

Blackout

Director's Notes

The premise of the film originally came from a 16 mm short I wrote and directed in 1996. I was trying to think of the worst thing that could possibly happen to me and how I would get out of it. My first thought was what would happen if I woke up covered in someone else's blood and had no memory of past events. This then developed into the final short about a young man who wakes up in a wood with amnesia next to the dead battered body of a girl. At the time I was not really conscious of what I was trying to say, just that it was an exciting premise that was enjoyable to write, but as time went by it became clearer that in writing the short I had been confronting my fears of violence.

I grew up with my Mum, my sister and my middle stepsister. My father was very reserved and had no interest in football or pubs. I never had a real male role model to follow and so preferred to escape into films than play sport. As a result, I became much more comfortable with my feminine side and shied away from 'laddish' behaviour, using humour as a way to deflect any aggression towards me. I have never understood male violence and even though I have been victim to it in the past, I am frighteningly aware that it also exists deep within me.

When I studied in Newcastle Upon-Tyne I felt quite out of place and would joke that I had three reasons to get beaten up. One I was from the south, two I was a student and three I didn't like football. I couldn't grasp the 'laddish' culture there or understand how so much unpredictable aggression could build up so quickly. Literally after every match there seemed to be violent fights on the streets, irrelevant if Newcastle United won or lost. This mindless aggression really scared me.

I have often thought what would happen if I found myself in a fight. How far would I go in order to win? How hard would I have to hit someone to knock them out? What if I hit them too hard and killed them? When I think about this I can imagine the adrenaline flooding into my body and a darkness glaze over my eyes. I think this is the point you lose all conscious control and allow your subconscious survival instinct to take over.

I am a very stable and non-violent person, yet I know that deep down I am quite capable of killing another human being. There are primal triggers in all of us, hidden deep within our psyche that in extreme circumstances can be released by strong feelings of fear, paranoia or the need to take control, which are often heightened by alcohol and drugs.

Blackout aims to explore all these forms of violence through character and situation and in doing so I hope will give the film a sense of believability that is not normally associated with the thriller genre, making it very dark, very real and relentlessly gripping.

The striking poster campaign will be used as one of the main tools for selling the film to a broad audience, this should be across print and on-line media, plus perfect for a London Underground campaign. The posters and on-line campaign will act as teasers and guide people to an online trailer with excerpts of thrilling violence and psychological twists without giving the plot away. Knitting together the stories of previous murders on the island we can make a number of thrilling plots and mini-trailers that will thrill the viewer and intrigue them to see the real film. These trailers and the main film trailer can be hosted on You-Tube with page hits aided by a viral marketing campaign.