

AMERICA



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Synopsis

In a tribute to his brother's military service in Iraq, Tim takes his brother's ashes to NY to the 9/11 Memorial. The journey ends in a lesson in racial profiling when he shares his evening with his Middle-Eastern Air-BnB host, Abdul.



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Director's Statement

On 9/11, I was awakened in Los Angeles by a phone call. It was Jana, the writer of this short, a single mom, who was out of town at the Toronto Film Festival. She said 2 things to me: "Turn on your TV and whatever you do with your kids, please include mine." It was a brief call. The North Tower had already been struck, and it seemed certain that everyone aboard Flight 11 was dead. Before the South Tower was hit, I received another call from my sister's partner, saying "Nan's down there. She's been hurt, she needs stitches, but she's going to go in her building where there's a nurse. I don't know how long we'll have cell phone coverage, but I wanted you to know she's OK."

And then the South Tower got struck.

And then the World Trade Center imploded.

And then started the longest day of my life.

My sister was among the 6000 injured but luckily not among the 2,996 people who died at the hands of terrorists. When I heard her voice 12 hours later, I wept with joy.

But then I saw the hate. And I saw it steadily grow and grow. And every time innocent people died, the tragedy was compounded by the racial profiling that happens when people look for someone to blame.

And then there was the senseless attack in Orlando. And I knew I had to do something. So I turned to what I do. I direct. I tell stories.

I told Jana about two young wonderful actors, one of them born in Morocco. They were close friends at Pace University where they were both in the professional acting program. Every day, while they walked to class, they saw the Freedom Tower being built at Ground Zero. I knew they would be perfect on which to tell my tale...and this film was born.

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My film is deliberately provocative. I want it to be. I want to challenge our thoughts as Americans and the assumptions and generalizations we make about others based on how they look.

Hate is never the solution.

Technical Specs



Country of Production USA

America

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Running Time

9:50 minutes

Original Language

English

CAST



Tim Dougherty

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Jade Ziane

CREW



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Director

MARY LOU BELLI

Writer

JANA SUE MEMEL

Producer

AIDA LEMBO

Cinematographer

CHARLES DOUGHERTY

Title Song

JULIE GOLD

Composer

MAX & LUCAS DRUZ

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BIOS

Mary Lou Belli Director



Mary Lou Belli is 2-time Emmy Award-winning director, writer, and producer. Among her directorial credits are *NCIS: New Orleans*, *Pitch*, *Famous in Love*, *The Quad*, *American Woman* and multiple episodes of *Hart of Dixie*, on the CW, *Second Generation Wayans*, *Reed Between the Lines*, and *The Game* for BET. She has also directed seven consecutive seasons of *Girlfriends* on the CW. A groundbreaking web series director, Mary Lou did the pilots and multiple episodes of *3Way*, winner of two Logo awards and The AfterEllen.com 2008 Best Web Series award, *Jenifer Lewis and Shangela*, one of IndieGogo's top 10 web series of 2012, and *Work in Progress* official selection to the HollyWeb and Academy Web Television fests and *The Drunk Lonely Wives Book Club* now doing the fest circuit.

Her short film *Straight Eye for the Gay Guy* won Best Mini-short at the California Indie Film Fest. It also played at Cannes, Woods Hole, Ojai Film Fest, and Cinema Diverse: The Palm Springs LGBTQ Film Festival. Her other mini short *I Heard Something* was an official selection at The Sapporo International Short Film Fest as well as the California Indie Film Fest and the Northeast Film Festival Horror Fest.

Mary Lou has directed an additional 150+ television episodes including *Monk*, *Wizards of Waverly Place*, *Sister, Sister*, *Living with Fran*, starring Fran Drescher, and *Eve*, starring hip-hop artist Eve, as well as *The Hughleys*, *Major Dad*, and *Charles in Charge*. Episodes she directed of *The Game*, *Girlfriends*, and *One on One* have all been nominated or won multiple Prism Awards.

