



As a mid-30's male, I missed out on the JOAN OF ARCADIA/ SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS craze of the last few years. My first real exposure to Amber Tamblyn has been an intense and thought provoking indie film by Hilary Brougher, STEPHANIE DALEY.

Amber gives a powerhouse performance as the pale-faced and insecure title character who is accused of killing her 26 week old fetus. The film boldly portrays a need for education for teens in matters involving sex and pregnancy.

In a press room jam packed with bodies and microphones a young women glides with confidence to the interview table. Fully made up and sporting an optimistic smile, the 21 year old is indeed a far cry from the ultra-conflicted and confused teen "Stephanie" she plays.

Interview: STEPHANIE DALEY's Amber Tamblyn

Written by Dave Howard

In a girly spring dress, she leans down into my microphone in mock exhaustion. "Okay you are the last one of the day. You get the shitty answers." In a monotone she delivers,

"The movie's great watch it, buy tickets. BUY TICKETS."

She straightens up and a smiles.

"I think that my film is going to outsell SPIDERMAN. That is my prediction!" In text message slang she states "JK,JK,JK" I look at her again trying to see a trace of STEPHANIE DALEY, Stephanie's not here. This role was a complete transformation for her.

How did you get to that place of anguish when you were delivering the baby in this movie? How did you go there?



Amber: It was a good combination of conversation and preparation between Hillary Brougher, myself and Tilda Swinton . We discussed many intimate details of our lives. I talked to my mom about it. My labor was 26 hours on no medication and it was full delivery the entire time. It was very rough. Tilda has had twins and Hillary has had twins. Mostly we talked about the process

and the feelings about it. When we actually shot it, Hillary was great to set it up as a fast shoot. There wasn't a lot of preparation time during the shooting. So we went in there, took a camera into the stall and she would just say "go." Before every take, I would ask for a giant bucket of ice water. I would just have them hold my hair back and stick my head in it. I would hold my breath as long as I could until I felt my face was burning off. The following week I had all these burn chafe marks on my cheeks that we would have to cover up with Aloe Vera and make up.

What that did was it gave me that intense red blotchy look that you probably only get from pregnancy, I would imagine. It's not just the red face you get from pushing, but it's the blotchiness, the stress, the strain. Before I would go into the bathroom, I would do fire breathing that my mom trained with a lot during pregnancy where you breathe in and out really fast and it helps you get through the pain. And I did that and would make me really dizzy. Then I was just quiet and pushed.

Did this character follow you home afterwards? I would imagine it would be hard to shake.

It was very hard to shake. The entire circumstances of this film are hard to shake. Terrible things were going on. In my personal life, a relationship was coming to an end, it was a difficult relationship. It was coming to an end, right when I was shooting the film. We shot in upstate New York in the Catskills, Hunter Mountain. There was no phone service, the house I stayed in was apparently haunted at some point. There was no phone service, no internet services. They would have to drive up to give me a call sheet in order to get a call time for work. It was a very lonely and isolated feeling. So all of those things, I really just allowed them to become a more external part of me. So I could use the weight of all of them in the playing out the character.

The kept saying you don't have to stay at that house, you can come stay in a production unit. For me I was just obsessed with staying there. Getting up in the morning and it is dead silent and there is no one around for miles and miles. They told you to keep the back door screen shut because bears will come in the house; It's really that kind of a place.

Do you think we need more publicity for young women so they can drop babies somewhere and survive?

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Absolutely, I think what we always hear about on the news is This happened at USC recently, this woman murdered her baby, stabbed it like 130 times; something awful. You hear the horror stories but you never hear why. Certainly the news doesn't tell us because they are there for dramatic effect, I feel. most of the time dramatize things. You never hear "WHY." Clearly the lack of tools available in knowing your options is major part of it. Parents and family play into that and the school system plays into that. The great support systems are like Planned Parenthood and there are tons of them that will tell you all of your options and all of your rights and I think that definitely needs to be out there more.

This is pretty heavy material, was there ever a chance to lighten up?

There was nothing to do up there. Tilda and I went down to Woodstock and got lost. We saw GRIZZLY MAN four times in the theater because we loved it so much. We were obsessed with GRIZZLY MAN. We were in someway trying to compare it to STEPHANIE DALEY. Tilda would say "I feel like I am more of the bear presence, you see.. Let me explain why..."

Was this because there was always a possibility of bears coming on to the set?

Maybe that's what it was. I don't know.

How did you get involved in this project?

My agent called me and said "you're never going to believe this but Tilda Swinton is attached to a script called STEPHANIE DALEY, it's a two parter about two women identifying their guilt as women through birth and still birth and they are offering you the part"

And I fell off the chair.

Tilda Swinton is probably one of the top three actresses I wanted to work with. I read the script, I thought it was amazing. Hilary flew out to Los Angeles, we had lunch and it was pretty much

good to go. I think there was a little wait period where we trying to lock financing. It was hard for anyone to invest money. But we did and took off.

The notoriety of “Joan of Arcadia” and “Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants” has brought more offers and different kinds of scripts. What is the difference between the indie material and studio pipeline material?

Both can be great. In Indie films, there are no rules to what you can and can't do, which great. But a lot of times you get inexperience filmmakers who make things that are not good. At the end of the day, I look at and say STEPHANIE DALEY was sold because of GRUDGE 2. I was able to do BLACKOUT and ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR because the GRUDGE 2 opened at number one. It made a ton of money. So there you go, I am proud of that fact. So SISTERHOOD is just a lucky marriage of the two. Where you are able to have something that is really well written and sweet and it is a really great studio driven film.

