

A man with light-colored hair, wearing a dark jacket, is shown in profile, talking on a black mobile phone. He is looking down and to the right. The background is a dimly lit room with a window and some furniture visible in the shadows.

# CONTACT HOURS

25-Minute Short Film | Psychological Drama

*Written by **Rufus Love**  
Directed by **Harry Richards***

*These materials contain references to suicide. Please take care while reading.  
A list of resources and crisis hotlines is available [HERE](#).*

# THE TITLE

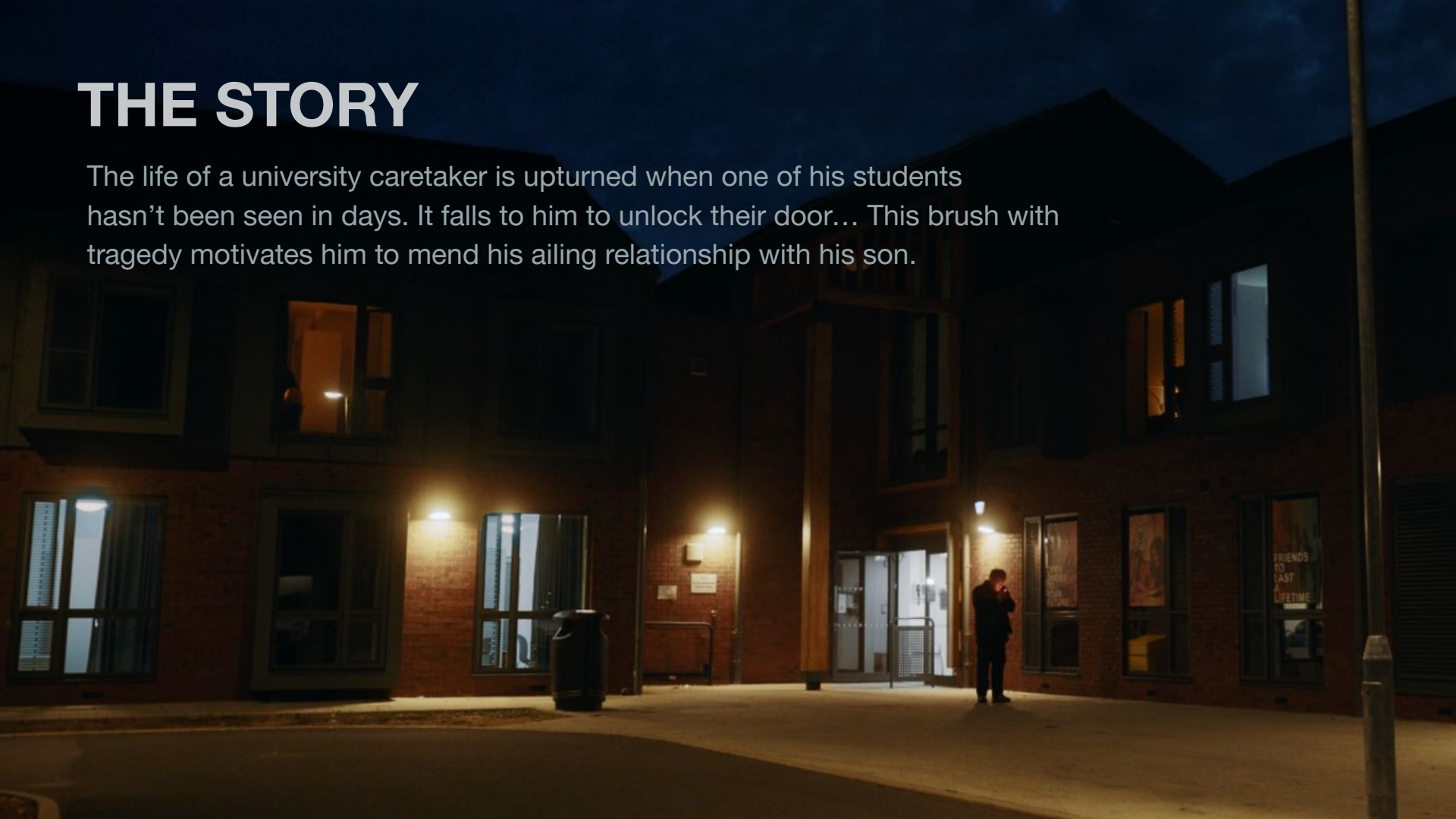
The term '**contact hours**' denotes the amount of face-to-face teaching time that students receive from their university.

It can be as low as four hours per week.

In a **film about student isolation and the struggle for connection**, we were drawn to the poignant irony of "Contact Hours" as a title.

# THE STORY

The life of a university caretaker is upturned when one of his students hasn't been seen in days. It falls to him to unlock their door... This brush with tragedy motivates him to mend his ailing relationship with his son.



