

Exclusive Interview with Sara Timmins, Creative Director of Life Out Loud Films!



"Chesapeake" The new drama from Life Out Loud Films

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Sara Elizabeth Timmins, motivational speaker, and the creative director and producer for her production company Life Out Loud Films, started her film company in 2008. However, her journey into owning her own production company led her on many adventures and to many life-long friends. Timmins wanted to pursue her life-long passion for acting, and began her journey in Cincinnati, Ohio while attending Xavier University where she majored in Organizational Communications and Theater.

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She became indoctrinated into the arts community during her senior year through



Janet Fitzgerald
DC Independent Film Examiner

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Life Out Loud Films

an internship for an arts organization in Cincinnati, Ohio and also began volunteering for a film shooting there called *Tattered Angel*. Through her volunteer work on the film, she assisted in planning and fund raisers to raise money for the film. She gained the respect of the film makers for her hard work and thinking “outside the box”. Following the exit of one of the producers, she was offered the job of a producer. She left her job and took the leap of faith and began working as a producer on the film, which began her journey in the industry.

How did you feel about taking that ‘leap of faith’?

It’s funny because I’d never given producing a thought. As a result of acting in college I did direct a project and I enjoyed it. I did a lot of public relations (PR) for the theater, and my dad would always say “You know you’re really a great actress, but you’d make a really good producer”. [Laughter] I guess you could say my dad was right, because I still like acting but, I really fell in love with film-

making and the process, that’s how I got started.

What were your challenges in producing that first film?

It was an independent film, and there was a lot of thinking ‘outside of the box’, and I think it’s probably how I came to a lot of the practices that I still use today. I had to be creative to

get the job done. I didn't have any experience in film going into that, no formal training, because of that I was more open to creatively solving problems. For instance, the crew and Lynda Carter, the star, and several great actors from Los Angeles and New York all needed transportation and lodging. My thought was we're going to fly people in, why don't we see if we can get donations of frequent flier miles from business people in the area. I just started making phone calls, and we ended up with enough miles to fly everybody in for free. Every time we can eliminate a budget item like that, we could put more money towards things that would increase the production value of the film. For lodging, I decided to speak with the Crown Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati, and asked how we could help them. It turns out that there were a lot of things we could do marketing wise to help their goals at the time, and they donated a block of rooms for the duration of filming. Catering or craft services as it's known was entirely funded by calling every single business we knew to get food donated to feed the cast and crew. I didn't necessarily need any formal training for any of that. There were many new things I did have to learn on the job, like setting up payroll, union rules, scheduling and budgeting.

Wow, it sounds 'trial by fire'.

I would not have had it any other way. I really have great respect for film education. I think it's the perfect route for some people, but the real application is to get in and get your hands in there dealing with the work that goes into making a film. We finished up and then it went into the post production process. I received some referrals from that film and started work on other projects in the area. I worked on, a regional made for TV movie for ABC next called Skin Complex with Wolfgang Bodison (A Few Good Men) and then local commercials.

What made you decide to move to Los Angeles?

I woke up one day and it had been on my mind for a while. I thought, I don't want to wake up at 40 and go "I wonder what would have happened if...". I need to live that life now. I need to be in a town, in L.A. or New York City, where I can do this on a regular basis and really give my career a shot. I decided that the best way for me to do it and not 'chicken out' was to tell everybody I knew I was moving to L.A. I set a date and made the decision. I did not have any savings. I didn't have time to really save up for it. I told myself, "Don't think about it just go". I moved out to L.A. in January 2003, and stayed on a friend's couch. The

day after I arrived, I got a job as a production manager on an independent film. I've been working ever since, either as a producer, an actress or as a production manager.

What happened next?

An LA acting coach that I knew at the time and had done a workshop with, Barry Papick, really gave me the encouragement in acting and convinced me that I had some kind of a talent.[Laughter]It's kind of funny because when I moved out there (L.A.) he introduced me to the team on a project he had been hired on as an actor. It was an independent film. They were looking for a new producer, and I met the film-makers, and got the job! I did not get paid on that project but took the job for the experience.. I began my networking from there and people who liked working with me on that project referred me to others and that led to paid jobs. I was able to establish a network in out there, and continued to work on independent films.

Timmins' progress continued for a few years as she took jobs performing in Murder mystery dinner theater, and continuing professional motivational speaking to leave her time open for auditions, as well as working on other film projects. As an actress, she was the casting director's top choice for a role opposite a name talent and was taken to the network for casting approval for a network series, on **Spike TV**, but another actress was cast instead. After that experience, she reassessed her dream of working as an actress in the industry and considered the possibilities of working in her beloved industry in other ways.

What was the turning point for you?

I'm not the sort of person that is passive. I thought, 'what am I doing sitting around here waiting for somebody to give me that opportunity? Why don't I just focus on spending my time to make something happen.'

Then?

I was really kind of torn with what I should do, and what I wanted to do. I was on a trip in December of 2007. I was wrapping up a project at the time that took me all over the country for three months. At the end of traveling, I went to my parents in Virginia for Christmas,

where they had retired. It was on that trip that I felt really torn. I was questioning if L.A. was the right place for me and, I didn't have a clear understanding what my purpose was in life. One day, I was feeling really unsettled, and I went for a walk just to get out of the house. It was freezing cold, trees were bare, but I took this walk right by the lake in my parents' neighborhood. I had this awakening moment where I think my head was finally clear of the noise of Los Angeles. I don't think I ever really stepped back to give myself the time to think about what I was really doing and to listen to what my heart and soul were telling me. The walk, really allowed that thought process to happen; through the beauty of nature and the quietness of it all cemented the idea in my brain. It finally occurred to me that my biggest passions were acting, producing, and inspiring people through motivational speaking. I thought, 'Why don't I put all those together and produce my own films that I could act in and that can also make a difference. I could do it in a way that is able to give back to an area, and to the people that are involved, creating a winning environment for all.'

From that moment, Timmins went on to create Life Out Loud Films, which has produced several award winning films to date. Next week we will explore with her the inspiring creation of the production company, Life Out Loud Films, as well as her challenges and successes, and the films that have been produced. Read more on this inspirational and triumphant film maker in this three part series profile!