Things like STEPHANIE DALEY, I wish it was opening in more theaters. Hopefully, it will because we have been getting some really great reviews and press. People seem to love it and support it. Thank God for the critics. Most people still listen to critics over friends. I believe they have a lot of impact there. I believe films like this can have some legs and some movement. Things that need to be seen.

Do you think both Pro-Life and Pro-Choice advocates can get something out of this film?

Absolutely, I haven't been asked that yet. I have been asked “How does this make you feel.. are you pro-choice or do you believe in abortion?” and I go “This film really doesn't have anything to do with abortion at all. It doesn't have anything to do with choices that you make. It has to do with the choices you don't make.”

That's what these characters are all about. These characters don't make any choices and that is what the film is about. It's about the outcome of that. Pro-Lifers should absolutely see this films because it about prevention and protection and how you should talk to your kids

so maybe they won't have sex at 16 years old at party. I think that would be a major step

forward.

Have you been doing any more poetry?

I have been writing a lot. It's a lot of Inside Hollywood anger. I am telling a lot of dirty stories in different formats that need to be told. I hope that young girls really enjoy the hell out of it. I think they will know exactly about who I am talking about. It's a mixture of that of bad relationships. This is much more of a flushing out. The first book was just for me to say, "Hey, let me represent myself to you" and here are the poems I wrote from 14 to 21. There are some good things in there, but there is also a lot of stuff that is sophomoric, because I was fourteen. "War Poetry".. what do I know?

I have also been doing a pretty deep workshop with a couple of poets named Derrick Brown and the other is Mindy Nettifee from Long Beach. She has a book called "Sleepyhead Assassins." I think it is one of the best books of poetry I have ever read of any era. So we've been work shopping. We've been doing this really great thing, it's been such a great exercise for me. Jeffery McDaniel, who is my favorite poets says "You have to imagine your ass off" I feel like that is what we have been experimenting with in this writing group. We've been deepening imagery and metaphor; finding things that are cooooooooool.

What's the title?

I was thinking of naming it "It's Hard to Face Your Problems When Your Problems Are Your Face" But there are a couple of other names "Laughs Look Like Upside Down Cries." It's in progress

This is a really meaty role, afterwards were you ready to do just a project that is just plain fun?

I did this consecutive thing... I did GRUDGE 2 where I got dragged around by some crazy ghost, then he breaks my neck. Then I went and did BLACKOUT, in which I am in an elevator struggling with a mass murder.. I think I just needed to get some shit out. (Laughs)

Then I did *SPRING BREAKDOWN* right after that. That was Parker Posey and Amy Poehler and Rachel Dratch and we are at the beach and flying kites and being silly and girly. It was really fun to do, that kind of Lucille Ball type acting. In this film, it was the first time a director said to me, "We're going into a close up now, so you can go bigger."

Usually when directors come in for a close up they say "tone it down."

So I when they said "Bigger." I was like "REALLY? DONE! DEAL! "

You grew up in an artistic household, how would you say that grounded you?

I wouldn't say grounded, I would say rooted. It's hard to say, I grew up around a lot of artists. The whole seminal culture and then there is Neil Young, which is his own thing. They're all mildly crazy. They're getting old now and they are getting to that place where they talk a lot about old stories. The other night my Dad had a party at his house and George Herms, the first collage artists every, where drinking tequila and they were getting so drunk. They literally drunk dialed about 11:30 at night. We were having this BBQ thing, sitting around playing music, reading some poetry and they got on the phone and they drunk dialed my godfather, Dean Stockwell. An hour later, he's talking all this nonsense. He just hung up on George. Then they say (slurs) "Let's call Dennis."

"Mom, take the phone away! Someone is gonna spill some big 60's secret."

Would you ever think about going back to television?

Funny you ask. I just did a pilot for CBS. But I did it because Michael Cluster (*Six Feet Under*) wrote it. He's a very interesting director. It's a show called "Babylon Fields" with

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Ray Stevenson, Kathy Baker and Jamey Sheridan. It's about everyone coming back from the dead. Everyone in the world, Indian Tribes everything. Not an Apocalyptic type scenario, it really focuses on this one tiny town in Long Island. This girl Janine's father (Sheridan) comes back from the dead. He's a corrupt cop and what we the audience find out that someone, either Kathy Baker or myself, put an ax in the back of his head. That's how he died. He finds the ax and sort of places it in the back of his head and realizes that's how he was killed. He then goes on to investigate his own murder. It's about him trying to fix all of these awful situations and relationships he had. Eventually there is going to be some really hilarious things, like *Zombie AA*, they all go to meetings so they won't eat flesh. It's really dark, dark comedy. It's right up my alley.

I read it and said "CBS is going to do this? Are you kidding me?" They want their *Heroes* or *Lost*, something along that lines. If they're crazy enough to put their money behind it, I'm crazy enough to do it.

It mainly focuses on this town. People come out of the cemetery, there are some funny things, I don't want to give it away. It's really great. My character's name is Janine Wench, this Long Island girl who carries a gun. She's kind of clumsy, but kind of sweet

And a little hardcore. It's a great character role. When I read it everyone was saying, "Don't go back to T.V! Don't go back to T.V."

I said I had no choice, this was amazing! I don't want to go do *SCOOBY DOO 5*. There are not enough roles to keep my sustained. A good script for me comes along maybe three or four times a year which is not enough. I know it sounds ridiculous, but sometimes I can't do those. That's the way it goes. So I would rather be doing something like this where it's consistent and it feeds me. I feel like I am always hungry for it.