

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

m a t e



A FILM BY GEORGE-ALEX NAGLE

OCTOBERMEDIA.COM.AU/MATE



LOGLINE

After too long apart, local deadbeat John's attempt to reconnect with school-age Jack over a weekend on the outskirts of Sydney threatens to collapse into chaos and heartbreak.

SYNOPSIS

After a long time apart, local no-hoper John must connect with reserved schoolboy Jack over a weekend in an insular working-class outpost of Western Sydney. However, Jack's attempt to re-establish their relationship is threatened as John's self-destructive nature emerges.

Mate is an uncompromising and complex coming-of-age drama examining themes of masculinity, maturity and the challenges of growth within a changing social landscape.

GEORGE-ALEX NAGLE

DIRECTOR

+61 405 211 804
georgealexnagle@gmail.com
georgealexnagle.com.au

BEN TARWIN

CO-WRITER / PRODUCER

+61 408 400 253
bt@octobermedia.com.au
octobermedia.com.au

CAST

Joshua Brennan as John
Jeremy Blewitt as Jack
Melody Kiptoo as Krystal

Title: Mate

Genre: Drama

Country: Australia

Production Year: 2021

Language: English

(English .srt available)

Duration: 33:03

Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1

Frame Rate: 25 fps

Shooting Format: ARRI Alexa Mini 3.2k

Exhibition Format: 2k DCP, 4k DCP

(FLAT container), 2k Prores, 4k Prores

Sound: 5.1, stereo





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

It began with a simple premise: what would my thirteen-year-old-self think of my thirty-year-old-self? Although it might not be explicit, for my co-writer Daniel and I, this film began as a study in depression, and a means to reconcile our personal demons.

Mate centres around estranged father and son, John and Jack, and it was always important for this to be true two-hander. Told exclusively from either character's perspective, it might have made for a satisfying story, but it wouldn't have been the full story. Indeed, a key element of *Mate* is the transition and ambiguous inheritance, the handing over of perspective and legacy from father to son. We come into the film firmly tethered to John, but as the narrative progresses there is a gradual shift of perspective to Jack.

Jack is something of a blank slate, threatened to be overwhelmed by the force of John's personality. However, John is a man unable to move with the times. His identity, views, attitudes toward women, and his compulsive, ill-considered bravado resemble that of bygone era, to say the least. How can Jack find validation in a father in a crisis of masculinity, as each of them struggles with their need for connection?

The third main character really is the world in which the story takes place, that particular form of suburbia

found ringing the outskirts of Australian cities. This isn't the glittering Sydney of harbour postcards and tourism brochures, in fact it's as far from the Harbour Bridge as you can get before hitting the mountains. John might be a product of this insular working-class pocket of Sydney's periphery, but unlike John, his environment is in a state of flux. New buildings and infrastructure projects are sprouting up all around, reshaping and redefining Sydney's west, physically, economically, and culturally. One day Jack may reap the benefits of this protean new west, but there is no space in it for John.

This is a film about a lot of things, maybe too many: familial ties, personal legacy, fear of maturity, toxic masculinity, the challenges of growth within a changing social landscape, but ultimately, it's about the paths in life you take. Metaphorically, John and Jack are like the same character in different stages in their lives, John looking back on the former life he lost, Jack looking forward to an uncertain possibility, unable to avoid the question: can people really change?

My main priorities when making this were the authenticity of the story-world, and the performances, and in many ways, they are both intimately connected. Our locations around Penrith, Werrington, and Westmead created an immersive world for our cast. It's rough, raw, lived-in and imperfect world, and this was

mirrored in both the photography and the approach of working with the actors. Although this a dialogue driven film, there was a lot of space given to improvise, and make it their own, embracing the realism and chaos of the story at any given moment. This was always going to live or die with the performances, and I'm in awe of our two leads, Joshua Brennan and Jeremy Blewitt, for bringing this story to life.

There were many challenges in making this film, as you would expect in the middle of the COVID pandemic. We lost key crew, cast, and locations with little notice, and had to delay, regroup and reschedule shoot dates several times. Fortunately, we found a sweet spot in between lockdown restrictions. But, although COVID was our biggest impediment, in many ways we couldn't have done it without it.

I speak for my whole team when I say I'm really proud of this film, proud of the multilayered and uncompromising story we crafted, proud of the cast who brought their characters into human forms, and proud of all the professional, creative and technical collaborators who gave it their all in times of such uncertainty, as well as everyone who offered favours and sacrifices big and small.

