

Birthday Adjustment Disorder

PRESS KIT

SYNOPSIS:

A group of existentially lost romantics attempt to find happiness by embracing a birthday.

TECHNICAL DETAILS:

Running Time: 93 minutes
Production Year: 2018
Country of Origin: Australia
Shot On: C300, C100, 5D III, 5D II, 7D, Go Pro
Aspect Ratio: 16:9 Flat
Format: DCP, Digital
Sound Format: 5.1, Stereo

CONTACT:

Producer: Jane Malone
Email: BirthdayAdjustmentDisorder@gmail.com



KEY CAST:

(in order of appearance)

Benjamin Scott:	Fitz
Christine Callinan:	Cindy
Gil Balfas:	Bart
Jane Malone:	Harriet
Steve Lynch:	Mike
Andrew Den:	Will
Suzie Cubillo:	Rach
Gary Brun:	Ed
Michela Carattini:	Sam
Brendan Casey:	Jimmy



KEY CREW:

Writer, Director, Producer:

Jane Malone

Co-Producers:

Alicia Hannan, Kerrie Hannan,
Stephanie Hughes, Juliette Kong

Cinematography:

Ben Chakravorty, Antoine Mike,
Tom Roberts, Mike Smith

Editors:

Enzo Tedeschi, Gary West, Adrian
Nugent

Sound:

Rob Budinski

Composer, Music and

Sound Supervisor:

Joel Geist

Designer:

Sarah FitzGerald



ABOUT THE STORY:

Birthday Adjustment Disorder is an independent Australian feature film about adjustment and anxiety. Birthday anxiety, status anxiety, life anxiety. Filmed as a fly-on-the-wall in Bondi, this fast-paced dramady holds a mirror to one of the most important issues of our time: mental health. Seven thirty-somethings gather to toast a birthday. Among them are a psychologist, psychiatrist, neuroscientist, lawyer, artist, army veteran and a carpenter. All ostensibly happy, cracks in friendships and wine bottles soon appear, revealing an underlying current of deep existential angst. When it's discovered the date is perilously close to the anniversary of the death of a beloved cousin, the night descends into an exploration of shadow and loss which threatens to destroy friendships and lives forever.



ABOUT THE PRODUCTION:

Birthday Adjustment Disorder is a micro-budget feature film produced mostly on location in Bondi, Australia. In the spirit of Mumblecore, using found locations and filmic innovation, the incredibly committed and creative cast and crew worked as a collective to shoot the film was shot on what we think might be a record six cameras - C300, C100, 5D Mark 3, 5D Mark 2, 7D and a Go-Pro. With a nod to French New Wave, *Birthday Adjustment Disorder* marks the feature film directing debut of award winning playwright Jane Malone and is an intimate portrayal of the politics and personalities shaping the contemporary conversation around mental health.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

Birthday Adjustment Disorder is a really personal film for me. It's a dramady about anxiety and depression. I've had anxiety and depression myself, as have many people I know. They're endemic. Overlaying that is the predominant societal message that we should be pursuing happiness, even though that isn't proving to be making us very happy.

The film is set in Bondi, Australia. I lived in Bondi for many years and felt the people I knew there represented the various aspects of the conversation around happiness, anxiety and depression that I wanted to explore. Back from the *Baywatch* beachfront, Bondi is home to an eclectic mix of mental health professionals including psychiatrists, counselors, neuroscientists and researchers, as well as, of course, artists, yogis and people who love nature and the ocean. I came up with the story and characters to further interrogate the politics and personalities framing the mental health debate that I was living and hearing – medicine, psychiatry, neuroscience, and the importance of art, forgiveness, connection and love.

Alongside that, I was desperate to explore female narrative. Too often in film, men get the Hero Myth and women get the Cinderella Myth. Stories are so important. We become the stories we're told and the stories we tell ourselves. And myth is as much a part of the mental health conversation as medication. I wanted to explore what happens to a complex three-dimensional female protagonist attempting to straddle the Hero Myth/Cinderella Myth divide.