# SETTING THE SCENE

A dimly lit kitchen scene, likely at night. In the foreground, a stainless steel sink is visible with a faucet. Behind the sink, several plates and bowls are stacked on a rack. To the left, a stove with a red digital display is partially visible. The overall atmosphere is warm and somewhat somber due to the low lighting.

A caretaker cooks at home for him and his son, but just before their meal, he is summoned to find the source of a burning smell at the student halls he looks after. His son stays at home, throwing out his father's empty wine bottles.

On the Caretaker's way out, one of the students warns that they haven't seen their neighbour in Room 319 in a couple of days. It is late, and he decides he will check back in the morning.

We follow the Caretaker home for dinner, to find his son has already eaten and is rushing out. He notices the depressing state of his son's bedroom, then heads to his local pub for last orders – with a growing sense that something awful might have happened in Room 319.

Indeed, when the Caretaker unlocks the door to Room 319, the young man who had been living there has taken his own life...



# INSPIRATION

**"Contact Hours"** was inspired by a conversation with a university caretaker who had resigned after discovering a student who had died by suicide.

This tragedy had an enormous impact on the writer, Rufus, who began his research by interviewing a Welfare Officer at a London university to help shape the screenplay.

Harry, director/producer, and Rufus knew six students at Edinburgh University who took their lives, and many of our friends have since struggled with depression and suicidal thoughts.

# WHY NOW?

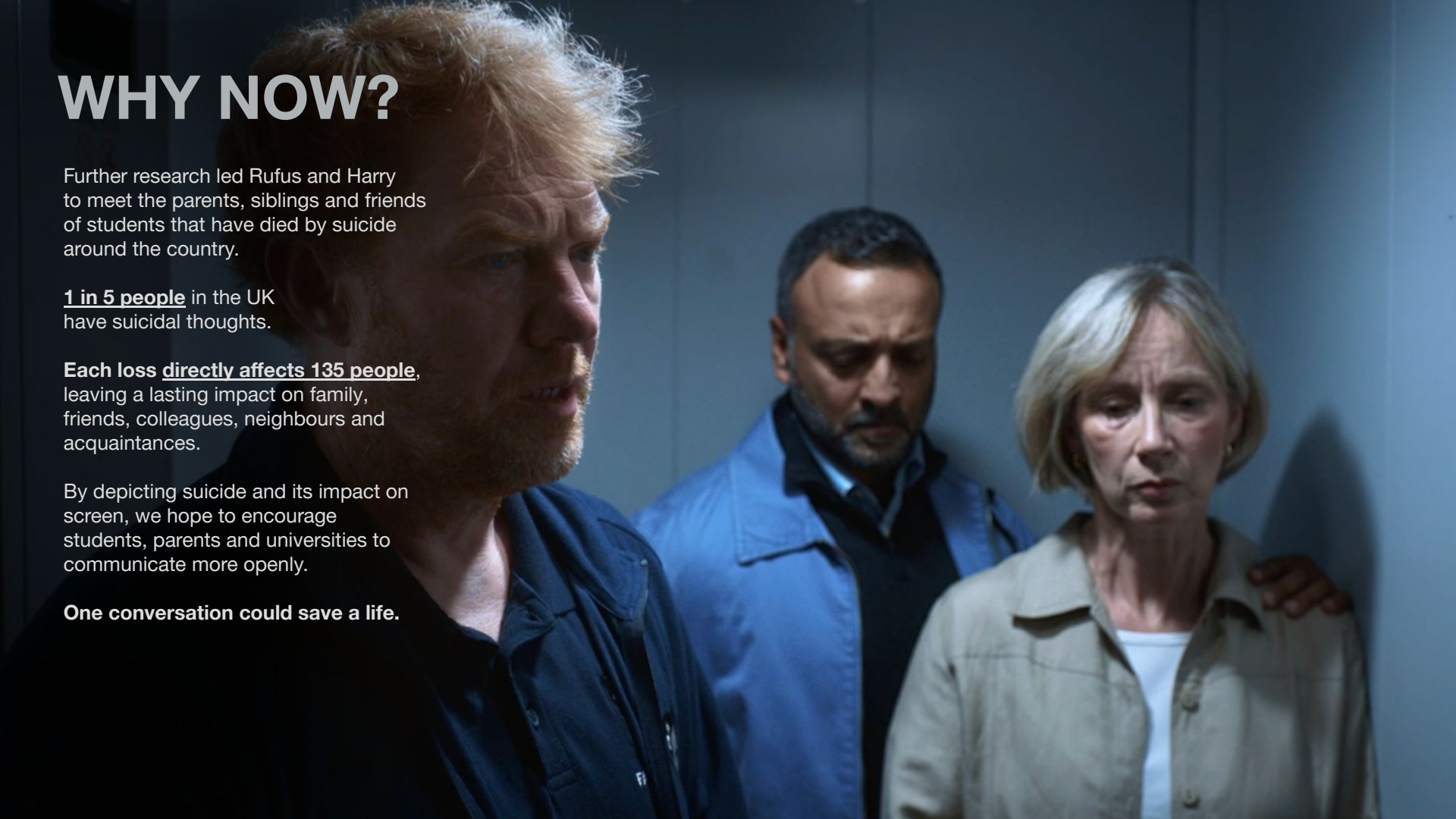
Further research led Rufus and Harry to meet the parents, siblings and friends of students that have died by suicide around the country.

