

Published on 26/06/2018 on Blasting News > SHOWBIZ & TV > 2018 > 06 > 'The Pleasure of Being Served': Interview with filmmaker Michael Manese

'The Pleasure of Being Served': Interview with filmmaker Michael Manese

Rate this title

Filmmaker Michael Manese discusses his career and his latest movie, which has been lauded at international film festivals.

If you like this article, have a look at the [Teen Mom](#) Channel to receive all the latest news and videos, and to interact with its community!

FOLLOW

blasting 

CLICK TO WATCH : Images from filmmaker Michael Manese



Meagan Meehan

Expert in Lifestyle

Author

(Curated by Ryan C. Devault)



Meagan Meehan

Expert in Lifestyle

Video Editor

[Suggest a correction to this article](#)

Michael Manese is an emerging **filmmaker** who was born in the Philippines and currently resides in New York. Michael works as a website content manager by day and, in his free time, writes and films [Movies](#) and plays in a band. Michael is the **writer** and **director** behind the powerhouse of a short film titled "**The Pleasure of Being Served,**" which

chronicles the life of Rosa, an undocumented immigrant working as a maid in NYC. In fewer than 20 minutes, the film delivers a powerful punch, making us feel for good-hearted Rosa, who is trapped working for the obnoxious, girlfriend-juggling, borderline-exhibitionist Hudson.

Michael Manese is also the mind behind "**Maxine**," another short that was a follow up to his brief movie titled "When bart6874 met lulu5547." To date, his films have been shown in over a dozen film festivals all over North America and Europe including the Inwood Arts Film Festival, the [New York City International Film Festival \[VIDEO\]](#), and [The Golden Door Film Festival](#).

Michael's films are thought-provoking and contain both heart and edge. Michael attended Rutgers University where he studied filmmaking and in 1996 a screenplay he wrote, titled "Talk Show," was staged at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe as part of their "Fifth Night Scriptreading." This subsequently led to him landing several jobs as a script reader for companies such as New Line Cinema, Apostle Pictures, and Foxboro.

When not working on films, **Michael** is singing in his band, planning his forthcoming wedding, and taking karate classes, where he recently earned a black belt. He is also the creator of "Angry Doug" comics, which led to his own production company called Angry Doug Pictures. Michael recently discussed his incredible career via an **exclusive interview**.

'Angry Doug' production company and movies

Meagan Meehan (Q): You are both a filmmaker and a bass player so how did you discover and hone both talents?

Michael Manese (MM): I've always been into the arts, whether it's movies, music, visual arts, literature, etc.



Movies and music are my top two favorites. However, whereas I dream of being a filmmaker, I fantasize about being a rock star. It means being a filmmaker is something I take very seriously. It's something I pour my heart, soul, money and time into. Playing music is just a way for me to live out my high school rock star fantasies.

Q: You also work as a web content manager (and were a script reader too) so does your day job impact or influence your creativity at all?

MM: Yes. Day jobs are important. They may not necessarily be fun or glamorous but done well, they will finance your dreams. I can't stress enough how day jobs are so important. Having said that I'm lucky enough to do what I do because being a web content manager can be creative.

Q: You also draw cartoons and one of your creations "Angry Doug" was what you named your production company so what inspired "**Angry Doug**" and what were its major themes?

MM: I started making short films before Digital Technology came around. I was shooting in Super 8 and 16mm right after college.

When they got to be expensive I started drawing a comic strip titled "Angry Doug." Doug is based on my college roommate. Now that there's digital technology and that people are making feature length films on smart phones, I've put Angry Doug on hold and went back to filmmaking.

Q: You are the owner of a **production company**, so how tough was that to establish and get off the ground?

MM: I formed the the company as a necessity because I have very little money to hire people. Basically, my company is a one-man band: ME. I do everything from writing, directing, editing and producing. Sometimes I even act and do my own sound and cinematography. For the most part though, I leave the more technical stuff to the professionals.

Q: Your short films are masterpieces that you write and film—you also find all the actors and locations! Is it difficult to do so many different jobs on these projects?

MM: Yes, it's very challenging. But I'm in a great place as a filmmaker. As an amateur my films don't have to make money back so I can take my chances when it comes to stories and themes. Since I don't have deadlines I can take my time raising money and making sure I find the right actors and locations. For now, I have total freedom. It's a lot of work and takes up a lot of money but it's worth it.

Q: One of your films is called "The Pleasure of Being Served" and it focuses on a MSU's (who was an accountant in the Philippines) who doesn't seem to find much pleasure in serving her obnoxious boss. Some of the scenes in the film—like the boss and one of his girlfriend's stripping naked and walking into the shower right in front of Rosa, with no regard for her—are shocking. Are these based on actual stories you've heard, or is it entirely fiction?

