

THE HANDOVER

A Short Film by David Stubbs



Press Kit

I N T E R N A T I O N A L S A L E S

Juliette Veber - NZ Film - PO Box 11 546 - Wellington - New Zealand
Tel +64 4 382 7686 - Fax +64 4 384 9719 - juliette@nzfilm.co.nz

N E W Z E A L A N D F I L M

DIRECTOR
WRITER
PRODUCER
PRODUCTION COMPANY
INTERNATIONAL SALES

David Stubbs
Bianca Zander
Vicky Pope
Krafthaus Films & POP Film
Juliette Veber
NZ Film Commission
juliette@nzfilm.co.nz
+64 21 526 452

HD CAM • DOLBY DIGITAL • COLOUR • 15 MINS • 1.85:1 • NEW ZEALAND

TAG LINE

Broken homes, broken hearts.

ONE LINER

When a single dad returns his daughter at the end of the weekend, he seizes the opportunity for one last moment of intimacy with his ex-wife - but he soon discovers there's no going back.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Paul is a single dad who loves spending time with his six year old daughter, but handing her back at the end of the weekend reminds him of everything he has lost – his family, his home and the love of his life.

After returning his daughter to her mother, Paul seizes the opportunity for one last moment of intimacy with his ex-wife. But he soon discovers his act of transgression comes with a price.

FESTIVALS/AWARDS

2009 Chicago International Film Festival, USA
2009 Encounters Film Festival, UK
2010 Rhode Island International Film Festival, USA
2010 Mas Sorrer International Short Film Festival, Spain
2010 Ozu Film Festival, Italy
2010 Show Me Shorts, NZ

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

From the start I set myself the task of developing a project about a world I know and people I know. What excited me most about the screenplay was it's raw and original emotional power. It's affecting because the characters and scenario are so real...it could be your friends, your family, your neighbours. It could be you. It's an enthralling, intensely personal drama, almost a thriller in the end, and its climax is loaded and agonising.

As a divorced dad sharing the custody of his daughter with her mother and her new partner, Paul routinely goes through the process of a 'handover' with his ex-partner. Every second Sunday afternoon he drops his little girl off at her mother's house where she lives with another family; people who are complete strangers to him. Driving away and abandoning Katy like that makes no sense, it's fucked up, and it goes against Paul's most basic instincts as a parent and a human. It's incredibly sad and it is a constant reminder of a failed relationship and the loss of a family.

These feelings are the truths surrounding families and blended families. This is the experience of many people every day - in every town and city. But as our research showed, and any police officer will tell you, the real tragedies come when one half of the relationship can't move on.

The Handover is a drama about Paul, a man who can't let go or move on after a failed relationship. He wants his family back. We watch him over the course of a single day, a Sunday leading up to handing over his daughter to her mother and new partner. And we witness the circumstances and opportunities that lead to him risking everything for a chance to get back the family and the life that he's lost.

The climax explores a kind of visceral truth, a moral issue that is relevant to you and me - could we ever come to a point where we do something that crosses a line and risks everything? The answer is yes, because we all understand the complexities of life and emotions, and of course, love can make fools of us all.

WRITER'S NOTES

Director David Stubbs came to me with an idea for a short film about the traumatic moment when a divorced parent hands over their child to the other parent at the end of the weekend. From that starting point, we developed a universal story about the difficulty of coming to terms with a broken family and a relationship that has ended.

It was important to me that the events of the story took place over the course of one day, to give the film a sense of immediacy and drama. This is the day that Paul, a 30-something single parent, is forced to realise that his dream of putting his family back together is never going to happen. He starts out the day hoping for reconciliation with Helen, the mother of his child; he ends the day with a newfound realisation that he is no longer a part of her life, even though his relationship with Katy will continue.

As a writer, it was important to me to create a simple story with universal themes.

I'm attracted to stories with emotional honesty, raw drama and an element of transgression. Paul getting into bed with his ex-wife crosses a moral boundary but it's an act that the audience can both understand and identify with. It's important that we empathise with him every step of the way. I want the story to reflect the messiness of real life, along with a heightened sense of drama. There are no good guys or bad guys in this story, but hopefully there is a sense of moral complexity and emotional depth.

Broken families are a painful reality we are all forced to deal with in this day and age, whether it's as a child of divorce or an adult struggling to come to terms with a failed relationship. *The Handover* is about a regular guy who wants what we all want: love, family and connection.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The Handover is an original idea developed by the Director David Stubbs and Writer Bianca Zander.

Production was self-funded by the Director so the film was made on a small budget but always with the highest ambitions.

In realising the screenplay we knew incredible attention would be needed to create the particular tone and feel of the imagery and elevate the cinematic aspects of the story. Australia-based cinematographer Jac Fitzgerald is one of NZ's emerging DOP talents and was key in bringing an understated sense of atmosphere and beauty to the photography.

One of the other crucial aspects of the story was to create empathy with the central character Paul. Editor Cushla Dillon brought her intuitive style of cutting to the edit and has crafted a finely woven piece of storytelling which also subtly puts the audience in Paul's psychological space and keeps them there.