I wrote the film so I could shoot it myself. I knew as a first-time feature film director who hadn't been to film school, it would be very difficult to attract funding and investment. Our incredibly committed and creative cast and crew worked as a collective to shoot the film on what we think might be a record six cameras: A 5D Mark II, 5D Mark III, 7D, C100, C300 and a GoPro. We improvised a lot. One of my favourite directing moments was the dolly shot we created by strapping the GoPro to a sliding wardrobe door.

I love seeing films that attempt to authentically wrestle with the vagaries of the human condition: ambition, regret, resilience, vulnerability, the search for meaning, and the power and purpose of love. I hope our audience feels the tussle of that authentic wrestle as much as we did making it.

- Jane Malone



BIOGRAPHIES:

JANE MALONE – WRITER, DIRECTOR, PRODUCER, ‘HARRIET’



Jed Malone was an ABC Triple J Raw Comedy National Finalist and weekly sketch columnist for the Sydney Morning Herald before working as a writer/presenter for ABC TV Comedy (*The O’Loughlin Show*) and a presenter/producer for ABC TV Science (*Quantum*). Jed’s plays include *The Naming*, which was developed by Inscription, *The Rumour* penned whilst writer-in-residence at The Crypt Theatre in Balmain, *Cohabitation*, produced at the Bondi Pavilion and as a rehearsed reading at the Alliance of Resident

Theatres New York, and *The Wedding Trifle*, awarded the Varuna Fellowship for Drama. She has been shortlisted for the NSW Premier’s Prize for Literature, Commended in the Fellowship of Australian Writers’ Awards, is the recipient of the NSW Order of Australia Emerging Directors’ Grant (Ensemble Theatre) and was awarded the Deafness Forum of Australia Members’ Choice prize for co-producing Australia’s first universally accessible play. She recently completed a Screen NSW TV Directors’ Attachment on Essential Media/Nine Network’s *Doctor Doctor* (USA: *The Heart Guy*) and is developing a number of projects for stage and screen.

CHRISTINE CALLINAN – ‘CINDY’

Christine grew up on the stage singing in Eisteddfods and performing in musicals and plays from the age of four, including lead roles in *Okhaloma*, *Godspell*, *Assassins* and *Cohabitation*. Along the way her love of acting grew so she completed the ScreenWise Course and has since appeared in guest roles on *A Model Daughter* (Channel 10), *Crownies* (ABC) and lead roles in many short films including a number of Tropfest entries. Christine graduated from the University of Technology Sydney with a business degree and is currently GM Marketing and Communications, Pacific at CBRE. While she still very much enjoys acting, most recently her focus has been producing and in December 2017 the TV documentary series *The Place Makers*, which she conceived and produced, was aired on Channel Nine.



MICHELA CARATTINI – ‘SAM’



Michela has an unhealthy interest in languages, obscure autobiographies and criminal behaviour. A graduate of AMDA, Columbia University and Sydney University, she has performed on stages in New York City (*‘Helga’* in off-broadway’s Cabaret & *‘The Angel’* in *‘Angels in America’*), Heidelberg (Stadttheater’s *‘The Student Prince’* & Houston Grand Opera’s *‘Street Scene’*), Prague (Svandovo Divadlo’s *‘Flamenco de Colores’*) and Sydney (*‘Lady Macbeth’* in FSTC’s *‘Macbeth’* and *‘Charlie’* in FSTC’s *‘Goodbye Charlie’*). Her film work in *‘54 Days’* (2014), *‘The 33rd Wedding’* (2015), *‘Le Matinal’* (2015), *‘Unspoiled by Feminism’* (2016) and *‘Tendenza ad Amar’* (2017) garnered her seven international acting awards and nominations in under two years, plus four writing awards. Most recently, she played *‘Chelsea Willis’* in Channel 9’s new cop drama *‘Bite Club’* (2018), and her feature screenplay *‘Carmen & Bolude’* won the most recent Mango Tree Story/HubScript LIVE Read Session. So as to not get bored, she alternates her jet-setting glamorous life with endless dirty nappies and interrupted sentences. www.michelacarattini.com

GIL BALFAS – ‘BART’

Gil Balfas is an actor from Sydney, having trained in Stanislavski under Hayes Gordon at Ensemble Acting Studios, he has 22 IMDB credits and performed in 22 plays. Gil started with roles in *‘All Saints’* (2002), *‘Packed to the Rafters’* (2008), *‘Underbelly’* (2009), and *‘The Jesters’* (2009). In 2010 he appeared in the ABC online drama series *‘Bluebird AR’*, where he played the billionaire *‘Harrison Wyld’*. In 2011 he played *‘Julian Tenison Woods’* in *‘Blessed Mary: A Saint for All Australians,’* a TV documentary on Mary McKillop.



