



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

Show Notes

Episode Summary: Filmmaker and founder of Axion Pictures, Derrick Bell Perez (he/him) sits down with host, Jade Madison Scott (she/her), to discuss his latest film, his writing process, how he finances his films, and more.

Credits:

- **Podcast Logo:** Amaka Korie
- **“On Their Way” Theme:** Bajio Alvarado
- **Creator, Host, Audio Editor, Transcript Editor :** Jade Madison Scott

Guest Information:

- [Axion Pictures](#)
- [Axion Pictures Facebook](#)
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EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

**‘On Their Way’ Theme Song composed by Bajio Alvarado
(It’s light and energetic. It puts a little pep in your step)**

Jade (JMS): Hey everybody. It’s me Jade Madison Scott and I’m glad to be here with you. This episode I’m talking to local filmmaker, Derrick Bell Perez. When I was researching Derrick and his production company, Axion Pictures, I was struck by the prolific nature of their productions. Short films, music videos, commercials, overall there was quite a bit of content. I was especially curious about his short films and that’s a lot of what we talk about this in episode. From the writing to the filming to the funding to the distribution me and Derrick talk about it all. Now before we get to the episode I wanna tell you transcripts and show notes can be found at wgcpredictions.com. Alright, the episode is coming up and remember this is a WGC production.

‘On Their Way’ Theme Fades

JMS: As a young Tampa native Derrick has made filmmaking his passion that started with his younger self, watching the behind the scenes content of his favorite films. At the age of 22, he already has over a decade of experience shooting multiple commercials, documentaries features, and short films. He hopes to make a difference through his storytelling and other creative works. Hey Derrick, how are you doing?

Derrick: I'm good. I'm good. Thank you so much for having me.

JMS: Thank you for being here. So, I'm just going to start off with the same question I asked, literally, everybody on this podcast. Um, we already know you're from Tampa, that's what the season's about, but I do want to know where are your roots?



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: I am born and raised in Tampa. I am Puerto Rican. Um, however, I do not speak...I was adopted into a white family.

JMS: Alright. So, first thing's first. You're a filmmaker, so how exactly did you know that filmmaking and videography would be something that you wanted to do?

D: Very early, actually. I was young, I loved superhero movies growing up, so I always watched, I was, uh, I was obsessed, so I would always watch behind the scenes and whatever was sitting in the, um, the bonus features on DVDs. So, um, from there, I kind of just, you know, became obsessed with, you know, what went on behind the scenes of films, and I decided to try making my own movie and, you know, kind of hit the floor running from there.

JMS: Ah, and you gained your passion through watching behind the scenes content, but how exactly did you learn how films work? Like how the filming process worked?

D: I would say when it comes to filmmaking, it's more so trial and error. I am a strong believer that when you're making a movie, you learn a lot and it's a huge journey, but what people don't understand is that the journey, you know what I mean, you start from creating the film and then developing the film that you created and then, even premiering the film and showing people...and I tend to see the premiers where other people are actually sitting down and watching your film-

JMS: Mmm.

D: As were most of the learning lessons come through because you're seeing the audience engage with your film and you're seeing what works and what didn't work.

JMS: What would you say, like, is the most important thing you've learned then from working on your films and watching these people at the premiers?



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: Um, I'd say the number one thing I've learned is create a good story. At the end of the day, you're telling a story, you know what I mean? You may not have the best sound equipment or you may not have the best “this” equipment, but at the end of the day, if you're telling a good story that is interesting, that is engaging, um, that's relevant, or if not relevant, piques the interest of others-

JMS: Mhmm.

D: You know, follow through with that, and you, you're still going to get people that really engage with your, your story.

JMS: Mmm. And I had the pleasure of watching, uh, essentially everything you put out on Axiom Pictures' YouTube page. So, I watched a lot of you guys' content, and I noticed that for your films, you are the writer as well as the director. So, going off of your point about making sure it's a good story, let's start from the very beginning of your process. When you have an idea that you want to turn into a film, where do those ideas come from and how do you put them on the page?

D: Well, first of all, thank you so much for engaging with some of our work, and you know, at the end of the day where I start off is, is I start with, what kind of story do I want to tell? Right?

JMS: Mhmm.