**1 in 5 people** in the UK have suicidal thoughts.

**Each loss directly affects 135 people,** leaving a lasting impact on family, friends, colleagues, neighbours and acquaintances.

By depicting suicide and its impact on screen, we hope to encourage students, parents and universities to communicate more openly.

**One conversation could save a life.**



A man in a blue t-shirt with a red and white striped collar is looking down at a door handle. The door has a semi-circular window with a grid pattern. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window and casting shadows on the wall.

# THE PAPAGENO EFFECT

Evidence shows that **sensitive portrayals of suicide, focusing on a character overcoming a crisis**, can encourage people suffering in silence to seek help.

Watching them come through a difficult time and show hopeful recovery can serve as **a powerful testimony to others** that this is possible.

It provides reassurance that suicidal feelings can be worked through and will pass.

**Such portrayals have been linked to falls in suicide rates.**

# CREATIVE VISION

by Harry Richards

My direction begins with powerful yet understated imagery.

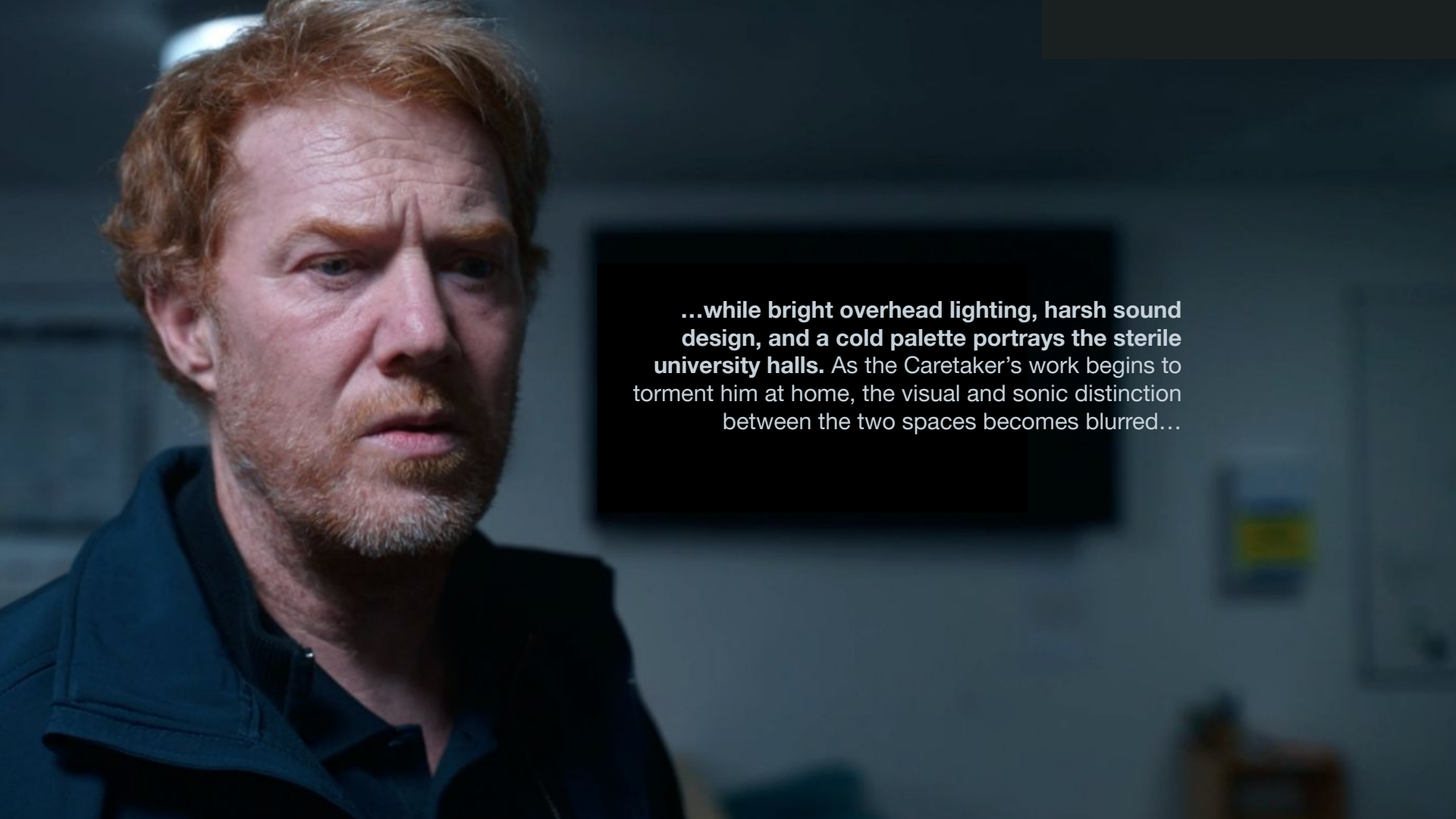
**We invite our viewer into a deeply realistic world, using long takes, grounded camera work and:**