Following that he played a lawyer *‘Ari Badrossian’* again for the ABC in *‘Crownies’* (2011). Most recently he was *‘Billy Crudup’s Stand-In’* on *‘Alien Covenant’* (2017) for Ridley Scott and this year has a small role on *‘Home & Away’* (2018). In June 2018 he can be seen playing the romantic lead *‘Gideon’* in *‘Things Not to do After a Breakup’* at The Depot Theatre, Marrickville.

ANDREW DEN – ‘WILL’



Andrew graduated from QUT with a degree in Fine Arts (Acting) in 2012. In the years since he has made two guest role appearances in *‘Home and Away’* (2013 and 2016), as well as *‘Secret City’* (Foxtel) and the recently aired *‘Friday on my Mind’* (ABC). As well as acting, Andrew is passionate about conservation and his beloved Sydney so you’ll often find him in his other roles where he is employed at Taronga Zoo or sailing square riggers.

STEVE LYNCH - 'MIKE'

Steve Lynch is an actor, writer, comedian and improviser. In addition to his role in *'Birthday Adjustment Disorder'*, he has appeared in the horror film *'Muirhouse'*, and the California-filmed short *'Whispers In The Wind'*, as well as numerous theatre productions. He has performed at comedy festivals in Sydney, Melbourne, Los Angeles and New York including with his one man show *'US of Eh?!?'*, detailing his year as an actor living in Los Angeles. Steve is also one of Australia's top improvisers, having won the NSW Theatresports Cranston Cup and twice represented NSW at the National Championships. As a writer, he was part of the AWGIE winning team for *'Wednesday Night Fever'* (ABC) and has also written for *'Comedy Inc.'* and *'The Glasshouse'*.



BENJAMIN SCOTT - 'FITZ'



Benjamin Scott is a British born Australian actor living in Sydney. Benjamin started performing as an actor and dancer at an early age through to his 20s, appearing in professional theatre and dance productions across the UK. During a brief hiatus from acting he travelled and worked in various industries across the world, realising that acting remained his life's passion. Benjamin resumed his acting career in Sydney, finding success by drawing on his extensive life experiences and applying them to different roles, across a range of genres. He now splits his time between Australia and the UK performing in a variety of productions across film, TV and theatre.

ALICIA HANNAN - CO-PRODUCER

Alicia has enjoyed a diverse range of experiences across the media industry. Alicia saw first-hand the challenges of the film industry whilst working as a production assistant on a straight-to-video-store-discount-bin feature film. Stints in production followed on much-loved kids' shows such as *'Bananas in Pyjamas'* and *'Play School'*, then entertainment programs *'Review'* and *'Media Watch'*, before moving into acquisitions for children's programs at ABC TV. Enjoying the business side of the industry, Alicia moved to Southern Star (now Endemol Shine), managing the operations of the distribution business, before taking on a sales role to sell content into the Asian and Latin American markets. Excited and challenged by the emerging digital landscape, Alicia transitioned to digital product management roles at Fairfax Media, managing websites and apps for the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age, then Network Ten's Broadcast Video On Demand and livestreaming service Tenplay. Alicia loved her return to the film space with *'Birthday Adjustment Disorder'*.

KERRIE HANNAN – CO-PRODUCER

Throughout her childhood Kerrie Hannan's parents ran a cinema. Her exposure to movies instilled an abiding appreciation of the power of story. This led to a degree in Mass Communications and a career in television. She is a former ABC TV program maker with credits covering a range of genres and formats including magazine stories; short and long form documentary; studio-based interview programs and panel discussions. Her longest stint at ABC Television was on *'Compass'*, where she produced, wrote and directed 20 half hour documentaries exploring issues of faith, belief and the search for meaning. She joined Shine Australia for the 15 part documentary series, *'Class of'*, profiling a group of school students struggling to make a fresh start. She is currently working on a documentary project and pursuing post graduate studies. *'Birthday Adjustment Disorder'* is her first involvement in feature film.

