



richard







'Sometimes am I king...'

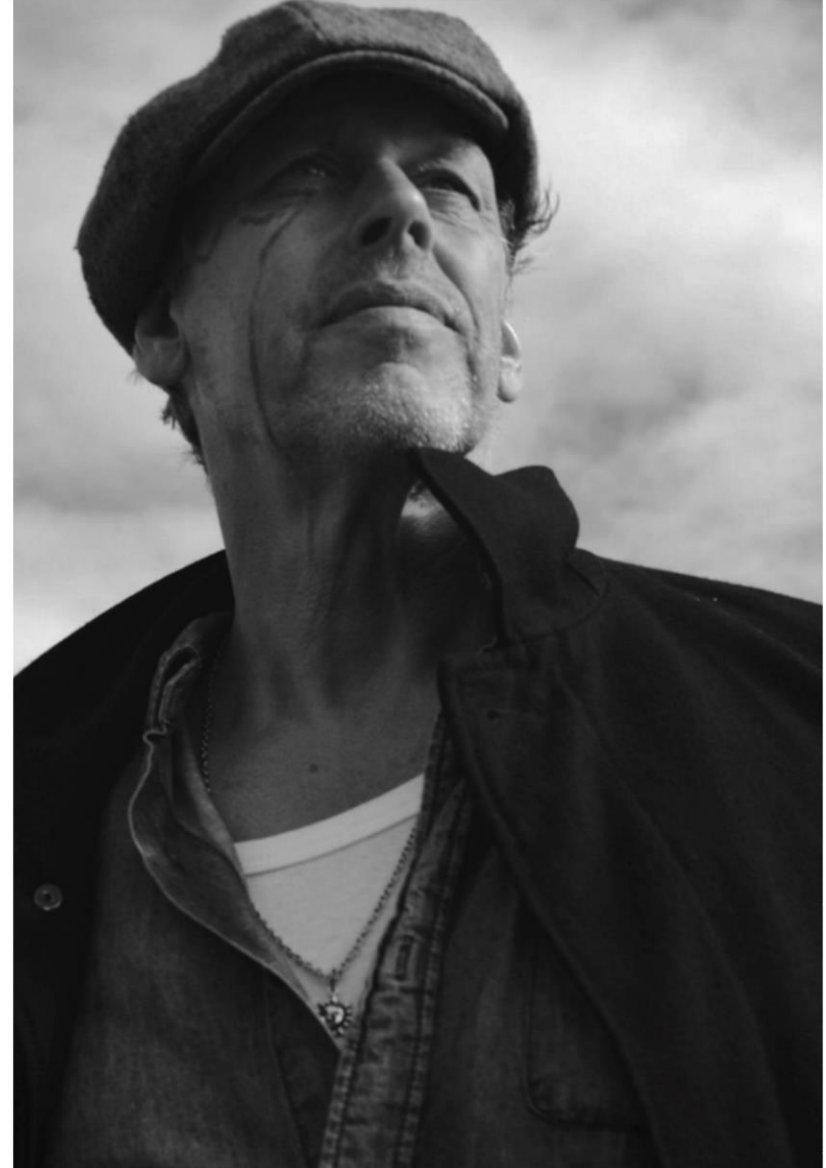
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## Vaughan Douglas Capstick as Richard

After spending many years involved with local theatre as a set designer Vaughan was persuaded onstage by his Art Director at the time who informed him that being part of an ensemble company meant just that, everyone took part in a show. This marked the beginning of a journey from the pursuit of art to one of performance and in the process developing skills as a writer and film maker.





## Calum Roberts as the child with no name

Previous to his co starring role in Richard, Calum had only appeared in a couple of short student films. The intensity and focus that he is able to project in front of camera is difficult to find in many adult actors but for a nine year old with no formal training and so little acting experience it appears innate. Apart from acting Calum also loves football and moves effortlessly between the camera lens and goal posts.





## Lara Cooper Chadwick as Isabella

Drawn to theatre at an early age Lara's acting background is founded in Shakespeare and classical theatre. She has appeared in numerous plays taking on lead and supporting roles with equal enthusiasm and professionalism. After studying at Rose Buford drama conservatoire Lara is now a full time professional stage and screen actress.





## Sue Bartlett as the Witch

Sue was born in London and moved to Portsmouth in the late sixties where she quickly became involved in the local theatre scene appearing in both classical and modern plays. Sue's open minded approach to acting has given her the versatility to move freely between live theatre and film embracing both with equal professionalism.





## Rob Paul Eggett as the Conman

Rob teaches Spanish and Latin studies at secondary school level. A lover of art and fashion Rob instigated the setting up of drama groups for stage plays and musicals at the schools he taught in. A flamboyant individual who readily applied his charismatic personae to his screen role as the Conman. Richard is Rob's film debut.





## Peter Colley as the Priest

An award winning local actor with a wide ranging ability for character and lead roles. Peter is used to performing in a variety of plays and musicals and his attention to the detail tone and balance of the characters he creates provides a solid platform for any role he is asked to play . With a long and impressive background in live theatre Richard is Peter's film debut.





## Sheila Elsdon as the Priestess

Sheila has been involved for many years with a number of local theatre companies and is adept in both musical and straight theatre. A local award winning actress Sheila is a versatile performer who undertakes roles from glamorous showbiz types to the downbeat and ordinary, portraying each with equal depth sensitivity and passion. Richard is Sheila's screen debut.





## Richard Salsbury as the Devil

Richard is a prize winning local author and his enthusiasm to take part in this project stems from his interest in history and the adaptation of real events. Given the opportunity to lift a character from the page of a script and provide it with flesh and blood Richard moved with ease as an author of invention into one of performance. This film marks his screen and acting debut.







## Richard / synopsis

Alone, exhausted and confused, Richard is on the point of surrender and accepting the demise that fate has dealt him. In his final moments his mind fragments and perceives other realities, voices and symbols carved from a past life in which he was a medieval king. Richard is propelled into a lost kingdom landscaped from past memories and furnished with strange characters. He is guided by a pale faced child whom Richard believes to be an innocent lamb he must protect in order to realise the salvation of his own decaying soul.

The journey they embark upon leads across a rich tapestry of half remembered territories plucked from Richard's mind. Underfoot the terrain is rich in earthly elements whilst the air is full of mysticism in a place where the past entwines with the present. The further he explores the landscape the more it imposes itself on his senses until he fully surrenders to its spell. Empowered in this new found land Richard rises above his own self doubt and fear in order to see the journey through to its final showdown. A climax to a conflict that will see his soul damned forever or eternally healed.

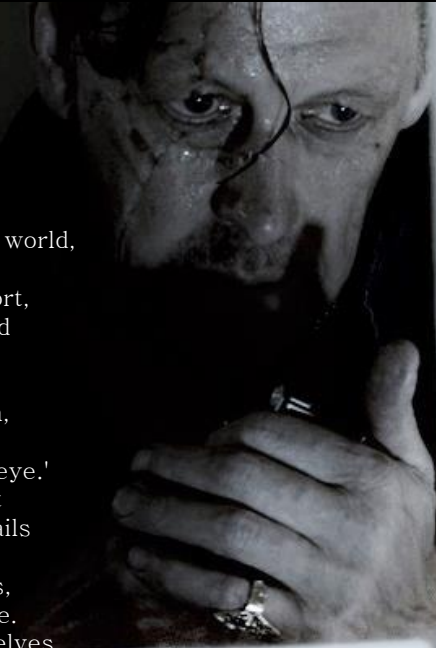
SCENE V. Pomfret castle.

