

Official Selection - 54th BFI London Film Festival, UK
In Competition - 55 Semana Internacional de Cine Valladolid, Spain
Best International Short Film, Cinema Tous Ecran, Switzerland
In Competition - 33rd Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival, France
In Competition - Melbourne International Film Festival, Australia

CHOICE NIGHT



PRESS KIT

Try to have it all. Risk losing everything.

A short film by Christopher Dudman

INTERNATIONAL SALES

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NEW ZEALAND FILM

PRODUCTION NOTES

DIRECTOR	Christopher Dudman
WRITER	Paul Stanley Ward
PRODUCER	Vicky Pope
PRODUCTION COMPANY	POP Film Ltd
COMPLETION DATE	2010
SHOOTING FORMAT	16MM
SCREENING FORMAT	35MM

35MM • DOLBY DIGITAL • COLOUR • 15 MINS plus credits • 1.85:1 • NEW ZEALAND

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ONE LINER

Fifteen-year-old James has everything before him. The catch? He has to choose between the two things he wants the most: love or mates?

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Over the course of one night 15-year old James has to make a choice: love or mates? When James ends up in a brothel with his mates at the same time as he should be meeting his new girlfriend, his night begins to spin out of control. Bombarded by booze and hormones James' divided loyalties make his choice more real than he ever could ever have imagined.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Fifteen-year-old James has everything before him; the catch is he has to choose between the two things he wants the most. Jenny, the girl he has a crush on is awaiting him at the end of her shift at the used-book store. His new rugby mates expect him to front up for a night on the town after his debut on the team. Unable to say no to either he juggles his hopes and dreams over one *Choice Night*.

Woozy with alcohol, James is bombarded with the pressures of loyalty, instinct, guilt, hormones: love or mates? When his night spins out of control and he ends up in a brothel waiting room at the same time as he should be meeting Jenny, his choice becomes more real than he ever could have imagined.

Sometimes you do all your growing up in one night. In *Choice Night*, James is offered it all. He risks ending up with nothing, and losing what he desired the most.

FESTIVALS

2010 Melbourne International Film Festival, Australia
2010 CFC Worldwide Short Film Festival, Canada
2010 New Zealand International Film Festival, New Zealand
2010 54th BFI London Film Festival, UK
2010 55 Semana Internacional de Cine Valladolid, Spain
2010 Show Me Shorts Film Festival, New Zealand
2010 St George Bank Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia
2010 *Best International Short Film*, Cinema Tous Ecran, Switzerland
2011 Prague Short Film Festival, Czech Republic
2011 33rd Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival, France
2011 Saugeney International Film Festival, France
2011 Magma Film Festival, New Zealand
2011 Cannes Cinephiles Film Festival, France
2011 Palm Springs International Short Film Festival, USA
2011 Cinema Jove, Spain
2011 Odense Film Festival, Denmark
2011 Circuito Off Film Festival, Italy
2011 Drama Film Festival, Greece

ABOUT THE TEAM:

Choice Night is the second short film collaboration between Writer Paul Stanley Ward, Director Chris Dudman and Producer Vicky Pope. Their work to date has produced films exploring human stories of characters who fail, despite best intentions, to get what they desire.

Their first short film *The Graffiti of Mr Tupaia* won Best Short Film, Best Screenplay and Best Actor at the 2008 Qantas NZ Film and Television Awards, screened in competition at Locarno, Montreal, and received awards at Interfilm Short Film Festival in Berlin and In the Bin Short Film Festival in Australia.

The team are all currently developing feature film projects.

ABOUT THE STORY...

The story for *Choice Night* was gleaned from experiences I had as a teenager. I grew up in a rural town and moved to a suburb of Wellington where I attended an inner-city boy's college. I came from a Kiwi family where rugby was religion and I was expected to play. I was proficient (making the 1st XV) and I strove to succeed, but also - bookish and discovering music and film - I found myself an outsider in the bro-culture (when there was a brawl during a big match I'd find myself watching on the fringes with the god-fearing Samoans). Many of my friends - and the girl I had a crush on - were arty types (who scorned 'rugbyheads') and yet achieving on the footy field was important. I enjoyed playing, and (although I couldn't have articulated this in a changing room), it was a 'sensual' pleasure.