D: I look at what kind of story I want to tell. From there, I then create a character. And when you create a character, you're going to do a whole....you're creating like another individual and you got to make someone that's interesting enough for, um, us to follow throughout the entire film.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: And from there, we, you know, we draft the script and we, you know, you send it out to get revised and you come back and you do your final draft and, you know, we get the cast and crew together. We set up a filming schedule. We do all the preproduction, you know, all the ironing out of the project prior to, and then, uh, we kind of jump on and we shoot, make the projects come out. And from there we, um, we move into post and what I try to do now, what I didn't do years before, what I do now from learning from experience is I try to, um, try to set up post [production], um, organize everything for post prior to filming. So, that by the time we're there, we just drag and drop everything.

JMS: Mhmm.

D: But from here we kind of edit the project. You prepare it and you get it ready for release, and from there you figure out what outlet you're putting it on, and you kind of get it out there.

JMS: Okay, I'm going to get further into this process because I think it'd be really useful for people to hear how exactly you go through this beat by beat. So at the beginning-

D: A hundred percent.

JMS: Yeah. At the beginning you said your story stemmed from the characters. I'm a writer, personally, as well, and I'm wondering, and this is something I noticed with my own work so I'm wondering if you notice it in yours as well, do you typically have a character you sort of go back to? A sort of archetype that you're really comfortable with?

D: I, I, you know what? I tend to do that a lot and I try to stay away from that. What I do is I always try to go back to the character I did in the last project. And I think, "wait a minute, we're doing something different." So, what I always try to do is from there, I try to create something I've never done before, a character I've never done before, and that's always hard.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: And for me, it always starts with the name. It always, always, always, always starts with the name and I'm not sure if you're familiar, I know there's, like, some people.....like, names have meaning, right?

JMS: Yeah.

D: So, there's websites you go to where you can learn the meaning of a name.

JMS: Yeah I'm one of those writers, yeah.

D: I love to do that because at the end of the day, it's, it's, you know, you're literally creating someone and it kind of gives you like a little base to create with.

JMS: Mhmm.

D: I'm also very much into a little bit of psychology and understanding of certain disabilities and stuff like that. So, you know, I tried to focus on stuff like that as well, to create realistic, relevant characters that people at least have come across once in their lifetime and then build onto them and engage with them.

And at the end of the day, you're creating a character that the audience is going to follow through the rest of the film. It has to be an interesting character. And the number one thing

(Derrick Claps His Hands)

D: As a writer, and I always tell everybody this, if you're writing a project, your character in any story, any story, way, shape, or form has to grow from the beginning of the film to the end of the film.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

JMS: Mhmm.

D: Always always, always, and it's finding what does that growth look like? What are the struggles that character's going to face coming to that growth? Uh, and that's how you intermingle with the kind of story you want to tell. So, for example, we just finished writing a television pilot. For an LGBT filmmaker character. It's a comedic project.

JMS: Oh, that's fun.

D: It's not like it's a superhero or anything. It's a very, it's a high school drama with funny moments in it. And, you know, my thing was, what do I want the growth to look like for the character in it? And it's more so, uh, and it's two things. It's first of all, him coming to terms with being a, uh, LGBT individual, but also him coming to terms with being a filmmaker. You know what I mean?

JMS: Hmm.

D: Being a filmmaker, if you're involved in the arts, you know, artists are weird.

JMS: Sure are. Yeah.

D: So, we're different. We're out there. We're outside the box. So it, I wanted to create the understanding that yes, we are outside of the box, but there is nothing wrong with that. How do I develop that idea throughout the entire film so that the character can realize that. So that's more so my process.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

JMS: Um, okay, so at what point do you decide that it's time for other people to see the script that you've been working on? At what time do you decide it's...it's right to have other people's eyes on it?

D: My process with that is I develop a script.... I'm guilty of it. I get super excited. I get super excited when I finish a script. Um, cause it's like proud, you know-

JMS; Mhmm.

D: You're proud.

JMS: Yeah, it's an accomplishment.

D: Literally, literally. From there I write the script as a filmmaker, I try not to, um...I ship it out to certain individuals; I don't ship it out to just film buffs. You know what I mean? I don't ship it out to film buffs to revise because at the end of the day, you gotta understand, you know, when you go to, when you go see a scary movie, for example, you go sit in an AMC theater, you go sit down in a movie theater to watch a scary movie, you got different people in that audience, you know what I mean?