George-Alex Nagle, Writer / Director



PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

It was always important to us as storytellers to show a side of our city that didn't feature the harbour or the Opera House, to be far truer to a sense of place than that we had been accustomed to seeing; as such, we honestly had no idea how the film might be received especially by an international audience, who might not be as attuned to its local particularities. *Mate* is after all a film that deals with its themes and issues through a very Australian lens: the rapidly changing face of a suburbia not always forgiving to an individual trying find their own way in life; the social ties that can be loosened in the process of this change; the sometimes fraught task of how individuals find a way of living with the people they're born to; even, obliquely, the national mania for self-definition through real estate.

It is partly for these reasons that *Mate* becoming the first Australian film ever to win the Grand Prix at the Clermont-Ferrand International Film Festival feels so special.

The characters of John and Jack (intense and engaging performances by Joshua Brennan and newcomer Jeremy Blewitt, respectively), old and young, father and son, come from very different worlds, kilometres apart. John is a throwback to the darker side of an older, more working-class iteration of Australian outer-suburbia, getting by on the inertia of a fading larrikin charm, for whom rugby league and rock & roll represent the

horizon of his sullen dead ends; this is a world that undeniably exists, but also one in the throes of massive change and dislocation, as waves of migration of both people and capital transform the patchwork quarter-acre fibro bungalows of the outer-west into, in some parts, multi-cultural ethnic communities from all corners of the globe buzzing with a striking new verve and contrast, and in others, paradoxically, architecturally homogenous identikit developments; this is western Sydney as a city in its own right, encompassing everyone from fervent and confident Pentecostals, to a thriving and self-contained managerial middle-class, to people like those John might have gone to high school with, now seeking to climb the Jacob's ladder of social mobility.

John as an individual is in many ways trapped by this changing social context, stuck as he is the airless stasis of its slipstream, desperately nostalgic for a time that almost certainly never existed, reduced to pleading with Jack: "Johns's a friend of mine". Sure he is, mate.

Jack, for his part, only timidly engages with the world: when we meet him we're struck by a shy boy, with a first-hand knowledge of what it might be like to be bullied at school. Like all kids, desperate for a parent's understanding and support. He's also hopelessly out of his depth: what 13-year-old gets his dad a tie for his birthday?

Their differences, the things that start to intimate a life's trajectory, start to really show at that classically Australian social institution, the smoking section of the pub, where all the social and individual strands that run through the film first meet. It's here that Jack, previously passive, begins to perspectively assert himself, the narrative passing from one generation to the next. Will he respond to the confusion of his world better than his father, or will he fall into a similarly desultory repetition?

We never set out to make a beautiful film, unlike so many others, seduced nature's histrionics and the sensuous, austere sunlight of Sydney, but rather one that does some justice to a few of the complexities of the place, one that tries to show the flickering grace in the propulsive ugliness that powers our lives. As Fredric Jameson once said: "The image is the commodity today, and that is why it is vain to expect a negation of the logic of commodity production from it; that is why, finally, all beauty is meretricious". And if we give up on beauty, we might as well find ourselves at a closed Werrington Station on a Saturday night.

Fuck the Storm.

Ben Tarwin, Co-Writer / Producer



KEY CREW BIOS

GEORGE-ALEX NAGLE DIRECTOR / CO-WRITER / PRODUCER / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

George-Alex Nagle is an award-winning filmmaker from Sydney. As a graduate of the College of Fine Arts and Australian Film Television and Radio School, his body of work currently spans short film, music video, and video art installation.

His first experimental short *Real-Time* won the Boundary Breaking Short jury prize at the Sydney Underground Film Festival. *Embrace*, his AFTRS graduate film, premiered at the Sydney Film Festival before going on to multiple festivals and showcases around the world. Most recently, his mid-length drama *Mate* became the first Australian film ever to be awarded the prestigious International Grand Prix at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2022.

He is currently developing a slate of longform projects.

DANIEL CORBOY CO-WRITER / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Daniel Corboy is a multi-disciplinary artist from western Sydney. His eclectic creative output encompasses a broad range of media including filmmaking, screenwriting, music and song-writing, poetry, performance, painting and visual/digital arts. Daniel's work embraces a strong DIY ethos and is proudly independent.

