

## Obsession Leads to Empowerment for DJ Turned Film-maker

### Article

B.985 DJ Jordan Graye doesn't consider herself a writer or a film-maker, but a *chance encounter* with a man she had never met inspired her to write, produce, and act in a film that she says changed her life.

“The first time I saw his picture, I felt a stirring deep down somewhere. I must've stared at him for a good five minutes with the feeling that I've already known him for quite a long time.” It's not unusual to hear a woman speak of a man that way. What is unusual is that the man is Nikola Tesla, who died sixty-six years ago. An inventor and electrical engineer, he is credited with developing the alternating current (AC) electrical power, X-rays, RADAR, and the electric car.

“I was inspired to make a film about Nikola Tesla when I found out he was never properly credited for inventing radio. And since I work in radio and always thought Marconi was the inventor, I wanted to get his story out there. I couldn't understand why we didn't learn about him the way we learned about Edison in school.”

Graye's fascination with Tesla soon grew to obsession, sometimes having conversations with him in her head. Eventually, she found herself staying in the very New York hotel room where Tesla had lived for ten years. Although she wouldn't elaborate, Graye inferred that some strange experiences led to the idea for her film. She read several books on Tesla, then took screenwriting classes at the Gotham Writers' Workshop in New York and IMAGE (Independent Media Artists of Georgia, Etc.) in Atlanta.

“I'm sure this thing had divine energy in it because things just started coming together. I started meeting people who could pull a crew together, etc.”

Instead of approaching investors, Graye financed and produced the movie herself. “I used my life savings and a home equity loan to finance it. I'm still paying off the loan—and that was just for the shoot. We found a great site for Tesla's workshop, and we used the Fox Theatre for two scenes. The rest of the film was shot at my workplace.”

*MHz (Megahertz)* revolves around a self-destructive DJ, Brigh Montgomery, who finds herself in Blue Heaven with the eccentric genius. Though they get off to a rocky start, Tesla (representing logic and self-denial) and Brigh (signifying feelings and indulgence) must help each other work through their unfinished business, so that they both may move on.

“It’s about radio. It’s about claiming your personal power. It’s about forgiveness,” Graye says. “It’s about accepting all parts of yourself and becoming whole.

Although she appeared in two plays and a TV commercial during the ‘80s, Graye had not acted since then, even though she feels that she does act to some degree on the air.

Graye admits that making *MHz* was a tremendous undertaking. “Sometimes it was surreal to act and produce at the same time, like I'd finish a scene and in between takes I would sign paychecks for the crew.” She jokes about how different a writer’s point of view is from an actor’s approach. “I knew everybody’s lines except my own!”

As she entered post-production, Graye’s funds dwindled, so she decided to edit the movie herself, even though she had no experience. She watched many classic films to get a good feel for the process. “If *MHz* looks sort of old school, it's because I was glued to Turner Classic Movies.” Graye didn’t own a Mac, but a friend donated an Apple computer to her. An instructor at the Apple Store taught her Final Cut Pro.

As a woman, Graye found the film-making process to be empowering. “I can do

anything I put my heart to, but it has to be the heart energy, the passion first—then the brain. If I have that driving passion in my heart, then my brain will figure out how to get it done.”

Since finishing the shoot, Graye finds that she feels more comfortable in her own skin. “I’ve learned how to honor myself more, how to ask for what I need. I went through a divorce about three months after editing started, so big change to my personal life, but change for the better. I feel more integrated, more whole. Each of the characters in the script represents me. It’s like Carl Jung’s archetypes. So this project is an amazing healing journey in real life, as it is in the film.”

Though Graye has no plans to write, produce and/or act in another movie, she continues to edit the final film, in addition to entering festivals around the country, and hopes to distribute *MHz* theatrically one day. In the meantime, she trusts that her movie will have a more far reaching effect.

“My film is just another vehicle for introducing Tesla to people who don’t know him yet. And that was my goal when I set out to write the script, so more and more people will know him.”

Graye feels assured that *MHz* will galvanize viewers to examine their own beliefs, and ask themselves if their precepts enhance their lives, or do they hold them back from what they want to experience. Graye admits that she still struggles with this, too, but is encouraged that recognition is half the battle won.

“I also hope they find out more about this beautiful man that wanted to give us the amazing gift of free wireless energy. Maybe we can actualize his dream. That’s my biggest hope!” And in doing so, perhaps Graye, and her film, will inspire others to actualize their own

Obsession Leads to Empowerment for DJ Turned Film-maker

4

dreams.

*MHz* will screen at the Swansea Film Festival in Wales in May 2010.