JMS: Mhmm.

D: You know? So you got, you got people from all different cultures, different backgrounds. My goal as a filmmaker is I don't just submit it to film critics because that is, um...I do, but I don't just submit it to them. I submit it to regular people. You know what I mean? A teenage boy, I'll let him read the script. A working mother, I'll let her read the script. You know, you give it to different people to get different perspectives. And from there, I kind of use that to help me market the film and figure out who I will be, um, engaging with most with this story.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: So, that's kind of my process with that. And, you know, the whole short film thing, I only released some of my short films, you know. I have one coming up, actually, *Eyes To The Sky*

JMS: Yes, I'm excited for that one.

D: We actually just, we just finished the rough cut for that.

JMS: Oh, congratulations.

D: We'll be submitting that to festivals hopefully soon, but that won't be released.

D: That's not going to be released because the goal is to turn that into a feature film.

JMS: I see. Okay. To continue on with this process then, so you write the script, you have different eyes on it. You determine that it's ready to go and it's ready to be actually produced. Once you have the script, how did you go about compiling the team to make the script turn into a film?

D: Well, first I, I, I go to my board. I have a big board in my office and I figure out, “okay, what do you need?” So, what do you need to make a project? For my team what we have is we have, obviously we have a director of photography, someone who can manage the camera team.

JMS: Mhmm.

D: We have our, um, sound. Sound is very important and always tends to be crazy. So, we find someone to manage sound.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: I then find a script, supervisor, someone to work with talent and work with me. um, with the script, because I will literally jump into a scene and be like, “all right, what the hell are we, what are we filming?”

JMS: Yeah.

(Jade Laughs)

D: You know what I mean? Then they, um, they'll be like, “oh my God, you wrote the script.” I understand. I wrote the script, but you know, when you're filming a movie, your brain's all over the place. Um, and then we have, um, a UPM. The most critical role in all productions I've ever done is the UPM. That's a unit production manager, and pretty much they run the set. They make sure everyone's where they're supposed to be. They make sure everyone's there on time. Here at this time. Here at that time. I usually work with the UPM to work out a filming schedule. I've written filming schedules, and then, you know, my UPM is like, “Derrick. I do not like this schedule. Let's rework it.”

(Jade Laughs)

D: And you know, we, we have to go back and forth figuring that out. I work with Samantha Haapa, she's a Tampa native and she's, she's amazing. I mean, she's honestly the best UPM, best project manager I've ever worked with, and she's always very detailed. Always very detailed. She keeps me on my toes. She keeps everyone on their toes. Whenever Samantha's there, you already know the job's getting done right.

So from there, we, you know, I put the team together, we do a lot of meetings, you know, I meet with everyone individually to see how their department is doing and what, what they're getting ready for and what, uh, concerns or needs that they need for me to engage in.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: A lot of times I'm producing the projects as well, so I'm overseeing everything as, as a director, but also as a producer. And then also we, you know, we do group meetings where we kind of, everyone lays out what, what's the goal.

On top of that, I tend to work with the cast a lot. I do a lot of the rehearsals myself or I supervise them, and I, um, I work with the cast individually. I use Backstage to find actors. I also use, I post, we post on our social media, "hey, anyone looking to submit for these roles?" Um, and I kind of, we kind of, we do, we're doing Zoom, uh, auditions now, but, um, we auditioned them and we, uh, if they do good, we do rehearsals and we go ahead and bring them on board, and get everybody set up and I'd say we rehearse for about a month or two, and we get everything together. I think *Eyes To The Sky* we did, I'd say, a couple of weeks of rehearsal because the talent we had on *Eyes To The Sky*, they were ready. I mean, they were ready to jump onboard and make it happen.

JMS: That's wonderful. Do you have a background in theater? Cause when you said that about your audition process, that reminded me a lot of the audition processes in theater. Do you at all?

D: Absolutely.

(Jade Laughs)

D: I have years of exp...I also did ballet. I did ballet.

JMS: Oh!

D: I did ballet and, um, dance and stuff like that for years. And, uh, ballet taught me how to be a good actor. Ballet is, um, you, you pretty much have to act without using your voice. You can't talk in a ballet at all.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: So, you have to literally use your body and your facial expressions to get an idea across. That's one of the big things I look for in auditions, as well as...I look at the face, you know what I mean?

