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BRITISH ACADEMY
FILM AWARDS

OUTSTANDING DEBUT BY A BRITISH WRITER, DIRECTOR OR PRODUCER

This award recognises and encourages the most promising new British writers, directors and producers making their debut in feature filmmaking. It is presented in honour of Carl Foreman.

LUCY BAILEY, ANDREW THOMSON, ELIZABETH MORGAN HEMLOCK, DIRECTORS & PRODUCERS – MUGABE AND THE WHITE AFRICAN

This documentary feature follows Michael Campbell, one of the few hundred white farmers left in Zimbabwe since Robert Mugabe began his violent 'Land Reform' program in 2000. In 2008, Michael took the unprecedented step of challenging Mugabe in an international court, accusing the President and his government of racial discrimination and violations of basic human rights. What follows is an intimate, moving and often terrifying account of one man and his family's extraordinary courage in the face of overwhelming injustice and brutality.

Following a total press ban in Zimbabwe, much of the footage for the film had to be shot covertly; to have been caught would have led to imprisonment for filmmakers Lucy Bailey and Andrew Thomson. Initially funding the project themselves, they eventually approached Arturi Films, and producers David Pearson and Elizabeth Morgan Hemlock were able to secure private investment, public funding awards from the Film Agency for Wales, and a post-production deal with Molinare, enabling them to work with some of the post-production team from 2008's Oscar and BAFTA-winning *Man on Wire*. This enabled Bailey and Thomson to concentrate on the difficult task of maintaining high production values while filming illegally in a dangerous and chaotic country.

Lucy has a background in anthropology and over ten years experience as a director in television, with the majority shot in Africa, often covering sensitive subjects. Her recent work includes appeal films for Comic Relief, which earned her a nomination for the One World Media- Popular Features Award 2008. **Andrew** is a BAFTA and RTS nominated cameraman with over 12 years experience filming all over the world for Channel 4, BBC, National Geographic and Discovery, often in hostile environments. Previous credits include *Sex Traffic* (C4, 08), *Inside the Kingdom* (BBC, 07), *Brian Keenan in Lebanon* (BBC, 07) and *Ross Kemp in Afghanistan* (Sky, 07). **David** has over thirty years experience in television, as a director, producer, executive producer & commissioning editor. He has won an RTS award, and has been twice nominated for both a BAFTA and the Grierson Award. **Elizabeth** began her career at Working Title Films, before spending ten years as a leading talent agent representing actors and directors, and then became a Film Finance Executive at MHFTV. She has been a script development executive and development producer on various feature films through her company, Wild Films.

STUART HAZELDINE, WRITER/DIRECTOR – EXAM

Originally conceived as a short film, this thriller covers issues of race, class, privilege and morality, all within the confines of 80 minutes and four bare walls. Set in a not too distant future where the stakes have been raised by a deadly worldwide pandemic, Exam is based around a simple idea: eight candidates have reached the final stage of selection to join the ranks of a powerful and mysterious corporation, and are told that will have 80 minutes to answer one simple question; they turn over their papers and they're blank. Hazeldine recalls "I liked the absurdity of that: a timed test in which you have no idea what you're meant to do. It felt like a nightmare, one that anyone who has ever taken a test would identify with."

Shooting began in July 2008 over 28 days at Elstree Studios, and producer Gareth Unwin was impressed with the ease with which Hazeldine made the transition from writer to director: "He really knows what he wants, and he managed to keep good humour with the cast and crew alike". Rather than shooting it like a play, as many of the actors expected, Hazeldine wanted the film to be "as big and cinematic as possible", and shot on 35mm, framing the film in widescreen. The physical limitations of the one-room set and the need for real-time shooting posed a number of problems, but the crew including cinematographer, Tim Wooster, managed to turn many of these into positives, creating an atmospheric sense of claustrophobia as the tension in the exam room increases.

Stuart's previous credits include rewrites on the Hollywood blockbusters *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *Knowing*, and writing projects in development include adaptations of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (to be directed by Scott Derrickson in 2010) and classic science fiction novel *The Tripods*. Exam marks Stuart's feature writing and directing debut, following the 20-minute short film *Christian*, which he wrote and directed in 2005.

DUNCAN JONES, DIRECTOR – MOON

In the near future, astronaut Sam Bell is living on the far side of the moon, completing a three-year contract with Lunar Industries, overseeing a the mining of a new source of energy. It's a lonely job, made harder by a broken satellite that allows no live communication home. When what appears to be a younger, angrier version of himself arrives at the station, Sam has to fight the clock to discover what's going on, and where he fits into company plans.

The film was written for actor Sam Rockwell, who had mentioned to Jones while discussing another project that he was a sci-fi fan. Jones set about writing a vehicle that would offer a challenge to Rockwell, and hit upon the idea of multiple roles; this posed a number of technical demands for both the first time director and his crew and Rockwell who overcame the practical difficulties of the shoot to deliver two brilliant performances; his performance also won over fellow actor Kevin Spacey, who signed up to provide the voice of Sam's robot companion immediately upon seeing a rough cut of the film.

