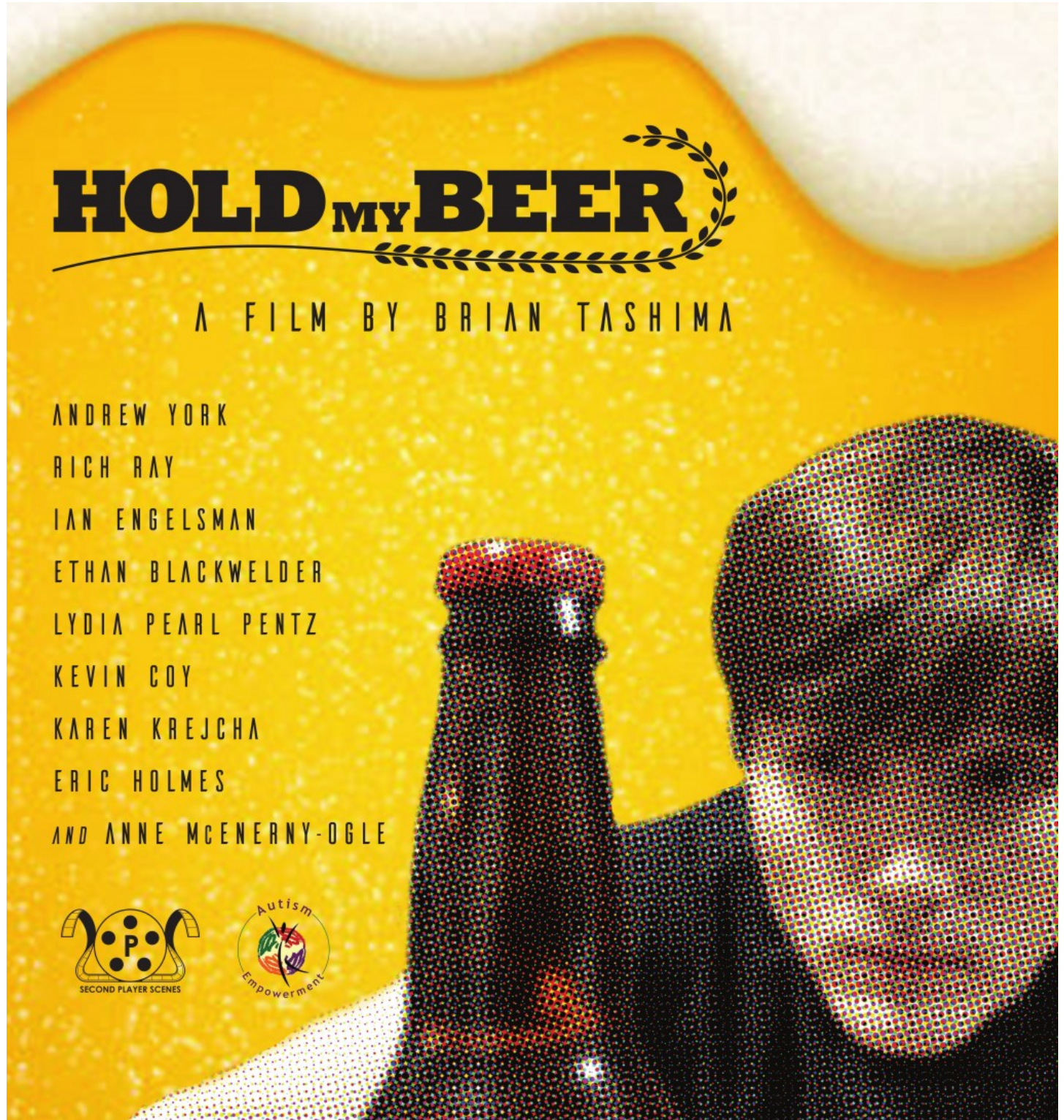


Independent Dramedy Spotlights The "Other" Vancouver, Autism, Forgiveness, and Dreaming Big

An autistic young adult who discovers an interest in craft beer and decides that his life's goal is to open his own brewpub.



THE “OTHER” VANCOUVER ON THE MAP

When you hear about a film being made in Vancouver, you naturally think of British Columbia, Canada, the third largest film and television production center in North America behind only Los Angeles and New York City. But now, an independent filmmaker from the “other” Vancouver—Vancouver, Washington, to be precise—is working to change that.

Brian Tashima, a resident of Vancouver, Washington since 2000, is an author and screenwriter who, in 2022, started working on a story that was meant to be a showcase of his hometown while also paying homage to two of his other passions: autism advocacy and craft beer. The result was a script for a short film titled *Hold My Beer*.

“My goal was to create something that shone a spotlight on Vancouver’s emerging arts scene, using local talent both in front of and behind the camera,” Tashima says. “Basically, I wanted to put this city on the map.”

There are some who might say that Vancouver, Washington (which was actually incorporated 29 years before its Canadian namesake) has had a bit of an inferiority complex when compared to its larger and better-known neighbor to the north. There are T-shirts for sale at the local mall that say “Vancouver, not BC; Washington, not DC.” But to Tashima, his town’s identity should be considered a feature, not a bug.

“I think the fact that we are this kind of underdog or ‘second player,’ like Luigi to Mario or Tails to Sonic, is what makes us unique,” he says. “If anything, we should take pride in it.”

Tashima ended up directing the film himself, while producing it through his entertainment company Second Player Score in association with a locally based, neurodivergent-led nonprofit organization called Autism Empowerment, for which he serves on the board of directors.

“In addition to using Vancouver-based talent as much as possible, I also wanted to authentically represent autistic and neurodivergent voices both on and offscreen,” he says. “About half of our main cast and crew identify as neurodivergent. It’s really important to me to help provide those kinds of opportunities.”

The result was a 39-minute comedy-drama about an autistic young adult from Vancouver, Washington who discovers a passion for craft beer and embarks on a mission to open his own brewpub. Tashima credits his entire community for helping bring it to life.

“Along with Autism Empowerment, we had so many other production partners,” he says. “The Vancouver, Washington Culture, Arts, and Heritage Commission provided a grant. Some local businesses served as filming locations, while others were sponsors for a sold-out premiere screening that we held at a local theater. Local bands donated music for the soundtrack. Area newspapers, TV stations, and other organizations like Visit Vancouver WA helped promote the film. We even had Japanese language students at a local community college translate the script into Japanese so folks in Vancouver’s sister city of Jojo, Japan could enjoy the film.

“I’m so grateful to everyone who pitched in,” he adds. “I think it really demonstrates the power of community and just how much civic pride we have here.”

Tashima’s ultimate goal is to have *Hold My Beer* turned into an ongoing series. To that end, he’s made the film available online on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/@HoldMyBeerFilm>) with the hopes of

attracting enough viewers that a studio or streamer would consider investing in the production of more episodes—possibly three seasons’ worth, if Tashima has his way.

“I know it sounds like a long shot,” he says. “But I mean, the film itself is called *Hold My Beer*, so it seems appropriate to dream big.”

So far, the film has received positive reactions from the independent film review community, with Take 2 Indie Review calling it “a deeply inspiring tale,” and Short Films Matter calling it “a sincere and authentic story that celebrates passion, ambition, and neurodiversity with heart and humor.”

More information about the film can be found at <https://holdmybeer.mov>

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