“The Two Sided Coin”

Written and Directed
By
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Honors Thesis Project
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Abstract

"The Two Sided Coin" is a movie that I wrote, directed, produced, and edited. My goal was to take on all aspects of the movie production process, embodying the idea of the auteur. "The Two Sided Coin" is a short film about a student, Jake, who finally meets Angela, the girl he has had his eye on for some time. The two hit it off immediately. But when they meet a second time, Jake decides that the two are not all that compatible. Jake soon realizes that things are not back to normal as he discovers that he has a secret admirer of sorts. The movie shows how Jake reacts to what seems to be looking over his shoulder everywhere he goes. Helping or perhaps hurting Jake along the way is his wisecracking roommate Steve. Together they realize that Jake’s situation may not be as bad as it seems.
"The Two Sided Coin"

Notes on the Production Process

I have always been intrigued by the idea of the auteur, on who takes on all elements of the production process for a film. There was no doubt in my mind that for my capstone project I would do just that and produce a movie of my own. For this project I wore all hats of production as I wrote a completely original script, cast the actors, directed, filmed, lighted, acted, and edited the movie. This project has allowed me to take on the role of the auteur and create a finished movie product.

The script for this story has been an idea of mine for over two years when a friend of mine had an experience not unlike what the character Jake in the movie encounters, yet not nearly as extreme, or with as severe of consequences. I had the basic idea worked out but it was not until I was under way with this project had I begun to construct the script. I first made rough notes of the general ideas and then formed them into distinct scenes. I then typed the scenes and arranged them in order. At this time I inserted important dialogue and reworked the ideas until everything flowed. I finished by including the remaining dialogue. Most of the dialogue was done by acting them out with a friend and together decided what made sense. Once production began, I made several minor changes. The total script writing process took about two weeks to complete.

I spent the first month of the semester informally casting the three lead parts in the movie. I have been a producer for BSU Late Night, a student run comedy show, which gave me unique access to an abundance of talented actors and actresses. Each of the three actors that I finally decided on had worked in one or more of my productions for Late Night and it did not take me long to decide who would be best at each part. Sam
Day, who played Jake, the lead male role, is a natural actor who is very believable and has had extensive experience in high school theatre; he is also a theatre minor. Emily Boone, who played Angela, is a very capable actress and can play a normal person one minute and a psychotic one the next, and she also has an alluring appeal about her that I knew would fit her character. Tom Pilotte is great to work with and his personality is almost identical to that of the character Steve, therefore he was an easy choice.

I began production on the movie on April 6th because I wanted to wait until the weather was warm and spring-like. I made out a tentative shooting schedule and partitioned the scenes into what I thought was feasible for the timeframes of availability of my actors. I stuck to the schedule and shot on every day as close to each time as possible. Unfortunately on almost each day of shooting we were unable to get to shoot every scene because of time constraints and late nights. By the end of the scheduled production week I had six of the twenty four scenes left to shoot. It was rather difficult to find time when my actors could all meet together for these parts, therefore production for the classroom scenes and the final scene continued until April 26th and 29th respectively. I had originally planned to have all production completed by April 16th.

I had completely underestimated the time it would take to shoot each scene. I have produced numerous small videos before but never anything of this size. When I was only able to shoot for two hours or so at a time, we were only able to do one or two scenes because of the time it took to set up the lighting and the camera shot and have my actors ready with their lines. Every time the camera moved, the lighting had to change. Outside shoots were difficult because I had to deal with the environment around us. There were so many people and noises that were completely out of my control; therefore
I had to wait until conditions were right to shoot the scene. Even then we only had very short windows of time to shoot each shot.

Continuity was also a very difficult issue to deal with. Continuity is making sure that shots and scenes match up properly and believably. The most important item of continuity is wardrobe, making sure that clothing remains consistent throughout the day in “movie time”. This was particularly difficult in this movie because I shot numerous scenes from different days in the script in one day of shooting and the same script day over the course of several shooting days. I kept a running tally of what each character wore for each scene in order to ensure that we remained consistent. I found out during editing that I had made one mistake and had to re-shoot one particular scene.

The editing process took just over a week to complete. I first had to digitize, that is convert all of my footage from tape into digital media capable of editing. I did this once when I was half way through production and then again when production was complete. I chose to edit the movie using Adobe Premiere and used Avid Express DV for slow motion and cropping effects. I first made a rough cut of the entire movie, making sure that everything meshed and that there were no continuity errors. I then fine tuned the edit and mixed the audio levels. I then added the music track and finished by adding the text. I used Final Cut Pro 3 to convert the movie to DVD usable M-PEG 2 format and completed the project on DVD Studio Pro and burned my movie onto DVD.