Enter KING RICHARD

KING RICHARD II

I have been studying how I may compare  
This prison where I live unto the world:  
And for because the world is populous  
And here is not a creature but myself,  
I cannot do it; yet I'll hammer it out.  
My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,  
My soul the father; and these two beget  
A generation of still-breeding thoughts,  
And these same thoughts people this little world,  
In humours like the people of this world,  
For no thought is contented. The better sort,  
As thoughts of things divine, are intermix'd  
With scruples and do set the word itself  
Against the word:  
As thus, 'Come, little ones,' and then again,  
'It is as hard to come as for a camel  
To thread the postern of a small needle's eye.'  
Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot  
Unlikely wonders; how these vain weak nails  
May tear a passage through the flinty ribs  
Of this hard world, my ragged prison walls,  
And, for they cannot, die in their own pride.  
Thoughts tending to content flatter themselves  
That they are not the first of fortune's slaves,  
Nor shall not be the last; like silly beggars  
Who sitting in the stocks refuge their shame,  
That many have and others must sit there;  
And in this thought they find a kind of ease,  
Bearing their own misfortunes on the back  
Of such as have before endured the like.  
Thus play I in one person many people,  
And none contented: sometimes am I king;  
Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,  
And so I am: then crushing penury  
Persuades me I was better when a king;  
Then am I king'd again: and by and by  
Think that I am unking'd by Bolingbroke,  
And straight am nothing: but whate'er I be,  
Nor I nor any man that but man is  
With nothing shall be pleased, till he be eased  
With being nothing.

transcript of Shakespeare's original monologue



## Director's Notes

How often in history does a young pretender bide their time before attempting to wrestle a kingdom from an ageing ruler? Observing from the side lines before springing the trap and seizing power?

In the opening scene of the film Richard is slumped against a wall in a stairwell embalmed by shadows extending from his soul to shroud his surroundings. With his life force in decline he attempts to set out his final thoughts using a voice recorder. At a critical moment his mind fragments and spills from his body. Detached and sinking further into his own sense of failure Richard is joined by a child who sits down beside him. The child becomes a catalyst for Richard to step away from the darkness of his own interior and examine the tattered remains of a kingdom he believes he once knew. A world in which he encounters strange characters stitched together from the threads of half remembered memories.

As a way of interpreting Shakespeare's original monologue the dialogue is broken down, extended in parts and delivered by a variety archetypes trawled from Richard's mind. All of whom represent possible aspects of his character placed within recollections of past events or memories. This gives the monologue greater width by referencing his personality or character traits to specific themes. By doing this his own sense of identity comes under greater scrutiny as his journey develops. The further he delves into the deeper recesses of his mind the more his sense of self within the revealed landscape is authenticated until the delusion becomes an accepted norm.

In the same way that Shakespeare's original monologue offered his character, King Richard, different points of view to his precarious position so does the film. But whereas the original offered only the prospect of death or exile, the film allows its protagonist to believe he is capable of redefining his own destiny and surviving his present life threatening crisis.

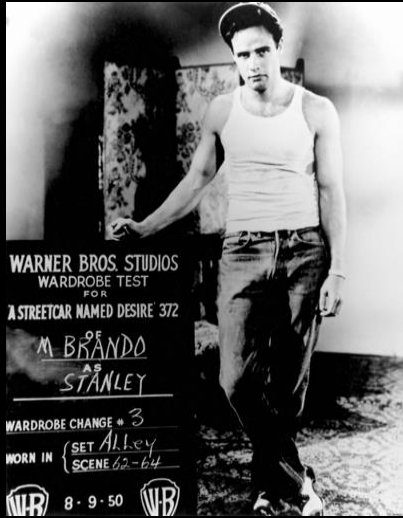
Carl Jung theorised that our personalities are made up of several traits or aspects of ourselves. He named these traits archetypes and likened them to recognisable characters such as a trickster, a demon, a hero, a priest, a wise woman, etc.

For this film I've chosen the archetypes of a hero, child, princess, witch, conman or trickster, priest, priestess, the devil and monster. This places each character into the context of Richard's view of his world.

There were various influences involved around the original idea. Charles Dicken's Scrooge, whose miserly protagonist was forced to undergo a journey into a supernatural world which compelled him to acknowledge his own lack of humanity and seek forgiveness in order to continue living. Don Corleone's advice to Michael in Francis Ford Coppola's film *The Godfather II* (1974): 'keep your friends close but your enemies even closer.' Richard did just this but was unable to determine which was which. But most notably the film's opening soliloquy is directly influenced by Billy Wilder's 1944 *Double Indemnity* film character, Walter Neff and his recollection of past events conspiring to bring about his downfall.

In looking at the historical aspect of the film I also wanted to add a sense of Arthurian legend. And so we have a child posing as a latter day Mordred wandering a mythical kingdom. Watching and listening. Waiting for the right moment to strike and usurp power.

## Costume – the look and feel of Richard



The style and feel of the eponymous hero of the film was influenced by Marlon Brando's look and performance in the Elia Kazan films, *A Street Car Named Desire* (1951) and *On The Waterfront* (1954). I wanted something that suggested a bygone era which was distinct and recognisable by a Terry Malloy or Stanley Kowalski type of brooding character. The impression that these kind of films created by the look and tenure of their characters was one of powerful individuals rising above their down trodden stations in life. Flat cap, vest, baggy trousers and shirt epitomised the 1930'-40's America and carved out a unique style which over ensuing decades became a recognisable style as in John Ford's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) and Preston Sturges 1942 odyssey *Sullivan's Travels*. In latter day it is still an effective motif which the Coen Brothers' used to great effect in their film *Oh brother where art thou* (2000) an adaptation of Homer's *Iliad* which also borrows from Sturges's film.

There is a connection between Richard's appearance and what we associate with it which allows us to accept him based solely on his garb and demeanour. A simple marker which slips effortlessly into the viewer's imagination of a moody, individual fighting for survival whilst begrudgingly accepting the cards that fate has dealt him. It underpins the power of our association with costume and continually reinforces an individual's perceived role within a visual narrative.

Left to right: Brando as Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Terry Malloy in *On The Waterfront*



Henry Ford as Tom Joad in John Ford's 1940 Steinbeck adaptation *The Grapes of Wrath*



First costume fit for Richard



Vaughan Douglas Capstick as Richard recalling the past



Calum Roberts as the Child with no name in an austere but powerful look. Dressed in shadows and revealing nothing of his identity

Secondly, it was as important to indicate that the child who appears at the moment Richard's mind fragments as a representative of a newer, modern age. But nonetheless, he too needs to appear similarly austere but in more powerful way as he's on the way up as Richard's power is on the wane. Think of Noodles' gang in Sergio Leone's classic 1984 epic *Once Upon a Time in America* and how their success as petty crooks transferred visually from glad rags to suits and elevated their status within their neighbourhood. An unambiguous statement that made them stand out from the rest of the crowd and other local gangs. This shift in attire represents the passing of the old and arrival of the new. From foot soldiers to generals, gangsters dressed as businessmen marauding as funeral directors.