We were also lucky to have the support of a stellar NZ cast including Gareth Reeves (*A Song Of Good*), Nathan Meister (*Blacksheep*), Loren Horsley (*Eagle V Shark*). New-comer Sarah Armstrong plays the role of "Katy".

CAST

PAUL: Gareth Reeves

Gareth is a rising cinematic star in New Zealand. He impresses with his vulnerable and sympathetic male characterisations on screen. He has appeared in numerous television and film productions including *Dead Letters*, *The Tribe* and *Insider's Guide to Love* for which he won Best Performance by an Actor at the NZ Film and Television Awards in 2005. His most recent feature film role was Gary Cradle in Gregory King's gritty feature film *A Song Of Good* for which he has been nominated as Best Actor at the 2008 NZ Film and Television Awards.

HELEN: Loren Horsley

Loren Horsley is most well known for her break-through role as Lily in the internationally acclaimed film *Eagle V Shark* for which she won Best Actress at the Newport International Film Festival 2007. *Eagle V Shark* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2007 and was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize.

ANDREW: Nathan Meister

Nathan has played a wide range of character and dramatic roles in films including *No. 2*, *Avatar* and the lead in *Black Sheep*. He is currently playing Johan/Lenart in NZ feature film *Under the Mountain*.

KATY: Sarah Armstrong

Six-year old new-comer Sarah Armstrong was spotted by the Casting Director, Miranda Rivers. The film required her to be thrown into some intensely raw, adult situations but she was remarkable in her ability to

take on board the emotional complexity of the scenarios and deliver a depth of performance well beyond her years and small stature.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

A storyteller with an eye for the uncomfortable truths in everyday life, David has moved between directing music videos, television commercials and drama in a career that's been eclectic and committed.

In recent years David has directed many high profile large budget TVCs and has featured on the prestigious UK Shots Reel. He's also directed music videos for Sony Music and Universal Music and was a finalist in the 2003 and 2004 New Zealand Music Video Awards.

David's first theatrical short, the bizarre and twisted drama *Helmut & Gretel*, enjoyed success on the European film festival circuit including selection for The Hamburg Film Festival, Sweden's Fantastic Film Festival and Raindance in London. It also won David the Best Director-Short Film prize at the New Zealand Diva Awards.

David is currently developing a feature film project with Bianca Zander, writer of *The Handover*, while continuing to follow his dreams and live his nightmares within the exciting maelstrom of the New Zealand film Industry.

WRITER'S BIO

Bianca Zander is a Wellington based writer of fiction and screenplays with an MA in scriptwriting from Victoria University. *The Handover* is her first produced screenplay.

Bianca is currently working on a novel set in London and New Zealand, as well as developing a number of TV and film scripts. In 2006 she co-wrote and developed a 40-part mini drama series for Gibson Group (broadcast on NZ television and mobile phones in 2007). In 2004, she co-produced and directed the acclaimed TV documentary *The Freedom Flat*, which was a finalist for best short documentary in the 2005 DOCNZ festival.

She has appeared as a commentator on TV and radio and is an occasional contributor to the Sunday Star Times and the Dominion Post. For two years, she worked as a staff writer on the *Listener* magazine, before producing a breakfast radio show for a year on radio 95bFM. She is also a published short story writer.

PRODUCER'S BIO

Vicky is currently working as a freelance producer in advertising to earn a buck but her main passion and ambition is to make films. This year she produced a feature-length independent documentary called *Trouble Is My Business* which premiered at the NZ International Film Festival in July. She has recently completed delivery of a NZ Film Commission funded short film *The Graffiti of Mr Tupaia* starring Rawiri Paratene (*Whalerider*), shot and delivered on 35mm film which also screened at the NZ International Film festival this year and is screening at numerous international festivals in 2008 including Locarno, Montreal, Hof and Hamptons.

Vicky is in pre-production with a second NZFC funded short film *Choice Night*, and is currently producing the television documentary *Flight of the Concord: On Air* for Prime TV.

Vicky is developing several dramatic feature film and television projects including the animated TV comedy series *The Pen* (Executive Producer Elizabeth Mitchell, Writer/Directors Jemaine Clement and Guy Capper) and feature films *Two Little Boys* with Robert and Duncan Sarkies, and *Guy Fawkes Night* by Peter O'Donoghue. She has recently been appointed by the NZ Film Commission as an Executive Producer to mentor emerging filmmakers with short film projects funded through the NZ Film Commission's Short Film Fund.

CREW

Director
Writer
Producer

David Stubbs
Bianca Zander
Vicky Pope

Director of Photography

Jac Fitzgerald

Editor

Cushla Dillon

Casting Director

Miranda Rivers

Production Designer
Costume Designer
Make Up Supervisor

Gim Bon
Amanda Neale
Michele Perry

Production Manager

Carly Neemia

Production Companies

Krafthaus Films
POP Film