

MUNKEY IN THE CITY Director's Statement

You know what bothers me? That there aren't enough stories about me out there.

I mean, there aren't really any shows or films that represent my experience as a person. It's not just that there are so few non-stereotypical portrayals of Asian American men on screen, in general. It's that, even when there are, there aren't any representations that reflect my own particular kind of flavor.

Let me explain: I have a certain kind of lifestyle—I rent a room in a house, I hang out on street corners, I get into fist fights, I work for tips, I'm lazy, I have bad credit, I try to get things for free, my relationships don't last...In fact, I'm a bit of a mess. I'm not a bad guy, but I'm not the archetype of a hero either, though I do try to recycle. I'm really the lackadaisical underachiever who likes to do adventurous things, like stay out late drinking and shooting pool at bars. I'm also the casual procrastinator who would rather take a nap then, say, make an agenda. And, though I am the spirited filmmaker, I'm just not yet "successful," as my family likes to put it.

In short, I'm the Asian American slacker-starving artist-antihero type, and I'm looking for stories about me. Have you seen any?

Well, that's where a guy named Munkey comes in. Based on my own personal experiences, *Munkey in The City* is about an underachiever who's not exactly content with the underachieving. Munkey has a dream, and he's willing to be poor and unoriginal to get to it. But in essence, Munkey is just trying to become a better person, despite having his flaws. He's a guy who probably doesn't even deserve better things, but he wants to work for them anyways. And although Munkey longs to be a "successful" writer, in the end, all the best journeys are of growth and self-discovery anyways, and Munkey's is no different.

There actually is a fine point to finding ourselves in the media we watch. It means we have a place in the culture we live in, and that somehow we are accepted; that we, too, belong amongst our peers, even if we are not perfect, or even a bit of a mess. It validates our narrative.

It is my honor and pleasure to bring you this story of a peculiar guy named Munkey, because it shows the diversity apparent among Asian Americans today. We are all of different shades and ranges, interests and lifestyles, lest we not forget. We all have a story within us, even the loafers and deadbeats of color in America. Let's let them know they have a place in this world too.

--Michael T. Nguyen