JMS: Mhmm.

D: Because you can say something all day and all night, but at the end of the day, if your face doesn't show it, it's not being delivered to that audience. So, I always look at that.

JMS: And as you mentioned earlier in the interview, you often also produce these projects as well. So, how do you go about securing funding for your film?

D: So, securing funding is the most difficult thing ever.

(Jade Laughs)

D: I'm telling you. I'm trying to find financing for my feature film, especially now with COVID it's really hard. I can share some resources that were given to me that I tried to engage in, um-

JMS: Oh, that'd be nice. Thanks!

D: Which I'm still learning. Like I said, financing is hard. You know, one thing is, first, what I, what I've done is I reach out to local film groups to see if they're, they'd be interested in sponsorship. Sponsorships a huge thing, where pretty much people can invest in your film and receive sponsor incentives. So their name and the credits and, also, like, for example, what we do as sponsored incentives is they pay a certain amount, we'll give them a t-shirt for the film or they'll get a copy of the film. You know what I mean? There's lots of kinds of incentives you can do with that.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: And, you know, you'd be surprised you can go to local bars and restaurants and community organizations, uh, and reach out and see who would be willing to, you know. I'm a minority owned business, my company Axion Pictures. So, I try to reach out to organizations that are in supportive, you know, people of color making films and getting those opportunities because it is difficult. It is difficult, but I still, I believe there's people out there that want to help us be something amazing and then set an example for others.

JMS: Mhmm.

D: So, you know, among that perspective, you know, that's one way, uh. Another way is I know crowdfunding, there's Indiegogo, there's Kickstarter. It's kind of the same with sponsor incentives, but this time you're not going in person to ask people for money. This time you have to create a pitch video. You have to create material. You have to really outline your sponsor incentives. And you're asking the public for support. I tend not to really get involved in that. I don't really do crowdfunding. I tried a couple of times I've been successful to an extent with that. The reason why I say I don't really engage in that because it's. It's like, uh, there's, it's a whole marketing. It takes a lot of marketing to run a successful, uh, Indiegogo or Kickstarter campaign, and I try to focus more of that time on preparing and producing the project, and, you know what I mean, in, in other, in other realms of production, stuff like that.

Another route for financing is, what I just learned not long ago, it's product placement. Um, there's a website I believe you can go to. I think it's called [ERMA](#), E R M A, and it's all about product placement. It gives you, uh, contacts and brands and representatives and who to call and who to contact. And pretty much what you do is you go through to them and you say, "hey, you know, I'm looking to produce a project." Um, this is, you know, you give them your pitch material. "This is what I'm doing. This is the scope of the project. This is when we're filming. This is how we're putting it together." They might want to see the script. They might want to see what kind of project there, you know, allowing their brand or product to be in. And you'd be, surprised. I've, I've heard, I know of someone who produced it.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: It's a short film and they, um, I think they, they use one of the soda brands. They gave them like \$5,000 just to. Have sodas at the table at a dinner scene. You know what I mean? Just have sodas sitting there on the table and they drink it occasionally. And I heard they also give you stuff for your crew and your cast, um, to have also on set as well. So, it just depends on what you look into, but I know that is, uh, a route as well.

You know, I think another route is investors. If you can find people that will invest in your project, you know, even family, friends, you know what I mean? They know how passionate you are about your project. My mom always invests food. You know what I mean? When we have sets, we...she's always investing food. She's always like, "oh my God, I'll cook. Don't go out and get food." So, she's always cooking for the projects and taking care of everyone.

If you are in association with a nonprofit when producing your project, depending on the nature of the film, I don't think you can. I don't know how hard [or] easy it would be to do if you're making like a film on the Texas Chainsaw Massacre, but I know, for my foster care film, we did, *Eyes To The Sky*, unfortunately we did not have a nonprofit, so this did not work, but we were so close, Publix was going to sponsor meals for every single day of filming.

JMS: Oh!

D: If we were to have that nonprofit, which we do now, but you know, just as a heads up, if you have a nonprofit or even a work with, or in association with a nonprofit, you'd be surprised there are companies that would be willing to just donate food for your production for credit, you know?