He co-wrote the script for *Mate*, the first Australian film to take out the prestigious Grand Prix at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2022.

Daniel is currently developing shortform and longform projects.

BEN TARWIN CO-WRITER / PRODUCER / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Ben Tarwin is an author and filmmaker based in Sydney, Australia.

His novel *Daylight*, described by best-selling author Debra Adelaide as 'at times... an uncomfortable read, sometimes mysterious and elliptical, but always original and lyrical,' was published in 2021.

His film *Mate*, for which he acted as co-writer and producer, was the first Australian film ever to win the prestigious Grand Prix at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, in 2022.

NICK BOLTON PRODUCER / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Nick is a filmmaker and Board Member of Screen Illawarra, based on the South Coast of NSW.

On completing his Masters in Screen Arts and Business at AFTRS, Nick and his wife Jess Milne founded their production company TEN ALPHAS, with offices in Sydney and Wollongong. The company offers services across TV, film, documentary, web and online, and corporate, design and animation with a strong focus on social impact based storytelling.

He was Associate Producer on feature film *Rough Stuff*, and has produced several short films, most recently the festival winning film *The Road To Vagator*, and *The Narrabundah Boy*. He also produced documentary *Off The Leash In Chiang Mai*, and documentary web series *End of Life*, which he also wrote and directed.

He currently teaches at AFTRS and the Sydney Film School.

CAST BIOS



JOSHUA BRENNAN (JOHN)

Joshua graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2011. He has performed on stage with STC, most recently touring *The Secret River* to London and the Edinburgh Festival, and ATYP. His screen credits include *Underbelly*, *Shark Net*, and the webseries *Skinford 2*. Josh recently returned from the US having completed filming for an ongoing role in the US TV series *The Long Road Home*. His feature film credits include *Bloody Hell* (2020).

In 2013, Joshua received the Best Newcomer Award at the Western Australian Equity Guild Awards and in 2011, the Best Male Actor Award at the WA Screen Academy Awards.

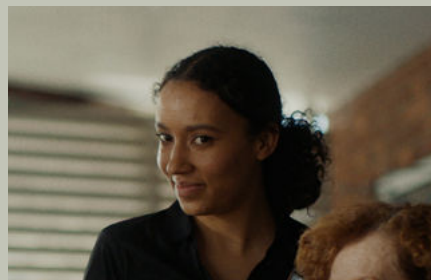


JEREMY BLEWITT (JACK)

Jeremy Blewitt is an emerging actor, writer and musician. He has been performing from the age of eight, and has studied in both Sydney and Los Angeles.

Jeremy has written and starred in two short films, *Road to Neom* and *Celestial Bodies*, as part of the Sydney-based Young Actor's Assembly, and has starred in multiple film and television productions, including the Clermont-Ferrand Grand Prix winning *Mate* by George-Alex Nagle, and Channel 7 Australia's primetime drama *Between Two Worlds* (2020).

Most recently he has been cast in two major limited series, Amazon's *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* starring Sigourney Weaver, and Disney's *The Clearing* alongside Guy Pearce.



MELODY KIPTOO (KRYSTAL)

Melody Kiptoo is a Kenyan-Australian actress, singer and social media influencer. Growing up in Darwin, NT, Melody moved to Newcastle at a young age to train in screen and theatre performance. After the completion of her studies she moved to Sydney where she began working in commercials and short films before finding her first feature film role in Steve Jaggi's teen-comedy-sports film *Back of the Net* (2019). *Mate* is Melody's first dramatic role and she has several more currently in production.

HOD BIOS

CAMPBELL BROWN

Campbell Brown is an Australian cinematographer working across TVCs, documentaries, TV series, and shorts. He has worked with many of Australia's leading production companies on projects for some of the world's biggest brands and with some of the world's most exciting musical acts.

His narrative short films include *Chicken* (BFI London Film Festival 2020), *Nest* (Melbourne Film Festival 2020), and *Mate* (Grand Prix, Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2022). He is currently working on Disney's *The Clearing* with Guy Pearce and Jeremy Blewitt.

KELLY CAMERON

Kelly graduated from AFTRS in 2017 with a Masters of Screen Arts. She has experience across drama, documentaries, commercials, VR, music videos, and video art installations.

She has worked with director Dylan River on the feature documentary *Finke: There And Back* (Sydney Film Festival 2018). She also edited the SBS On-Demand drama series *Robbie Hood*.

