

“Gun Z”



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LOGLINE

A college student goes on a frenzied mission to reclaim a gun that his lover stole from him.

...THEO, a mixed race college student, and JESS, his tall, edgy white lover, enter an off license, looking for some wine. As they are looking, the shop is held up by thieves in bike helmets. THEO, taking out a gun, averts the robbery, but takes the CCTV footage, not wanting to be found out. Later that night, he confesses to JESS that he found the gun that was used weeks before, and it has since given him new purpose, new life, and makes him feel safe.

In the morning, THEO goes to his therapy appointment, and they talk obliquely about an object that he found, and the negative effects that could arise from it. THEO is not having it, and likes how it makes him feel. He returns home to find JESS has gone, and so has his gun. He spends the next few days trying to find it, threatening his friends, getting picked up by the Police, having a reunion with his estranged mum, and finally finding the gun that has eluded him.

But finding the gun comes at a terrible price as he is quickly led into a world of danger, obsession and murder'...

SYNOPSIS



KEY CHARACTERS

THEO (18) stylish, artistic, a little odd, mixed race lad from a black father and a white mother. A disillusioned literature student, with a curiosity for the world. He is searching for an identity in the aftermath of family revelations.

JESS (17) alternative, edgy, with a short black-bob circa Natalie Portman in 'Closer'. A fellow student with a lust for life, always looking for the next experience. Has sex with THEO and steals the gun, betraying his trust and adding to his conflict.

DETECTIVE A (30's) a black female Superintendent with the Met, new to the position, unpracticed but utterly resolute. Questions THEO when his friend commits suicide, but is determined to uncover the truth about his involvement with a missing gun.

THERAPIST (40) THEO'S therapist. Very much a professional that simply listens and offers advice. A small role but an important one. He is the greek chorus to our audience, articulating what Theo sometimes cannot.

MUM (40's) mother of THEO, estranged from her son because of a lie she told about THEO'S father. She tries to reconnect with him, but finds it hard to find common ground. Kind, needy, and as desperate as THEO.

WILL (19) JESS'S idiot ex boyfriend, pithy, funny, and pathetic.



INTENT

We want to make Gun Z a stunning psychological crime drama, akin to Paul Schrader, Akira Kurosawa, Damian Chazelle and the Safdie brothers.

It will explore the themes of belief, anxiety, control, obsession, power, and morality or its coded absence. Our film will attempt to be an accurate representation of middle class art students set against the very urban backdrop of multi-cultural South East London.

What happens when a disillusioned, but conscientious person such as THEO finds an object such as a gun? How does it affect his ethics? His beliefs? His behaviours? We want to normalise this discovery and ask the question... what does the gun mean to you?

Inspired by the 'God-Complex', found in Tarrt's The Secret History, or Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment, we are seeking to explore the role of the misguided student, above the shackles of society, asserting his will to power. We are interested in how the gun itself fuels this idea.

The gun will be represented as an almost malignant evil, taking hold of Theo's heart and soul, turning him from a benevolent student into a wayward murderer. Think how the ring changes Frodo in Lord of the Rings, or the Invisibility corrupts Griffin in The Invisible Man.



THEMES/CONTENT

In the aftermath of his white MUM telling him that his real black DAD ran away when she was pregnant, THEO questions the very fabric of who he is, pushing him towards a new identity. Issues of race and heritage come to the surface, and he seeks solace in the gun.

Searching for this identity, It gives him something to aspire to, to believe in, to worship even; almost idolatrous. But as the gun slowly corrupts THEO'S world view, he becomes cold, harsh and almost fascist in his pursuit of what he thinks is his, almost by divine right. Discovery turns into entitlement. Possession leads to obsession. THEO is not to know that ultimately, he cannot cope with the power that it gives him.

Further allegiance to the gun comes in the form of anxiety, fuelled by Brexit, political volatility, climate change, rising inequality, sexual confusion, insecure job markets, and an algorithm-driven world run by technology we don't understand, has led people into a profound existential crisis. In the advent of global news and 24hr media coverage, we can now watch and listen and digest all of this, all the time.

In the absence of religion, so many young people are turning to different belief systems in order to feel part of something greater than themselves. For some, it is the climate, for others veganism, activism, art, race, radical politics or simply trying to be a moral person.

For THEO, the gun is his religion, representing security, safety and serenity.

STYLE/PHOTOGRAPHY

This will be bold, stylish, momentous cinema, running approximately 25-30 mins in length.

We want the film to have a Gothic/Urban feel to the environment. Buildings need to jut and impose, dwarfing its characters. The streets need to feel rough, insalubrious but glimmering with hope. The world THEO sees will be magic-realist, heightened and fantastic in it's presentation.

Roaming steadicams and fast dolly shots will be utilised to create the frenzy, fear and obsession of what is happening inside THEOS heart and mind. The camera also needs to move through the film with an uncommon urgency and curiosity.

In order to achieve a cinematic look that is worthy of our grand designs, we will shoot the film on the Arri Alexa Mini with Cooke Anamorphic/i lenses, lending it a rich, widescreen, painterly aesthetic with bursts of pulsating neon colour in the aspect ratio of 2.55:1.

