

# Five Smooth Stones Production Company Makes 'Neovangelistic' Films

BY KALLE KUNKLE

For Tishin Padilla, movies are much more than entertainment. "I got saved in a movie theater," he said.

It was Memorial Day of 1998. "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" had just finished playing and as the credits rolled, Padilla wept.

"That movie was my life," he said. "It's basically the story of these two guys who go to Vegas and do drugs 24 hours a day. I saw my life on the screen. I couldn't bear it. I got home and I just fell on my knees. God had used a movie to reach me."

Film and television have played a major role in Padilla's life. As a young boy, he was "bounced from home to home" and "raised by a television set." He recognizes this scenario has become more common and would like to use his medium to impact people; the success of Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" recently served to confirm his vision.

"We are called to go and make disciples. I believe God has called me to get them while they are in front of the big screen," he said.

Padilla graduated from Hunter College with a B.A. in Film Production and immediately heard the Lord telling him to move forward, but not alone. He prayed, "Lord, the fields are ready, but the laborers are few. You are the Lord of the Harvest, send the laborers."

He eventually partnered with David Rivera to form the Five Smooth Stones production company. The two Bronx residents met at Fordham Manor Church. Rivera handles marketing and promotion and also serves as assistant director.

Five Smooth Stones is a unique production company whose objective is to challenge people with films that are metaphors of the Gospel. Their productions are mainly used to reach people outside the Christian community.

"I want to be very clear—we are Christians who make films," said Padilla. "Christian films already have a genre, but only a Christian audience."

Because of their unique vision of evangelism through movies, they have named their style of film making, "neovangelistic." This vision was born because of a film Padilla made while still a student at Hunter College. The short film, "All You Can Eat," was the kick off to his entire production company.

"The film put a mirror in front of viewers' faces," he said.

The movie tells the story of two hungry, homeless men who ask a passerby for food, but are instead presented with the Bible. Padilla explains that viewers are usually turned off by the Bible at the beginning, which automatically makes them experience the film as one of the characters. One homeless man opens the Bible, while the other doesn't. The slight twist at the end has provoked the same reaction every time.

"Everyone sees it and says, 'Oh you got me,'" says Padilla. "The 'mirror' makes viewers ask themselves, 'Which homeless man am I?'"

These are the kinds of questions Five Smooth Stones wants to raise with their films. The company has been asked to enter films in several festivals and wants to seize any opportunity to challenge an audience.



Tishin Padilla (foreground) and David Rivera (background) are partners in the Five Smooth Stones Production Company.

la hopes to create a DVD for church distribution that can be used as a springboard piece for evangelism.

Five Smooth Stones recently completed another film entitled, "The Map." It's the story of a weekend dad who attempts to take his

daughter camping. After asking for directions, the father is misdirected and through the inquisitiveness of his daughter, realizes he has no meaningful direction to offer her in life. A preview of "The Map" is currently being planned.

While Padilla has now become an award-winning director, he is quick to say that Five Smooth Stones is not moving forward on talent and zeal alone, but on the anointing of God.

"I believe that God has anointed us to do this," he said. "We are called to a ministry like Joseph. We are called to a ministry in Egypt—the world. This is a serious call and we believe that we are following God into Egypt. Pray for us."

For a complete schedule of Five Smooth Stones' previews and film festivals, visit [www.fivesmoothstones.com](http://www.fivesmoothstones.com). Five Smooth Stones is also available for church presentations and panel discussions. For information, call (917) 753-6667.

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