

Paul Blinkhorn

WRITER and DIRECTOR

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Paul initially trained as a theatre director and now works across film, theatre and audio drama. He has previously been shortlisted for the Genesis Future Directors Award at the Young Vic and longlisted for the Old Vic 12. As a writer, director and producer his award-winning shorts have been screened internationally.

As a director he was recently shortlisted for the [British Comedy Guide Talent Awards](#) for his comedy short [THE MAN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE GARDEN](#). The awards recognise and champion emerging comedy talent and this year were judged by a panel comprised of six industry figures at the top of their fields: Sky Studios producer Adnan Ahmed; TV director Andrew Chaplin; producer Claire Broughton, who is head of podcasts at Hat Trick Productions; Sky Studios producer Katie Churchill; Yellow Door Productions founder Lucy Lumsden; and Mark Wynter, from leading post production facility The Farm. The film's script also made the final 50 in a BBC Writersroom competition out of almost 7,000 scripts.

During lockdown he produced and directed the short film HAND TO HAND COMBAT with a company of 45 women (both actors and non-actors) to raise public awareness of domestic abuse. The film has since received the support of Women's Aid, Manchester Women's Aid, Creative England and numerous support organisations from across the country. It was recently selected to screen at the BAFTA-qualifying Bolton Film Festival.

He is currently part of [Set Access: A UK Film Talent Development Programme from Creative Access and Guy Ritchie](#) as well as [FLEX with Screen Yorkshire](#). He's a member of the Writer's Guild of Great Britain, Directors UK, the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab (New York) and Equity. In 2020 he was part of the Widening the Lens cohort with Encounters Film Festival supported through Screen Skills, a participant on Open Horizons #2 with Northern Film + Media funded by the Film and TV Charity and a participant on the Creative England Ideate programme.

SHORT FILM DIRECTING includes:

THE MAN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE GARDEN (2021 - as writer-director - Official Selection: Southport Film Festival, This is England Film Festival, Women Over 50 Film Festival), **HAND TO HAND COMBAT** (2020 - Official selection at Bolton Film Festival (BAFTA-qualifying), **FELLAZ** (2018 - Official selection: High Peak Independent Film Festival, Kinofilm 16th Edition Manchester International Short Film Festival, Portobello Film Festival, Bolton Film Festival), **AFTER AUSCHWITZ** (2016 - as writer-director - Official Selection: Tirana International Film Festival (Tirana, Albania – Academy Award qualifying festival) *award-nominated, Tryon International Film Festival (Tryon, North Carolina, USA), Eureka Springs Human Rights Film Festival (Eureka Springs, Arkansas, USA) *award-winning, Shorts Off Film Festival (a BAFTA Cymru qualifying festival), Near Nazareth Film Festival (Israel), Cumbria Short Film Competition *award-nominated, Pennine Film Festival (Accrington, UK), **DUTY CALLS** (2009 - as writer and director - Official Selection: Artensive International Festival - Romania, Bradford International Film Festival, Cannes International Film Festival – Short Film Corner *supported by North West Vision and Media, Cornwall Film Festival, Pennine Film Festival *awarded 'Best Short', Purbeck Film Festival, Salford Film Festival, Strasbourg International Film Festival).

SHORT FILM AS A WRITER includes:

THE TENANCY (2020), Dir: Clifford Milner, ROYAL BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE - nominated for Best Ensemble Cast at Birmingham Film Festival, **ORGAN BROS** (2 x 15-minute eps) sci-fi web-series for TURNSPIT PRODUCTIONS. Supported by Story Futures and Creative England as part of their Ideate programme.

TRAINING:

- MA in Theatre Directing (East 15) - supported by an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant
- BA Hons Drama and English (Edge Hill University)

AUDIO DIRECTING includes:

For BBC Audio Drama Award winning Wireless Theatre Company he has directed and produced the four-part series **OMEGA, NIGHT OF THE ORCHID, I HEART AMY, THE MIGHTY CARLINS** selected to be part of the HEAR Now: The Audio Fiction and Arts Festival in Kansas City, USA and the UK Radio Drama Festival 2015 and **COUNTRY LIFE. FEEDING TIME** (as writer-director BBC Radio Manchester), **GUY/MAN/GUY** (for Kick It Down Productions).

As a director-producer he was one of four finalists in Audible's Audio Drama Production Competition in 2019.

"Director Paul Blinkhorn orchestrates the guttural opprobrium and speedy altercations while allowing unspoken emotions to gather and surface...Rush, rush, rush to Wireless Theatre Company's website for a free download of this play" - *The Stage* on The Mighty Carlins

"Being totally in the dark of the storyline is the best way to listen to this adventure of romance, deceit, passion, and terror. The storyline has been expertly written, expertly acted and expertly produced and it is well worth listening to." - *The Cult Faction* on The Night of the Orchid

THEATRE (AS DIRECTOR):

Paul has staged worked which has been seen at venues including Oldham Coliseum, HOME, the Old Red Lion (London), Tristan Bates (London), Theatre 503 (London), Manchester Library Theatre, Contact Theatre (Manchester) and the New Diorama. He was also Associate Director at the New End Theatre, where he directed the UK premiere of **74 GEORGIA AVENUE** by Tony and Academy Award nominated writer Murray Schisgal.