JMS: Mhmm. For that Publix's deal that didn't end up going through, did you just go out and email them or-



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: I called them, I'm a caller, you know what I mean? And they, they were very awesome over the phone. They were great. They were like, “man, we wish you were a nonprofit, cause we were going to give it to you.” And you know, they expressed that they really like doing stuff like that. They really like supporting the arts. They like supporting filmmakers. Publix is a great company. I heard Subway is very good as well.

Like, for example, I'm, I was doing the foster care film and now we're, since we're putting together a feature for it, I'm going to look into Wendy's. I know Wendy's has they have a whole charity thing for children in foster care. I went into a Wendy's in Orlando and I saw this big plaque on the wall and they support children in foster care initiatives that really try to benefit them. And if you really consider it, that's exactly what my film project is doing.

It's giving a realistic look at what foster care looks like, what the system looks like, and giving people a realistic look on what it looks like, not only brings people to want to adopt, not only brings people to want to get involved, but it gives people, um, competency and I think that's the hardest thing people, when it comes to the foster care system, is people, new people, wanting, “oh my God, I want to adopt. I wanna get involved. I wanna do this. I wanna do that.” They don't have the competency that comes with that and understanding trauma and understanding some of the behaviors you'll be seeing. So, that's kind of the goal with this film I'm working on now is to go into that, but also go into the character. The character is such a strong character and I, I can't wait to, um, you know, explore that further in the feature film.

JMS: Hmm. So, with a film, like *Eyes To The Sky*, which is about abuse in the foster care system or-

D: It's an abuse in his biological home, but then being thrown into a broken system.

JMS: Oh, I see. I see. I was reading the IMDB description and I don't think it caught the nuances of that. So, for a film like that, which deals with a heavy topic, how do you as a director come in and create a...a supportive and emotionally healthy environment?



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: Well, yeah, this project, I actually had to consider that a lot. Cause I was, I was in the Hillsborough County foster care system for eight years and I was adopted, um, I even fought and got custody of one of my siblings and I had to...for me to step into this project was very, you know, I wouldn't say retraumatizing, but in a sense was like open...like taking off a band-aid, you know?

JMS: Mhmm.

D: So what I did to kind of prepare, and that's pretty much the best word I can put is prepare, for it was, you know, just kind of had to, you know, I obviously had the film...I had the short film written from the feature, which I had written years ago. I've had the script prepared, but finally choosing to embark on it, I had to, I had to first, you know, make sure everybody who was in the cast and crew were all on the same page like, "hey, this is a very serious project. This is very, you know, this is what my goal and my intentions with the project is."

I know there's a film out there right now here in Tampa, that everyone's going crazy about because the director had a hidden agenda and never told anybody in the cast and crew-

JMS: Ahh, that's terrible.

D: From what I'm hearing and it was not a...it was a very controversial, hidden agenda and, you know, I didn't want to do that with my cast and crew. I'm very straightforward. This is exactly what I want. And to be honest with you, the, the amount of support I received from them was tremendous. And even, even if we have to step, even if I have to step aside for a second, just to take a quick breath and they were very respectful in regards to that, not only respectful in regards to understanding, but also very open to learning more about what it's like and very inquisitive.

The guy that played the main character, Fabio, was very, very much interested in talking to me about my history and what I've experienced and what would I do, or what would a kid in care do in a situation like this? And how would he react to this?



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: And, you know, they were very vocal and, um, we were, it was, it was a very big collaboration and developing not only the, uh, the acting side, but even the, you know, the emotions through the camera side and the music composer through the, the music composition. And I mean, there was just a big collaboration and, uh, understanding going on with the project. So, it was pretty amazing.

JMS: That sounds like a really lovely supporting environment, especially for you with a cast and crew that's so understanding. But now it's not only important for you to create an emotional environment, but it's...an emotionally safe environment, but it's also important, especially in COVID, to create a physically safe environment. So, what type of measures do you put in place to ensure that, uh, COVID can't run rampant through your set?

D: Absolutely. So I, um,

(Derrick Chuckles)

D: We met with Tyler, Tyler is the film commissioner here for Hillsborough County, we met with Pete as well, Pete Buzo he's with Custom Built, he, uh, produced a project as well. You know, we had to all...they were very, very keen on COVID safety, COVID safety. What are you going to do to be COVID safe? Because at the end of the day, it's very important to keep not only your cast safe, but your crew safe as well. Also you being safe as well. So, there is a certification program which is available to the public. If you wanted to take [it] everyone can pretty much access it, but it's pretty much [Safe Sets Amidst COVID-19](#) and it goes over precautions that you can take, precautions that you need to take and pretty much doing that course...we did that, but also I also initiated many meetings prior to filming to go over, okay, "this is what we're going to be to do kept COVID safe." So, I know one of the things is, you know, everyone has to have a mask on, unless you're in front of the camera, and then when we're in between shots, you need to mask back up.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

JMS: Mhmm.

