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CULTURE, MUSIC

# '\$STACK\$' FILM WAS WRITTEN AND SHOT IN TWO DAYS



JULY 30, 2021 CHERRYL BIRD

\$STACK\$ (*STACKS*), the directorial debut from Gerald Webb, is a nail-biting, dramatic short film dripping with social commentary on our post COVID-19 world. If you like heavy suspense-drama with a Pacino feel, you'll enjoy watching this short movie. And it's even better if you love comedy and a great soundtrack.

\$STACK\$ stars Mark Christopher Lawrence in the role of Hector, for which [he was nominated for a Daytime Emmy award](#), and Emmy Award-winning actress and Duke University alumna Diahnna Nicole Baxter (*Scandal*, *A House Is Not A Home*) in the role of Magdalena.



Alongside Lawrence and Baxter are actors Calvin Winbush (*This Is America*, *Nashville*), Tarnue Massaquoi (*Terminator: Dark Fate*), Jamie Burton-Oare (*CSI: New York*) and Jadarrel Belser (*Zombie Apocalypse*).

The characters meet up in an underground parking garage under very tense circumstances for the trade of in-demand commodity for paper. Paper is used as a slang for money, as is the word stacks, like stacks of hundred-dollar bills. There are also other meanings to words used in the dialogue that will become clearer as you watch the film.

\$STACK\$ gives us a bit of introspection into our own behaviour, allowing us to step back and reflect on how Hollywood has trained us as viewers to expect very specific actions and outcomes with the positioning of characters, lighting, particular notes and style of music. Even the colours have come to have deep meaning over years of watching movies with the same elements repeated.

It's not hard to decipher these elements to figure out their meanings but for a director to put them all together into a language that speaks to a wide audience while evoking the same emotion in everyone at the same time, takes skill. Webb makes us all feel the same tension, fear, anticipation, release, humour in the same places in the film.

He played us. It takes a maestro to do that, someone who can instruct and arrange each element: actor, dialogue, location, scenery, music, pace, mood, lighting, audio, cameras, editing — to integrate each element like instruments in an orchestra. He built up our adrenaline, then he twisted the plot at the last minute and sedated us with laughter and hip hop.

The film was an official selection at the Micheaux Film Festival in Los Angeles during the 2021 season in April-May. \$TACK\$ won Outstanding Comedic Short and was nominated for Outstanding Comedic Directing, Outstanding Comedic Writing and Outstanding Comedic Actor for Lawrence's role.

Webb got the idea for the film while watching the lead up to the Los Angeles COVID-19 stay-at-home quarantine order unfold. He quickly penned the screenplay, cast, crewed up and shot [\\$TACK\\$](#) all in a 48-hour window just as the world was shutting down due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

In addition to directing, writing and producing \$TACK\$, Webb returned to his early roots in the DJ and hip hop worlds to pen and perform the single *Dropping Deuces*, a hilarious, and possibly not so elegant COVID-19 themed parody song, which he used for the film's soundtrack. He performs as G. Webb in the video at the end of the film.

Webb is a former casting executive for the first three *Sharknado* feature films and Syfy's *Z-Nation*. He has appeared in over 100 film and television shows, cast over 150 films, has produced 35+ films and the upcoming series *FraXtur*, was the American DJ Association's 1998 nightclub DJ of the year and is the co-founder of DeInstitutionalized Films.

*Dropping Deuces* has been viewed millions of times on major streaming and social media platforms and is being distributed by Distrokid. The comedic parody song was created to raise awareness and remind people to [#Stayhome](#) to [#FlushCovid](#).

That reminder is especially relevant again as we try to manage and adapt to new, more robust strains of the virus.

by Cheryl Bird – Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
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