I believe that the project was a great success and I am very pleased with the final product. This project has given me the ability to develop a movie from start to finish and have a completed product that I am proud of. It has also taught me some very valuable lessons about the filmmaking process. I had completely underestimated the time that
such a project actually takes and the amount of tiny details that have to be accounted for.

Lighting proved to be one of the most difficult elements of the production process and I
was able to overcome those difficulties. The project also helped me to become a better
director having to deal with and handle the three main actors on an almost daily basis.

Most of all, this project has given me confidence in my abilities as a moviemaker. This
project has assured me that this is what I love to do and want to do as a career.
Movie Script written by Peter Ellingsworth

OPEN BLACK SCREEN
FADE UP to shot of JAKE's face- Blinking and Groggy
(Music up)
JAKE sits up and jumps off bed.
Shot of JAKE's door. JAKE opens it and walks toward the camera.
Enter hallway and sees STEVE his roommate

JAKE
Morning.

STEVE (looks half asleep)
Yep.

JAKE
I got dibs on the shower.

STEVE
Whatever dude, I'm going back to bed.

JAKE (half smiles)
Hey Steve.

STEVE (annoyed, from his room)
What, Jake?!

JAKE
Let's do something tonight.

STEVE (appearing from his door suddenly alive)
Whoa! Jake the Snake wants to go out tonight.

JAKE (rolling his eyes)
Yeah, yeah. Well I'll see you later tonight.

CAMPUS
Backwards trucking shot JAKE walks to class, looks to the left
Shot of ANGELA walking in opposite direction motion slowed
CU of JAKE's face as he sees ANGELA, slowly turns back toward camera with smile on his face
Shot of JAKE in class, looks bored, looks down at his watch, perks up, looks towards the door
Shot of doorway, ANGELA walks by
CU of JAKE as he notices her, smiles
POOL HALL

JAKE sitting with roommate (STEVE)
JAKE looks up and sees ANGELA
Shot ANGELA on other side of bar, looks up and sees him
Shot JAKE, quickly turns away

JAKE
Hey, that’s that girl I was telling you about! She just saw me looking at her.

STEVE
(Looks at ANGELA)
Not bad, dude. Why don’t you go talk to her.

JAKE
I can’t go over there now. She caught me checking her out.

STEVE
Oh, you know she loves it. (Looks at her again)
STEVE (continued)
Oh crap, she’s coming over here. Later Dude. (STEVE gets up)

JAKE
(Angry at STEVE)
Where are you going you bastard.

ANGELA approaches, looks at JAKE flirtatiously

ANGELA
Can I sit down?

JAKE
Uh, yeah, sure.

ANGELA sits down. Extends hand.

ANGELA
Hi, I’m Angela.
(They Shake hands)

JAKE (Surprised)
Hey. I’m Jake.

ANGELA
Sorry. I’m usually not this forward. I just saw you looking at me...
JAKE (scratching head)
Uh, yeah, sorry about that I, uh...

ANGELA
Yeah, I see you every day walking to class.

JAKE (really embarrassed now)
Uh oh.

ANGELA (laughs)
Don’t worry, I don’t think that you’re a creep or anything.

JAKE
Well that, that’s good, I guess.

ANGELA
Jake... right?... You’re really cute.

JAKE (shocked and flattered)
Uh, thanks... I think you’re, uh, cute as well.

ANGELA (laughs)
That’s sweet. Thank you. Nice and good looking.

Camera pans from JAKE to ANGELA. Dissolve to multiple shots showing passage of time. Dissolve between various shots of the two talking. Shot of JAKE smiling and laughing. Shot of STEVE walking up.

STEVE (pokes him with a pool cue)
Hey Romeo, it’s two o’clock.

STEVE gestures to leave.

JAKE
Yeah, I guess you’re right.

(To ANGELA) I guess I better get going, it was nice talking to you, and ... and meeting you.

ANGELA
Nice meeting you Jake. (JAKE gets up)
Wait... (Grabs his hand)

CU of hand ANGELA holding him by the wrist. She writes her phone number on his palm.

ANGELA (continues)
Why don’t you give me a call and we can do something. How’s Saturday night?

JAKE (excited but trying not to show it)

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Script
Sounds great, I’ll, uh..(Looks at hand) I’ll call you.

ANGELA’S HOUSE

Shots of JAKE getting ready for his date with ANGELA
Shot JAKE at ANGELA’s house. Knocks on front door.
ANGELA answers, noticeably less dressed up as the previous night.

