

From the outset, one of my primary goals with *Memorabilia* was to write something that could feasibly work on a very limited budget. I was always inspired by the D.I.Y. debuts of writers like Kevin Smith and Glenn Howerton, both hugely successful creators who started out on small, largely self-funded projects with their friends and collaborators; they proved that a production doesn't require a huge budget to get off the ground, particularly an independent one. *Clerks*--the convenience store comedy that launched Kevin Smith's career and reinvented the "bromance"--was made for roughly \$28,000 in 1993. And Glenn Howerton's short film, *Charlie Gets Cancer*, was made for under \$200 (most of which was spent on tapes for the two camcorders he already had) and inspired *It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia*, the longest running live-action sitcom on TV.

For me, these stories were a confirmation that a strong creative vision and dedicated actors are what really brings our favorite stories to life. A bigger budget is vital in some situations; it confirms that the project is valuable, well-produced, and stable work for the cast and crew. But a smaller scale is much more appealing to me, especially for my first project--there's more freedom to experiment, figure out what plays and what doesn't, and work comfortably throughout production. There's less expectation of what the finished product has to be, in terms of falling into a particular genre and playing into those conventions: creative control is a priority here because the story is deeply personal, and the way the story defies standard romantic comedy tropes is actually important to the narrative. It's distinct in just the right way--instantly familiar, yet slightly twisted and unusual.

*Memorabilia* is a character-driven dramady about a geeky burnout named Jake reflecting on his high school years and his first girlfriend: Lily Lamore, a cute tomboy new to his school that Jake quickly falls head over heels for. He stumbles upon a Freddy Krueger bank full of their old notes in his basement, which is how Jake and Lily's story unfolds—various letters and mementos trace everything from their meeting and first dates to the eventual fallout of their relationship, a loss that Jake never fully recovered from. His friends make appearances in both sides of the story: a tightknit group of stoners that might as well live in Jake's basement, including Alex (his wry sidekick), Ford (a sharp, artsy hippy kid), Leeps (a frazzled, exuberant drug dealer), and Minh (a chubby Asian guy always trying to get a laugh.) The cast is rounded out by Jake's second love interest: Carmen, a sexy, scatter-brained singer that Jake meets on his first acid trip. The audience for this kind of story may seem limited on the surface, but it also has a lot of heart, humor, and personality that gives it a somewhat universal appeal. Even if the dialogue and content are jarring, I think the themes explored (relationships, impermanence, depression, drug use, etc.) are both timely and relatable to a large demographic.

With all that being said, I intend to keep this production about as small as I realistically can; I have a camera of my own that I plan to use, and access to others should I encounter any

problems during filming. I can also rent any other equipment we may need from my mentor James Gribbins at Gribbins Films, who has enjoyed my work with the screenplay, as well as the sample short I produced with my friend Alex Royer. Ideally, I'd like to pay each member of the crew by the hour--\$12-15 seems to be a standard rate for independent productions, but I'll also aim to keep the sets relatively small so we can work efficiently without fear of going over budget. Filming permits also shouldn't be an issue: all the locations I'll end up using are either private residences or otherwise public areas that don't require clearance (such as side-walks, parks, bus stops, etc.), so it shouldn't pose a problem during production. One of the most expensive issues seems to be a bus rental; there are a few scenes that would require shooting on a school bus, and they can cost as much as \$400 a day. We would need one for about two or three days to get all those scenes finished, but that's certainly an attainable goal. Finally, I plan to keep post-production costs down by doing my own editing work, and probably just avoiding the use of any licensed music or outside media altogether.

While I feel like I could make it work for much less on my own, a budget of \$5,000 would ensure that we could get anything we needed and keep the cast and crew satisfied throughout the production. Memorabilia is a labor of love in the truest sense; I wrote it because I needed to, and I want to make it because I believe in this story and I've never seen anything else quite like it on the screen. It's raw, funny, dark, and bittersweet in a very sincere way, and a homemade feel is important to it turning out how I'd envisioned...It's very consciously nostalgic, and I think a stripped-down approach is just appropriate given the tone and sensibility of the story. Memorabilia is near and dear to me, and making it happen on my own terms--on my own time, with my own people--would just be an absolute dream come true.