D: For me. I was, I was very, uh, I wore masks. There were times when I would have to pull it down just to get something across cause it's very hard to direct with the mask on, cause you're talking with the mask and people can't always hear you.

JMS: Oh, I see. Yes.

D: Keep in mind, you're you're filming for like 9 to 10 hours a day. It's a lot, but at the end of the day, we did pretty good. I mean, you know, you have to have GermX and all kinds of, um, you know, stuff, social distancing, you know, you got to keep your, you gotta keep your casts and crew safe. You know what I mean? There's, there's a lot of protocols and it's really not that difficult. It's pretty basic, you know, social distance, when you're filming and in filming an environment then, you know, you have the exception, but I always kept up to date with everybody if they're seeing any symptoms and nobody really was. So we, uh, we did pretty good with that.

JMS: Oh, that's nice. So, you filmed your film. It's in the can. How involved are you with Post? How involved are you with editing?

D: Actually for this one, I've been very involved. I always like to supervise the editor, like just sit in the room and watch them, put it together cause then you can just engage in amazing conversation with them and see their process. My director of photography is also the editor, the lead editor for the film has been doing very good. I pretty much edited my own director's cut of the film of the footage. They took my director's cut and they crafted, um, what they put together with it. It's been, it's been pretty amazing. I am very impressed. I have to tell you the, the talent, uh, in this project is very, very, uh, they did an amazing job.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: I think the rough cut right now is.... I think it's like 14 minutes. It's... the only thing they're doing now is like putting the credits and stuff on it. The project is amazing. I have to say it's, I will say it's very hard to watch, cause keep in mind, we don't, it's a short film, so we don't go into the foster...we, we didn't even step into foster care yet, we're just focusing on trauma and the abuse and it's, uh, it's very, it's not kid friendly, but it's very, very, uh, very intense.

JMS: Mhmm.

D: Very intense. There are breathing rooms, but, um, you will, uh, definitely feel that pit in the center of your stomach, and I remember filming these scenes too and, um, we've had people have to like step out of the room. One of the moms was just overcome with emotion. Uh, one of the biggest scenes in the film is the very end, the last scene of the short film. It is so sad and heartbreaking. That you know, people are crying on set, watching it all unfold and keep in mind it's happening, like, 5 million times we're doing like 5 million takes from 5 million different angles, but it's, it had such an impact. On what was going on in the scene and how the actors were doing, um, portraying it.

I mean, at one point there's I have to, I always share this. It's the funniest thing ever. I always had, like, um, what are you call...eyedrops in case, cause they need to cry. There's a, there's a part where they cry, I'm trying not to spoil it, but one of the young actors who I am still blown to this day, he's like, I think he's 12 years old, uh, I said, "you guys have to cry" and he's like, "oh, I don't know if I can do that." So, I said, "Oh." So, I kind of like expected that they weren't going to be able to do that so I brought, you know, eyedrops and all kinds of stuff to prepare for it, to make it look real.

JMS: Mhmm.

D: And I'll be damned we're filming the shot, *THE* shot, the first shot, and you know, we're filming and everyone's watching and we're all watching and this kid is actually crying.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: Like *crying crying*. I'm sitting there like, "Oh my." Everyone, like when the second we yelled, cut, everyone looked at each other like, "wow, he really..." I mean, he got me, I almost started crying. So, it was good. It was, it's a, it's always a crazy experience. I'll say that.

JMS: And so, like you said earlier, not releasing it to the public because you want to shop it around to become a feature, who exactly you showing it to, to, to make it into a longer project?

D: Well, it is going to be in film festivals. It will be in film festivals. That's the route with that? We're going to do it in film festivals. I know with film festivals you can't release it to the public, but it will be in film festivals, and you know, like I said, I'm just trying to shop it around and get it....I want to find investors. I want to find a way to make this project work because I know it's a very important project. I also will be doing a, I'm going to do a premiere of it, private premiere, and I'm going to do it for a bunch of foster and adoptive families to come out and watch it.