Isabella is a direct link to Richard's vision of a past life and temporarily holds the key to his dream as she represents his last memory of happiness. In contrast to the Witch and the crumbling ruins of the medieval castle which surrounds them in scene 3 she is young, beautiful and untarnished by time, still faithful to Richard's memory of her. The look of Isabella was inspired in part by John Everett Millais's painting Ophelia and The Lady of Shalott by fellow Pre Raphaelite artist John William Waterhouse. Both paintings reflect the movement's love of nature and romanticism. It is an interesting juxtaposition to Richard's early 20c look which can be viewed as an antithesis to the brotherhoods' doctrine of idealism opposing realism. Yet, a medieval king would lie within the realm of the Pre Raphaelite movement's themes and motifs which is where Richard places himself.

Having watched the BBC series The Desperate Romantics I was drawn to the character of Lizzy Siddall who modelled for some of their paintings, in particular Ophelia. Apparently she was a very plain looking girl but depicted as an 'idyll' by the artists, an image of aestheticism harking back to a romanticised view of a bygone age. Precisely how she resides inside Richard's mind.



The Lady of Shalott by John William Waterhouse 1888



Lara Cooper Chadwick as Isabella



Ophelia by John Everett Millais 1852



There is an old woman who represents the archetype of a witch. Her costume is deliberately ambiguous but not dissimilar to a mourner's shroud. Knitting a large net intended to catch lost souls before releasing them back into the pond of another existence she occupies the space which marks the beginning of Richard's sojourn. Similar in gesture and overtone to the witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* she's a soothsayer warning Richard what awaits him on his journey: "By the prick of my thumb something wicked this way comes." This is a reference to Shakespeare's play but in this instance the Witch is also referencing Ray Bradbury's 1962 novel, *Something wicked This Way Comes* and the advent of a sinister carnival heading into town. This foreshadows Richard's encounter with the Conman in the Amusement Park in the following scene.



Sue Bartlett as the Witch, a soothsayer



Steve Martin as Jonas Nightingale in Leap of Faith (1992)



19c Bagman on the road



Robert Paul Eggett as the Conman

I was impressed by the performance of Steve Martin in Leap of Faith (1992), a man full to the brim with charismatic power but completely empty of the milk of human kindness. He represents hope in its most superficial and beguiling form

The Conman, or trickster as he is known in archetypal terms, is dressed as a 20c bagman carrying a suitcase which suggests someone on the move. With fedora, bow tie, chequered shirt, suit and blanket roll he looks like the kind of character who would have been seen playing poker on steamboats or selling miraculous potions from the back of a covered wagon. A bootlegger lifting the human spirit whilst relieving it of its hard earned cash. He represents the spirit of adolescence, constantly on the move and surviving by the tricks he's learnt on the road. The amusement park is his home territory where he happily plies his trade. Indeed, he is the manifestation of the carnival itself in mind and spirit, engaging onlookers with his sleight of hand tricks and illusions before disappearing in amongst the fairground rides and stalls. Tricksters and road side preachers, whether reading from a holy book, the back of a bottle or a deck of cards, are all cut from the same cloth and serve their adopted communities. Conductors of an unseen world that bewitches peoples' eyes whilst temporarily relieving them of life's tedium and the contents of their purse.



Robert de Niro as Vito Corleone in Ford Coppola's 1974 *Godfather II*



Seated old Italian men



Peter Colley as the Priest

In context with the Conman's attire I saw the Priest from a similar perspective performing in a similar style, moving from town to town selling faith by the dollar to those in need of salvation. Partly influenced by P T Anderson character Eli Sunday from the film *There Will Be Blood* (2008) and any one of a number of Coppola's Sicilian characters from *Godfather II*. His cloth is cut to appear reverential but powerful, similar to the child. His denim shirt suggests he is either a journeyman and attempting to fit in with the local people thereabouts or being unexpectedly interrupted in his rehearsal by Richard he has not had time to change into more formal attire befitting a public performance. His dark glasses enforce the idea of blindness, a world without light where only blind faith can carry a person through life's travails. His cane is employed as both an aid and weapon and brandished as a symbol of his office, similar to the staff of some ancient high priest. In the Priest's hands it is used as a conductor to connect directly to the heavens and summon god's wrath.



Sheila Elsdon as the Priestess

The Priestess is dressed in an odd mixture of garb spanning the mid 1930's to 1940's suggesting images that Richard may have seen later in life before his demise. She is the feminine counterpart to the Priest and whilst he may appear as dark and ominous as an oncoming storm she is somewhat decorative and playful. Maybe the Priest is unaware of how she looks? After all, it is the Priestess who has the power of vision and it is her eyes that guides the Priest and informs him. In contrast to his coal coloured look and vista, her attire is specifically designed to attract an audience. An old fashioned glamorous assistant solidly supporting the magician at work. She has a look of well-maintained refinement about her which displays the possibility of material well-being here on earth if we chose to follow the teachings held within the books she sells. I likened her style to some of the first female roles I'd seen in cinema from old war movies and Ealing Street Comedies. She is an eccentric blend of pastiche conservatism and a firm believer in the here and now whilst in attendance to the happily ever after.



Orson Welles  
as Harry  
Lime in *The  
Third Man*  
(1949)



Bussetta  
Michael's  
Corleone's  
bodyguard  
from  
*Godfather II*  
(1974) played  
by Amerigo  
Tot



Father Merrin  
played by Max  
Von Sydow  
keeping his  
appointment  
with the Devil in  
*The Exorcist*  
(1973)



The Devil wears black. He is both a messenger and recipient: a guide and executioner. But above all else he is a businessman who deals in the contracts of fallen souls. I liked the idea of the Devil in a post WWII black market place where anything could be bought and everything had its price. Where brokerage was a skill that could ensure comfortable survival instead of acute hardship. The Devil operates strictly on the border and is there to tempt anyone with the promise of a 'heaven' here on earth. A shadowy salesman who never sleeps and only completes a deal when the light is almost gone, making the small print on a contract hard to read. Like the servants of God the Devil wears black, not in compliance, but in mockery of their vestment.

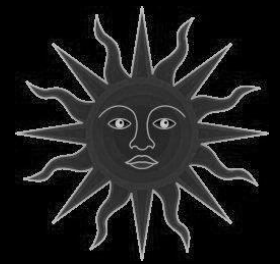


Monster is the archetype within us all but the creature in the film is modelled on the ancient Greek Minotaur and represents the worst aspect of Richard's despotic rule if he were to continue as a king into old age. He resides in a tower overlooking the entrance to a Labyrinth below so he can guard against unwanted intrusion. Built as a garrison of defence the tower has become a prison from which he can only leave on the point of death. In stark contrast to the medieval tower early on in the journey where Richard encounters Isabella and a land of natural beauty, here the would be king meets the cold, dank smell of something rotten lying at the very heart of his soul, tormenting his mind.

A mix of ancient history and modern psychology provides the building blocks for the Minotaur and his granite shell. I wanted an extreme version of how Richard would manifest had he continued to live: a monster who fuels only fear in the hearts of others. He is physically decomposing but the magical symbols painted onto his body serve to hold him in limbo whilst tightening his will to continue his rule at any cost.



The sunburst was a royal badge of Richard and worn throughout the film by the protagonist on a silver necklace. On the Minotaur it has bloated and turned black as if infected from within. Bandages across his waist conceal a wound from the medieval battle raging in Richard's mind during the opening scene. It's also marks the fatal blow inflicted by the child to end his life and carries with it the connotation of the wound of Christ. A further marker of Richard's grandiose thinking.



