

\$TACK\$ (2020)

Hector (**Mark Christopher Lawrence**) and Magdalena (**Diahnna Nicole Baxter**) are enemies, and they've avoided one another for years. Now, however, in unprecedented times, they will have to put their differences aside and do what they can for the greater good. **\$TACK\$** tells the story of these two individuals, two tough guys, coming face-to-face to make an exchange—and what's on the surface may not always be the whole story.

Ominous, intense, full of passion—these things and more are what viewers get throughout the duration of **Gerald Webb's \$TACK\$**. The intensity that exists throughout the film is mesmerizing; what Webb is able to accomplish in this regard is phenomenal, and he allows viewers to remain engaged from beginning to end as a result. From music to camera placement, Webb works the room with great aplomb, and he knows how to read both his own film and his potential viewers. With Webb's clear understanding of filmmaking, passion and emotion transcend **\$TACK\$** in its entirety, and it's able to wrap its powerful fingers around the throats of everyone watching. Webb doesn't aim to strangle his viewers, but rather to prove how powerful and in charge he is—and he accomplishes this feat with what appears to be ease. He's in charge from the start, and he asserts himself into each and every facet of his riveting short film.

Just as viewers begin to grasp all that **\$TACK\$** is, the narrative shifts in a compelling and completely unexpected fashion. What the world could have never expected comes to be in brilliant and hilarious fashion. Webb doesn't attack comedy head on, however, he allows it to slowly develop and reach viewers in a



more subtle and effective way. Through the slow development of **\$TACK\$**, viewers become part of the journey, intertwined with each of the characters on screen, and the payoff is brilliantly successful as a result. Viewers are invested in what they believe to be happening,

and when that unexpected twist comes at the film's conclusion, all can't help but to laugh at the perfectly developed narrative.

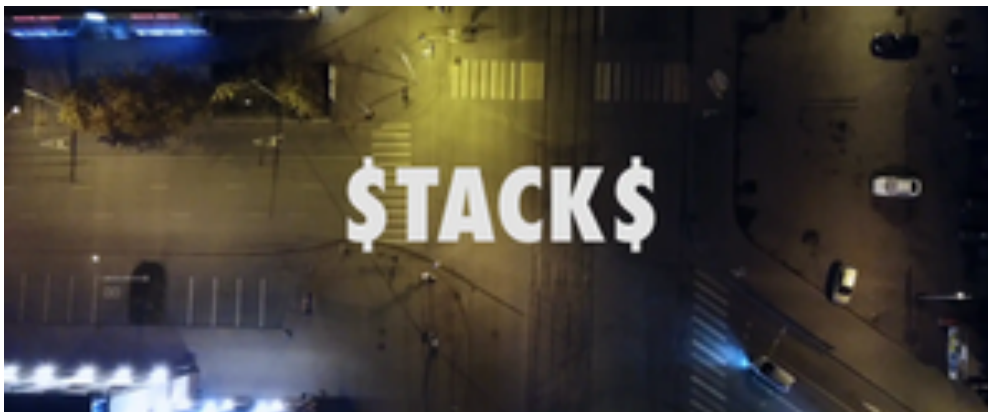
\$TACK\$ comes down to what Webb is able to bring to the table, and while there are other factors that contribute to the film, Webb is ultimately the reason the film is as entertaining as it is. His brilliant storytelling, his ability to create a film full of finesse, and his unprecedented ability to develop subtle and effective comedy play major roles in how **\$TACK\$** is received. However, another aspect of Webb's prowess shines beautifully throughout the entirety of the film as well, and that's his understanding of cinematography (along, of course, with Director of Photography **Thomas Hennessy**). His ability to manipulate a camera to capture every intricate detail of his film, to develop intensity, and ultimately reveal his grand idea at the end of the film is truly beautiful. What he's capable of doing in regard to the cinematography in **\$TACK\$** is much like what the best in Hollywood has to offer, and to say the very least—I'm impressed.

\$TACK\$ is a dramatic telling of the world in which we live, but it dabbles, perfectly, in comedy to offset the intensity present throughout. Webb is the piece of the puzzle that makes everything work. I believe that the actors and other members of the crew, as effective as they are throughout **\$TACK\$**, could have been replaced and Webb still would have found success. He's a cinematic genius, and even with all that he's already accomplished in his career, I believe he's just scratched the surface.

Written & Directed by Gerald Webb.

Starring Mark Christopher Lawrence, Diahnna Nicole Baxter, Calvin C. Winbush, Tarnue Massaquoi, Jamie Burton-Oare, & Jadarrel Belser.

★★★★★★★★★½/10



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