THEATRE (AS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR):

TWO 2 by Jim Cartwright (World Premiere, Octagon Theatre Bolton, Dir: David Thacker), **TWO** by Jim Cartwright (Octagon Theatre Bolton, Dir: David Thacker), **FROZEN** by Bryony Lavery (Manchester Library Theatre Company, Dir: Roger Haines - nominated for 'Best Production' at the Manchester Evening News Theatre Awards).

OTHER SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE:

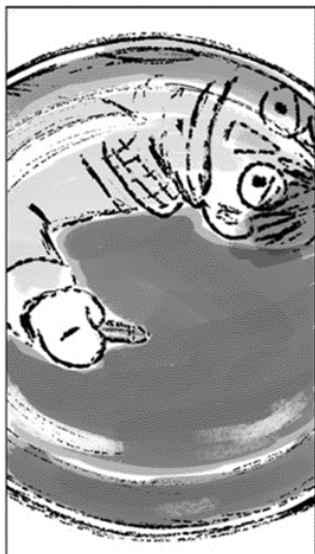
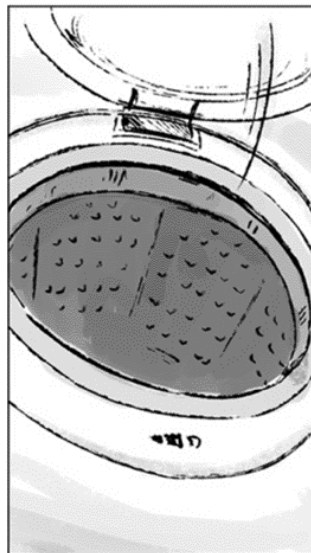
Paul has experience as an AD and Producer as well as an educator.

REFERENCES: David Thacker Television and Theatre Director

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

THE END

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(a still from the 2-minute proof of concept for 'The End')



(a behind-the-scenes still from the 2-minute proof-of-concept for 'The End')

THE FULL OUTLINE:

The story: A car travels down a country road, passing abandoned vehicles, dilapidated buildings and debris. Scrawled in graffiti down the side of one car it reads - "KEEP GOING" and on another "DON'T STOP!"

In the distance a plume of smoke rises high into the sky far behind them. The car begins to slow and then to swerve. Slowly it judders to a standstill. BANG BANG BANG - someone is inside the boot of the car. KICKING at it furiously.

After a moment the driver's door opens - and a dead body is forced out of the driver's seat. LEWIS - a man who looks like he's been dragged through a brush backwards climbs across into the driver's seat. He's injured. He holds his side. He struggles - his hands are cabled tied together. From the boot of the car he hears "Let me out, let me out". He turns over the engine - and it FAILS. Again and again. The armrest on the backseat FLIES FORWARD and A FACE BURST THROUGH the gap between them. It is as if the boot is giving birth. IT'S A PUPPET. This is BEAR; she's three-foot and feisty is trying to squeeze through the small gap.

She's alive and KICKING - she gives up and turns her attention to her own bound hands. She makes an attempt to chew her way through the cable that binds them together. He holds out his hands in her - he wants assistance. "Don't look at me", she says, shaking her head. "I'm not a fucking Swiss army knife!"

LEWIS turns his attention back to trying to start the car. He glances in the rear-view mirror. SHE'S GONE. He then turns around to look for her. She's not there. He turns back to the steering wheel. She startles him, her face pressed up close to the driver's window. She's standing on the dead body of the car's original driver. She says "Do you not want the gun?" - lifting it up into view. He ignores her. He makes one last desperate attempt to start the car.

THE EARTH begins to tremor. AND then intensifies. The scented fir tree hanging from the rearview mirror begins to sway. THE RADIO bursts to life. A series of unrelated words and disjointed sounds and voices explode from the speakers of the car. Its loud.

He leaves the car. Eager to avoid detection they run to the treeline. We watch them disappear.

They emerge from the trees and walk up to the door of a farmhouse to seek refuge. IT'S LOCKED. They call out, but no-one answers. LEWIS forces the front door open and they enter. Its deserted. It was clearly once a loving family home, but now everything is covered in a sheet of white dust.

The dining room table is still set - BUT THE FOOD ON IT is half-eaten and mouldy. LEWIS checks outside to see if they have been followed. He barricades the doors. He then goes to the house phone to check it - its DEAD. He can't call for help. He throws it against the wall. WINCES. He's in pain, but does his best to hide it. She reprimands him - "And what will that achieve?"

He sits down - amongst the previous occupants' belongings. BEAR, having placed the gun on one of the kitchen worktops continues to look around.