**Diegetic sound** (sound that originates from within the film's world e.g. music playing from the Caretaker's radio).


Another cornerstone of my vision is **the juxtaposition of the two spaces in the Caretaker's life.**

Soft lighting, gentle music and a warm colour palette depicts his comforting home...






...while bright overhead lighting, harsh sound design, and a cold palette portrays the sterile university halls. As the Caretaker's work begins to torment him at home, the visual and sonic distinction between the two spaces becomes blurred...

A man with light brown hair and a beard is shown in profile, facing right. He is wearing a dark blue polo shirt. The background is a dark, textured wall, possibly wood or stone, with a vertical light-colored strip on the right side. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the man's face and hair against the dark background.

We swing between the Caretaker's bad dreams and waking nightmares.

The growing emotional pressure he faces is underscored by disorientating angles and **a departure from realism.**

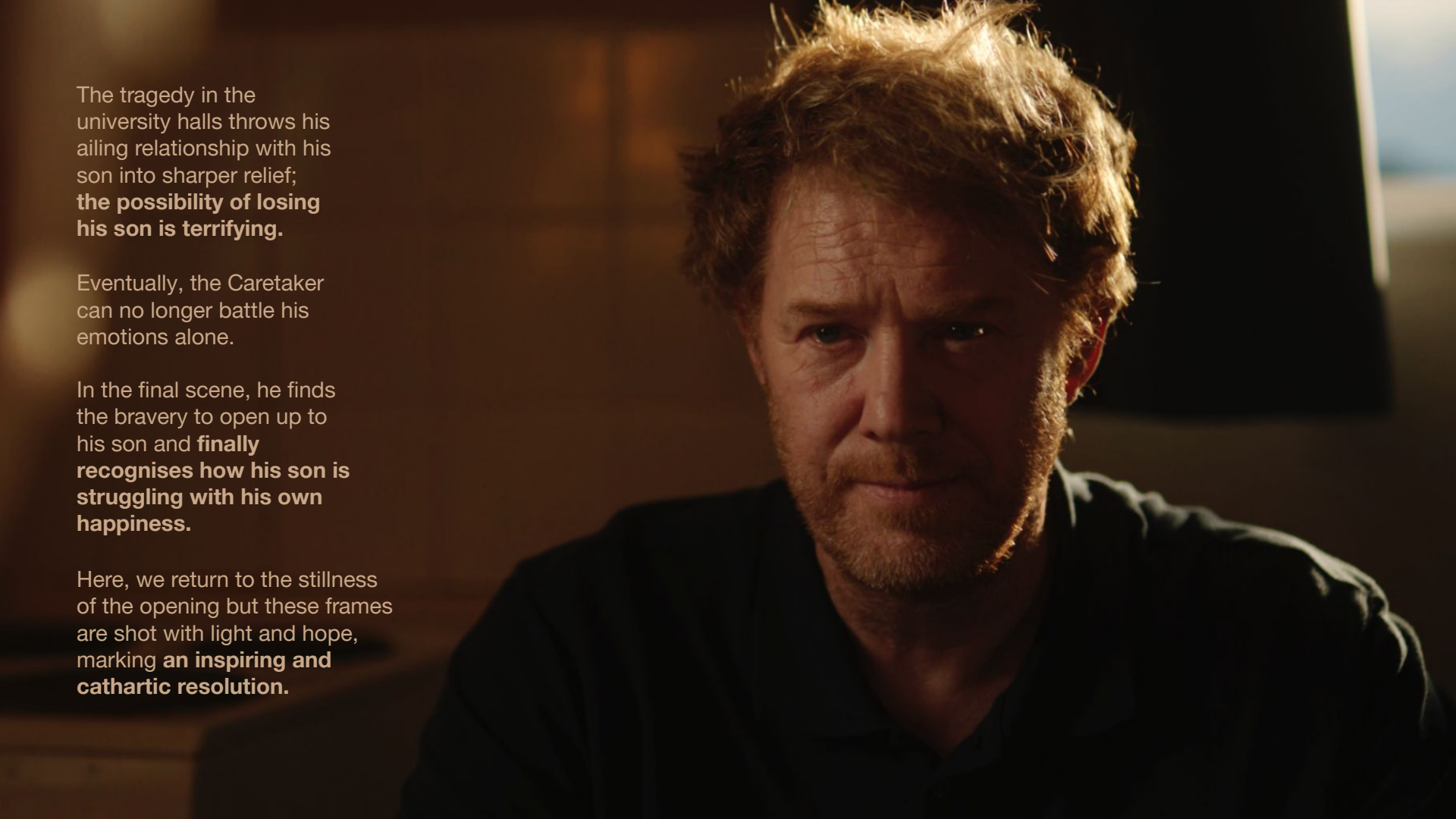
Practical effects are used to create surreal moments that subvert the viewers' expectations...