In addition to working with This Film Studio on the *Save This Rhino* (2020) documentary series for National Geographic, and Neon Jane Production's feature documentary *M.u.M* (2020), she has also worked with Google's Creative Lab as a creative collaborator and documentarian pushing the boundaries of art and new technology.

JAI PYNE

Jai Pyne is a composer, producer, songwriter and artist from Sydney. He graduated from AFTRS in 2012 and specialises in making music for film and contemporary dance.

His recent work includes *Alba* (Melbourne International Film Festival 2021), *Mate* (Grand Prix, Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2022), the dance work *Narcifixion* at Riverside Theatre 2021, *Good Times, Bad Moon* (Flickerfest 2022), and web series *Domesticated*.

Prior to composing, Jai was the main producer, singer, and songwriter for Sydney band The Paper Scissors. He continues to make original music which he releases through his label Turktown, which he co-founded with producer and composer Caleb Jacobs.



CREDITS

KEY CREW

Written by Daniel Corboy
& George-Alex Nagle
Co-Written by Ben Tarwin

Directed by George-Alex Nagle

Produced by Nick Bolton,
George-Alex Nagle
& Ben Tarwin

Executive Producer Ben Tarwin
Nick Bolton, Daniel Corboy, Jess Milne
& George-Alex Nagle

CAST

John Joshua Brennan
Jack Jeremy Blewitt
Krystal Melody Kiptoo
Paula Di Smith
Davo JR Laveta
Stacy Zoe Jensen
Brent Nick Bolton
Baby Juniper Ashmore

CREW

Director of Photography Campbell Brown
Editor Kelly Cameron
Production Designer Tom Coppola
Sound Design Luke Stacey
Costume Designer Małgorzata Zablocka
Original Music Jai Pyne

Casting Stevie Ray CGA

1st Assistant Director Leonard Fung
2nd Assistant Director Ian Kyster

1st Assistant Camera Matt Scott Chow
2nd Assistant Camera Danielle Payne

Sound Recordist Martin Demian

Gaffer Max Gersbach
Best Boy Balint Major
Grip Chris Davies

Hair & Makeup Artist Amber Adams
Hair & Makeup Assistant Sunnie Fung

Script Supervisor Michael Wray
Script Attachment Blaise Borrer

Stand-by Props Tom Coppola
Stand-by Props Małgorzata Zablocka
Scenic Artist Anna Herold Pola

Fight Director Scott Witt

Unit Production Manager Nick Bolton
Production Assistant Daniel Corboy
Production Assistant Alexandra Lowe
Production Assistant Danny Smith

Sound Mixer Luke Stacey
Sound Mixer John Hresc
Sound Post-Production Facilities
Sydney Sound Brewery

Colourist Matt Fezz

BTS/Photographer Jess Milne
Photographer Kim Lowe

Trailer Joel Håkanlind
Graphic Design Leon Shore

2nd Unit Assistant Director Ian Kyster
2nd Unit Director of Photography Samuel Pibbs
2nd Unit 1st Assistant Camera Chris Ras
2nd Unit 2nd Assistant Camera Autumn Loveday
2nd Unit Best Boy Liam Patrick

2nd Unit Hair & Makeup Amy Chen
2nd Unit Production Assistant Steven Lattuca

Additional Camera George-Alex Nagle
Additional Camera Assistant Steven Lattuca

"INTENSE AND EMOTIONALLY
POWERFUL... EXTRAORDINARY"

ARTE

"IMPECCABLE"

LAWRENCE BOYCE, CINEUROPA



GEORGE-ALEX NAGLE
DIRECTOR
+61 405 211 804
georgealexnagle@gmail.com
georgealexnagle.com.au

BEN TARWIN
CO-WRITER / PRODUCER
+61 408 400 253
bt@octobermedia.com.au
octobermedia.com.au

RIGHTS
October
info@octobermedia.com.au

INTERNATIONAL SALES
Kurzfilm Agentur Hamburg
Anna Leimbrinck
sales@shortfilm.com

LINKS
[Trailer](#)

[Award Poster](#)

[Production Stills](#)

[Behind the scenes stills](#)

[Headshot of George-Alex Nagle](#)

[Headshot of Ben Tarwin](#)

[Production Notes](#)

OCTOBER
MEDIA

TENALPHAS