MM: It's entirely fiction. Before I came up with the story I started thinking about the things I had to make a movie: access to an apartment, access to gear, budget, etc. etc. Then I started to think how I wanted Tagalog and subtitles in the movie. I wanted to hire Filipino actors for Filipino roles, elements I never had in my short films before. I had a couple of romance novels laying around and thought, what would one think about a person reading these in the subway? I challenge myself to write unlikable characters and direct the actors to play their parts to be likable. I wanted to have nudity in it as well, done in a tasteful way. So, after assessing all these things, I started writing the story which was much, much different in the beginning. Eventually the story I came up with were inspired by two of my all-time favorite movies ever: "The Remains of the Day," and "Hud" (hence my male character's name) which coincidentally had domestic workers as main characters.

Q: You want to make Rosa's story into a feature-length **movie**, can you give us any little teasers of what might happen to her in the future?

MM: The feature length version is called "America Already is Great." The climax, the part where Hudson offers her hush money will take place while the 2016 US Election results are being tallied on TV state by state. It's great that I get asked that question "What's going to happen next?" Sometimes it sounds like I left a lot of loose ends (I don't think so), but to me it just means that people care about the characters. You'll just have to wait and find out what happens to her when the feature length movie comes out.

Q: How did you find the actress who played Rosa since she's absolutely amazing?

MM: She's great, isn't she? She told me it's her first film ever. I found her through an open casting call, sheer luck. Angelita and Graham I found the same way. Mara, the blond, I've worked with before. She was the lead character in my previous short film "Maxine."

Immigrant stories, characters, and film festivals

MM: You were born in the Philippines and now live in NYC, so do you feel that gives you an insider's view of often overlooked **immigrant stories**?

MM: Well, as a character, Rosa was an undocumented immigrant first and a Filipina second. She could have been from Eastern Europe or Central America or from anywhere else in the world. I chose her to be Filipina because my mission as a filmmaker is to promote "Filipino Chic."

Q: Which of your **characters** and/or films that have been favorites to work with and why?

MM: I really like my latest one "The Pleasure of Being Served." It's the product of my evolution as a filmmaker. The characters in it were not likable so it was a challenge for me to make them likable, at least enough for the audience to follow. It has elements of my background in it with Tagalog being spoken and the things that some immigrants go through (sending care packages, seeking out other immigrants for kinship).

Q: You have been to many **film festivals** and won awards, what is it like to enter into these fests and have any been especially memorable?

MM: So far, we have made fifteen film festivals in Europe, North America and the Philippines. I'm proud of these accomplishments and try to publicize them as much as I can. What I don't publicize is the fact that eight festivals reject me for every one that accepts. Every rejection stings, whether it's a big or small festival. I try to move on quickly and not dwell on them. The 40th Asian American Film Festival was very memorable because of the

size of the crowd and the reception it got during the screening. I met so many filmmakers there as well, people I still keep in touch with now for possible collaborations.

Q: What new movie projects are you working on at the present time and what most excites you about them?

MM: I'm mostly writing these days. I'm writing "American Already is Great." I'm writing another short film "Carne Knowledge" which I plan on working on in collaboration with another Filipino American filmmaker. At the same time, I'm writing an outline to see what a story arc would look like if "The Pleasure of Being Served" became a TV mini-series. Maybe each episode she works for a different client/ apartment?

Q: What are your primary goals for your future as a movie maker and is there anything more that you would like to add?

MM: Eventually I would like to make a living making feature length films. Easier said than done, right? But anything is possible otherwise I wouldn't even try in the first place. Making short films and making a name for yourself is a good start. Baby steps...

What's trending?

- 'Ant-Man and The Wasp' timeline lines up with 'Avengers: Infinity War' events **VIDEO**
- Images of actor Robert Craighead **VIDEO**
- Images from filmmaker Michael Manese **VIDEO**
- 'Sicario: Day of the Soldado' is a story of Drug trafficking at US-Mexico border **VIDEO**



Suggested for you

- The costume in 'Spider-Man: Homecoming' comes with big changes **VIDEO**
- Modeling and acting: Photos of Olga Safari **VIDEO**
- Meghan Markle debuts at the Ascot races with the Queen and Prince Harry **VIDEO**
- 'Iron Fist' is coming to Comic-Con but none of Marvel's movies will be there **VIDEO**



Get to know Blasting News

This area provides transparent information about Blasting News, our editorial processes and how we strive for creating trustworthy news. Moreover, it fulfills our commitment to The Trust Project - News with Integrity (Blasting News is not part of the programme yet).

[ABOUT](#) • [EDITORIAL POLICY](#) • [PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[Mission](#) • [Contributors](#) • [Diversity Policy](#) • [Ethics Policy](#) • [Corrections Policy](#) • [Verification/Fact Checking Standards](#)
• [Unnamed Sources Policy](#) • [Actionable Feedback Policy](#) • [Ownership and funding](#) • [Contacts](#)

Blasting SA, IDI CHE-247.845.224, Palazzo Mercurio, Piazza Colonnello Bernasconi 5 - 6830 Chiasso (Switzerland)

© 2013-2022 Blasting News

