

A Not Twice Production

THE FALLEN GOAT

A short-film by Carl Thomason
[13 minutes]

Brief Synopsis:

Goat farmer Jack discovers one of his animals dead in the field, but it is unclear exactly what happened in the night and what predator could have savaged the innocent goat.

Jack feels that this killing was by something more than an ordinary mutt, but despite searching his field for clues and questioning some local townsfolk, it is only when he visits his local pub that he is told about some visiting outsiders that have been causing some ruckus.

Upon meeting them, the outsiders turn out to be an arrogant trio on a stag weekend, but how could their drunken behaviour be linked to the death of the goat?

Long Synopsis:

As the morning begins on a large, secluded goat farm, Jack (Paul Cooper) discovers one of his goats dead in the field. As the body was splattered with blood and quite far from the rest of the flock, Jack is suspicious of foul play in the night.

After taking some time to have a coffee with his daughter (Elspeth Mary Jane Dewick), Jack returns to the field and burns the dead animal in his furnace before taking a look around the field for clues. Jack finds an unusual amount of wooden clothes-pegs lying around and none of the local townsfolk seem to have heard or seen anything out of the ordinary in the night.

Jack goes to his local pub, and there he meets a trio of lads (John Brimm, Levi Day & Liam O'riordan) on a stag-weekend, and they seem very interested in his business and the fate of the dead goat. However, after discovering a wooden clothes-peg attached to the trousers of one of the lads, Jack can only believe that they had something to do with the death of the goat. But protesting their innocence, what could the drunken lads see, hear or even do during their intoxicated adventure? And could it lead Jack to finally losing his unbreakable cool exterior?

Director's statement:

One day, while the stars and moons above me were aligning, I suddenly had the idea that the words “The” and “Fallen” were something that would work in any film title, and I also decided that according to my lunar year animal, it was to be a “Goat” that had done said falling. Seriously, that's where the title came from. But the story itself stemmed from something more personal. While I have never lost an actual goat, I have had pets die, seen friends become just faces in the crowd, and as I've gotten older, and become a parent, realised that I must keep my cool while others around me are losing theirs.

Jack the farmer is that cool head. He loves his animals, they are both his pets and his business, as would be on most goat farms. But while his daughter is sobbing, he keeps a cool exterior. While local villagers are speculating, he keeps a straight face. While locals in the pub debate free meals, Jack maintains a stubborn silence.

I love the idea of a strong but silent character, like the moody and violent Dae-su Oh in Chan-wook Park's 'Oldboy', all of that revenge and history going around in his head and he's trying to keep it all together as he samples dumplings and gets jumped by gangs. Jack spends time with so many characters during this film and he is always the calm one. In fact, it was hard to even let a small drip of emotion reveal itself at the film's climax even when I was writing the script. Jack is someone that bottles everything up and deals with it in his own little world surrounded by his goats.

Taking inspiration from the opening of Stanley Kubrick's 2001 A Space Odyssey, I felt that dialogue was something that should be used sparingly to allow us to discover the real solitude of Jack's world. When the time comes, the people around him say more than enough, the rest of the time I want the audience to see the world he lives in with his eyes and ears. Jack's world of nature, animals, loneliness, and on this occasion, laced with some death, and a little revenge.

Production stills

On set / location:

