

# Home Kill

New Zealand Film Festival 2001

## Presskit



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# Production Notes

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Writer Steve Springett  
Director Andrew Bancroft  
Producers Andrew Bancroft and Nik Beachman  
Production Company Intercept Limited

Colour 35mm 1:1.85 15 minutes Dolby Digital

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## Log Line

A tale of murder, mystery and madness set on an isolated farm.

## Synopsis cont...

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*Home Kill* is a gothic thriller set on a remote dairy farm in New Zealand.

Farmer Ken and his young wife Tanya are expecting their first child. Ken's slightly retarded brother Barry, who idolises Ken, lives with them in a happy family. The only other person on the farm is a brooding farmhand, Wayne, a drifter who lives outside in a caravan, drinks liquor and sees in TANYA everything he's never had...

In a calculated move, Ken is killed by Wayne, like a king who is toppled off his perch, and chaos descends on the kingdom.

Wayne makes it look like a suicide, and in her confusion and grief, Tanya is duped but Barry is not. Unfortunately nobody has ever listened to Barry and he is unable to articulate his perceptions to Tanya. Their world is thrown into turmoil and Barry suffers hallucinations that there is something alive and demonic in the offal pit (where carcasses are disposed of).

When Wayne makes his move on Tanya and is rebuffed, something in him snaps and he decides to have her anyway. He traps her in the barn where she fights for her life and is saved only by Barry who, imagining himself as an avenging demon, attacks and kills Wayne.

Seeing Barry in a new light, Tanya accepts her new and unusual family situation.

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# Director's Notes

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*Home Kill* is part of my on-going quest for an answer to the question: what does it mean to tell a *cinematic* story?

Previously, in my other works for cinema and television drama, I have sought to "tell a story in pictures" wherever possible. In my film PLANET MAN I relied on the audience's cine-literacy in *noir* stylistics to tell the story. In another short film, MAKING THE RAIN BREATHE, I told the 15-minute story of a domestic tragedy without a single word of dialogue.

By the time I came to direct *Home Kill*, my belief was that *cinematic* meant essentially the same as *expressionistic*. It meant using the cinematic apparatus at my disposal to create in the audience the same psychological state that was being experienced by the character.

*Home Kill* was the first screenplay written by a talented newcomer, Steve Springett. It was that rare kind of script - a blueprint for a cinematic event - and I felt it was an opportunity to work in an expressionistic vein, because the essential element of a gothic chiller is extreme emotional states.

*Home Kill* is also a supernatural horror film, a sub-genre with a rich lineage - from Jacques Tourneur (CAT PEOPLE, NIGHT OF THE DEMON) through to more recent films such as Roeg's DON'T LOOK NOW and Kubrick's THE SHINING. However, in the late 1970s this genre nearly vanished as splatter movies and horror-comedies took over. Recently THE SIXTH SENSE and THE OTHERS have shown that the sub-genre still has immense appeal and *Home Kill* was targeted the same way.

Easier said than done, however. Supernatural thrillers rely on suspension of disbelief and so it is necessary to avoid genre clichés. *Home Kill* took some risks in this regard, with the dynamics between the triangle of characters, and especially the depiction of Barry's avenging demon. I underestimated the power of these genre signifiers and had to work hard to avoid them compromising the extreme emotional states which were our objective. I look forward to learning from audience reactions.

*Home Kill* is a dark film and a bracing experience to watch. On the other hand, fifteen minutes is a very short time in which to scare an audience. You need to put them on the edge of their seats within the opening minutes, and that's a good discipline for a filmmaker. If it succeeds in doing this, I will feel I have created a cinematic film.

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# Co-producer

## Nik Beachman

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Nik has a background in production in NZ Features and TV drama, and currently he works extensively in TV Commercial production. His first project as producer was the acclaimed NZ Short film "The Painted Lady" (Belinda Schmid, 1999), which was selected for many international showcases, among them, Montreal & Tampere. This film was runner up for best short film at the NZ Film Awards, 2000. His second short film production was "She's Racing" (Kirstin Marcon, 2000), which also garnered numerous festival selections and was awarded a Silver Plaque at the Chicago Film Festival, 2000. He is currently developing two feature projects with Andrew Bancroft & the NZ Film Commission.

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# Director

## Andrew Bancroft

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Andrew Bancroft has directed, produced, and written drama for film, television and theatre.

His short film, MADE MAN, won national prizes in 1994, and in 1996 his short film PLANET MAN became the only NZ film to win at the Cannes Film Festival, winning the International Critics Prize. In addition to HOME KILL, he has made a fourth short film, MAKING THE RAIN BREATHE, for Canal Plus (France).

In 1999, he co-wrote and directed the one-hour TV drama NGA TOHU - SIGNATURES, which swept the New Zealand Television Awards in 2000 (winning Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best Supporting Actor).

In partnership with Nik Beachman, he is also developing two feature film projects with finance from the New Zealand Film Commission. One of them, BULIBASHA, was the only non-US project selected for the 2001 Sundance Independent Producers Conference in Utah, USA.

In addition, Andrew also works as a script development consultant. He has been instrumental in a number of national initiatives with the New Zealand Writers Guild, and has directed workshops for new plays for the Auckland Theatre Company.

In 2001, Andrew has written and directed a range of TV documentaries for the Arts series MERCURY LANE.

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# Credits

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## Cast

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<b>Tanya</b>	Sara Wiseman
<b>Barry</b>	Leighton Cardno
<b>Wayne</b>	Craig Hall
<b>Ken</b>	Ross Harper

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## Crew

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<b>Director</b>	Andrew Bancroft
<b>Producers</b>	Nik Beachman and Andrew Bancroft
<b>Writer</b>	Steve Springett
<b>Production Company</b>	Intercept Limited
<b>Cinematographer</b>	Rewa Harre
<b>Art Director</b>	Mark Stephen
<b>Editor</b>	Eric De Beus
<b>Sound Designer</b>	Chris Burt