

Dark Horse Films

Presents

Blue Moon

(85 minutes, 2018)

Language: English

Dark Horse Films

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TECHNICAL DATA

Original Title	Blue Moon
Genre	Thriller Noir
Country of Production	New Zealand – Aotearoa
Year of Production	2018
Length	86 minutes
Shooting Format	2.8 Anamorphic
Screening Format	DCP 4K
Language	English
Technical Details	24 fps
Sound	5.1
Aspect ratio	1:2:39

CAST

Horace Jones	Mark Hadlow
Darren Cates	Jed Brophy
Lucille Jones	Olivia Hadlow

Rueben – Doug Brooks, Gina – Liz Mullane, Security Guard – Nathan Green, Police Officer – Mathew Crawford, Police Officer – Nicole Gardiner, Newsagent – Kyle Abbott, Police Officer - Jeshurun Scheib, Police Sergeant – Robert Ballantyne, Veronica Jones – Alison Lenton, Wahoe Chan – Lai Zhouwen, Gilly – Doug Brooks, Motorist – Simon Paynter, Geoffrey the cat.



Crew

Directed by	Stefen Harris
Written by	Stefen Harris
Director of Photography	Ryan O'Rourke
Editor	Judd Resnick
Sound Design	Chris Winter
Composer	Tane Upjohn Beatson
Sound	Ben Dunker and Janja Heathfield
Production companies	Dark Horse Films, Kahu Media
Producers	Stefen Harris and Pegeen O'Rourke
Executive Producers	Tim Riley and Richard Vizer

TAG LINE

What would you do if you had one chance to turn your life around? Would you steal half a million dollars if nobody in the world would ever know?

Story

Horace Jones, near bankrupt petrol station proprietor, foolishly misappropriates stolen drug money believing no one will ever know. Pretty soon his chaotic but safe existence is under threat when gang enforcer Darren Cates arrives on the scene desperate to reclaim the cash. The only trouble is Horace has locked the money in the time-lock safe and they'll have to wait until 6am to open it. As the two men wait it out Horace realises there's something horribly familiar about Darren. They both sang in the choir at Christ College forty years ago.



Filmmakers Q & A

Q: Where did the story come from?

A: We were working on other projects and having great difficulty raising finance. Exasperated, Mark Hadlow said “Why can’t we just shoot it on a cell-phone?” He wasn’t serious, but the question got me thinking. I asked a second question – if we made a film on a cell-phone what would be our limitations? I began to consider the possibilities of a single location and a story that takes place in an undisturbed ninety minute span, with just a handful of actors. I was thinking hard about it at 4.20am as I refuelled my police patrol car. The petrol station was lit up like a space ship in the night, austere and beautiful. I took a shot with my iPhone and that photograph became the founding document of Blue Moon.

Stef Harris – Writer/Director

Q: What attracted you to the Blue Moon project?

First and foremost I was blown away by the mythological scale contained in the story. Darren is a character I’ve never played before and getting inside his head was a real challenge. Sometimes you get lucky enough to play a character who challenges you as an actor. This was one of those rare roles. I loved the idea of shooting in one location with the constraints and limitations that imposed.

Jed Brophy – Actor

Q: What are the pros and cons of shooting a feature film on iPhone?

I admit to some trepidation leading up to the shoot. I knew we would be pushing the iPhones to their limits and was worried about battery life and how the end product would look. Ultimately no other camera setup would have allowed us to shoot so quickly and we only had access to the location for a total of 30 shooting hours. The set, both indoor and outside was pre-lit, eliminating any stop start for lighting set ups. The film is almost entirely hand held apart from occasional use of monopod or gimbal allowing the crew to shoot as fast as the actors could perform. In this way we were very unobtrusive allowing the actors to own the space.

Ryan O'Rourke - Director of Photography.

Q: Who is Horace Jones really?

Horace is a man on the precipice; almost all of his outward public life is a charade, a smokescreen. Once a mild mannered Christ's College chapel choir boy whose school masters thought was destined for greatness and achievement. There is an "underbelly" to Horace Jones and when his old school mate Darren turns up looking for half a million dollars in drug money..... life, wife, marriage, 6 kids and his business is about to go down the toilet.

Mark Hadlow - Actor

Q: About the casting?

I cast the film in reverse order. Confident that Mark and Jed wanted to work with me I set out to write a piece utilising those considerable building blocks as my foundation. As I wrote the story I had a very good appreciation of how they would spark off each other, how they would deliver the lines and what would and wouldn't work. Discovering Olivia Hadlow was a happy surprise, after auditioning more than thirty young women to play Mark's daughter I viewed an audition tape and instantly realised that we had found Lucile.

Stef Harris – Writer/Director



DIRECTORS STATEMENT

Horace's entrepreneurial enterprise is spiralling into oblivion, and then in walks trouble.

After years working as a front line police officer I became fascinated with the people of the night. The night cashiers, Cleaners, Taxi Drivers, Security Guards, the Police and the criminal underclass. Almost a separate species living a somnolent existence, virtually a raw negative to our lives. I wanted to make a story entirely within that realm, using the night time almost as a thematic special effect.

The film unfolds in real time. That is to say there are no time lapses and every minute of story time is roughly a minute of screen time. Therefore the pacing is near to authentic as we experience life. I deliberately set out to discombobulate the audience, nothing is straightforward and the dialogue is intentionally opaque. I want us to work hard to keep up with the story unfolding between the lines.

I wanted to see how far a conscientious man will go to protect his family from a dangerous world. Horace is facing the personal horror of telling his loved ones their privileged existence is coming to an end. These worries fall away as his world deteriorates and he faces real life and death decisions. When the time comes for Horace to save his daughter he finds himself woefully unprepared for a physical confrontation. His whole life has led to this moment where he must literally fight for survival and his golf handicap appears to be next to useless.

Another theme of the story is how we deal with the friends we have outgrown. Neither Horace nor Darren will speak of the real reason they ceased to be in contact at the age of fifteen. Yet this chance meeting seems to bring them both right back into the middle of schooldays whether they like it or not. Old resentments and childish arguments resurface like poison and grown men start talking like school boys.

Most interestingly I want to see how audiences react to the final revelation that Horace, whom we have rooted for throughout the film, was concealing a dark agenda all along. Will audiences understand or even forgive? After all we shouldn't be surprised – the first words he spoke in the film were a massive lie.

DIRECTOR : STEFEN HARRIS



Stefen Harris feature drama **The Waimate Conspiracy** 2006 won four best film awards including, Wairoa Maori Film Festival Best film – Australian Producers Association DigiSPAA Award Best Film, Canada Dreamspeakers Aboriginal Film Festival Best Feature Film and The New Zealand Screen Award for Best Feature Film.

Stefen won the **Air New Zealand Inspiring New Zealander Scholarship in film** to study alongside Martin Campbell (Casino Royale/Zorro) on the set of Mel Gibson drama Edge of Darkness.