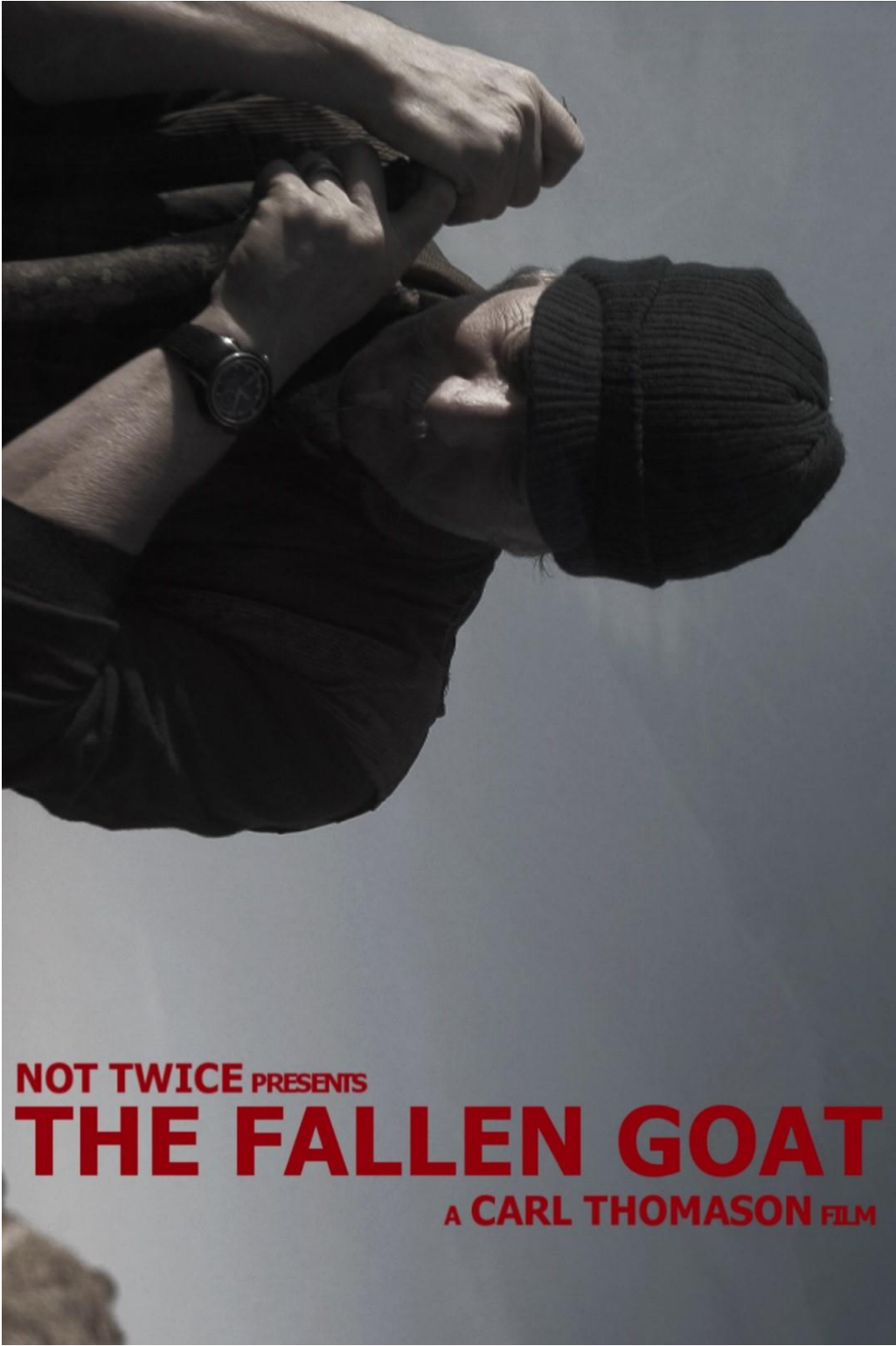


(1. filming in a Kitchen showroom in Hertford with Elspeth Dewick, Paul Cooper, Mark Scullion, Andrew Gannon & Carl Thomason / 2. filming near Luton with Carl Thomason, Mark Scullion, Paul Cooper & Andrew Gannon)



(3. Andrew Gannon filming as producers Carl Thomason & Mark Scullion make a cameo as locals with key actor Paul Cooper / 4. filming in Ickleford with Rebecca and her horse Buster for part of the film's climax)

Official Poster:



Cast and Crew:

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Previous work</i>
Jack	Paul Cooper	7 Cases
Delbert	John Brimm	The Hostage, The Enemy
Danni	Elsbeth Mary Jane Dewick	n/a
Stuart	Levi Day	The Enemy, Broken Bones, The Hostage
Dick	Liam O'Riordan	The Enemy, Broken Bones, The Hostage
Larry	Stephen Emery	Theatre
Lloyd	Szymon Madziel	Music Video for Shields, Theatre

<i>Crew Member</i>	<i>Role(s)</i>	<i>Previous work</i>
Carl Thomason	Director, Producer, Writer, Editor	The Hostage, The Enemy, Broken Bones, 7 Cases
Mark Scullion	Producer, Boom	The Hostage, The Enemy
Andrew Gannon	Director of Photography, Camera Operator, Lighting Director	The Hostage
Sean J Vincent	Technical Advisor	7 Cases, Music Videos

Technical Details:

Camera	Sony Nex FS100 / Sigma & Canon lenses
Running Time	13 minutes 25 seconds
Editing Software	Sony Movie Studio
Country of Origin	England
Estimated Budget	£206 (approx)

Online Page Links:



@n2filmsuk



/n2films

Trailer Viewable:



vimeo.com/212932760



youtube.com/watch?v=XVU-HNyVTKI

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FAQs

What was the inspiration for The Fallen Goat?