LEWIS looks at the gun. He fears the sinister forces that are hunting him down. There is no way out. They will find him. They ALWAYS DO. He's sure of it.

His only means of escape is to take his own life before they arrive and take it from him. But he will need BEAR to assist him - to ensure that he's successful. He wants HER to help him.

She see him looking at the gun. He asks her and she refuses. She tries to defuse the situation - with humour -but only ends up making light of his plight. She shows him a handful of bullets. SHE ALWAYS KNOWS WHATS BEST. She removed them earlier - She GOADS him - by swallowing the bullets - ONE by ONE. As though eating her favourite bag of sweets. He rushes at her in desperation, SHAKES her, turns her upside down AND sticks his hand down her throat - all in an attempt to retrieve the bullets.

He fails. He SINKS to the ground...He's finding it tricky to breath. And it doesn't go unnoticed. // He chooses to talk AND she decides to listen. Even if it doesn't all sink in. // He reveals the true extent of his fears - of what will await him if he is found. He's not a coward. He's seen it before. With others. With people he cared for. The endless pain. He tells her that he wishes he'd done things differently and now it's too late. He's angry - at everyone.

She wants to lift his spirits. To give him HOPE, but it's hard to muster. She NEEDS HIM to fight. "You need to get to your feet and dust yourself off" /// He feins a smile.Laughs. "That's hard when there's little more than dust left". She offers to rustle up something to eat - if he goes upstairs to freshen himself up. They'll talk more later.

In the bathroom LEWIS starts to run a bath. He unbuttons his shirt. Touching his chest. Its covered in painful bruises. EVERY VEIN on his torso is BLACK - as if his blood has been consumed by blackness. His body has been ravaged. He opens the medicine cabinet - it's EMPTY.

BEAR is downstairs working her way around the house collecting every potential hazard and throwing it out of the window: toaster, blender, bleach and the entire contents of the cutlery drawer.

Back in the bathroom, LEWIS is lying in the bath, his head fully submerged. He's holding his breath. Longer and longer. He's found a moment of solitary peace. From underneath the water, WE see BEAR appear above him. The water begins to flow down the plughole. The bathplug dangles from her hand. LEWIS is not impressed. "What are you doing?"

LEWIS dressed in a novelty bathrobe comes down the stairs - joining BEAR in the kitchen. On the table is a single bowl of cornflakes and a packet of crackers. "Is this all there is?" he asks her. She shrugs - "Oh, sorry, no tin opener".

BEAR sits at the far end of the table and stares at LEWIS as he opens the pack of crackers. He hates crackers. But he's also very stubborn. He starts to eat. To Chew. She continues to watch him. To supervise. He's curious - "You never eat." He moves on to his bowl of stale cornflakes. "What, no spoon? ... "Don't talk with your mouth full!" "WHO DOESN'T HAVE SPOONS???" She pauses for a moment "And we don't have any almond milk either. And you can sod off if you think I'm going out to get lattes!"

The sound of helicopters can be heard approaching. They've been found. BEAR'S caught off guard. It has to be now. LEWIS panics. He lifts her from her chair and throws her in the washing machine, locking her inside. She pleads with him to let her out. Not to be rash. He tells her that HE'S SORRY.

He thinks - Shit, what am I going to do now? He makes a decision. He places his head in the oven, turns all the dials, takes a few deep breaths and WAITS. From inside the washing machine BEAR breaks the silence - she shouts - "It's electric".

The ground begins to tremor as it did before. From inside the house we hear what sounds like fast approaching vehicles. The tremoring grows. The bowl of cornflakes CRASHES to the ground. Blinding lights flood through the windows. BUT we don't see who or WHAT is causing them. LEWIS rages at those outside. He won't let them take him.

BUT he has nowhere to turn. BEAR realises that THEY are here. It's now or NEVER. BEAR begins tapping on the glass window of the washing machine – BUT IT sounds different. She's holding a bullet in her hand. The sounds outside continue. The lights become more intense. LEWIS lets her out.

SHE hands HIM the bullet. She won't hold him back. She won't stop him. He retrieves the gun from the table and they sit side by side on the sofa...For a moment. Gently his hands run across the fabric and places the gun on the pillow. Its SOFT – COMFORTING. He loads the bullet into the magazine. Puts it into the gun. Racks it. BEAR reaches out and places her hand on LEWIS' arm - it's OK. She's there for him.

There's a pounding on the door. The barricade rattles – becoming more and more unstable. Outside the shadows of his pursuers move through the beams of light - temporarily casting the house into darkness. Lewis picks up the gun. The barricade falls, the door opens and everything crashed to the ground in slow motion. Lewis raises the gun. A bright flash from the muzzle of LEWIS' gun fills the room. It is accompanied by the sound of a solitary gunshot. All falls silent.....

On the sofa LEWIS lies dead.

As the lights and the sounds return we see that he's NOW ALONE.

BEAR is no longer here. As we turn away we are blinded by the beams of light.

And we – FADE OUT. CREDITS. THE END