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Self-Medicated

WORLD PREMIERE

Diane Venora, Monty Lapica, Michael Bowen

Directed by Monty Lapica

4 p.m., Friday, June 17; plus 3:30 p.m., Saturday, June 18

A powerful debut from writer-actor-director Monty Lapica. Based on his own experiences as a Las Vegas teen, Lapica plays Andrew, a smart and talented high schooler whose life has come undone after the death of his father. Smoking pot, drinking, and pulling juvenile pranks (shooting paint balls at tourists on the Strip being the most amusing), Andrew is indifferently throwing his life away. His pill-popping mother, played by Diane Venora, sends him packing to a juvenile lock-down facility, her last hope for helping her son.

In all films about therapy, there comes a moment where the central character must hit rock bottom, must recognize the extent of his own problems before any sort of healing can come. What Lapica does so nicely with *Self-Medicated* is delay that moment time and time again. Every time you think Andrew is going to crack, he brazenly denies the world his pain. When it finally comes, it's well earned.

Lapica handles himself well wearing all three hats, and his cast gives him solid support. The too-little-seen Venora is superb as the mom, and Greg Germann, so smarmy in his role on *Ally McBeal*, plays straight as a counselor trying to help.

T.R. Witcher

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