## Carl Jung and Archetypes

In Jungian theory archetypes refer to underlying forms which emerge in conscious awareness as images or motifs such as the Mother, the Child, the Trickster, the Hero, the Tower, Water, the Tree of Life, etc. According to Jung these archetypes populate the collective unconscious, a landscape of the unconscious mind which is shared amongst all members of the same species.

Jungian psychology emphasizes the importance of the psyche and the personal quest for wholeness as an individual. Jung reckoned that the collective unconscious had a profound influence on the lives of people who lived out its symbols and dressed them in meaning through their own experiences.

He believed archetypes to be universal, archaic patterns that are the psychic counterpart of instinct. They are inherited potentials which become manifest when they enter consciousness as images interacting with the outside world. They form a dynamic substratum which an individual shapes and colours according to their own personae and experience.

In these terms, the archetype in itself is merely a possibility, an empty vessel waiting to be filled.

## Locations

- Empty office block, the Hard, Portsea
- Hallway landing, Durnford Court Southsea
- North harbour, Portsmouth
- Portchester Castle
- Portsdown hill
- Long curtain embankment, moat, gun battery and bridge, Old Portsmouth
- Garrison church (Domus Rei) Old Portsmouth
- The Round Tower and gun emplacements, Old Portsmouth
- The Courtyard of the Round tower

Although there were practical reasons for deciding to shoot the film in my hometown, the driving force behind the decision was my desire to place the locations on the 'filmic map' so to speak and give them an iconic look and feel. Being an historical city situated on the seafront there is an excellent blend of land and coastal locations sat side by side. And it was these locations which furnished some of my earliest memories when wandering the town as a child with a large group of kids from our council estate in the heart of the city, Landport. As I grew older so these areas where I'd spent my childhood aged and it was part of my raison d'être to try and preserve in film these places for posterity and future eyes. They became some of the heavier coins in the loose change of my cultural capital. Locations which continually attract me like a misplaced trinket on a old charm bracelet which pulls at my mind and spirit. When I'm gone I hope that some of them will remain in their present form and if not? Then in 40 or 50 years' time people can say 'if you want to know what it used to look like round here then you should take a look at that film Richard. I haven't got a clue what it's about but there's some nice shots of Old Portsmouth in it.'



The dilapidated 1970's office block is situated on the approach to Portsmouth harbour train station and was mentioned by Neil Hunt our cinematographer as a possible setting for placing Richard at the beginning of the film. The decaying exterior of the building gave us the metaphor of Richard's physical condition before we're introduced to him and worked well as a post-modernist palace: a crumbling edifice losing its identity. As the film developed beyond our initial concept we realised the need to link certain scenes together in order to place our characters within the narrative. Although we were working on locations for bigger scenes there was still the pick-up shots in between that needed the same care and attention to sit within the dystopian feel of the story. In every instance we approached our film in guerrilla style and followed an organic process which allowed us to remain open minded as Richard moved through the blur of his own dismembered memories.

The hallway in scene 1 is directly outside the front door of my apartment which was built in 1951 in retro art deco style. The initial test shots were done with light streaming in through the windows which sit above the stone staircase. I was influenced by some of the close up shots from Bennett Miller's 2005 film Capote as Truman Capote conducts a series of interviews in the prison cell with Perry Smith, one of the accused murderers. Initially we attempted to shoot something far more understated than what became the noirish style of the opening we now see between Richard and the child. As it was, the stone landing we used was directly above the staircase I'd initially selected and moving to the landing gave us greater freedom to create a more claustrophobic feel and intensity between the actors. A pale looking Richard bathed in sweat in a dark, dark place joined by a pale skinned child swathed in black, befitting the shadows he emerges from. It also made the close up camera work more manageable and gave us a broader range of shots to select from. As the child enters the scene he stands above Richard, creating a strong visual dynamic in terms of power before reducing himself in height and stature and seating himself alongside Richard. The possible sub text is the devil being summoned to salvage what is left of Richard's soul. In order to claim it he must lead the 'lamb', Richard, to its slaughter. The reverse of how Richard comes to define his own role in the story.

North Harbour Portsmouth is the first open air shot with Richard and the child. After a brief interlude of darkness being measured in time by a gallows drum and unseen bolts being withdrawn from their keeps, Richard's mind is given the chance to wander further than the confines of the hallway as large doors are pulled open and the first shafts of light invade Richard's dark interior. (The doors being opened belong to a 12c Augustin priory situated inside the grounds of Portchester Castle). Once outside Richard looks across the harbour towards a stone tower, the medieval Norman Keep of Portchester Castle. A tower used in storytelling can often signify the destination or place where the prize of the hero's journey is kept. I'd read and enjoyed Stephen King's the Dark Tower mythology but I wasn't so much influenced by that as I was by the desire to set Richard on his journey from a place he believed he once called home. The low tide of the harbour and its mud flats were the perfect setting for the beginning of his journey. Mud. Mud everywhere from the outgoing tide revealing what is normally unseen. Mud of the mind, mud of movement, memories sinking in mud, buried but preserved. A large empty expanse of terrain devoid of the salty liquid which brings it to life. Puddles of dull water and small empty shells bereft of life. The metaphor is unmistakable in reference to Richard's state of mind and body. Richard kneels to the ground and examines the terrain he now inhabits. Not only is he interacting with its substance but he is also paying it the respect that any invading king or explorer would do on the point of discovering a new land and with it the realisation of their dream. The wooden poles sticking out of the ground represent an ancient landing stage or pontoon for boats of an invasion fleet. I'd buried the timbers in the mud the afternoon before the day of our shoot so we could capitalise on the few hours of daylight we'd have the following evening and not have to think about set building. A few hours after I'd finished I went back to the site and anxiously watched as the tops of their heads disappeared beneath the incoming tide. I had a fairly sleepless night wondering if our landing stage would still be there the next day. We arrived at the location around 5pm and to my relief the pontoon was not only still intact but was festooned with seaweed. It was an Excalibur moment and I knew then that the force was with us!



Low tide at north harbour with the newly planted landing stage



High tide – an Excalibur moment in set build



North harbour, Portsmouth, looking towards Portchester Castle. Richard's first view of the outside world

Portchester Castle is thought to date back to at least 3AD. Although the Roman army retreated from Britain in the early 5th century, it is unlikely that the fort was ever completely abandoned and was in continual use on a much smaller scale over the proceeding centuries. A 10th-century hall and tower were built within the fort suggesting it was a high status residence during the Saxon period and used as part of their coastal defence against invading Vikings. The Saxons made way for the Normans who rebuilt parts of the castle and added a tall imposing Keep as its main living quarters (Richard's first view of the castle). In June 1346 Edward III assembled his 15,000 strong army there before leaving for France on the campaign that ended in victory at the Battle of Crecy. It was only later discovered midway through test shooting that between 1396 and 1399 the royal apartments that stand today, albeit in a ruined state, were built for Richard II and inhabited by his child bride Isabella de Valois whilst he went to wage war in Ireland. Even before this discovery, I felt that the castle, its moats and ramparts was an ideal setting for Richard to begin his journey. It immediately throws into question the sense of time and place. The new information regarding the castle's connection to Isabella and Richard reinforced the feeling that as a writer and director I was 'following a trail' rather than leading a charge. The exchange between Richard and Isabella in scene 5 is so beautiful that the reassurance she offers Richard I hope extends to the viewer and draws them further into the tale. For the setting of this scene I was inspired by the paintings of Caravaggio and the dense shadows (chiaroscuro) that occupy some of his works allowing people to move from darkness into light. There is often little or no background on view (backstory) and the observer is compelled to focus on the subject matter of predominantly male figures in varying stages of drama.

