

DENNIS MCINTOSH

Psychic to the Stars

Written by Paul Roundell

Directed by Dominic Brunt

MITCHELL-BRUNT
FILMS

Synopsis

Dennis was famous. He isn't anymore.

Dennis had it all. But he lost it.

Dennis was married and lived in a big house with a nice car. Now he is single and lives in a static caravan with his cat.

Dennis wined and dined with the stars. Now Dennis has a drink problem.

The 80's were a long time ago for Dennis. His once glittering career as TV's top psychic is finished, along with his book sales and sell out concert hall bookings. Estranged from his wife and daughter, Dennis spends his nights alone watching video tapes of glories past and dulling his worries with vodka.

After climbing down the billings to land at a smattering of pub appearances, Dennis drags himself through his now tired and thin routine in front of half interested, half full venues. His agent wants out and the bailiffs are knocking.

Dennis was a fraud who never contacted or saw a spirit in his life. Until now.....

We follow the caustic Dennis McIntosh as he rails against his lot. We also flashback to his childhood and glory days of superstardom. A fraud who learned to cold read an audience and play the fame game to a tee, Dennis is now at rock bottom with failing health.

A severe beating and bad news from the doctor change everything. Voices in his head won't be silenced. Psychic readings become terrifyingly accurate. Strangers appear and disappear. Visitations from the past.

Finally....Pandemonium as a newly invigorated, large audience are led to hysteria by Dennis's messages, declarations and accusations.

If only it could last...

Writer



Paul Roundell

Lancashire-based Paul began his career in 1992 as a wide-eyed youth writing for video game magazines. Side steps (and backward steps!) saw him move to trade magazines and websites before falling into television work in 2003, where with the exception of a brief period stacking shelves at Accrington Asda, he has stayed ever since.

He has written over 300 episodes of Emmerdale – including its only ever live episode – plus two feature-length spin-offs, and is the most commissioned writer in his time on the show, winning Best Episode and Best Scene multiple times from various awards. He wrote the screenplay for 2014 movie Bait, of which The Guardian said, “What’s especially laudable is the dimensionality writer Paul Roundell distributes among the characters.” Mike-77134 from the internet, on the other hand, wondered, “Was this actually written by a human being?”

Other (unbroadcast) work includes ‘Grounded’ for ITV2 with producer Kathleen Beedles, and ‘Mirror Mirror’ for BBC, with producer Phil Collinson. He is currently developing comedy drama ‘Headless’ and, in 2020, when the world went bonkers and the work dried up, wrote a feature-length near-monologue, The Virus Diaries, about one father’s struggles during early Covid lockdown.

When time permits (it never does) he continues to work on his novel, ‘Significant/Other’ about our fascination with fame, and has almost by accident started work on a children’s book, based on his experiences with his own children, but with less swearing.

Director



Dominic Brunt

Dominic Brunt was born in Macclesfield in 1970.

He left school to become a sheet metal worker/welder before training to be an actor at The Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

Appearing in the Sarah Kane short film Skin plus many TV drama's including Soldier Soldier, Inspector Morse, Holding on and Comedies including 2.4 Children and The Paul Merton Show.

As well as his work for ITV's Emmerdale, Dominic has run Mitchell-Brunt Films along with his wife Joanne.

Dominic won Best Director at The Nevada Film Festival for Bait, starring Victoria Smurfit and Jonathon Slinger. Bait was also the closing film of The Fantasia Film Festival in Toronto. After a long run on Netflix and Hulu it can still be seen on various platforms including iTunes and Amazon Prime.

His two other feature films, Before Dawn and Attack Of the Adult Babies have also had world-wide sales and distribution as well as playing at many of the leading film festivals throughout the world. They are also available through The Horror Channel, iTunes and Amazon Prime.

His 4th feature film as director, Evie, will be released this year after gaining a world-wide distribution deal.

Director's Vision

I intend Dennis McIntosh (Psychic to the Stars) to be my fifth independent feature film exploring ordinary people in everyday settings, faced with extraordinary situations.

Dennis McIntosh is a morality play and a study of what comes after fame, what comes after the end of a marriage, what comes after the money is gone, what comes after you have driven away everything you loved. The screenplay studies toxic masculinity and those that survive in it's wake. The film also looks at the effects of fame: it's decline and demise, whilst in the final act, we offer a chance of redemption.

The story will be filmed and set at night and in the twilight hours of the evening. After all, it is the twilight years of Dennis's life which we are interested in. We will achieve this using the Arri Alexa camera which is excellent for low light recording and Cooke's anamorphic lenses to give us that all important wider field of view and nostalgic cinematic look.

The audience should be thrust between the characters and placed within their claustrophobic environments and communications: The pub, the flea pit caravan which Dennis calls home, the oppressive agents office and back-stage.

Director's Vision



Director's Vision

I was inspired to write the story after growing up on the same street as a working men's club which regularly featured smaller variety acts on their way up as well as more established performers on their way down. This mixed with a skepticism and sometimes repellant view of those that seek to make money from grief without any fear of the consequences.

I was also drawn to the adulation, the acclaim and the fawning that psychics experience from their eager audience. We seek to explore what happens when the shows become smaller, the audiences dwindle, the book deals and talk shows fade and fame withers to the bottom of a glass of whisky.

I feel that the script succeeds in the tricky balance of creating an anti-hero in Dennis. His only friends are his faithful cat Meg, his long suffering agent and his ever present companion, the bottle: His cat loves him, his agent tolerates him and his family have long abandoned him.

As an audience we should be drawn to his plight and, against our best interests, we empathise and sympathise with Dennis.