But pretty much, like I said, I'm looking for companies that want to tell an amazing heart wrenching yet heartwarming story, um, that dives into the lives of many of the people impacted by the foster care system.

JMS: Okay. I also have a few questions about Axion pictures. Starting Axiom pictures, how did you decide that that was something you wanted?

D: You know, I, I wanted it to do all of my films under a production house, one production house, and then in association with other production houses, whoever, you know, jump in and help. I originally was, I did have a business, it was DVP Productions, but I wanted a better name, I wanted something more different so I looked into...I always do this for my movies too when I'm trying to come up with titles, I go look at the thesaurus. I look up, obviously, what, what, what is it about? What is my company about?



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: My company is about being unique and being different than everybody else and just making different content, and I looked up the word unique in a thesaurus and Axion came up as one of the options when I clicked it. And I think it's like a, it's a scientific term for like a unique particle-

JMS; Yeah, subatomic particles. Yeah.

D: Yeah. Listen it had unique in it-

(Jade Laughs)

D: You know what, the name is pretty damn unique. I don't see anyone else with Axion Pictures. So, I went ahead and created the business and, um, got all the paperwork taken care of. I filed to be a minority owned business and was successful in that and kind of been producing films.

I also do commercials and, um, commercials was mostly what we've been doing lately and videos, um, small businesses and attorneys and stuff like that. But our film side, we get to really, I love being able to have my own production house to fall under.

JMS: Ahh, so for your commercials and for businesses and things like that, how exactly do you...do those companies get in contact with you? Like what's the process for making a commercial?

D: It depends on who it is. Sometimes people will reach out to you, it's very rare. You mostly got to go and get the work yourself. There's a website you can actually go to for people interested in that, is I think it's called [StaffMeUp](#). [Backstage](#) has links to it too. Backstage now is open for videographers, but pretty much you go and you apply and you, um, you apply to certain jobs and you know, that it's contract jobs, contract jobs. So, I'm starting that now. Um, but mostly most of my work, uh, you know, I, I'm pretty good with words.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: I'm pretty well connected so, I'm able to get with businesses and talk with them and they love the work I do for them. So, they share it with their business friends and they tend to, you know, need video services as well. Um, that's my route with small businesses through commercials, I usually get contracted out with Abandoned Studios or with Custom Built.

JMS: Mhmm.

D: They were shooting a beauty test. They're doing virtual reality. They have a whole green screen studio set up at Custom Built, and now we've just set one up in our, our studio in St. Pete. Chance is amazing with the virtual reality, and he figured it out, how to make it work. Like they literally create a scene. For example, we're in front of a green screen right now, I want the background to be a rooftop, they don't just take a picture in there and that's your background; they have a virtual 360 degree world that, like, if you were to put on a headset, a virtual headset, you can literally turn around and see every detail. They do that for video so that when you're filming, whenever the camera turns, it turns in that world as well, you know what I mean? So, it, I mean, it's the coolest thing. So, what my job was was to film the, um, they wanted to create this whole big behind the scenes marketable content. So, I went and I shot pre-production then I also shot the day of filming and now I'm editing it, and, um, it's good. I mean, it looks great, you know what I mean?

It's...I have a little, I have a different process with clients and I do it films, but, um, cause it's more, like, timely manner. You got to get done at this time and you got to get everything taken care of. You got to keep in touch with your clients. But for the most part, it's, it's some good work. You'd be surprised there's a lot of people and a lot of opportunities here in the Tampa Bay area.

JMS: And, I think this is my last question about Axion Pictures, unless you say something and I decide there should be a follow-up, but a few months ago, I don't know if you've heard, but [Diamond View Studios](#) put in like this massive LED screen.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: Oh yes, yes.

JMS: LED studio, yeah, over in university mall. And I mean, like, that's a pretty big development. That's the only, like, the third one in the entire North American continent. So, clearly Tampa is really putting its flag in the sand for film development in our area. So, I just wanted to ask, as the head of a Tampa based production studio, where do you see Tampa's film scene going in the next 10, 20 years?