It was the feeling of being between seemingly irreconcilable worlds that I remember: doubtful and insecure, but wide-eyed and desirous of stretching out and having it all ... yeah, a teenager.

The central event (the brothel induction) in *Choice Night* was loosely based on an experience I had as a fourteen-year-old. At the time it was a hormone fuelled blur; it was something I reflected on as a dramatic event only later. It was one of those formative stories that return through remembering and repeated telling; this compelled me to write it up as a story for screen.

I'm proud of the vision that Chris and Vicky have realised. I appreciate that it's not moralistic (though James makes a 'bad' choice he's not a victim). I hope that it captures something of that palpable intensity of youth: of waking up one morning and realising you can't turn back the clock ... of the sensation, with guilt on your tongue, of having experienced a tragic - but understandable - *choice*.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I've always felt a coming of age story needs to revolve around a formative, life-changing, experience to be meaningful and 'Choice Night' fitted this mould very well.

In New Zealand "Choice" is slang for "Great" so the title is both apt and ironic because James makes a choice that turns the night into a personal disaster.

It was important for me that James learned from his experience. By the end of the film he knows he's lost the girl (the one thing he cared about) but what he learns is that when you do things without thinking, then you aren't making the choice. The choice is making you.

Destiny is not a matter of chance. It is a matter of choice.

I envisaged the film to be a portrait of a boy/adolescent over 24 hours. I imagined that his face would be present on the screen for much of the film and determined to see him in as many emotional states as possible; as he negotiates his way through the expectations of his first love and his friends.

The film begins with hope and promise and ends with regret and broken love.

A boy makes a choice and has to live with the consequences.

I wanted us to feel the loss for both him and for the girl he loses. And, to this end, it was very important to show how James comes to make his choice so we understand rather than judge him for it.

In fact James really doesn't make a choice, events overtake him and he isn't mature enough and doesn't know himself well enough, at 15, to know that he can make a choice.

The tragedy of the piece is that he loses what he most desires for what turns out to be a nightmare.

The film was deliberately shot handheld, on 16mm, to give a 'captured' documentary sense of realism. I wanted it to feel true to life but tell a story in a classically dramatic way.

The biggest challenge was finding a boy of school age who was prepared and capable of exposing himself, physically and emotionally, as the script demanded. He was the key to its success and Aaron McGregor, who plays James, makes it one.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Christopher Dudman studied painting in New Zealand before doing his MA in film-making at the Royal College of Art in London. His graduation film *Blackwater Summer* was nominated for a student Oscar in 1989 and went on to win Best European Short Film at Cork, Best Film at the Munich International Student Film Festival, the Young Jury Prize at the Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival, and Best Director and the Public Prize at Tours.

Christopher went on to edit short films and work as an assistant director and editor on documentaries for British television. He wrote and directed several arts documentaries for the BBC, C4, Thames Television and for the Arts Council of Great Britain; one called *Sandman* received a British Television Society award and was also exhibited at the Tate Gallery.

On his return to New Zealand in 1995 he researched and wrote two 90 minute episodes of 'New Zealand at War' a landmark documentary series about World War Two for TVNZ.

Since then Christopher has been directing television commercials and developing feature projects.

He set up Robber's Dog Films in 2006 and is presently developing two feature films - *We Will Not Cease* (the Archibald Baxter Story) with poet Glenn Colquhoun and *One of Us* about two agents working for the NZ Police Undercover Programme in the 1980s with Norelle Scott.