ANGELA
Oh, Hey Jake how are you?

JAKE
I’m great. You?

ANGELA
Yeah. Come on in.

Shot of TV screen, movie playing. ANGELA and JAKE’s reflection on the sides of the screen showing their obvious distance.
Shot of the two on a couch. Jake looks over at ANGELA who does not look at him.
Cut to same shot JAKE now slouched and looking bored.
JAKE Looks at his watch.

JAKE
Well I think I better get going.

ANGELA
Really, so soon? Do you want to do something later.

JAKE
Oh, I don’t know. I just don’t think that this is going to work out.

ANGELA
Oh, I see. So what, are you breaking up with me?

JAKE
Uh... No, I mean, I just don’t think we should see each other. It’s not really breaking up.

ANGELA (half smiling)
Don’t worry, it’s all right. I will see you around?

JAKE leaves.
Shot of ANGELA watching him as JAKE walks away.
JAKE’S HOUSE
JAKE walks in the house.
Shot STEVE sitting on couch.

STEVE
How was it?

JAKE (sighs)
Eh...

STEVE
That good huh? Have you bought the his and her matching towels.

JAKE
It was like she was a completely different person than she was the other night.

STEVE
Oh I see. The old two sided coin. Huh.

JAKE
Yeah, I guess your right.

STEVE
Well yeah, I wrote the book on chicks.

JAKE
Is that why you stayed home tonight.

STEVE
Exactly.

CAMPUS
JAKE walks to class as before.
Looks to his left expecting to see ANGELA.
Shot of POV, ANGELA is not there, JAKE looks disappointed

CLASS
JAKE looks out the class door.
ANGELA is not there.

JAKE (to himself)
I guess I made an impression on her.

Pan to student sitting next to him.
STUDENT (looking at JAKE)  
Excuse me, are you talking to me?

JAKE  
Uh, no... sorry, I was, uh... talking to myself.

STREET- MORNING  
JAKE walking to class down the street.  
A car seems to follow him slightly. JAKE turns to look at the car, but seems unaware of anything wrong.

CAMPUS  
Various shots of JAKE walking in different places and looks as though he is followed.  
Turns to look at a crowd behind him but sees nothing suspicious.

LIVING ROOM  
JAKE is sitting talking with STEVE.

JAKE  
This may sound strange, but I think that someone has been following me lately.

STEVE  
What? You’re crazy.  
Wait a second, I think you’re right.  
STEVE mockingly goes to the window and quickly opens the blinds.  
Shot of outside, car in front of house turns on headlights and immediately drives off.

STEVE  
Whoa, That’s weird. I sure planned that out perfectly.

JAKE  
Yeah, no kiddin’. Well, I guess you’re right, I am going crazy.

STEVE  
Well, I’ll tuck you in tonight just to be sure.

JAKE looks at him angrily.

JAKE’S BEDROOM  
JAKE sitting on futon reading.  
Looks towards the window but sees nothing.  
ECU of JAKE as his eyes slowly move to the window again.
Shot from behind of JAKE moving to the window and looks out.  
Shot from outside POV of person behind bushes.  
Shot from JAKE POV of movement. A person can be seen looking at JAKE. 
Shot of JAKE startled as he sees the person. 
JAKE quickly pulls his blinds down and dives out of view.

JAKE (to himself, obviously worried, breathing heavily) 
No way?! 

STREET-MORNING 

JAKE walking down the street. 
Same car is following him as before 
JAKE looks behind him and the car stops. 
JAKE turns his head forward and then quickly looks again as the car screeches to a stop. 
ECU of JAKE’S face as he tries to see who is driving the car. 
MS of car, a girl can be seen driving.

CAMPUS 

MS of JAKE as he walks through campus, crowd behind him. 
JAKE turns to look behind him and sees ANGELA wearing sunglasses. 
CU of ANGELA as she tries to look away. 

OUTSIDE LIBRARY-NIGHT 

LS JAKE walking at night by library. 
CU JAKE as he hears someone walking. Turns to see ANGELA ducking from view. 
JAKE (to himself) 
What the Hell? 

JAKE walks away quickly

LIVING ROOM

STEVE sitting in living room 
JAKE bursts through the door. 

JAKE 
Hey. You know how I was telling you about someone following me. 

STEVE (slaps his forehead) 
Oh, yeah. (Laughs) Are you still worried about that. Let it go.
JAKE
No. Listen. It’s Angela.

STEVE
Who?

JAKE
You know...uh...(thinks about what to say) the two sided coin.
STEVE
Oooh. (Disbelief) She’s following you. No.