Meanwhile, there are **worrying indicators** that the Caretaker's son might be contemplating harming himself.

Though they are living in the same house, they are complete strangers...

The Caretaker **can feel his son pulling away from him.**



The tragedy in the university halls throws his ailing relationship with his son into sharper relief; **the possibility of losing his son is terrifying.**

Eventually, the Caretaker can no longer battle his emotions alone.

In the final scene, he finds the bravery to open up to his son and **finally recognises how his son is struggling with his own happiness.**

Here, we return to the stillness of the opening but these frames are shot with light and hope, marking **an inspiring and cathartic resolution.**

# PERFORMANCES

**This is a film about the difficulty of communication**, so naturally the dialogue is spare. The emotional heavy-lifting is conveyed visually, through the subtlety & skill of our actors.

Allowing their lived experience to guide aspects of our storytelling will bring colour and richness to the final product.

We facilitated authentic performances with detailed production design, ensuring that the actors had the time to feel grounded in their characters' environments.





Our subject matter is extremely sensitive, as suicide is our film's central theme.

A death by suicide emotionally impacts our characters, but **we don't train the camera directly on it.**

This is out of respect for those affected by suicide and a stylistic desire to avoid sensationalism.

It's critical that we represent people considering suicide, as opposed to alienating them.

This is **an earnest, hopeful film about escaping the pull of the darkness.**

## THE MESSAGE

# CREATIVE TEAM



**HARRY RICHARDS**

*Director/Producer*

**RUFUS LOVE**

*Writer*

# CREATIVE TEAM



**HARRY RICHARDS**

*Director/Producer*

Harry is best known for writing and directing “[SANTI](#)”, one of 50 films selected from 1,000 submissions for the BFI Future Film Festival 2022, and now streaming on [Minute Shorts](#). Harry’s work has already impressed a wide audience: “SANTI” was screened in person with a live Q&A to over 1,000 people, including students at [21 UK universities](#), and guests at the BFI Southbank, Everyman Chelsea, and Stratford Picturehouse. Harry has since been featured in many online publications including [The Filmmakers Podcast](#), [Filmhounds](#), [View of the Arts](#) and [Why Now](#).

**Harry has an impressive track record of thought-provoking projects.** Prior to “SANTI”, Harry wrote, directed and produced two shorts: “Glass People” (2019) and “Year 13” (2016) — and a striking four-part travel video series for Colombia’s national newspaper. In 2023, Harry spent six months living in Medellín, Colombia, immersing himself in the culture to research for the “SANTI” feature film. Alongside this, Harry worked as Video Director for a PR company, and interviewed [award-winning filmmakers](#) for Entrepreneur Magazine about Colombia’s emerging film industry.

Previously, Harry spent nine months assisting the producers behind the critically-acclaimed Netflix episodic drama “The Bastard Son” (2022), shadowed prominent British director Tom Shankland on BBC episodic drama “SAS: Rogue Heroes” (2022), and second assistant directed five commercials. Harry also participated in Film London’s 2022 Directing and Production Finance Labs, to further strengthen his understanding of the British film industry.

# CREATIVE TEAM



**RUFUS LOVE**

*Writer*

Rufus is a London-based writer and actor. **Since being shortlisted for the prestigious Lynne Gagliano Award at the Royal Court** in 2020, his work has been mounted at the Gate Theatre, Theatre 503, Caravan Theatre, The Golden Goose and The Hope Theatre. The latter is the venue for a two-week run of his one-man-show, "Speakers' Corner: The Public Shaming of Rufus Love". **This has been nominated for a 2024 Off West End ("Offie") Award.**

Rufus was commissioned by the Gate Theatre to create a short film inspired by the Spanish Golden Age play, "Damned for Despair". Rufus was invited back to write and film a poem to mark their departure from their fabled Notting Hill home.

Rufus has experience as a script-reader for Dancing Ledge, the production company behind the BBC's award-winning "The Responder". He has also read for the Bruntwood Prize, the UK's most prestigious playwriting competition.

Rufus studied English Literature at Edinburgh University, followed by an Acting Masters at Mountview. At Edinburgh (and during a year studying in Montreal), Rufus took classes in European and American cinema, directing and playwriting. At Mountview, Rufus attended film tutorials and wrote scripts for his screen-acting classes. Two of his scenes were selected by a freelance director and shot for his showreel.