WRITER'S BIOGRAPHY

Paul Stanley Ward is a 33 year-old writer based in Wellington, Aotearoa-New Zealand. He has written two NZ Film Commission-funded short films: *The Graffiti of Mr Tupaia* and *Choice Night*. He won Best Screenplay for a Short Film for *Graffiti* at the 2008 Qantas NZ Film and TV Awards.

Paul grew up in the Rangitikei and Wellington. He graduated BA (Hons) in English Literature and NZ History from Victoria University of Wellington, and has a Masters degree from the University of Oxford in Modern English Literature.

He worked as a Story Producer in the US for the Discovery Channel and NBC, before returning to New Zealand where he was Series Writer for the TVNZ documentary series *Here To Stay* (on the settler groups that immigrated to New Zealand), and the documentary series, *Undercover*, (on NZ's undercover police program). He is founding editor of NZ On Screen (www.nzonscreen.com), the Qantas Media Award-winning online showcase of NZ screen culture.

He has two feature scripts in development, including *Bird's Eye*, with Mark Albiston and Louis Sutherland (whose previous two short films have both won Cannes jury prizes).

PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY

Vicky Pope has over 9 years production and development experience through her work as a Wellington based television and film producer.

She spent 3 years as a Development Executive at the New Zealand Film Commission, NZ's government agency responsible for the development and financing of NZ film. She also undertook a 6 month internship with UK script development training agency ARISTA. She has worked closely with the emerging filmmaking community through a further role as the NZ Film Commission's Short Film Fund Manager.

As a producer she is closely involved in all aspects of development. Her recent stop-motion animated short film *Life After Death* written and directed by Guy Capper and Jemaine Clement (*Flight of the Conchords*) screened in the NZ International Film Festival in 2006. Last year Vicky produced an independent documentary *Trouble Is My Business* which premiered at the 2008 NZ International Film Festival to critical acclaim and has a theatrical release in New Zealand in 2009. She also produced the short film *The Handover* directed by David Stubbs and was nominated as "Woman to Watch" at the 2008 WIFT NZ Awards. This year she was selected to attend the Berlinale Talent Campus in January. She also completed production of a television documentary *Flight of the Conchords: On Air* which premiered on NZ television and has sold to BBC4 UK, Australia and Sweden.

Vicky is currently working as an Executive Producer of short films for the NZ Film Commission, responsible for commissioning and overseeing production of NZFC financed shorts, and is developing a number of feature length films including a black comedy *Two Little Boys* with NZ Director Robert Sarkies (*Out of the Blue* and *Scarflies*).

CAST

JAMES
JENNY

AARON MCGREGOR
PEARL MCGLASHAN

COACH
SEX WORKER
TAMA
WARDY
MACCA
TOTO
RUGBY LADS

LOUIS SUTHERLAND
CORRIE BRINK
PHILIP VAKA
GEORGE MASON
NIC SAMPSON
TOMASI MOCEVAKACA
PITA MOCEVAKACA
OPETI VAKA

JAMES'S MUM
JENNY'S MUM
RECEPTIONIST
STRIPPERS

EMMA KINANE
DRA MCKAY
MARIA WALKER
KIMBERLY BROWN

WOMAN IN STREET
BOUNCER
ADDITIONAL STRIPPERS

FLO VERLANDER
POLINA OUTKINA
VANESSA STACEY
SPENCER GREENHAM
JULIA CHURCH

BOYS IN CHANGING ROOM

JASMINE WILLIAMS
VERONICA LOWE
JOANNA JONES
PHYLLISOPHIA JASONSMITH

CUSTOMER IN BOOKSTORE
DRUNK GUYS

FRASER CAMERON
PETER STEVENS
JANET VAN POLANEN
CRAIG MURRAY
JONNY MOFFATT

CREW

DIRECTOR

CHRISTOPHER DUDMAN

WRITER
PRODUCER
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
DOP

PAUL STANLEY WARD
VICKY POPE
MATTHEW HORROCKS
JAC FITZGERALD

CASTING DIRECTOR

TINA CLEARY

ADDITIONAL CASTING

SUZANNE MCALEER
ADRIAN DENTICE
RACHEL BULLOCK

PRODUCTION MANAGER
PRODUCTION COORDINATORS

CARLY NEEMIA
PAMELA HARVEY-WHITE
LUCY PARR
TOM WILSON

RUNNER

FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
SECOND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
THIRD ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
ADDITIONAL THIRD ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