JULIETTE KONG – CO-PRODUCER

Juliette has been involved in theatre since childhood. She made her professional debut for the Australian Opera as a singer in their production of *'Boris Gudenov'*. She graduated with Bachelors of Arts and Social Work from Sydney University in 1995 and with a Diploma in Performance Studies from Ensemble Acting Studios in 2002. She has since featured as an actor in corporate training programs and videos for the Pam McLean Cancer Communications Centre, the Cognitive Institute and Westpac Bank. She featured in numerous theatrical productions while studying at Ensemble Studios, has featured in short films, including *'The Colour Red'* as part of 'Short and Sweet', and as a singer was one part of an acoustic duo that played regularly around Sydney's Inner West. Juliette has diverse production and stage management experience. Juliette has worked as producer on Jed Malone's two other productions *'The Rumour'* at the Crypt Theatre, Balmain and *'Cohabitation'* at the Bondi Pavillion and was thrilled to be involved in the latest production.

SARAH FITZGERALD – DESIGNER

Sarah Fitzgerald trained as an architect and an artist and has enjoyed working in both fields over the years. The opportunity to work in the set design with Jed Malone during the production of her film *'Birthday Adjustment Disorder'*, was an exciting opportunity that brought Sarah's experience in design and art together. Sarah studied architecture at The University of Sydney and graduated in 1998. After practicing as an architect for some years, she returned to study Fine Arts at The National Art School and completed her Masters in Painting in 2017. Sarah's interdisciplinary art practice includes painting, sculpture and installations that respond to the conditions of a particular site, including interior places and the urban landscape beyond. She currently divides her time between working as an interior designer, and making her own artwork for exhibition.

CREDITS:

CAST:

Fitz:	Benjamin Scott
Cindy:	Christine Callinan
Bart:	Gil Balfas
Harriet:	Jane Malone
Mike:	Steve Lynch
Will:	Andrew Den
Rach:	Suzie Cubillo
Ed:	Gary Brun
Sam:	Michela Carattini
Jimmy:	Brendan Casey
Kate:	Val Weldon
Dave:	Phil Willis
Richard Wilkins:	Richard Wilkins
Radio Interviewer:	Eden Falk
Souvenir Salesman:	John Morris
Baby Oscar:	Francesca Kong
Waitress:	Marni Walsh
Girl at Bar:	Lily Baafi
Barman:	Rob Deacon
Girl in Bar:	Beatrice Ludwig
Organic Shop Attendant:	April Gadd
Lucinda's Dad:	Brett Heath
Barman:	Nick Schuman
Voice of Pilates Client:	Katrina Doyle
Voice of Lucinda's Dad:	Tony Baine
Adult Oscar:	Nick Barkyl
Dave Stunt Double:	Doug Samuel
Bondi Pavement Walkers:	Sarah FitzGerald, Bernadette Hughes, Darcy Hughes, Genevieve Hughes, Glenn Hughes, Rex Hughes, Stephanie Hughes, Louise Kyle-Robinson, Naomi Malone, Natalie O'Dea, Sophia Radocaj, Eve Shaw.

CREW:

Writer, Producer, Director: Jane Malone
Co-Producers: Alicia Hannan, Kerrie Hannan, Stephanie Hughes, Juliette Kong
Associate Producers: Naomi Malone, Kerryn Payne
Cinematography: Ben Chakravorty, Antoine Mike, Tom Roberts, Mike Smith
Editors: Enzo Tedeschi, Gary West, Adrian Nugent
Script Editors: Emily Maguire, Bernard Cohen
Script Consultant: Larissa Behrendt
Sound: Rob Budinski
Composer, Music and Sound Supervisor: Joel Geist
Designer: Sarah FitzGerald
Production Consultant: Brendan Fletcher
Line Producers: Katrina Doyle, Beatrice Ludwig
Additional Editing: Phil Donnison, Graeme Robertson
Additional Cinematography: Barry Nichols, Benjamin Scott, Felicity Jenkins, Robbie Budinski
Camera Assistant: John Knowles
Photography: Felicity Jenkins
Macrophotography: Kerryn Payne
Food Stylist: Sarah Boswell
Sommelier: Elio Cordaro
Makeup: Brigette Serhan
Additional Makeup: Trenna Austin
Finance: Jane Stanton
Location Manager: Therese Malone
Community Manager: Phil Willis
Time Online Managers: James Hutton, Jane Stanton
Catering: Verde Restaurant
Productions Assistants: Bianca Ceissman, Paula Conroy, Frances Cordaro, Robyn Gallagher, Danni Kleinig, Louise Kyle-Robinson, Matt Reede, Vanessa Smith, Heidi Turnock, Tracy Unwin
Script Development Hosts: Noni Lewis, Naomi Malone, Natalie O’Dea, Mark Ragg, Ant Radocaj, Doug Samuel, Simonne Shepherd, Will Shepherd, Jo Shulman
Graphic Design: Kate O’Dea
Lucinda’s Poster: Kate O’Dea
Oscar Funeral Notice: Natalie O’Dea, Angela O’Dea
Crisis Line Sign: Matt Burnicle
Community Garden Sign: Matt Burnicle
Data Wrangler: Paul Ruggieria
Legals: Arts Law Australia

MUSIC:

'You Have My Heart'

'Mil's Trills'. Written and performed by Amelia Robinson. Produced by Anthony 'Rocco' Gallo, Co-Produced by Lorenzo Wolff. Vocals, Ukulele, Guero, Glockenspiel: Amelia Robinson. Tambourine: Anthony "Rocky" Gallo. Bass: Lorenzo Wolff. Drums: Justin Hofmann. Baritone Horn: Jesse Neuman. Piano: Dean Jones. Violin: Jeff Young. Backup Vocals: Tessa Morgan, Rie Aldous, Samuel MG Robinson, Jahkai Georges. © Mil's Trills.

'Brooklyn'

'Mil's Trills'. Written and performed by Amelia Robinson. Produced by Anthony 'Rocco' Gallo, Co-Produced by Lorenzo Wolff. Vocals, Ukulele, Hammond & Percussion: Amelia Robinson. Bass, Guitar: Lorenzo Wolff. Guitar, Percussion: Anthony "Rocky" Gallo. Drums: Justin Hofmann. Keyboard: Nick Semrad. Hype Chorus: Jesse Neuman, Tara Field, Lorenzo Wolff, Anthony "Rocky" Gallo. © Mil's Trills.

'Make No Mistake'

'Coronet Blue' 2007. Written by John Rooney, Kenny Miller and Paul Berton. Produced by Mitch Easter, John Rooney. Recorded by Mitch Easter. Vocals: John Rooney. Guitar, Chamberlin, Backing Vocals: Mitch Easter. Bass: Don Dixon. Drums: Simon Kirke. Organ, Electric, Piano: Ian McLagan. Backing Vocals: Jamie Hoover, Greg Shafritz. Flute, Backing Vocals: Georgina Johnston. Harmonica: Jim Hoke. © Coronet Blue.

'Mother May I?'

'Mil's Trills'. Written and performed by Amelia Robinson. Produced by Anthony 'Rocco' Gallo, Co-Produced by Lorenzo Wolff. Vocals, Ukulele, Organ & Percussion: Amelia Robinson. Sousaphone / Bass: Lorenzo Wolff. Drums: Justin Hofmann. Saxophone: Steve Elson. Backup Vocals: Alex Goldman, Gilad Robinson, Nadav Robinson, Charlie McIntosh. Hype Chorus: Amelie Marriot, Isla Munnik, Leo Munnik, Jake Caserta, Noah Samuel, Olivia Grace Vassallo, Rie Aldous, Theo Lawrie, Theo Samuel. © Mil's Trills.

'Springtime'

Written, performed and produced by Anthony Russell. © Anthony Russell.

'Waiting Forever'

'Coronet Blue' 2013. Written by John Rooney and Tom Watson. Produced by Kevin 'The Caveman' Shirley. Vocals: John Rooney. Guitar: Blondie Chaplin, Pat Thrall. Keyboards: Arlan Schierbaum. Base: Michael Rhodes. Drums: Anton Fig. © Coronet Blue.