The lighting will be specifically chiaroscuro, borrowing from the noir genre. It needs to express a bold contrast between light and dark, like Darius Khondji (Se7en), Harris Savidas (The Yards), and Gordon Willis (The Godfather).

South East London will be a character unto itself. Areas such as Peckham, East Dulwich, Deptford, and Camberwell must be shown in all it's grime and glory. We will shoot in real and plausible locations where possible to help achieve a level of authenticity.



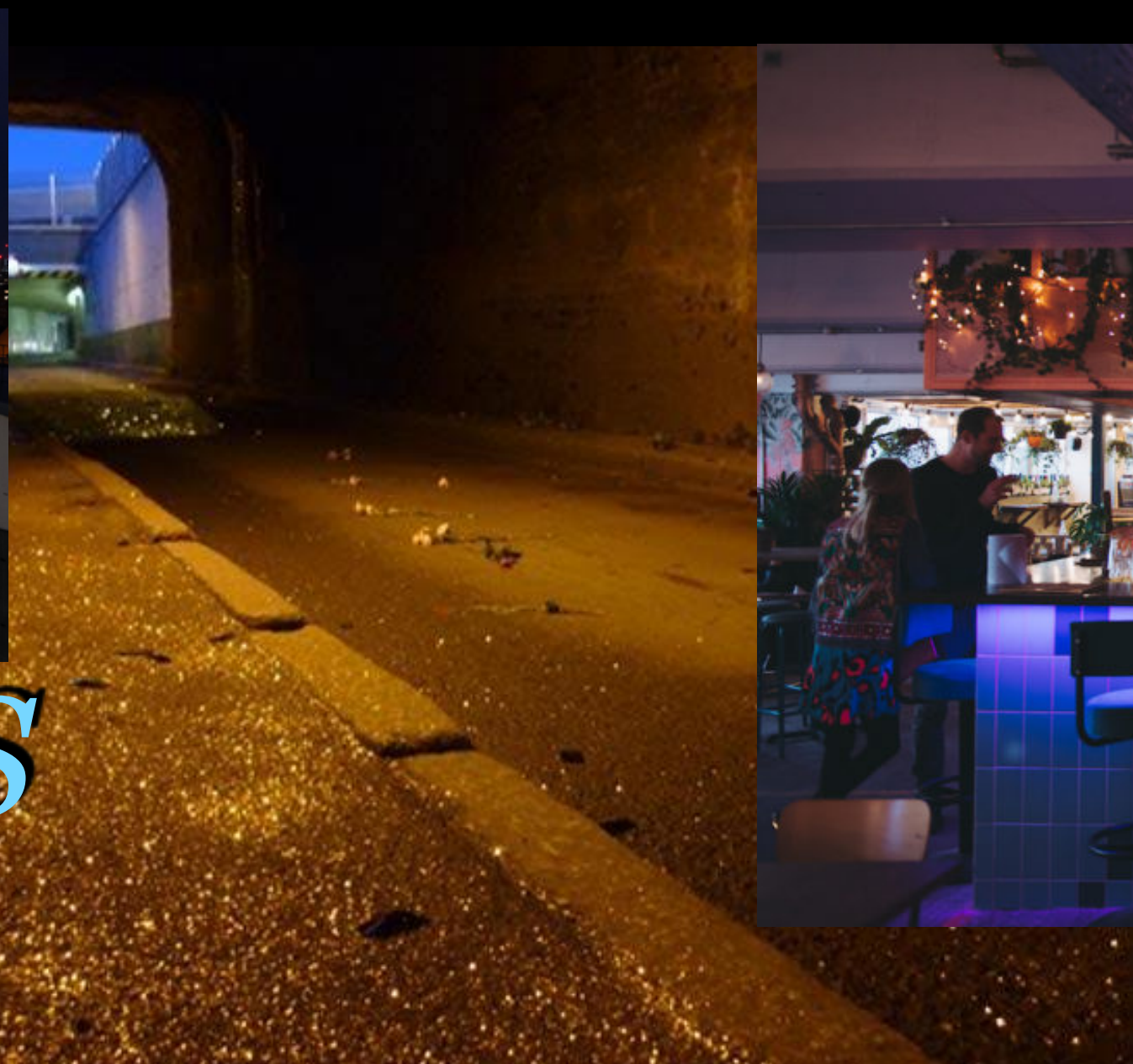
MUSIC

We want the sound to be unique. It must evoke a strangeness in THEO's changing world view, creating a kind of malevolent psychosis, thrilling and abhorrent. It must highlight the duality, the dissonance and the inevitable tragedy of his actions.

The sound design will include the sounds of the gun as a motif; flick of the trigger, click of the clip, shot of the gun.

We will mix this with a classical score of big strings and modern synth - sinister, dark, oppressive, with a modernist twist.

Think Johnny Greenwood - 'There Will Be Blood' and 'You Were Never Really Here', as well as Danny Bensi & Saunder Jurriaans - 'Ozark', 'The Outsider' and 'Enemy'. Other minor influences are Mica Levi, Penderecki and Bernard Hermann.



REFERENCES



COMPARISONS



'Stray Dog' dir. Akira Kurosawa - 1948



'Whiplash' dir. Damien Chazelle - 2014



'First Reformed' dir. Paul Schrader - 2017



'Good Time' dir. Saftie Brothers - 2017