Portchester Castle supplied us with scenes 3, 4 & 5 and introduced us to the Witch. From my early scouting trips I wanted the witch to be in a place of natural beauty, wild and ancient. Her domain represents Delphi and although she's referred to as a witch she symbolises an oracle or soothsayer in the renaissance themed land of Arcadia. The landscape she sits in is a reference to the era of the Romantics' painting who explored medieval subject themes and motifs often depicting natural landscapes, temples and crumbling ruins discovered by explorers in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Portchester Castle (and previous photo).

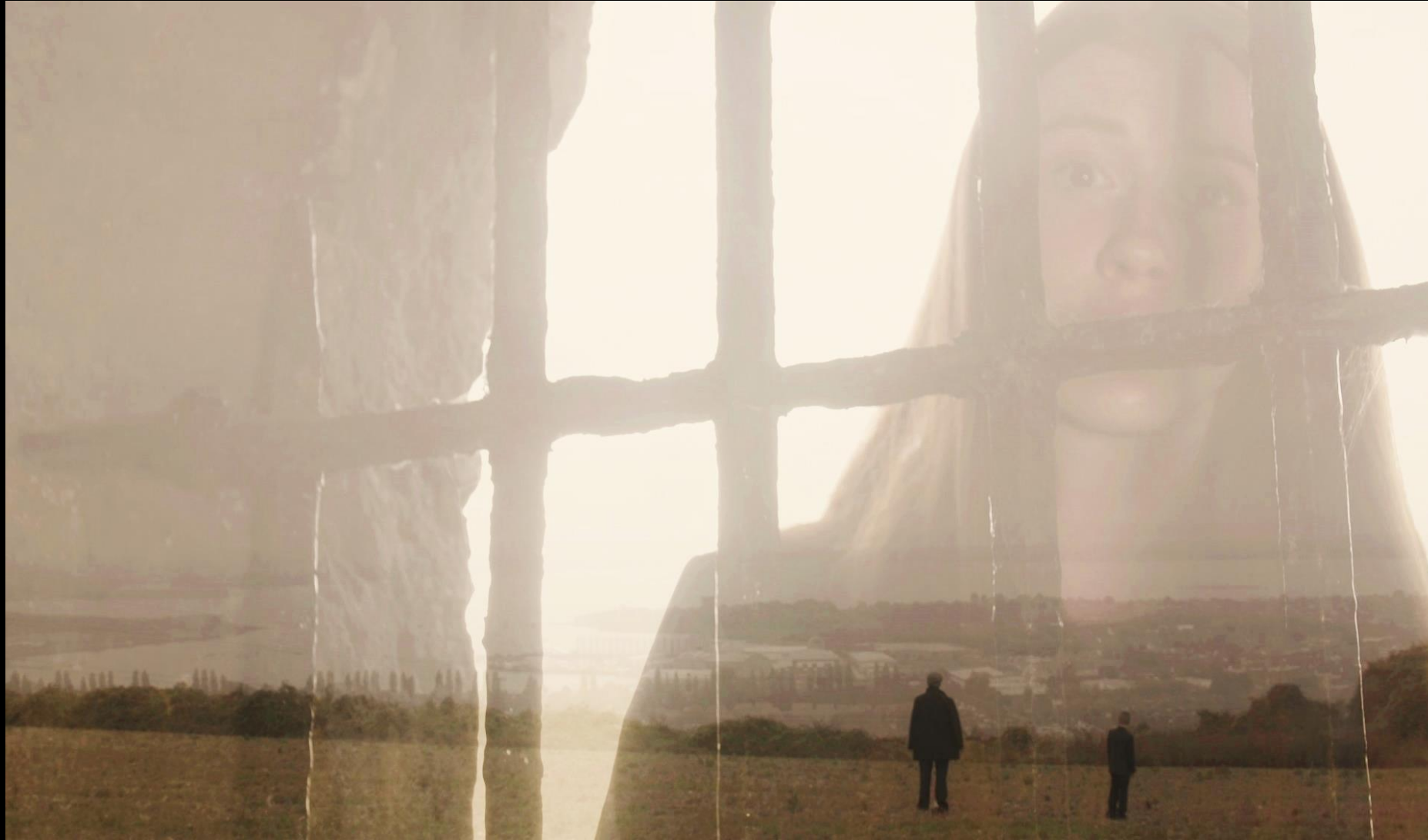


Arcadia, Greece





Richard's kingdom viewed from Portsdown hill overlooking Portsmouth harbour and Portchester Castle with the Isle of Wight on the horizon



Isabella in the sky

## Portsdown Hill

overlooks the Peninsula of Portsea Island and its natural harbours either side: Portsmouth to the right and Langstone to the left. On the horizon lies the Isle of Wight separated from the mainland by the Solent channel. It's one of the few cities that I know that offers such a dramatic panorama. Even here I have seen changes in my own lifetime with building developments on its slopes and it's probably only a matter of time before that trend is rekindled. The hill was used as a look out position for invading enemy forces in times gone by. It was the perfect location for Richard to gaze down upon his kingdom and in doing so, relinquish his hold on the recent past, symbolised by Isabella leaving the earthly plane and ascending into the heavens.



Amusement Park, Clarence Pier is a haunt from my childhood. With a large gang of kids from my estate I was allowed to wander up from the town centre where I lived to the funfair and surrounding area. I was one of the youngest, 9 or 10 years of age and the older boys, just into their teens, acted as alpha males or silverbacks to the troop, deciding where we were going and how we'd get there. As you can imagine, the funfair was an incredible place for a kid growing up in the sixties. It was the go to venue along with the Saturday morning cinema and frequently the two went hand in hand on the ethereal plains of our imagination: one being the birth place of characters to be played out in the grounds of the other. It is in the Amusement park that we encounter the Conman, or trickster. His look and the setting of the theme park were influenced in part by Ray Bradbury's 1962 novel *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. But whereas Bradbury's carnival was a dark and ominous place which drained the life force from his visitors ours, I hope, provides a gentle comedic turn. The idea for the Conman to try and hide there was, in part homage, to Carol Reed's 1949 noir thriller *The Third Man*. I liked the idea of a colourful theme park normally full of people having fun conflicting with Richard's view of it, devoid of its life force and only its skeletal remains on view. Like other scenes in the film it triggers half remembered memories in Richard's mind, a time of fun and a playful youth. But the sentiment accompanying the memory has long since detached itself and in place of unfettered joy there is caution and whisperings of deceit.

Clarence Pier Amusement park was developed from around 1928 when it was still a Victorian seaside attraction and grew until the late 1930's before most of its original wooden structure and pier were destroyed in bombing raids in WWII. It underwent reconstruction into the 1950's and although it briefly slumped for a number of years it has re-established itself in recent times but is less than half its size when I knew it as a kid.



The Garrison Church, Domus Dei – God’s House, Old Portsmouth is located very close to Long Curtain embankment, its canon emplacements and moat. The church was founded in Old Portsmouth by Bishop de Rupibus in 1212 as a Hospice to aid and shelter pilgrims from overseas bound for the Shrines of Canterbury, Chichester and Winchester. In 1449 Henry VI sent the Bishop of Chichester to the Church in order to pay the sailors and soldiers of the Garrison. Due to a disagreement in the amount of pay, the Bishop was murdered. For this the town was excommunicated for fifty years. The south side of Domus Dei was converted into a residence for the Governor of Portsmouth and was called Government House and in the process gave the name Governor’s Green to the place which it retains to this day.