'Five Star Home'

Written and performed by Clair Hayes. Guitar: David Hinds and Clair Hayes. Bass: Chris Haigh. Keyboard: Liz Donaldson. Recorded and mixed by David Hinds. © Clair Hayes.

‘Talking To Me’

‘The Wisemans Circus’. Produced by Ben Chakravorty, Glen Geerin.

Words and arrangement: Ben Chakravorty. © Ben Chakravorty.

Distribution: CD Baby.

‘Object Pop Part 2’

Written and produced by Joel Geist. © Joel Geist.

‘Never Coming Home’

‘The Wisemans Circus’. Produced by Ben Chakravorty, Glen Geerin.

Words: Ben Chakravorty. Arrangements: Glen Geerin. © Ben Chakravorty.

Distribution: CD Baby.

‘Who Put The Fire In My Belly’

Written, performed, recorded and produced by ‘The Little Thieves’. Guitar: Mark Cameron. Drums: Chris Colquhoun. Violin: Jeremy Kong. © ‘The Little Thieves’

‘Lomi’

‘Mil’s Trills’. Written and performed by Amelia Robinson. Produced by Anthony ‘Rocco’ Gallo, Co-Produced by Lorenzo Wolff. Vocals, Ukulele, Organ & Percussion: Amelia Robinson. Sousaphone, Bass, Lap Steel: Lorenzo Wolff. Drums: Justin Hofmann. Guitar: D.V.S.. Keyboard: Dean Jones. Claps: Jesse Neuman, Tara Field, Lorenzo Wolff, Anthony “Rocky” Gallo. “No” Chorus: Gilad Robinson, Alex Goldman, Nadav Robinson, Amelie Marriot, Isla Munnik, Leo Munnik, Jake Caserta, Noah Samuel, Olivia Grace Vassallo, Rie Aldous, Theo Lawrie, Theo Samuel. © ‘Mil’s Trills’

‘My Constant’

‘The Shadow Catchers’. Lyrics, music and performed by Juliette and Jeremy Kong.

Recorded, mixed and produced by Chris Colquhoun. © ‘The Shadow Catchers’.



ART:

Alicia Hannan, 'Distance', acrylic on canvas, 1998.
Alexander Gallagher, 'Tinker Truck', watercolour on paper, 2013
Alexander Gallagher, 'Three Eyed Monsters Return', pastels on paper, 2013
Alexander Gallagher, 'Patterns Party', pastels on paper, 2013
Andrew Den, 'Santori Splash', acrylic on canvas, 2013
Christine Callinan, 'Mike and Harry I', photograph, 2013
Christine Callinan, 'Mike and Harry II', photograph, 2013
Felicity Jenkins, 'Lucinda and Ed', photograph, 2013
Jed Malone, 'Will', photograph, 2013
Jed Malone, 'Will and Rach', photograph, 2013
Lorna Munro, 'Ruby Langford', oil on canvas, 2013
Lorna Munro, 'Untitled', oil on canvas, 2013
Louise Kyle-Robinson, 'Coming Home', acrylic on canvas, 2012
Louise Kyle-Robinson, 'The Quiet', watercolour and pastel, 2012
Luke Hannan, 'The Dancer', acrylic on canvas, 2004
Kerryn Payne, 'Origin of the Speciest', photograph, 2013
Kerrie Hannan, 'Oscar, Will and Harry', photograph, 2013
Mike Castle, 'Manhattan Skyline', photograph, 2009
Sarah FitzGerald, 'Everything is Upside Down', charcoal on paper, 2011.
Sarah FitzGerald, 'Day in Day out', graphite on paper, 2012.
Sarah FitzGerald, 'On Reflection', charcoal on paper, 2012.
Sarah FitzGerald, 'A Walk on the Beach', photograph, 1995.
Stephanie Williams, 'Collection of 4 Pictures: Dancing on Rainbows', acrylic on canvas, 2007
Suzie Cubillo, 'Brodi', acrylic on canvas, 2013
Suzie Cubillo, 'Phoenix', acrylic on canvas, 2013
Suzie Cubillo, 'BroNix', acrylic on canvas, 2013
Val Weldon, 'Creative Art', acrylic on canvas, 2013
Val Weldon, 'Flowers Grow', acrylic on canvas, 2013
Vanessa Smith, 'Booth Street Bird', mixed media, Year Unknown
Vanessa Smith, 'Coloured Circles', mixed media, Year Unknown
Vanessa Smith, 'Blue Circles', mixed media, Year Unknown

