

The Hymn of The Filmvenger

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The theater is packed on the opening night of AGBO's *No Sleep 'Till Film Fest* premiere. The audience indulges in popcorn as the plot thickens and there sits the director, Ricky Acosta, in the back of the theater awaiting his fate as a filmmaker. He looks around the crowded room for any signs that might indicate the success of his film. *Do they like it? Do they not like it?* Nothing was enough to settle his busy mind. The most climactic part of the film is about to take place. The main character is about to go check on her mother in the bedroom and in 3-2-1.

Cut! Let's rewind the tape a bit, back to the beginning...

Ricardo Acosta, otherwise known as Ricky, started his filmmaking journey as a child. His passion for filmmaking derives from his first memories of watching Disney VHS tapes and later, the Marvel cinematic universe. In college, the computer science student threw a pebble in the hope that it will skip its way across the daunting waters of the entertainment industry.

"I'm in the prime of my life. I'm going for broke," says Acosta. The 26-year-old filmmaker noted that his only regret was not having this mentality sooner as opportunities might have manifested themselves. In the hope to pivot and jumpstart his filmmaking career, Ricky founded *Filmtopia*.

Filmtopia, Ricky's YouTube channel, was created to be a space where people could come and feel welcomed and at home. *Filmtopia*'s specialty is movie and television reviews where Ricky dives deep into the filmmaking process and the context of the story. He also hosts premieres where fellow fans can watch new episodes and film premieres, such as Disney+'s new debut series, *Loki*. In Ricky's words, premieres "...provide a space for fans to come together and bond even if it is just for an hour each week."

With the entertainment being fast-paced and competitive, a filmmaker always has to be on his feet. Ricky looks for ideas and ways to make his content a way for the audience to transport themselves into their desired reality and let their mind go on a brief vacation. Ricky took the initiative to immerse himself in adjacent fields. In order to become a better filmmaker, Acosta strives to make *Filmtopia* the channel it was destined to be.

The moment Ricky was struggling to find inspiration for new content, AGBO announced their first-ever 48-hour film festival, *No Sleep 'Till Film Fest*. Eager as ever, Ricky was ready to take on this challenge.

AGBO's prompt read, "In this challenge, participants are required to take something from our reality and bend it, remove it, twist it, or question it. This can be an item, an idea, or a person. It's your turn to interrupt and reconfigure our world into something unexpected." Participants had 48-hours to produce a fully edited three-minute short film that creatively utilized the prompt.

On a very tight schedule, Acosta found himself falling victim to overthinking. Though *Filmtopia* gatewayed his content creation journey, he didn't feel it was enough to get him through this challenge. Acosta noted that he was ready to wave his surrender midway through the process until one thought changed everything.

"I had to become a better filmmaker at all costs," says Acosta. "The start of this journey begins when I finish this one." It was at this moment that he finally felt like he had creative closure. Ricky in all his creative filmmaking glory came up with *This is 4D*.

"*This is 4D* is a play on words. If you say it fast, it sounds like "This is Forty," he said. *This is 4D* is a mind-bending film about a woman who spends her 40th birthday in a peculiar way.

Interestingly enough, Acosta crafted the story and editing brilliantly. The main character is found on the couch watching television all while bugging her stubborn mother to take a blood pressure test. Every time she returns to the couch, she appears increasingly more restless than before.

Click the image below to watch *This is 4D*:



Acosta let out a sigh of relief as he pressed the submit button on the competition website. When discussing the hardships he faced he said, “Optimism will always outweigh everything.” *No Sleep ‘Till Film Fest* encouraged Ricky to take that optimism as he continues to transition to a feature filmmaker.

Moving forward, Ricky has many hopes and dreams for his future. The one he prides himself upon the most is working to make *Filmtopia* something bigger than himself. His desire for this hope truly demonstrates the genuine passion he has for what he is doing. No matter how many trials and errors he will face, Ricky Acosta will continue to make films for the love of making films. Acosta further explained that the second a filmmaker makes a film for any other reason than genuine love of the craft, they will consequently lose their passion.

3-2-1. Action!

The credits are rolling as *This is 4D* concludes. The audience gives a standing ovation as they were moved by the story. Ricky Acosta, the once nervous director, no longer has to question his fate as a filmmaker. The audience turned to applaud him as they are leaving the theater as changed people. It was at this moment that Ricky finally understood that this was his purpose and destiny. Ricky created his own destiny and for that, he will exceed far past his expectations.

Ricky Acosta will soon be a name we will all know and love. After all, it was him who said, "Don't force yourself to become something you're not, strive to become something you were meant to be."