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LOVE, LABOR, LOST

ACTRESS AND BUDDING FILMMAKER **TANIA RAYMONDE** UNDERSTANDS THAT "THE BUSINESS" DEMANDS HARD WORK, DEDICATION...AND MAYBE JUST A LITTLE BULLSHIT. BY ERIC ALT. PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVID BLACK

"BE BOLD, AND MIGHTY FORCES WILL COME TO YOUR AID."

Tania Raymonde recalls hearing Anthony Hopkins use this Basil King quote as a motivational tool for young actors, and it instantly resonated with her. It's no wonder. Raymonde once took it upon herself to set up her own production company through which she wrangled together actors and a professional Hollywood crew to shoot her short film *Coff Division*, which was based on a theory she discovered in Plato's *Symposium* that every man and every woman has a predetermined soul mate.

She was 15.

"I had to cast the movie and get people to shoot it. And these were all people two to three times my age," laughs Raymonde, now a seasoned 19, sparking up the first of several cigarettes on the outdoor patio of a Starbucks in west L.A. "So I just had to blatantly lie about how old I was because I was doing the whole thing myself. I would answer phones like..." At this point, she mimes holding a receiver to her ear, and adopts a posh accent: "Hello, Cone Dog Productions..." It was complete bullshit! If I had been like, "Yo, man, what's up, my name's Tania, I'm 15, want to work on my movie?" it wouldn't have worked. I tried to dress up in suits and stuff but that didn't work, either." She shakes a head of chin-length raven hair, as if this is your typical silly teenage behavior. "I think to this day the director of photography doesn't know how old I was."

Maybe this kind of attitude doesn't seem so precocious for an L.A. native, but as the only child of a magazine editor and an architect, Raymonde claims she grew up as far from the stereotypical idea of Hollywood as you can in this town. She attended the Lycée Française at the behest of her Gallic mother, and otherwise had what she describes

as a normal childhood. "Even though I grew up in L.A., I wasn't around all of that," she says, with a dismissive shrug. "My friends didn't really care. I never really grew up in that kind of circle." The strict curriculum of the Lycée—Raymonde peppers her conversation with casual references to Marcel Proust and Molière—allowed for few extra-curricular activities, but doing just one school play convinced her that she was destined for a career in the field millions flocked to her hometown to pursue.

After finishing up the sequel to the Ryan Reynolds/Justin Long comedy *Waiting*, Raymonde will shuttle back to Hawaii to continue her role as rebellious "Other" Alex on *Lost*—which she enjoys so much that she even welcomes the fans' notoriously Trekkie-like devotion. "I think I have a trading card," she muses. "Not many shows have that kind of intense interest." Will we soon see her at a sci-fi convention signing autographs next to Shatner? "Are you kidding? I'd love to do that!" Her enthusiasm is genuine—in fact, she adamantly refuses to call what she does "work."

And as for the "other stuff" (her words) that surrounds the industry? Raymonde keeps it simple. "I think the stuff that you do speaks for you," she says, exhaling. "If you put in the hard work then everything else falls into place. I know that sounds like a goody-goody way to put it but the only thing you can control is how hard you work on something and how much you give to it, you know? If it takes having a boring social life where you have to wake up at five in the morning and work until midnight and wake up the next day..." She deliberately lets the sentence hang for a moment.

"It doesn't give you that much time to fuck up, which is a good thing."