

WHIPPY

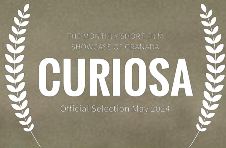
PRESS KIT



SYNOPSIS

Rivalry, greed and calippos...

A messy turf war has erupted between rival ice cream firms in 1980's Glasgow after one rogue vendor is caught selling knobbly bobbles on Mr Sprinkles patch.



TEAM

JAMES ROOKE - WRITER & DIRECTOR

With an advertising agency background spanning 15+ years, James' work has been recognised at Cannes, The British Arrows and D&AD. From the British Army and Confused.com, to Coca Cola and Ferrari, James has worked with some of the world's biggest brands.

While his agency career has driven a passion for writing, his art direction background has fuelled a dedication to creating striking, memorable visuals.

These combined experiences have paved the way for James' desire to create original, well-crafted storytelling that connects with audiences.

JON MUSCHAMP - DOP

With a background in Cinematography from the esteemed NFTS, Jon's talent has been recognized with awards, including a BAFTA for Best Short Animation and the RTS Best Cinematography award.

His debut feature film, The Flood was distributed through Curzon Cinemas. Jon then teamed up with Sebastien Thiel to shoot the BBC comedy pilot Dreaming Whilst Black, which garnered an Emmy nomination.

Jon's collaboration with Lena Headey resulted in the critically acclaimed short film The Trap, earning a BAFTA nomination. Their success enabled them to produce a feature-length version, premiering at the Austin Film Festival.

Throughout his career, Jon has had the privilege of working with a diverse array of notable artists and brands, including KSI, Ikea, Noel Gallagher, Kasabian, Nick Cave, Pale Waves, Madeon, Honne, Dry Cleaning, and many others.

SAM TOPLEY - PRODUCER

After leaving the Met Film School Sam has had 15 years of experience in commercial production, producing films for some of the UK's most prominent brands winning awards at prestigious industry festivals like Cannes, British Arrows and D&AD, shooting around the world with industry leading directors and working with top tier talent like Kevin Bacon, James Corden.

MIA WALTON - PRODUCER

Mia kickstarted her career in production after graduating from Bournemouth University. She has freelanced on various short-form and commercials projects before starting her current role as an in-house Producer at The Vigilante Group.

"Whippy" is Mia's producing debut.

HOLLY RODMAN - CASTING DIRECTOR

Holly is a Casting Associate in film, TV, short films, commercials & music videos for leading Casting Director Kharmel Cochrane with credits including John Wick 4 (2023), Lady Chatterley's Lover (2023), Gran Turismo (2023), The First Omen (2023), Robert Eggers' upcoming film Nosferatu (2023) & Michael Sarnoski's A Quiet Place Pt 3 (2025).

JON CLARK - COMPOSER

An award-winning composer for film, TV, his score for Raging Grace directed by Paris Zarcilla, won Best Original Composition in a Feature Film at the Music and Sound Awards 2023. It was also nominated for Best Original Music at Vashon Island Film Festival.

The film won the Grand Jury Prize at SXSW 2023. His debut feature film score for Kissing Candice directed by Aoife McArdle (Succession) premiered at TIFF and also screened at Berlinale. Other notable credits include NETFLIX Documentary The River Runner. His musical style draws from his classical background as a violinist and pianist, fused with contemporary electronics, modular synthesis and closely knitted sound design.

A man with a dark beard and hair, wearing a white suit jacket and a blue tie, is shown from the chest up. He has several blood splatters on his face and suit. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a serious expression. The background is a wall with large yellow letters spelling out "Quality". The wall is also covered in blood splatters and streaks. The overall scene is dark and gritty, suggesting a horror or thriller movie.

CAST BIOS

Mr Sprinkles - Emun Elliott

Best known for his role's as Don Logan in Paramount's 'Sexy Beast', Kenny in BBC3's 'Guilt' and DI Tony Brightwell in 'The Gold'. His other prominent roles were those of 'Richie' in 'Threesome,' 'Andy Brenner' in 'Trust Me,' and 'John Moray' in 'The Paradise.' He trained at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.



Jon - Kal John

Scottish acting coach known for his role as Barrios in the 2022 film Kingslayer.



Girl - Aaliyah Iruoesiri

Aaliyah, nine, featured in a number of TV commercials is set to star in a well-known Scottish sitcom in November, with details being kept under wraps at the moment for contractual reasons.