The film went into production during the 2008 writers strike; the lull in production caused by the strike meant that the film could be shot over 33 days at Shepperton studios (which would not ordinarily have been possible for such a relatively low-budget film) and also attracted a number of top-class effects people whose work for Hollywood productions had been put on hold. Jones used his background in effects-heavy commercials to combine old-school techniques like model miniatures and retro production design with contemporary CG effects to deliver an ambitious and intense sci-fi thriller.

Duncan started out as wild-cam operator for Tony Scott, before going on to work as an AD for commercials director Walter Stern. After a period shooting low budget music videos, Duncan joined advertising guru Trevor Beattie as a creative director of his new agency, BMB; their initial offering, the 90-second woman on woman fight fest 'Fashion vs Style' for French Connection, caused such controversy it made front-page news and was subsequently named a finalist at the 2006 Cannes Lions. Duncan is currently developing his next feature, *Mute*, with support from the UK Film Council.

SAM TAYLOR-WOOD, DIRECTOR – NOWHERE BOY

Nowhere Boy tells the untold story of John Lennon's adolescence in 1950's Liverpool- raised by his Aunt Mimi from the age of five, at 15 John is suddenly reacquainted with his mother; faced with bringing a end to the bitter war between the two sisters for his love, the wayward boy finds his voice and goes on to world-fame with The Beatles.

Director, Sam Taylor-Wood was attracted to the project by the screenplay by Matt Greenhalgh (winner of the BAFTA for Outstanding Debut for the Joy Division biopic Control in 2008). "Reading the last page of the screenplay, I knew this was the film I had to make," she remembers.

The cast is headed by newcomer Aaron Johnson as the young Lennon, with support from Kristin Scott Thomas as Mimi and Anne-Marie Duff as Julia. Largely filmed on location in Liverpool, the city itself is just as much of a character in the film.

The script called for Lennon's song 'Mother' to be played at the end of the film; the rights are held by Yoko Ono, his widow, and she has never given permission for the song to be used, but Taylor-Wood felt the inclusion of the song was 'essential'. After a private screening of the film, Ono gave permission, and has since publicly praised the film, which Taylor-Wood says "is worth its weight in gold on an emotional level. She was incredibly moved by it and thought the essence and spirit of Lennon was completely there"

Sam Taylor-Wood is an internationally renowned conceptual artist and filmmaker, known for her multi-screen video works and for the video portrait of David Beckham sleeping in the National Portrait Gallery collection. She was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1997, and won the Illy Café Prize for Most Promising Young Artist at the 47th Venice Biennale. Love You More, her first narrative short film, was nominated for a BAFTA in 2008.

ERAN CREEVY, WRITER/DIRECTOR – SHIFTY

Set on the outskirts of London, this sharply scripted, witty, urban thriller follows themes of friendship and loyalty over the course of 24 hours in the life of a young drug dealer, the charismatic 'Shifty'.

Based on writer/director Eran Creevy's teenage experiences growing up in the London suburbs, the film was funded by Film London's microwave scheme (which challenges London-based filmmakers to shoot a full-length feature on a maximum budget of £100,000), and delivered after a shooting schedule of just 18 days. The impressive cast includes rising stars Riz Ahmed and Daniel Mays, Lock Stock's Jason Flemyng and BAFTA nominee Francesca Annis.

Directing his first feature was a daunting prospect for the 32 year old: "The first time I walked into the production office and saw all the actors' photos spread across the wall was the moment the enormity of what I was responsible for really hit me. The characters I had created alone in a room on my laptop now had faces and were going to be brought to life by actual, professional actors. It was surreal, exciting and terrifying simultaneously."

The toughest challenge for first time feature director Eran was the pressure. Having laboured over the script for more than three years, the tight shooting schedule meant being extraordinarily disciplined on set. He explains, "All the energy, the build up, the crew hire, script development, auditions, casting, preproduction and then it all comes down to 25 minutes to achieve the shot before the light goes or you have 30 people who need to break for lunch. The pressure of that moment is immense and surreal. I just had to make sure I was always in the right head space on set as sometimes compromises have to be made."

However, whilst the budget for the film was modest by Hollywood standards, the cast and crew were determined there would be no sacrifices on quality. Producer Ben Pugh says "We were lucky enough to attract some of the finest, most experienced actors and crew to the project so it was easier than you might imagine to make this film, to this standard, on only £100,000. Eran's unique visual style and his confidence in communicating that vision, coupled with the skills and talent of the people we surrounded him with who could bring that vision to life, was a winning combination."

Eran began his film career as a post production runner working his way up to assistant director roles on a variety of features including Layer Cake, Scoop, Life and Lyrics and Wimbledon. His directing career began on pop promos before graduating onto commercials including a four commercial European campaign for Nike Plus.

Information sourced from production notes and publicly available sources