# PRODUCTION COMPANIES

# HEADRUSH

## HEADRUSH FILMS

Executive Producers:

**Harry Richards**

**Rufus Love**

Registered Company No. **15780865**

*Headrush Films were responsible for developing, financing, casting and post-producing the film.  
They are also responsible for the film's marketing and distribution.*

# PRODUCTION COMPANIES

# BLEND

## BLEND FILMS

Producers:

**Danny Alvarez-Del Río Rumbelow  
& Liam Wallace-Cook**

Registered Company No. **11987841**

*Blend Films partnered with Headrush Films for prep and production.  
They were responsible for managing and distributing the production budget.*

# SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT

Harry and Rufus spent a year developing the script together, and received feedback from the British Film Institute and two highly successful production companies:

**DANCING LEDGE**

*The Responder,  
The Salisbury Poisonings  
& Crossfire*



character

7

*Culprits, The Night Manager,  
The Undoing & Spooks*

We also consulted a mental health nurse and volunteer at **The Listening Place**, who regularly speaks to young people struggling with suicidal thoughts. This helped us to understand how to portray the sensitive subject matter.

Prior to production, the screenplay was reviewed by **Samaritans' Media Advisory Team**, who confirmed that it was in line with their guidance for portraying suicide on screen.



# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We have also consulted a number of the UK's leading mental health advocates, who focus on suicide prevention:



GEORGE SULLIVAN



ROSE ROWKINS



JON SALMON



TANYA MARWAHA



QUENTIN BARGATE

All of these people have a very personal connection to suicide, having either lost a family member to suicide or survived suicide themselves.

We've also received support from members of ForThe100, an organisation of parents bereaved by suicide.

# CAST



**GEORGE OSBORNE** (“*The Pendragon Cycle*”)

## THE CARETAKER’S SON

George is a young rising star and model, with 5K Instagram followers. His performance will help **STUDENTS** relate to our story.

## THE CARETAKER

**KRIS HITCHEN** (*Ken Loach’s “Sorry We Missed You”*)

Kris is an established actor in the UK film industry, with 16K Instagram followers. He will elevate our film and make it very marketable to **PARENTS** and **FILM FANS**.

Talking about our shoot, Kris said:

“An amazing experience and one I will truly treasure. **I was actually going to quit acting before Contact Hours came along, but the passion of the cast and crew was infectious, and I probably gave my best ever performance.** So I suppose I’ll hang in there a bit longer.”



Speaking about the shoot, George said: “**An absolute pleasure to put Rufus Love’s beautiful script on screen. Thank you Harry Richards for believing in my ability.**”



**SEBB MASTERS**

*Composer*



**JENNIFER PERAULT**

*Costume Designer*



**CLAIRE WOLF**

*First Assistant Director*



**LOUIS HOLDER**

*Editor*



**SCARLETT GARDNER**

*Director of Photography*

# HODs

Each of these people will know someone that has died by suicide.