JAKE (insistent)
I saw her following me. In her car!

STEVE
Are you sure it was her.

JAKE
It was her. And she stopped every time I turned around. She’s following me.

STEVE (look of concern)
Do you realize what this means.

JAKE (worried)
What?

STEVE (gradually getting excited)
You...have... a stalker!!!

JAKE
What?

STEVE
You have a stalker. That’s awesome!

JAKE
What?

STEVE
I don’t know any guy who wouldn’t want a stalker.

JAKE (points too himself)
This guy. That’s too weird.

STEVE
Listen. There is a good looking girl out there who is obsessed with you. When she wakes up in the morning she wondering what you are doing. What you’re having for breakfast. And then she goes out and follows you, to look at you. She worships you. It’s what every guy wants in a relationship and you don’t even have to have the relationship!

JAKE (now clearly excited)
Yeah, YEAH. You’re right. I have a stalker! That’s awesome!

STREET

JAKE walks down the street. Same car follows him.
JAKE slyly turns his head and sees the car.
JAKE chuckles and smiles.

CAMPUS

JAKE walking through campus.
Over the shoulder shot of ANGELA behind JAKE in the distance.
JAKE smiles greatly, proud that he is being stalked.

LIBRARY-NIGHT

JAKE by library at night. Stops to hear if he is being followed.
JAKE stops to think. Sits down on a bench and looks as if he is enjoying himself.

JAKE’S ROOM

JAKE sitting on futon opposite of window
JAKE looks out toward window, gets up and opens blinds, returns to where he was sitting.
JAKE scoots closer to the window.
Cut Shot JAKE closer
Cut shot JAKE next to the window, JAKE peers casually out of the window, and smiles.
Shot from ANGELA’S POV of JAKE through window.

CAMPUS

JAKE is standing on opposite side of street where he usually walks, hidden.
JAKE checks his watch.
ECU of watch.
JAKE (to himself)
Just about time. Come on Angela, I know you’re out there.
ANGELA comes into view.
MS ANGELA looking around waiting for JAKE.
JAKE
I’m not there... but you are.

LIBRARY- NIGHT

MS of ANGELA peeking around corner
LS of ANGELA standing up looking for JAKE.
CU of JAKE emerging from behind a tree.

JAKE (creepily excited)
Keep on watching.

STREET- MORNING

Shot of ANGELA sitting in her car waiting for JAKE to come out.
Camera tracks right to reveal a car parked behind her.
CU of car reveals JAKE sitting in the car watching her.

JAKE (worse than before)
That’s a good girl, keep watching.

JAKE’S BEDROOM

JAKE is sitting by the window on his futon.
He continually looks out to see ANGELA.
STEVE walks in the room

STEVE (with suspicion)
What the hell are you doing?

JAKE (startled)
Oh, uh, sitting here.

STEVE
You’re always sitting in here. What are you doing?

JAKE (not looking at STEVE)
I’m letting her watch me.

STEVE
Who? Your stalker?
STEVE walks toward the window.
JAKE immediately gets up to stop him.

JAKE
No! My girlfriend.

JAKE pushes him out toward the door.

STEVE
Dude you are crazy.

JAKE immediately takes off his sweatshirt and pushes into STEVE’s arms.

JAKE (forceful)
Here, put this on.

STEVE
What?!

JAKE
Just put it on. Please.

STEVE
All right, whatever, man.

JAKE
And sit right there. (Points to the futon)

STEVE
All right, all right, but I still think you’re crazy.

JAKE leaves room.

OUTSIDE OF HOUSE

Shot JAKE slowly exiting out back door
LS JAKE creeping around the opposite side of his house.
MS JAKE hiding in front of neighbor’s house.
LS ANGELA from JAKE’s POV still looking at JAKE’s window.
CU of JAKE

JAKE (almost sadistic)
Oh, yeah. Keep on watching. That’s a good girl. Yeah.

SOUND EFX (A police siren bleeps)
Blue and red lights appear in the side of the neighbor’s house and on JAKE
JAKE is unaffected
JAKE hears rustling near by turns to look.
Shot of bright blinding flashlight.
OFFICER
Freeze. Hold it right there!

CU of JAKE’S face brightened by flashlight, terrified.
Slow dissolve to JAKE’s face in normal light still looking at camera.
Freeze frame, dissolve out

CAST
JAKE- Sam Day
ANGELA- Emily Boone
STEVE- Tom Pillote
STUDENTS- Dan Beyer
Peter Ellingsworth
Jamie Gething
Jaimie Jones
Nick Manuszak
Steven Weir