SEUMAS COONEY
SARAH ROSE
BRUNO DU BOIS
JOEY DORAN-O'REILLY
DARREN MACKIE
SIMON ENGLISH
LOREN HORSLEY
PETER WELLINGTON

ACTOR'S COACH
SCRIPT SUPERVISOR

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
FOCUS PULLER
CLAPPER LOADER
VIDEO SPLIT

JAC FITZGERALD
LEE ALLISON
JOE MICHAEL
JASON NARAN
ROHAN SATYANAND

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
PROPS BUYER/SET DRESSER
ART DEPT ASSISTANT
GRAPHICS DESIGN

BEN WHALE
NICOLE SPACKMAN
LOUISE KASSLER
SHAYNA QUINN

COSTUME DESIGNER
WARDROBE ASSISTANT

AMANDA NEALE
SAMANTHA MORLEY
INGRID PEEK

MAKE UP SUPERVISOR
MAKE UP ASSISTANT

MICHELE PERRY
NISHA VAN BERKEL
ERIN KELLY

KEY GRIP
ADDITIONAL GRIP
GRIP ASSISTANT

MURRAY LOVE
GRAEME TUCKETT
BRET SAUNDERS
HENDRIKUS DEVANN

GAFFER

GERALD MORSE
ROB KERR
GLEN AYRTON
CRAIG FARRAND
REUBEN MORRISON

BEST BOY
LIGHTING ASSISTANTS

SOUND RECORDIST BOOM OPERATOR	AARON DAVIS N'DEMBO ZIAVOULA
LOCATIONS ADVISOR ROAD SAFETY UNIT MANAGERS	PETER TONKS LEIGH KARANGAROA SAM PAGE ANDREW STRUGNELL
VEHICLE WRANGLER STUNT COORDINATOR SECURITY	VAUGHN WILLIAMS LUKE HAWKER TREVA MEREMERE IMOGEN WILSON
CATERER	BILLIONAIRES CATERING BILLIE LUSK
STILLS PHOTOGRAPHER	MATT GRACE
EDITOR OFFLINE EDIT FACILITY	CUSHLA DILLON OKTOBOR
SOUND DESIGN ADR RECORDIST	MATT STUTTER BUSTER FLAWS BEN SINCLAIR
FOLEY ARTIST FOLEY RECORDIST SOUND RE-RECORDING MIXER	CAROLYN MCGLAUGHLIN ROBYN MCFARLANE TIM CHAPRONIERE
COMPOSER	DAVID LONG
FILM LAB & POST FACILITY LABORATORY COORDINATOR LABORATORY LIAISON DAILIES COLOURIST DI EDITOR DI COLOURIST PARK ROAD POST COORDINATOR	PARK ROAD POST PRODUCTION PETER AMIES ANDY WICKENS JON NEWELL SHANON MORATTI MATTHEW WEAR ALISON INGRAM
FILM SCANNING AND RECORDING FILM SCANNING & RECORDING SUPERVISOR	WETA DIGITAL NICK BOOTH
VISUAL EFFECTS	NICK BOOTH NIGEL MORTIMER
TITLE DESIGN TITLE ANIMATION	SAM AUGER LUCAS BROOKING
ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT NZ FILM COMMISSION SHORT FILM MANAGER	LAKE DAVID PICTURES JULIETTE VEBER
ORIGINAL MUSIC PERFORMED BY	DAVID LONG (CUATRO) ROWAN PRIOR (CELLO)

PASSAGES FROM THE GREAT GATSBY RECORDED BY PERMISSION OF HAROLD OBER
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