*(Click each name for their bio)*



**CLEMMIE POLLARD**

*Production Assistant*



**SEAN SIMPSON**

*Sound Designer*



**GREG McLAREN**

*Production Designer*



**LINA ALVAREZ**

*Production Manager*



# CAST & CREW WELLBEING

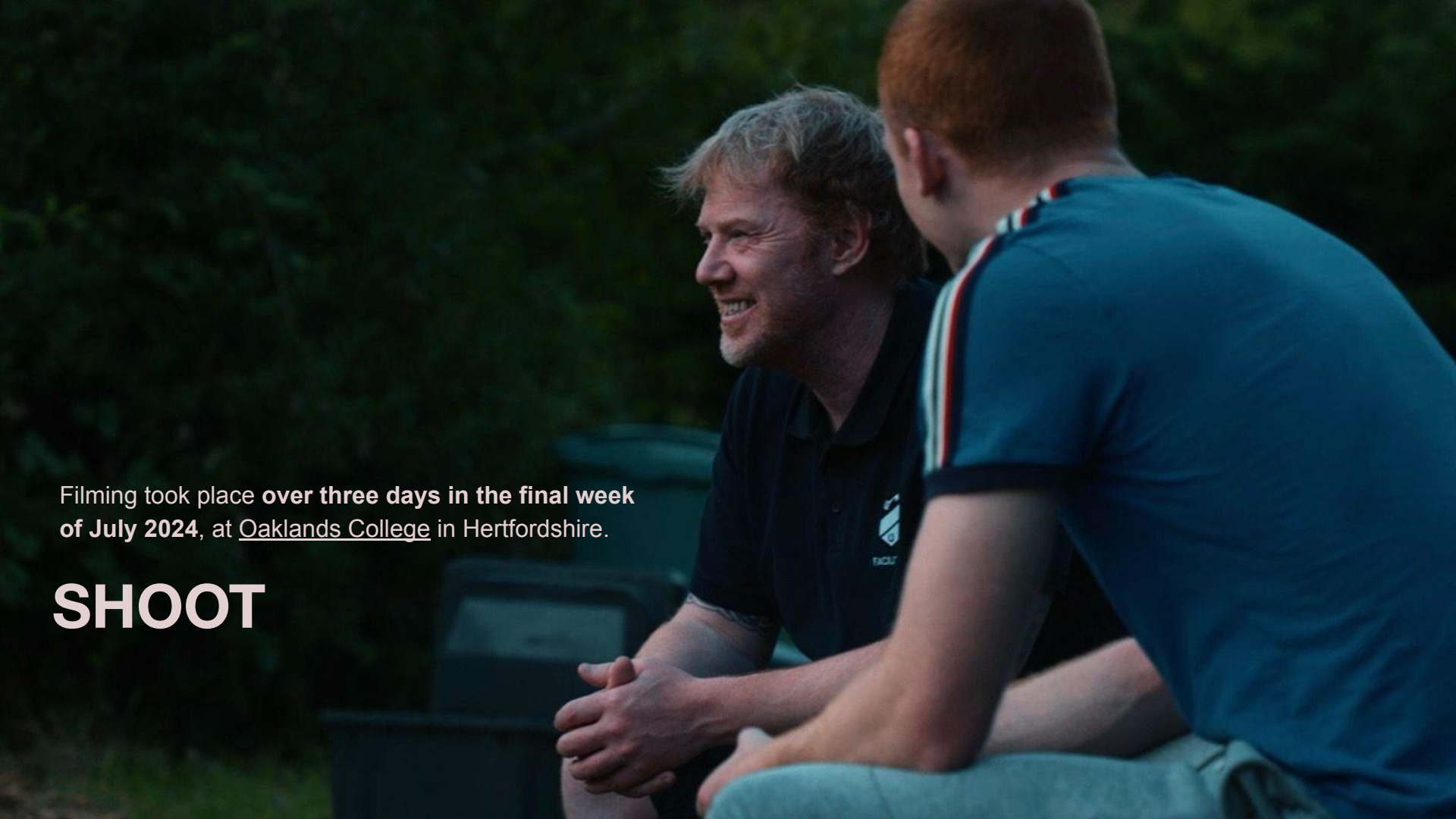
Our crew was full of talented industry professionals, engendering a diverse and inclusive environment that **did not tolerate discrimination in any form.**

*The theme of suicide can be triggering for people, so each cast and crew member was supported throughout the filmmaking process.*

*Both Harry and Rufus are **ASIST-trained in suicide intervention**, and we had a two-person wellbeing and psychological safety team on set to oversee production.*

*This team provided our crew with a **toolkit of resources and crisis helplines**, as well as one-to-one check-ins for those experiencing suicidal thoughts or who have been affected by suicide loss in the past.*



A photograph of two men sitting outdoors at dusk. The man on the left has grey hair and a beard, wearing a dark polo shirt with a small crest and the word 'FACULTY' on it. The man on the right has red hair and is wearing a blue t-shirt with red and white stripes on the sleeve. They are both smiling and looking towards the right. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a wooded area.

Filming took place **over three days in the final week of July 2024**, at [Oaklands College](#) in Hertfordshire.

# SHOOT



# TIMELINE

SHOOT  
**JULY 2024**

POST-PRODUCTION  
**AUG - SEPT 2024**

PRIVATE SCREENINGS  
**OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2024**

UNIVERSITY SCREENINGS  
**JANUARY - JUNE 2025**

FESTIVAL CIRCUIT  
**JANUARY 2025 - JUNE 2026**



# MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION

## FILM FESTIVALS



Our film's distribution will start by **targeting prestigious UK short film festivals**. This is where "Contact Hours" will begin to attract industry attention. **UK universities**.

We hope to collaborate with the short film distributor Salaud Morisset, who would handle all aspects of distribution – from festival submissions and print traffic to TV sales and multi-territory deals with streaming platforms.

Their team collaborates with established short film buyers and coordinates strategic awards campaigns for the short film categories at the European Film Awards, BAFTAs and Oscars.

# MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION

## SCREENINGS

Our film's cultural impact will be cemented through **student screenings at UK universities**. These will offer students a space to discuss the film and learn about suicide prevention strategies.

We will provide **actionable advice from our partner charities** for students struggling with suicidal thoughts and for those affected by suicide loss. This guidance will also encourage students to check in on each other more regularly.

The screenings will be an opportunity for universities to demonstrate their support for student suicide prevention.



# MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION

## PRESS

Harry's **13 months working at PR agency**

**Publicize** gave him a deep understanding of how to connect with journalists and secure coverage in reputable and well-known media outlets.