THANKS

Tom Malone
Jim Malone
John and Lois Malone
Alissa Warren
John Morris
Kath and Alec Welsh
Alison and Stuart Green
Charlie Peters
Christine Callinan
Fraser Short
Jay Kong
Chris Culquohoun
Peter Lynch
Antonio Ruggerino
Lorna Munro
Gary West
Rob Joannides

AND

Porch and Parlour Bondi
Art Master
Barefoot Productions
Driftwood Productions
The Watsons Bay Boutique Hotel
Chapter One Bondi
Mamasan Bondi
Transition Bondi
Stuffed Beaver Bondi
Café Ella Chippendale
2GB
Bondi Organics
Waverley Council
Woollahra Council
Arts Law Australia
Freshflowers.com.au
The Ensemble Theatre
Just Organics Bondi Junction
Eora College TAFE
Fats Video

Q&A with JANE MALONE:

What led you to filmmaking?

I worked in comedy and independent theatre for years, and loved that, but I found myself increasingly attracted to the intimacy of film. So often stories happen in secret confidences or stolen looks, moments that can be missed on stage. Film allows such rich communication of subtext and backstory. A deep yearning or hidden regret can be communicated with the slightest tilt of the head. I wanted the film to be an intimate portrayal of life in your thirties, which is so often not what it seems.

Why did you want to make this film?

This is a really personal film for me. The film is about anxiety and depression, both of which I've had, as have lots of people I know. I'm deeply interested in the human condition, and particularly in frailty, vulnerability, meaning and in the power and purpose of love. Anxiety and depression are at epidemic levels yet it feels like so many people still feel like they're suffering alone. Overlaying that is the predominant societal message that we should be pursuing happiness, even though that isn't proving to be making us very happy.

How did you come up with the story?

I lived in Bondi for many years and felt the people I knew there represented the various aspects of the debate around happiness, anxiety and depression that I wanted to explore. Back from the *Baywatch* beachfront, Bondi is home to an eclectic mental health mix, including psychiatrists, counsellors, neuroscientists and researchers, as well, of course, as yogis, artists, journalists and people who love nature and the ocean. I came up with the story and characters to reflect the politics and personalities framing the mental health debate that I was living and hearing – medicine, psychiatry, neuroscience, and the importance of art, forgiveness, connection, purpose and love.

Why is the film called 'Birthday Adjustment Disorder'?

Well it's a parody, but in truth, birthdays can be a time of reflection and sadness. You're getting older, something that's not celebrated in our culture, and there can be a sense of loss, lost time, what might have been. In the film the neuroscientist character 'Ed' defines it as the "simultaneous angst at the physical signs of aging in combination with lack of any other progress in your life". The film is set around the 33rd birthday of the lead 'Lucinda'. I went with '33' in deference to the Pulp lyric: 'A man told me to beware of life at 33. He said, "It was not an easy time for me".' Depression and anxiety are common throughout the thirties, as is suicide. Wise philosophers say it's a time of early life and mid-life collision. I like the Australian Jungian writer David Tacey's take on the internal forces that can be working at this time. In his book 'Gods and Diseases', he writes "Don't ignore the call to die, something inside of you is trying to live. If you don't cut off that part of yourself, you will die."

Tell us about your indie approach to filmmaking?

I wrote the film so I could shoot it myself. I knew as a first-time feature film director, who hadn't been to film school, it would be very difficult to attract funding and investment so I created the characters and plot with limited funds and locations in mind. We shot the film on what I think might be a record six cameras: A 5D Mark II, 5D Mark III, 7D, C100, C300 and a GoPro. One of my favourite directing moments was the dolly shot we created by strapping the GoPro to a sliding wardrobe door. It's interesting to see how the different cameras perform on the big screen. The GoPro really holds up! The locations are all 'found' apart from the lead character 'Lucinda's' apartment, which belonged to a friend who kindly moved out for two weeks so we could shoot there. The removalist boxes in the background, which were set up in the film to depict the arrival of a new flatmate, are actually full of his stuff. I've lived in so many share houses, and the arrival of a new housemate, and their possessions, always brings a little drama which I thought would make for a juicy subplot. Borrowed towels, broken TVs, missing wine - we've all been there.