It is here that Richard encounters the Priest and Priestess, old fashioned bible punchers who lean heavily on the voice of God and transcribe it to others for a profit. They represent the discipline of an order in society which Richard outwardly rejects in favour of a perceived wisdom ground out from engaging enemies on a battlefield instead of confronting them from the pages of a book.



Long Curtain embankment, moat and tunnel Was constructed from the mid 16c onwards when England was constantly at war with its European neighbours. Treaties and alliances provided some temporary cover but the desire for conquest flowed through European veins encouraging them to expand their empires in order to grow their economies. Portsmouth was the maritime heart of England and its navy was pivotal in its defence and expansion as a European and global power. Portsmouth became the venue for some of the country's most important military garrisons and through hundreds of years of development successive monarchs and governments built and reinforced its defences. Some still stand today but many were lost either to the German bombing raids of WWII or local town planners putting bulldozers before cultural heritage. Alas, there are skeletons of the historic sites it once contained, like fossilised dinosaurs and even within their stone cold bones there lies a sense of what has gone before. The moat with its gun batteries were part of Lord Palmerston's building program who feared an invasion from France following the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. The tunnel featured in the Devil's scene runs under Long Curtain earthen ramparts and opens onto a wooden bridge spanning the moat used in our dagger scene with Richard and the child. It was supposedly the last route walked by Admiral Lord Nelson as he departed for Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.



Labyrinth: medieval sea defence leading to the home of the Minotaur in the Round tower

The Round Tower was commissioned by Henry VII as part of a rebuilding scheme in 1488 to fortify defences against the threat of invasion from the Spanish and French. It sits directly at the harbour entrance which is less than 300 metres wide and commands the view of both the Solent channel and Portsmouth harbour. At certain times a chain was stretched across the harbour from the Round Tower to Gosport on the opposite side of the entrance to prevent ships entering or leaving. Leading towards the tower's upper entrance is a square battery point with ports carved in its seaward side for cannon. The area within the battery emplacement contains a series of arched entrances and partition walls so that each canon and its crew could be housed within its own area. This section of the tower provided the Labyrinth in scene 12 where Richard and the child find themselves after leaving the tunnel from scene 11. It represents the Labyrinth on the island of Minos that Theseus had to negotiate before encountering the Minotaur. The Round Tower is in contrast to the tower Richard sees in scene 2 and marks the end of his journey. It provided an excellent setting for the final two scenes although it was not initially my first choice. When deciding where the final showdown should take place I'd always had in mind a stone staircase nearby which reminded me of the famous stairwell from William Friedkin's 1973 film *The Exorcist*. I'd scouted this location several times and carried out test shots and rehearsals there and was sure it was right. But because of the nature of our shooting schedule I had time to consider how each setting added or subtracted to the film's narrative. The suggestion to use the Round tower was suggested by a local council officer who I liaised with for the filming permits. Looking at the atmospheric photos I took in a subsequent scouting trip to the Round Tower it proved a revelation. The setting gave us the chance to show a further downward spiral into the depths of Richard's psyche before he emerges from the shadows to face his adversary. It was another instance where I felt an unseen force at work driving the film in a direction that it needed to go rather than where I thought it should go. Part of the problem with the *Exorcist* steps (as they're affectionately now known) was controlling the traffic of people coming from several directions and the occasional noise from nearby homes in Battery Row. At the Round Tower for the first time in our entire shoot we were able to seal off the area and focus exclusively on our work without interruption.

And what an eye opener it must have been on a cold November night for passengers on the IOW ferry passing through the harbour entrance below to gaze up at a half naked man in a cardboard helmet holding a mace aloft and screaming, 'Sometimes am I king!'



## The Courtyard of the Round Tower

Once I'd scouted the Round Tower and the battery emplacement there was no doubt in my mind that I'd been given a wonderful (but unknowing) nudge towards a treasure trove of dramatic settings which allowed us to develop the last part of the film's narrative. The descent into the underworld, via a tunnel in the previous scene with the Devil, leads directly to the labyrinth which Richard must negotiate as a final test to resolve his fate. This location also provided us with our second tower from which the Monster (aka Minotaur) could sense Richard approaching throughout the film: 'something' awakened from its slumber. The tower represents the inner sanctuary of Richard's mind and the manifestation behind its impenetrable walls of what he could become if he could avoid death. The Monster is the demon within us all, the worst aspect of ourselves. It is Richard's final obstacle on his road to redemption and the Monster itself becomes consumed by shadows of the past when confronted with the present.

The Exorcist steps. Initially I wanted to recreate the Pieta with the child holding Richard's body. Influenced, amongst others, by the 1939 Raoul Walsh film *White Heat* with James Cagney's character Eddie Bartlett dying in the arms of Panama Smith, a nightclub hostess. It was important that Richard's sense of victory is short lived and that he cannot escape his own death. Only review it. He had to find himself back in the same position we'd placed him in scene 1 with the same camera angle and the child sat alongside him. This implies that perhaps the journey only took place inside his mind and the child, having learned the perils he'll face in life, will tread the same path as his predecessor and he too will commit his soul to a life of purgatory. One without beginning or end.



La pieta by  
Michelangelo  
1342



The infamous steps in  
Georgetown from the 1973  
film the Exorcist



Our own Exorcist steps in  
Battery Row Old Portsmouth  
2017



The Roaring Twenties by  
Raoul Walsh 1929

# Richard

## FAQS about the film

Q: What is the film about?

A: It is about a man facing his own death and how he arranges the disquiet of his pain and anxiety by placing himself onto another plane where his final thoughts can be used as a form of absolution.

Q: How is Shakespeare's original monologue adapted for the film?

A: The monologue is from Richard II and depicts the eponymous king imprisoned and reflecting on his life. Knowing he will no longer be king he is free from the servitude of high office and the restraints it places upon him. Throughout Shakespeare's play Richard has fought all his battles using eloquent prose and in this realm of 'combat' he remains unopposed. But with the passing of time comes a change in the nature and order of things, a force he can no longer oppose with words alone. Following his capture and imprisonment Richard accepts his time has come to pass into another sphere of reckoning, whether in this world or the next. His final thoughts and subsequent philosophy on his own life reveal a deeper understanding of his character and the opportunities he failed to grasp whilst in a position of power. These same rules of engagement apply in the film except this time the protagonist is able to build other worlds, from the words he delivers, into which he can escape. In settings that add texture and colour to his physical and mental state of mind he attempts to take heed of his own advice in order to reverse his ailing fortunes. By placing the monologue into a visual frame of reference the film shows what Richard is visualising and how he is summoned by his own imagination to enter a world in which he is king. But in place of Shakespeare's ineffectual leader of men, feeling powerless in his own decline, the film's protagonist is now a modern day war lord reared on violence and adept in physical confrontation.

Q: How will people understand the language and the reference points within the narrative?