I was feeling pretty down when I started writing this script, I had attended a couple of funerals recently of people gone far too young and I had lost touch with another good friend that didn't seem to want to stay in touch, so I was really feeling like writing something in tune with how I felt, which lead into me deciding upon an animal, instead of a person, that could have died, and the effects it would have on the person that had cared for it, the rest is history really.

What makes The Fallen Goat an important short-film?

For me, this is a story about loss, and that is something everyone will experience during their lifetime. I really believe that finding a way to deal with loss is important, but for most people it will be a case of feeling alone and needing to keep everything bottled up, which is where Jack comes in, someone bottling up his feeling of loss and never expressing his anger or frustration.

It's hard enough to talk about things like loss, and even harder to take our own advice, so I hope that the audience will feel like saying "just talk to someone" to Jack, and hear that advice for themselves too.

What was most memorable about filming on farms and with the animals?

We got to meet goats and horses and their respective owners, and see some of the every day lives and activities; such as the goats being milked, and that milk being turned into cheese. But the most memorable part was when I had asked actress Elspeth Mary Jane Dewick to get closer to a truck as she acted out the horror of finding a dead goat for the film, but life imitated art as she discovered two small, deceased goats lying on the truck's step. She was totally freaked out and went running past us as we tried to figure out what was happening. I'm not sure she will want to return for a sequel.

What is the thinking behind the film's look and pacing?

Originally, the film was very vibrant with colour and actually very bright to look at, but when I watched the film back, I found myself thinking that I was too focused on the beautiful colours we had filmed instead of the actual events and story taking place. I decided instead to drain some of the colour out of the film and make this a more dark and sombre experience, as it does concern the death of a loved animal and having too much bright colouring would have felt like a visual lie about what the film is really about.

The film does have a very steady pace for the first two thirds which was all filmed very static to allow the story to unfold very quietly at its own pace, really linking in with the way Jack lives his

life. The climax does go a lot more shaky as it unfolds allowing the chaos to be felt visually through movement as well as what is actually being shown.

What did you learn as a director while making this film?

The biggest lesson I took away from this experience was that I should be a lot more vocal with my director of photography about every single shot, especially when he or she does not already have a shot idea lined up for the scene. The best example of this was for the shot of Jack coming into focus as the deceased goat is at the bottom of the screen. When I had placed the prop goat onto the ground and instructed Paul Cooper where to start and where to walk, I then checked the shot, but it wasn't what I wanted and it wasn't until I physically took the camera to the ground that my DoP started to realise how close I wanted to get to the goat and why only a portion of 'dead goat' had been constructed.

After this learning curve, we discussed all shots with more detail and it was only when we found ourselves in another field filming with a horse than we had any real issues with shot set ups again, but learning to direct animals is a completely different lesson I imagine.

What films had been the most inspiring and influential to The Fallen Goat?

In terms of pacing, the opening of 2001 A Space Odyssey was very inspirational, and it continues to be, knowing that dialogue can wait as long as you are able to build a story through your visuals, and this is exactly what I wanted to do for this film. Also, the David Lynch drama A History Of Violence was quite an inspiration for presenting a character that is very secretive and closed up from his on screen friends and family. Both of these films also have a similar momentum I feel as they are quite steady and static, and build into something more explosive and fast paced.

The film was shot using digital super 35mm, why?

While the majority of the film was shot using my Sony Nex FS100, it was combined with a variety of lenses from Canon and Sigma, and we also used a Black Magic Pocket Cinema camera for one scene that belonged to DoP Andrew Gannon. A lot of the film was recorded onto the Atomos Ninja provided to us by Sean J Vincent, who is a local film-maker and friend that lends us a lot of advice and insight that helped us greatly while making this film.

I really enjoy using the Sony Nex and I still feel that I am just starting to get the best out of it as we continue to make more films and link it up with different lenses and other kit.