D: I think Tampa is very, very amazing for film productions. Hillsborough County. I'm going to say Hillsborough County, not Tampa, Hillsborough County altogether beyond....we did a commercial for [FilmTampaBay](#), right, which is the film commissioner's office, and we get to go around and we were pretty much promoting Tampa to be filmed, and you'd be surprised. There are so much different, diverse opportunities for locations in Tampa Bay.

You want to...if you want to jungle or forest, you got all kinds of options. If you want a city, if you want this, or you want...there are so many opportunities, and now that we have there, we, like I said, we have their, um, their, they do something, they have the LED boards and everything, that's amazing.

JMS: Mhmm.

D: I know it's a, it's very impressive. I know they did it with [The Mandalorian](#). So, what they're doing is amazing over there. Um, even with Pete and, um, Chance, with the virtual reality, that's another amazing option. There's so many, like I said, there's so many options and opportunities to do productions in Tampa, and what people fail to realize is bringing a movie to Tampa or bringing a movie to any city it actually, um, it's very good.

Say they were going to film an Avengers movie. First of all, let's look at that. They're going to film an Avengers movie at Tampa Bay. That would be amazing. That would be very good for the economy.



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: Because they're coming here, meaning they're going to hire local talent, meaning extras, actors, camera guys, crew, production assistants, they're hiring local talent. Catering! Not only that, they're going to all the hotels, where, where are they putting their cast and crew? You know what I mean? They're going to be sleeping in this hotel. They are bringing so much money into the economy by just shooting a production here.

On top of that, if they're filming an Avengers movie, I don't know about you. I was a huge, I'm a huge Marvel fan. I always watched, cause people love to film behind the scenes of what, like, say they're filming, uh, the Avengers movies in the street. People are going to be standing around wanting to film that. You'd be surprised people come from other states just to see them to film another movie. So the increase in tourism even grows. I know in the Avengers they did, they ate at this restaurant. *Shwarma*. Nobody knew what the hell *Shwarma* was, but after that movie, that restaurant is like out the wall with customers. That's just the importance of, you know, a film being made in that area.

I think Tampa is opening that door with this new studio and with all these other opportunities to create amazing content. And there, you can do so much here. So, I think we're going to be starting to see a lot, a lot of, um, projects and stuff being done here soon, I hope.

JMS: Well, I certainly look forward to it. I think Tampa has a lot of really, like you said, amazing qualities that would really lend itself to film. Okay, so we're at the end of the interview, Derrick, you are clearly a up-and-coming filmmaker. You have some, you have your hands in so many different pools. You're constantly growing and improving. You're making movies that, uh, seek to touch people and seek to increase competency on important issues. You're really doing it. So, I want to know Derk, how will you know when you've made it?

D: I'm going to be honest with you. I don't think I ever will. I considered that, I said, "what would happen if I ended up, you know, being in a....doing a superhero film or doing a major horror film?"



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 202: Derrick Bell Perez (Or How To Be An Indie Filmmaker)

D: The thing is, you know, when you're a storyteller, you know, storytelling never ends. So, I guess “making it” as far as that, I don't, I don't think I'll ever know. I think I'm always going to be wanting to throw the rope and to go further.

JMS: All right. Well, can you tell the people where they can find you and your work?

D: Absolutely. You can find us on Instagram. You can find us on Facebook and you can also find us on YouTube. And we have our website. Axionpictures.com. All the others are @axionpictures. Definitely check us out. Um, we're always looking to grow and do amazing things. So, uh, stay tuned and look at what we do.

‘On Their Way’ Theme Song composed by Bajio Alvarado

JMS: You have just finished listening to the second episode of On Their Way Season 2. On Their Way was created, hosted, and edited by me, Jade Madison Scott. The theme was composed by **Bajio Alvarado** and the logo was created by Amaka Korie. I said “fun fact” last time so now I’m gonna call it a tasty truth. Tasty truth: you can listen to an extra 10 minutes of this interview with Derrick over on our WGC Production Patreon. He talks about his experience with zoom auditions, his mainstream aspirations, and more. Just head over to WGC Productions on Patreon and subscribe. You can also show us some love by following us @withgoodco on Twitter and Instagram as well as sliding over to our website, wgcproductions.com, and purchasing some of our merch. Our season 2 merch is a portrait of a Ybor Rooster, designed by yours truly. It’s very cute. Alright, next we our guest is actor and musician, Will Stokes. As always I appreciate you for listening, and please take care of yourself and take care of each other.