Harry, Rufus and our two lead actors will engage in interviews for many UK-based film and culture publications to promote the film.

DEADLINE *VARIETY*

It's Nice That WEPRESENT

*Viewties*

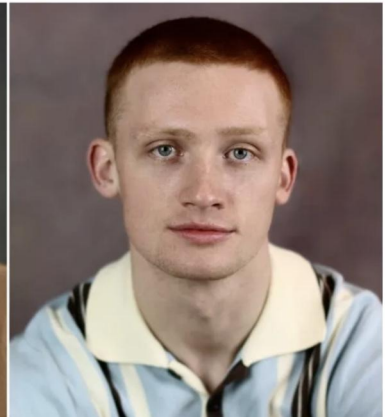
*VARIETY*

[Home](#) > [Film](#) > [Global](#)

Jul 19, 2024 7:05am PT

## 'Sorry We Missed You' Star Kris Hitchen and George Osborne to Lead Student Suicide Drama 'Contact Hours' (EXCLUSIVE)

By Naman Ramachandran ▾



# MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION

## INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS



**PANAVISION** - 250K IG followers.



**UNIT** - Internal PR team helping us get coverage in UK media outlets.



A **PANAVISION** COMPANY

**PANALUX** - 7K IG followers.

These organisations are already sharing our marketing materials (film stills, trailer, posters) on their social media pages to raise awareness of the film within the UK film industry.

# MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION

## CELEBRITY PARTNERSHIPS



Dr Alex George

2.1M IG followers



Ben West

70K IG followers



Dr Ally Jaffee

23K LI followers



River Hawkins

20K IG followers



Stephen Fry

800K IG followers



Matt Haig

700K IG followers

We are also raising awareness of the project by asking celebrities with a connection to suicide to share our project with their audiences on social media.

# CHARITY PARTNERSHIPS

*We have built partnerships with these impactful suicide prevention charities and organisations.  
This will help our film reach **students, parents and universities** faster.*

# PAPYRUS

## PREVENTION OF YOUNG SUICIDE

PAPYRUS is a leading UK charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. Their HOPELINE247 provides suicide prevention advice.

This is our main charity partner for Contact Hours.

# CHARITY PARTNERSHIPS

*We have built partnerships with these impactful suicide prevention charities and organisations.  
This will help our film reach **students, parents and universities** faster.*



R:pple is a browser extension that intercepts harmful online searches to self harm or suicide.



SUICIDE PREVENTION + TOOLS FOR THE TOUGH STUFF

Start the Conversation provide face-to-face and online suicide prevention training.

# PROSPECTIVE CHARITY PARTNERSHIPS

*We also hope to establish partnerships with these charities and organisations, including one that supports parents of children affected by suicide.*

Suicide&co



Support  
After Suicide  
Partnership



National  
Suicide Prevention  
Alliance



BEDER

**CAMPAIGN  
AGAINST  
LIVING  
MISERABLY**



Making sense of lasting memories  
and emotions after the suicide  
of someone you didn't know

  
MOVEMBER.COM

**HUMEN**<sup>®</sup>

  
Charlie  
Waller

**THE MIX**

**BiM**  
BOYS IN MIND

**PARENTING  
MENTAL HEALTH**

**Zero**  
Suicide  
Alliance



  
togetherall

student  
minds



THE JO COX  
FOUNDATION

**P** James' Place



# ONLINE / VOD RELEASE

To ensure that our film is accessible for students who are less comfortable attending in-person screenings, the film **will be available to watch online for free** throughout its distribution at universities and festivals. We plan to leverage Harry's existing relationship with [Minute Shorts](#), where "SANTI" is currently streaming, to release "Contact Hours" on their platform.

Minute Shorts 

prime video 


tubi

argo

Roku TV

## Contact Hours

The life of a university caretaker is upturned when one of his students hasn't been seen in days. It falls to him to unlock their door... This brush with tragedy motivates him to mend his ailing relationship with his son.

★★★★★ 13 IMDb 8.1 25min 2024 16+ 

[Drama](#) · [Psychological](#)

*We also aim to release the film on Amazon Prime and TVOD platforms, so that parents can watch the film as part of their streaming subscription or TV package.*

*Our list of suicide resources and crisis helplines will be prominently displayed below the film, and in the credits.*



Every student suicide is a tragedy.

**We hope our film helps keep current and future students safe.**

# CONTACT US

[harry@santithefilm.com](mailto:harry@santithefilm.com)  
[rufuslove@gmail.com](mailto:rufuslove@gmail.com)

**Harry:** 07751267951

**Rufus:** 07527374018

*Thank you for reading our deck.  
Screener link available upon request.*

*If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide, you are worried about someone, or have been affected by suicide loss, **HERE** is a list of resources and crisis hotlines that may be able to help.*

*This document has been written in line with **Samaritans' Media Guidelines** for coverage of suicide.*