A: To understand the context and prose of any Shakespeare work is difficult enough because of the language employed by the author. The monologue is an extract broken down and adapted into small segments to give the text an accessibility which isn't available in the rendition of the complete play. Hopefully the imagery and character settings will engage the viewer and help convey the sense of the dialogue. The original monologue is an eloquent speech which scans as a series of parables Each line has potential to deliver its own message which is why Shakespeare is still being argued over and reckoned with by scholars today. Anything that offers more than surface value is open to continual exploration which can reveal sub text and extra layers of exposition. By engaging with a text we ascertain a view and create an opinion. I believe that what we have created in our film works on many levels and requires more than one viewing in order to dip beneath the poetics that act as a vehicle for its visual narrative.

Q: What is the objective of using someone's mental state of mind to portray a journey?

A: I was initially inspired by Billy Wilder's film *Double Indemnity* (1944). Watching Fred MacMurray begin his confession in the opening of the film and the subsequent playback of the events which led him to that place reminded me of Shakespeare's Richard II delivering his final appraisal on life whilst locked up in Pomfret Castle. As a lover of the film noir cycle, its visuals and existentialist rationale, I wanted to place Richard in a place where he's given a chance to respond to his own eulogy. There are, in my mind, distinct similarities in the scenes penned by Wilder and Shakespeare (as unlikely as that sounds). I decided that my Richard would be undergoing some kind of breakdown in which he hears the sounds of battle and the screams of men being slaughtered. In his weakened psychological state Richard succumbs to the idea of a separate reality, a life in which he's a medieval king. By doing so he is able to escape the one in which he is dying.

Having had direct experience of individuals hearing voices, which can aid in constructing an alternative reality, I became aware of how distorted their lives become on a day to day basis with the world(s) they interact with. As a result of this condition there's a whirlpool of thoughts constructing exaggerated scenarios full of bizarre characters – some real, some imaginary – conversations and life experiences. As these alternative views are played out by an individual they add fuel to the values and beliefs of that other world, its construct and perceived messages.

The further Richard ventures into the strange kingdom the more it imposes itself on his senses until he becomes fully immersed in its mesmerizing landscape. Within a few short scenes Richard believes he's been spared his own death in order to shepherd the child, who has joined him, to a place of safety. By doing so, he believes he will be able to rise above his own downfall and redeem his eternal soul from the shadow of its earthly crimes.

Q: Who is the child and what is his role?

A: The child represents Richard when he was placed on the English throne in 1377 as a ten year old boy. In Jungian terms he is a guide, the angel or messenger sent in a vision to deliver a weary traveller or disciple to a place of resurrection. He has no name and initially Richard doesn't acknowledge his existence. Upon leaving the inner sanctuary of the dilapidated building the child gradually begins to assume control of the journey. This unspoken contract is formally undersigned when Richard hands the child his flick knife, or dagger as he describes it, whilst crossing a wooden bridge above a river. Although this act empowers the child, Richard is also relinquishing himself of the office the dagger represents: a violent warlord. It allows Richard to fully submerge his mind into the events taking place around him and more importantly, he is handing the child his murder weapon. It's worth mentioning that we only ever hear the child's voice and never his footsteps.

Q: How is Richard's mind affected by what he sees and what he hears?

A: We first encounter Richard on the point of demise, spiritually, mentally and physically. At his nadir he is joined by a young child whom he initially fails to see or acknowledge. After a few brief moments it appears that his mind fragments and spills over into an alternative reality and the monologue becomes a duologue with the child. The subsequent journey they embark upon could be viewed as a journey of the soul with Richard sensing this to be life's final lesson before meeting his maker. The further into the realm of his own imagination he moves the more it resonates and stirs up old memories which temporarily replace the present of him dying on a hallway landing. The life he is now experiencing as a medieval king in his own mind is far more engaging and powerful than that of his demise in the real world. Therefore, the more he trusts in it the greater its authenticity becomes. Everything in it is his mind's creation and eventually, after time, the illusion completely by passes any consultation process with his sense of what is real and what is not. By constantly encountering new characters and landscapes shaped from old memories the environment continually reinforces itself upon his rationale and allows Richard to find new life inside a world of his own creation.

Q: What is the significance of the settings?

A: Richard's character, isolated and confused, needs to draw some sense of comfort in the changing landscape about him. Nothing appears normal or holds his attention for too long as he weaves his way across its broken highways. I've seen first hand the paradox between the world which I witnessed before me and an alternative one that a person experiencing a mental illness could see and hear. Their only rationale for this experience was that their senses had been heightened to the point of them being 'gifted.' The longer the experience continued the more manageable the delusional world became and its authenticity more acceptable. But in the process there is a major distortion between old and new memories with the person experiencing the dilemma stuck in the middle trying to balance conflicting information.

Richard's last happy memory was with Isabella. A time of simplicity and innocence in a magical kingdom with a beautiful princess and a castle, like a fairy tale. By complete contrast the last character he encounters is a monster in a tower at night resembling a nightmare. In between these two he meets other characters whom he partially recognizes in settings that draw him in. While adapting to his new world it is also reminding him of past obstacles he must now resolve. Each place unlocks a specific memory and elicits a response from Richard. They marry him to his perceived memories in the same way as we are all locked into a specific idea of a place we once visited. These memories cannot be renewed or updated, only added to for future reference. My own attachment to Richard's kingdom are from my journeys as a child growing up and exploring the landscape of my bombed city. These kind of memories are vital as anchor points and regularly reinforce our own sense of identity whilst grounding us in our daily lives. For the most part they keep us 'sane'. The areas I wandered to as a child were as mesmerizing to me as Richard's are to him. They reveal a time in history that comes to a standstill once it has played its part in our construct and is only reactivated again by our presence. One of my aims of the film was to document the backdrops and settings of my hometown that were part of my childhood. John Ford filmed Monument Valley, the desert and epic skylines, sprinkling them with characters searching out lost causes and finding themselves in the process. I wanted my film to be as much about its settings as it was the people passing through them. To try and highlight scenery that goes unnoticed and place it within an epic context with overtones of a Sergio Leone landscape.

Q: How was the design of the film arrived at?

A: I specifically wanted an eclectic mix of settings, costume and characters. I liked Twin Peaks, the way that Lynch allowed his characters lateral movement on different planes and dimensions whether through amnesia, psychosis or spiritual transcendence. I loved the style and shtick of the original Avenger series from the sixties and Patrick McGoochan's The Prisoner. The common thread running through these works was the central question of: whose reality are we viewing? Whilst the characters were being dressed in everything available from the costume box. It was important from the outset to create iconic views of parts of my hometown, to give them grandeur and a look that I don't believe they've ever been given before. In the same way that Scorsese explored his neighbourhood I wanted to explore mine as someone moving towards the last phase of his life. A perpetrator returning to the scene of a crime. I wanted a small seaside town to take on the mantle of a sweeping epic (in places) and create a landscape that would never be forgotten. Equally, these views belong to Richard.

Q: What were the constraints in making the film and how were these overcome?