Q&A

DIRECTOR - JAMES ROOKE

What was it that drew you to telling this story? -

Initially I was drawn to the story of Glasgow's ice cream turf wars of the 80's. It's a classic juxtaposition between the innocence of chilled confectionary and the criminal underworld.

But I didn't feel like this film would benefit from retelling a version of that story. Instead I wanted draw from the societal tensions that were growing at the time, but rather than focus on the illicit activities, stay in the world of ice cream. It felt like there was comedic energy in that.

Short films are always riddled with limitations and hurdles, can you talk about the biggest challenges and how they were overcome? - James Rooke

Besides the obvious production challenges that come with making short films on a shoestring - the greatest challenge for me personally was locking the script. As a writer/director, you're never going to be satisfied with what's in front of you.

One thing I've learnt from my time in the advertising world is that deadlines and parameters are your ally. Otherwise you'll just keep tweaking and adjusting forever. At some point you need stop. Yes you can keep tweaking - even while you're rolling. But then for me, I wanted to go into the shoot day with a clear idea about what I was looking for from the cast. Luckily we were blessed with an incredible cast who took my tweaking the night before in their stride.

Can you tell us more about those production challenges and how those were overcome? - James Rooke

We had to fit the majority of the film into one day of shooting - all exteriors. So changing light throughout the day was always something we would have to navigate. As long as you plan for it, you can mitigate the effect to a certain degree - or even make a virtue of it. The motivation behind the cinematography was a 'Glaswegian Western' as we coined it. So embracing the midday sun actually played well into visual language of the film.

Emun is so well cast as Mr Sprinkles, can you talk a bit about how the casting process came about? - James Rooke

For me, the old saying 'directing is casting' was never more true on Whippy. The cast were exceptional. I could not have asked for more. So Holly, our casting director is due a huge amount of credit there. Emun's roles in Guilt and more recently Sexy Beast demonstrate just how entertaining he is to watch. Aaliyah and Kal too just carve out their own space on screen. There was some great chemistry on set.

CASTING DIRECTOR - HOLLY RODMAN

Emun seems so right as Mr Sprinkles, like he is a bending branch about to snap at any minute, can you share anything about the casting process and how Emun ended up being the right person for the role? And were there any obstacles to the casting overall or challenges that you had to overcome?

Holly Rodman - We were exploring different actors for that role as a team when the idea of Emun Elliot came up. One of our hopes with this role was to cast someone unsuspected and unobvious in the role and with Emun we felt he'd naturally avoid anything stereotypically attributed to gangster comedies given his talent and instincts.

Subsequently, the obstacle at hand became getting Emun on board with the project since an actor of his calibre doesn't always have the time in their busy schedule to work on a short film. However, when we met him via Zoom it soon became clear that he'd already connected with the project on a personal level. He proceeded to relay an anecdote about how an uncle of his had been an ice cream man when he was growing up.

What he went on to describe, how important his uncle's livelihood was to him, how he lived and died by his ice cream van as a way of supporting his family amidst hard times, was the exact reason we were so excited by Emun as an idea. His ability to connect the script to something so truthful and human, giving his character a rich sense of roundedness, was precisely why he was perfect in the role and we couldn't have been happier that he wanted to get on board.

DOP - JON MUSCHAMP

There is a Western visual language running throughout the film can you speak a bit about how that came about?

The first time I read the script, the standoff between the two ice cream rivals felt perfectly suited to Western visual tropes: a widescreen aspect ratio and tight closeups to capture the character's expressions - who's going to make the move first? It also works well for the comedic reveals within the film, misleading the viewer into thinking it'll lead to a violent ending, but it's a bit of fun.

We used slow camera pushes and movement to help add tension and static frames to focus on the performances.

We luckily managed to get some great anamorphic lenses which is a luxury for a short film. The Cineovision 1.5x lenses are designed with vintage glass but with a modern twist so the image isn't too distorted which can be distracting, particularly for the tight c/u's.

The lenses have a low contrast, which is important to give a period feel for 1980's Glasgow.

This was enhanced in the grade where we wanted to have a nostalgic, desaturated feel, with a little warmth, but avoiding the sepia wash seen in some Westerns

The resources available on a short film always throw challenges, what were the biggest hurdles to getting to the visual language of Whippy, and how did you overcome them? - JON MUSCHAMP

Short Films always face many challenges, largely because of a shortage of time, crew and equipment. Our biggest challenge for this shoot was keeping a consistent look on an unpredictable day of weather in autumnal England.