She has co-authored three books: "The NEW Sitcom Career Book," now in its second edition, "Acting for Young Actors," and "Directors Tell the Story" recently published in Japanese and Chinese. Mary Lou teaches directing at USC's School of Cinematic Arts.

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Jana Sue Memel Writer



Jana Sue Memel is an Academy Award-winning producer and writer who in the course of her 30-year career, has produced over 25 feature length motion pictures for both television and theatrical exhibition. In addition, she has produced over 65 half-hour live action shorts that have played as television series in more than 30 countries. Currently, she serves as Executive Director Motion Pictures & Television Academy of Art University along with pursuing her filmmaking endeavors.

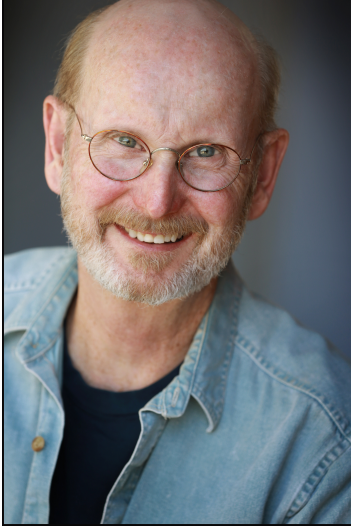
Short films she has produced have won 3 Academy Awards and have been nominated for an additional 8 Oscars in the Live Action Shorts category. Other films Memel has produced have also been nominated and won Writer and Director Guild Awards, Humanitas Prizes, Cable Aces and Emmy's.

Films she has produced have launched the directing careers of Danny Glover, Margaret Cho, Jessie Nelson, Laura Dern, Griffin Dunne, Rob Lowe, and Helen Mirren along with over 60 other directors. These films have starred the likes of Brad Pitt, Tobey Maguire, LL Cool J, Robert Downey Junior, Kiefer Sutherland, Bill Macy and Shia LaBeouf.

As a writer, Memel has adapted *FAULTLINE* for ABC FAMILY based on the YA novel and *RUBY FRUIT JUNGLE* for PRN Productions. She has done extensive rewrites on *LIFE AND DEATH AT 17* for Hoggswood and is writing *IN THE MIDDLE* for director Chris Moore and *Alona* for producer Craig Franklin. She also has worked as an additional writer on a pilot for Fox and features at New Line, Warners, Disney, Universal, and Revolution Studios. In 2016 she co-wrote, co-directed, and produced *Wild Seeds*, a spec pilot. She also wrote, directed and produced, *Purposeful Parenting* a series of live action short films.

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Charles Dougherty Director of Photography



Charles Dougherty has been a working actor for over 30 years. He appeared with Minnie Driver in the film *BEAUTIFUL*, directed by Sally Field. He appeared with Martin Landau in the film *AN EXISTENTIAL AFFAIR*. He had a starring role in the Roger Corman film, *WELCOME TO OBLIVION*. Mr. Dougherty has guest starred on numerous television shows from *HAPPY DAYS* to *MONK*. His recent television appearances include *UNDERCOVERS*, *THE MIDDLE*, *DOLHOUSE*, and *BONES* as well as in “The Late Night Wars” on *THE JIMMY KIMMEL SHOW*. He has appeared in over 300 television commercials, many of them memorable classics. Trained at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco and the Drama Studio, London, Mr. Dougherty’s theatre work includes *THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY*, directed by Fionnula Flanagan at Theatre West in Los Angeles as well as the Off-Broadway production of *KID CHAMPION* written and directed by the late Thomas Babe. Mr. Dougherty has taught long form Improvisational Theatre for US Performing Arts as well as Acting For The Camera at Pepperdine University, University of California Berkley, Stanford University, Florida State University, University of Kentucky, Georgetown, and Amherst. He created promotional videos as well as shot, directed, and edited short films with teen workshop participants. He also serves as the Director of Strategic Development for the same organization.

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