

MUNKEY IN THE CITY Background Information

In January 2013, Michael T. Nguyen was in a desolate place in his life. He had just moved to San Francisco and was excited to be in one of the most beautiful cities in the world, but instead he ended up feeling alone, frustrated, and confused. For some reason, he felt like he couldn't do anything right or connect with anybody around him. He had already dropped out of film school so he could focus on paying his overpriced rent and eating basic meals. He was working a job he wasn't happy going to, and living a life he didn't really enjoy living. And as he looked for answers that weren't there, he started drinking more and doing drugs. Soon he lost sight of what was really important to him, and he didn't care. Even worse, he felt like giving up on himself.

Then, feeling inspired, he did the cheapest creative thing he knew how to do, which was write his experiences down. One incident after another seemed to fly onto the page. Before long, he had written a story. He then decided he would use his adversity as a tool to achieve his filmmaking dreams. Instead of giving up on himself, he would create a web series about his experiences and learn to become a better filmmaker by working on it. He was determined to bring this story to life, not just for himself, but also to share it with anyone struggling in their own lives and striving to attain their dreams. And this is how MUNKEY IN THE CITY came about.

Over the next two years, Michael managed to save enough money to shoot a pilot episode of MUNKEY IN THE CITY. But, unsatisfied with this product, and largely driven by his lead actor Kenny Leu, he successfully raised enough funds through private investors to shoot all six written episodes of the web series. Then, along with Kenny coming on as executive producer, they brought on independent producer Angela Chen to create a core producing team. The three moved forward and combine their resources to procure a professional cast and crew for a very low-budget production. The relatively smooth shoot, minus the fire department shutting down one location, lasted five days in October of 2015.

It took Michael one and a half more years to finance the post-production phase of the project, which included hiring a professional editor, as well as a post-sound mixer and music composer.

Over all this time, Michael had serious bouts about whether he wanted to give up on the entire process and questioned if he was meant to be a filmmaker at all. But if there is one thing every filmmaker learns eventually, it's that perseverance is one's greatest asset. Michael had never stuck with anything for this long before. But he knew he had to see this project through in order to move on with his creative life. There was really no other option.

In the end, of course, it was all worth it, and Michael got just what he wanted from the beginning: an education in filmmaking.

Nearly five years in the making, MUNKEY IN THE CITY was first conceived in January 2013, filmed in San Francisco in October 2015, and finished post-production in July of 2017. It was released online to the public on October 18, 2017.

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