Luckily, we were blessed with the sun in the morning which we made the most of with a combination of scheduling specific times for each shot and by blocking actors for the perfect sun position, to make the lighting feel seamless. We didn't have a large lighting team with big textiles to control the light, so we could only do so much to augment the natural light for the actors. This meant we had to wait for the clouds to pass at times to make sure it felt consistent and the grade helped a lot to iron out the inconsistencies.

Whilst clouds are to be anticipated at that time of year some of the other challenges were less expected such as rapidly melting ice creams, and getting sunburnt and savaged by midgies in some unseasonal heat. Thanks to a great team, we got through the day despite the weather!

ORIGINAL SCORE / SOUND – JON CLARKE

Finding the sound identity for a film is always a challenge, especially bringing western language and 1980s Glasgow together, can you talk about how the score was developed?

The film is structured in 2 parts. The first half is Voice Over led and the music and sound design needed to give a layer of anxiety and immersion to the viewer that alluded to violence and what was to come. The second half needed to continue to follow the intensity of the dialog and rise and fall with Mr Sprinkle's growing anger, building in intensity into the gun shot and final rug pull.

The music was key in order to fuse this idea of 1980s Glasgow & Western film language. I based it on the idea of an 80s punk band,

a bass guitar that throbs back and forth keeping tempo and coupled it with off kilter other worldly vocal samples. We also lean into genre troupes of typical scores for the classic western but spin them to feel part of the underground world of the ice cream wars. In westerns often you hear a twinkling Celeste theme, in Whippy we decided that sound could come from the ice cream van which starts the music with its nursery rhythm like theme. The music then spawns out from this theme. We also recorded savage like vocals that we tie to Mr Sprinkles character, this underlines his wild nature as the mafia boss.

The film is a dark comedy and I think the way to support this was keeping the tone of the music heavy and dark, the dialogue and the ice creams are in essence the humor but the action and reality behind them is brutal and dangerous which the music represents.

Only In the credits music at the end do we introduce slight humor with more troupes of typical Western scores (whip cracks etc) but I think it was important that these are there to lift the audience at the end, leaving the dialog to do the comedic lifting during the film's main body.

PRODUCER – MIA WALTON

Pulling off a low-budget short is always challenging can you talk about what attracted you to this script and why you wanted to produce it?

I think for me the most challenging part was finding the right location. Our favourite location creatively, ended up being the most difficult location logistically (which always seems to be the case). It came with a lot of barriers and pushbacks, ones that would naturally arise when trying to film in a public place with a replica firearm and also ones that were a bit of a shock - like travellers deciding to inhabit our shoot location the week before!

However, we were lucky enough to have the best team, a special shoutout to the MET film police for allowing us to film and supplying us with a great police officer, PC Danny Tompkins who oversaw everything and kept a smile on everyone's face.

PRODUCER – SAM TOPLEY

Deciding which story to give yourself to as a producer can be a difficult decision given how many scripts you read, what was it about Whippy that got you interested? –

A big part of producing for me is always listening out for stories that spark something. When you work on a production, whether it be short or long form you are going to give a lot of yourself, your time, energy, sleep (!) to the production. So it's important to find something that clicks with you, so it's not work and you don't find yourself months into the job wondering why you've invested so much of yourself into something you don't even like.

As a day job I produce commercials and am often reading scripts I get sent, I worked with James on a job in 2018 and we stayed in touch, he mentioned Whippy one day when we were catching up, he summed it up as a sinister long shot of an ice cream van, covered raspberry sauce, set in troubled 1980's, with tension between ice cream men, taking tonal inspiration

from Raymond Depardon. That as a comedy, I just got it instantly. It's absurd, but firmly rooted in a dramatic reality.

So often I read things that are not written for the short form, and it was so refreshing to have something that has a great story, but is well contained within 5 minutes. What I also really loved about Whippy is that as well as being a self contained story it feels like it could be part of a bigger world. I wanted to know more about these ice cream van traders shooting each other in their callipo's.

TECHNICAL SPECS

Aspect Ratio: 2:39:1

Lenses: 1.5x anamorphic lenses

Camera: Arri Alexa 35

Number of Ice Creams harmed during the making of this film: 103





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Thank you for watching