How big was your on-set crew?

On average, four to five. Co-producer, camera, sound, and one or two others. We had a mini roster of volunteers who did everything from script supervision, to touching up makeup, to holding lights, to answering repeated calls for larger glasses of prop alcohol for the Director. It was a 22-day shoot and our rather unconventional approach to the financial structure I think helped with camaraderie. The production was a community project and we ran it as a co-op so everyone's hourly rate was the same, e.g. a 'producer hour' was the same as a 'script supervision hour'. Each member of the team would enter their hours online so we could keep track of everyone's hourly contribution with the goal of dividing the box office on a pro-rata basis.

What was your approach to casting?

Authenticity. Not only does that bring so much to performance but also to the script, which was workshopped for months. Steve Lynch, who plays the lawyer 'Mike', is a lawyer himself as well being an all-star comedy genius and one of Australia's best Theatresports players. Michela Carattini, who plays the American psychiatrist 'Sam', is American and also has a degree in Criminology. Mother of two Suzie Cubillo, who plays the indigenous artist and mother of two 'Rach', answered a casting ad we put on NITV (National Indigenous Television). It's Suzie's first acting gig since high school and she's a total natural. Christine Callinan, who plays the aspiring actor 'Lucinda', was the lead in a play of mine a few years ago and lived down the road from me, just like our characters in the film. My favourite casting moment was that of Brendan Casey, who plays the Irish character 'Jim'. Brendan was cast after one of his mates in Dublin took a call from another mate in Coogee who'd seen a casting notice in the 'Irish Echo' that he was reading in Edgecliff, who then passed on Brendan's number in Randwick to the Irish mate in Coogee so he could give him my number in Bondi. It was all very Irish.

One of the film's subplots is the exploration of the female hero journey. Would you comment on this in light of the recent gender in film debate?

Only 15% of Australian feature films are directed by women. That's ridiculous. It feels like most people are a bit over talking about gender, especially as gender is so arbitrary, but the stats don't lie. Film is part of a broader intersectional conversation about inclusion, diversity and leadership in general, which is why stories are so important. We become the stories we tell ourselves and the stories we're told. As the lead 'Lucinda' says in the film: "Men get the Hero Myth, women get the Cinderella Myth". I wrote the script a few years ago and since then many great female role models have been on our screens but we still have a long way to go. Hero journeys are at once mythic and individual. I like that when Joseph Campbell was asked about the Heroine journey he said the male and female hero journeys are ultimately the same: they are both the journey towards wholeness. The journey to wholeness was what I wanted to explore for my female lead character, 'Lucinda'. The emphasis society places on appearance is tremendous. As an ex-model and aspiring actor, 'Lucinda' has always been attached to her looks as a key part of her identity, but they've become her prison. As mid-life approaches, she has to do something drastic.

Can you describe the post-production pathway?

The film was initially called *The 33rd Wedding*. I wrote it as a scripted concept wedding video, in the time honoured micro-budget filmmaking tradition of having the video conceit as part of the story, like in *Blair Witch* and *Paranormal Activity*. The film won the Honorable Mention at the 'Idyllwild International Festival of Cinema' (USA). It was then selected for an 'In The Works' screening at Event Cinemas in Sydney, which is an initiative of WIFT (Women in Film and TV) to give female directors assistance with audience test screenings. The feedback was invaluable and from there, I went back to edit.

What are your hopes for the film?

Distribution for micro-budget films is as difficult as ever but of the four trends identified at Cannes MIPCOM for 2018 our film meets half of them. Films about anxiety and depression will apparently be hot sellers this year as will work by female showrunners. Of course, 'showrunner' is a TV term but as a writer/director/producer and actor, who certainly did a lot of running, I'm claiming it.