Director's Vision

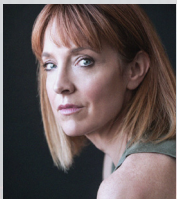
Aesthetically, we want to see the design of the film mirroring our main characters. The costumes, the locations and the decor need to be worn and threadbare. His caravan is a total reflection of the man: It is old, worn, cold, not everything works and it needs a good clean.

Muted colours and a shallow depth of field will bring us close to our characters and what they are thinking between the lines: What is not being said is far more important here.

Film, after all, is a visual medium and this must be remembered in the glances and beats between the dialogue. We have an excellent team which we have employed each time providing lighting and camera equipment, editing, grading, dubbing and musical composition. By keeping locations and cast to a minimum but keeping production value up front and centre, on the screen, we have gained distribution around the world and played the biggest festivals with each of our films. We look to repeat the success here with Dennis McIntosh (Psychic to the Stars).



Producer



Joanne Mitchell

Joanne started off her career as an actor, training at The Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

Since leaving she has had a full and varied career in TV, Film, Theatre, radio and voiceovers.

Recently her love of film and storytelling, especially within the Horror/Thriller genre, have lead her to focus more on writing and producing. To date three feature films that she has co-produced and written have had world wide distribution and sales: Before Dawn, Bait, Attack of the Adult Babies.

Last year Joanne made her directorial debut with her short film 'Sybil' which she produced, co-wrote and Directed. Having played at many international festivals all around the world, it can now be viewed on Gunpowder and Sky's platform, ALTER.

Her most recent work has been producing the feature film, Evie which stars Holli Dempsey and Michael Smiley, due for release later this year. And her second short film The Outing she directed starring Julie Hesmondhalgh, Con O'Neil and Elizabeth Rider – still in post production.

Joanne was nominated in 2017 as Screen International and Frightfest's Rising Star of the Genre.

Executive Producer



Alan Jones

Alan Jones is a film critic, broadcaster and author who has worked in the horror, science fiction and fantasy field since 1977, when he covered the shooting of STAR WARS.

He has written for every major genre publication, 'Cinefantastique', 'Starburst', 'Fangoria' and 'The Dark Side' and after 25 years still remains a film critic for 'Radio Times', the UK's biggest selling magazine.

His bestselling books include "Dario Argento: The Man, the Myths & The Magic", 'The FrightFest Guide to Exploitation', 'Saturday Night Forever: The Story of Disco', 'The Rough Guide to Horror Movies' and 'The FrightFest Guide to Grindhouse Movies'.

He translated, edited and illustrated Dario Argento's autobiography 'Fear' for the English-speaking markets, in conjunction with the master director.

And with director Nicolas Winding Refn he co-wrote the movie poster book, 'The Act of Seeing'.

He has been co-director of FrightFest, the UK's biggest genre event, for 22 years and is the managing director of the Trieste S+F Festival, Italy's veteran science fiction event.

Producer



Rachel Richardson-Jones

Rachel is an award-winning producer, with a vast knowledge of raising finance and managing feature film and TV productions. She has developed numerous feature film projects, co-produced a number of international feature films, and produced four UK theatrical feature films through her own companies.

She works closely with established screenwriters and directors to develop projects for the small and large screen and now has a slate of over thirteen projects in various stages of development and prep. Her films have been distributed and sold all over the world and screened at many prestigious international film festivals.

Producer



Hannah Stevenson

Hannah Stevenson is an award-winning producer for film and television. Her first short film 'Lollipop' was selected for Cannes film festival. Her documentary 'The Betty Driver Story' won an RTS North award for Best Factual Entertainment Programme.

Her first feature was 'In Another Life' that won the BIFA Discovery Award in 2017. She then went on to produce the hit British comedy, Eaten By Lions which was theatrically released in over 94 screens in the UK before selling to Sky and the BBC. The film was then distributed in the US and non English-speaking territories. She went on to produce Pavement as part of the Uncertain Kingdom and was recently commissioned by the BFI for the short film Baba. Baba recently won the coveted Iris Prize worth £30K as well as scooping Best UK short within the same competition. In 2021, Hannah set up and runs the Screen and Film School Birmingham, providing practically based, industry-focused degree courses.

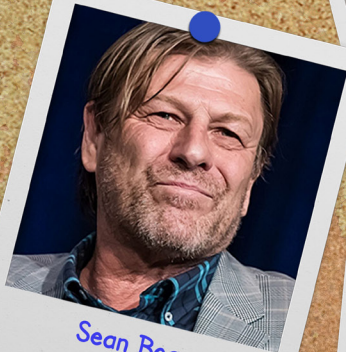
Casting



Ben Cogan

Ben Cogan has worked in casting for 21 years. He began as a casting assistant for many shows (including Eastenders, Holby City and Waking the Dead) before becoming the casting director for Doctors in 2002. 380 episodes later, Ben moved to Casualty, and, in his time there, 6 episodes that he worked on were recognised with BAFTA nominations. During this period he also worked on the Afternoon Play series, Kiss of Death and various short films - one of which (Wish 143) was nominated for an Oscar. Since going freelance in 2015 Ben has cast numerous films including the award winning, Just Charlie, Trendy, Lady M, Bellmouth and TV shows such as BAFTA nominated Apple Tree House as well as the additional child casting of His Dark Materials. Ben recently cast two feature films: 'Evie' and 'Love Without Walls' as well as three short films: 'Man at the Bottom of the Garden', 'Old Windows' and 'The Outing'.

Suggested Casting



Sean Bean



Samantha Bond



Miranda Richardson



Cathy Tyson



Julie Hesmondhalgh



Geraldine James



Lesley Manville

