



By Tim Tal

Meet **gough**, he’s a filmmaker from Australia. He’s the son of a well-known Australian stand-up comedian, and he himself did stand-up comedy for a while, before switching to filmmaking.

gough has his own production company, Beernuts Productions, and he also does casting, writing, editing and producing on his own movies.

So what’s so special about him? gough is blind. He says to be the first legally blind person to write, produce, edit, direct and star in a feature film unassisted. This is one bright example of how some people try to reach their goals despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

In an interview with BZFilm, gough speaks about his beginnings, takes us through his filmmaking process, inspiring many like him along the way. Read on.



INTERVIEW:

How did your journey into the film business start? Take us back...

Ever since I was a little kid I was always writing and coming up with scripts, little books etc. Then, when I finished high school, I started doing stand-up comedy at night and working at a radio station by day, doing audio production (their ad's and promo's). Both good training for what I do now. But I was always writing in my spare time. I love storytelling.

Then finally I thought it's time to get some of these scripts made, so I started up **Beernuts Productions**, my production company, and sent them out to producers etc. but with no success, mainly because once they found out I was legally blind, they didn't think I'd be capable of writing/directing etc. a film. So I thought, well, I'll fund the projects myself and produce them myself, so that is what I did and what I do now through my production company.

You've written, directed and edited your films, among other things. What was/is the hardest one to do, for you?

I write the scripts, so I have a very clear idea in my mind of what I want the piece to look, sound, feel like. So I need to communicate my ideas clearly to my cast and crew. That means pre-production is very important for me, because that's when I explain everything to everyone. When we are on set, it's a lot harder to change anything or reshoot something, mainly because of time and budget restraints.

So pre-production probably takes on more importance for me than it would for other filmmakers. So because of that, the actual filming of a project is quite challenging and my film sets work a lot differently to a "normal" film set, but the final product is just as good as any other film project being made. Which I guess demonstrates there is more than one way to successfully do a job.

In one of your interviews, you are seen to be editing one of your films by sound. It's kind of hard to imagine the process, could you describe it?

That's right, I edit by sound. That's where my radio background comes in handy. I spent many hours editing up radio ads when I was younger. So I kind of treat it like that, like editing up a 90 minute radio ad. As mentioned, I write the scripts, so I know where I want my edits to occur. So for example, I know that at the end of a certain line, I want to cut from the wide shot to the close up. So it's a simple case of making the cut at that point. I do have a sighted guide who helps with more technical edits. For example, if someone is getting out of a car (with no dialogue), he'll make sure the interior and exterior shots flow seamlessly as the character exits the car. I have also (at times) used jump cuts, like you often see in action or video game type movies, that is a method that can also work well.



What would be the hardest part, for you, to be working with actors on a film?

I can't see an actor's facial expression when we are filming, so I do have a sighted guide who tells me if they are doing what I ask of them. I can hear if my lines are being delivered correctly and I am very particular about that. And obviously that's going to help. For example, if an actor needs to be angry and yell a line, then obviously their face will contort in a certain way (that's just naturally going to happen), but seeing the finer details of their facial expressions is something I can't see.

And again, a lot if it comes down to trust, trusting the actors will give me the performance I'm asking for. But that's where pre-production and rehearsals are so important, I make sure I allow a lot of time, so I have plenty of opportunities to explain to the actors exactly what I'm after, so they know what is required of them. And it also gives the actors a chance to ask any questions and get any clarification before we go onto set.

Let's go into a technical direction. Does your company completely fund its own films? How does Beernuts Productions handle distribution?

Beernuts Productions is a fully independent production and distribution company. We self-fund our films and distribute them through the Beernuts Productions website. This means the sales from downloads is what we use to fund our next project. There is no third-party involvement at all. So this means we are able to produce the work we want to produce without any interference, which I believe makes for a better product.

It also means that all funds made through the sale of the films (downloads,) goes straight into making the next film and no one else takes a cut. However, it does mean if we don't get the downloads, we won't have the funds to make the next film, so it can be stressful at times.



Any plans to add action, sci-fi or horror movies to your film portfolio?

Beernuts Productions mainly produces comedy films. However, we have done a couple of more dramatic pieces and a documentary. So we do try and mix it up a bit in regards to genre, so yes, there is absolutely room to widen our scope to those genres as well. That said, those three genres you mentioned would be harder to tackle for me, being as they are all more visual in nature. My scripts tend to be more dialogue and comedy based, however that doesn't mean I wouldn't be keen to try a funny horror or edge of your seat thriller. Always love a challenge.

According to IMDb, you've so far been making only short films. Any plans for a full-feature film in the near future?

Most of our films go for around 20 minutes. However, our documentary is a full length 90-minute feature. And yes, we absolutely plan to make more feature films going forward.

You made your first film in 2010. What were you doing before that, the pre-filmmaking years?

When I finished high school, I worked in radio as an audio producer doing their commercials and promo's etc. And I was also doing stand up comedy. I also signed up with a talent agency and did a few TV ad's and extra roles (as an actor). So as you can see, being in the entertainment industry was always what I wanted to do. Then finally in 2006 I started up Beernuts Productions and got to work making the films, etc.

I have now made 16 films, which I'm so proud of. Most of which are comedy based. I have also written and produced 8 audio downloads (20-minute-long comedy sketches) and written 5 books. So hopefully everyone reading this will hit up the website and check out our work and get plenty of enjoyment and laughs out of it.