



EVENHAND

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I first read Mike Jones' screenplay for EvenHand, I was drawn to the realism of how the police officers and their routines were portrayed. I was also struck by the subtle rhythms of the story as it unfolds. EvenHand is a film about cops, but is perhaps unique to the genre in that it isn't about car chases, explosions and shoot-outs. It is a naturalistic, character-driven drama that explores the lives of two cops as they struggle with their jobs and personal demons.

The complexity of the characters also provided a welcome challenge for me as the director. Ted Morning is, at first blush, a total asshole -- the cop that pulls you over and doesn't just write you a ticket, but makes you feel morally depraved for speeding. He takes undue pleasure in his job, but it gradually becomes clear that he really does care about what he's doing; he just doesn't have the emotional tools to express himself in a meaningful way. Directing Bill Sage in the role of Morning was immensely rewarding. He delivered a subtly nuanced performance and brought life to a character that is unquestionably disturbed, but about whom we can care deeply.

Officer Rob Francis couldn't be more different from Morning. He is thoughtful and strives every day to make things better. But every good thing he does seems to come back to haunt him. His challenge is to find a way to be a cop without compromising his values. Bill Dawes, who portrays Francis, had the more difficult role in EvenHand, but he gave Francis depth while avoiding the pitfall of making him seem like a lightweight.

EvenHand creates a world that reflects many of the truths about police work: it's mostly tedious and repetitive and as a cop, you're not there to be a social worker. In the words of Morning: "You want to help people? You arrest them. You're a cop, that's what you do." That underlying cynicism is subtly countered by the two cops' approach to their jobs. They are not heroes in the way that we often think of police officers now, but both, in their own sometimes misguided way, seek to make things better. The heart of EvenHand is in the relationships. The truth is in the tragedy of missed opportunities.

Joseph Pierson

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