A: The idea for the film came to me in 2014 when I began studying in London. It wasn't until 2016 that I'd adapted the original monologue sufficiently that I was ready to begin filming. I was a second year creative writing student in Portsmouth when filming began. It was and still is a 'pay-as-you-go' production! As each aspect of the project developed so did the budget and instead of buying books and beer with my student grant I was trawling charity shops for costume, buying public liability insurance and feeding my cast and crew. The biggest problem encountered, apart from the weather, was getting volunteers on a regular basis to come out in the evenings during the autumn and winter months to help. Understandably a comfy sofa and tv is preferable to a damp, draughty old building or exposed hillside. There was also the problem of not being able to control the sound in certain locations. Notably during Richard's exchange with the Priest in scene 10 someone nearby decided it was time to practice the bagpipes en plein air. Stood, overlooking a large nearby moat which bore the closest resemblance to a Loch this far south, the lone piper spiritually reconnected with his ancestral homeland much to the chagrin of Richard et al. Eventually after several attempts with the dialogue, said Richard was forced to run up the adjoining grassy slope of the moat, locate the piper and, dressed like a 1930's hoodlum - with his character's 12" inch facial scar in plain view, ask, "Are you planning on playing for much longer?" The bagpipes squealed to halt like a cat skidding in slow motion headlong into a wall. And the piper limped off with an air of dejection cradling his tartan octopus beneath his bruised wing. Once more the bastard English had invaded the glens, ransacked his home and deprived him of his convivial cultural rights! Another time whilst filming the Conman scene we were on location in the amusement park which sat on an old Victorian pier above the sea. It wasn't the crashing of the waves beneath us or the howling wind and occasional shower that was the problem so much as the bloody hovercraft that arrived and departed at 15 minute intervals less than a hundred metres from where we were filming! As we hurriedly tried to deliver dialogue a few minutes after one hovercraft had left until a few minutes before another one arrived, our script that day became synchronised with the Portsmouth to Ryde Hover travel timetable! Ultimately, there was only ever going to be one winner but in the process we learnt some valuable lessons: perseverance, humour, always carry an umbrella on outside location shoots and most importantly, the skills of recapturing dialogue in post production - especially with scenes featuring hovercrafts and God's elemental indifference to film makers.

Q: What was the film's budget?

A: I'd never made a film before and had little idea of what was involved. I relied on my experience in amateur theatre as a set designer and actor as well as my work as a freelance decorator to give me a sense of direction and organisation. It was and still is a 'pay-as-you-go' production. A labour of love rather than a manufactured product. That said, the budget probably came in at pre-post production at around £2500 which would include, costume, travel, petrol money, food, public Liability insurance, security for certain locations and a member of staff's overtime wages at the Portchester Castle in scene 5 with Isabella!

Fred MacMurray as Walter Neff reveals what's on his mind in Billy Wilder's 1944 film Double Indemnity



## Richard's additional dialogue for pick up scene 7: the dagger scene

This scene was originally going to be shot using a dolly to give an overhead view as the previous shot was Richard looking up to the sky bidding farewell to Isabella. The shot would have suggested the eye of god watching over Richard. But due to adverse weather conditions and immovable objects out of our control we moved the location to a wooden bridge spanning the moat at the Long Curtain embankment location. This proved to be a much better setting as we could marry our close ups with wide overhead shots and distance ourselves from the action when needed.



*Wide shot leading to the amusement park*



*Richard calls to the child: Wait!*



*The child turns to face Richard*



*Beware of butterflies that float before your eyes*



*A thing so light in its appearance can make a sharp mind idle*



*When tricksters pose as prophets to separate us from our wealth*



*Our senses are cast like seeds on winter's landscape to flower out of season.*



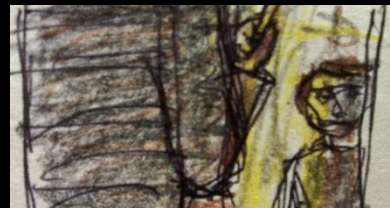
*And all the while death waits in line*



*Patiently biding his time*



*Richard draws his knife*



*Richard moves closer To the child*



*A dagger is a simple thing*



*From its hilt to its tip it has but one purpose*

## LOST KINGDOMS

Looking at some of the material I've viewed over the years there have been a number of film and TV dramas that focus on the subject of memory and displacement. The TV series *Life on Mars* and its sequel *Ashes to Ashes* posed the question using two separate protagonists seeking the same solution: where am I and how do I resolve the situation in order to return home? A question most notably asked by Dorothy in Frank Baum's 1900 novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. At the heart of displacement lies the question of belief in the objects and characters that inhabit the landscape. Part of the equation in establishing this is the power of faith in ourselves which can be measured in the trust we place in our surroundings. This was brilliantly highlighted in the works of author William Peter Blatty by pitting the agents of darkness against the forces of divine light through an unsuspecting individual. In so doing, Blatty portrayed the ensuing chaos and perceived path of redemption needed to be taken by his stories' protagonists. One of the most notable for me is William Peter Blatty's 1979 film *The Ninth Configuration* which tells the story of a secret government facility set up to examine how and why top level military officers failed in their duty at critical moments. The man sent to oversee the experiment is himself stood on the edge of his own personal crisis and sees the opportunity to help others as a way of exorcising his own demons.

The protagonist is Colonel Kane and in between flashbacks of his own military activities behind enemy lines he attempts to establish an environment amongst his patients where they are given free rein to play out their fantasies and create worlds without rules or boundaries. It is Kane's belief that by giving the men the kind of support they've never received from the military hierarchy they will regain their confidence and self-esteem and be able to come to terms with their deep rooted anxieties.

Colonel Kane had himself been taken from the battlefield to a hospital and accidentally given the chance to exchange his role as a warrior to carer. Setting in motion a different way of thinking and an emotional dynamic that is passive from aggressive without forsaking the strength of his character in the process. Indeed, as in many military campaigns, a common enemy often unites people of opposing beliefs or attitudes and adds to their strength as a group during a period of instability. Kane's patience with the men seems limitless but ultimately he is drawn into a personal confrontation with another group of people, outside the hospital grounds, who openly display their contempt for one of the Colonel's patients. This breaks the spell (delusion) Kane has been under which compels him to resort to his previous role as a lethal special ops marine. The film shows how memories play an important part in how we behave. How we construct the present world by the places we have left behind. Choices are constantly made by reflecting on the past and using that information to project future actions. Regularly attempting to show the world a side of us we believe that others will find acceptable whilst withholding other parts that we are least proud of.

The film, written, produced and directed by its author reflects a crisis of faith, either in the characters themselves or the organisation they represent. By being placed in an alternative scenario to the one in which they experienced their trauma, they are catapulted into a situation of trust by others. Stood in the middle of the storm instead of on its peripheries means they cannot remain passive but must take action to confront their dilemma. Being at the centre of the maelstrom allows them to observe other characters and settings which transpose those they left behind. Although these may differ in detail their aspect amounts to the same: a different set of numbers giving the same total. Being proactive in the process aids their own clarity of thought and gives it intention before providing a means of escape.

Colonel Kane perceives his path to salvation through the rescue of others, in particular an astronaut named Captain Cutshaw. Kane experiences a huge shift in his mind set which has been conditioned to show zero compassion in his line of duty as a Special Ops marine. Initially confused in his new surroundings Kane rapidly adapts himself to the opportunity to help others and regardless of the surreal goings on both inside and outside his head he embraces his new role with the same vigour and tenacity as he would any of his previous assignments.

The Ninth Configuration highlights the stark contrast of emotional engagement between the violence of a battlefield and the required patience when caring for another. This is a similar situation to Richard whose mind begins focusing on past events as the present is being pulled from his grasp. In order to deal with the problem he allows his mind to accept an alternative reality to the one he is experiencing and in so doing, provide an ultimate solution. There ensues a struggle for a perceived truth which lies at the heart of the problem creating chaos and confusion in its wake. In both situations, Richard, Colonel Kane and Captain Cutshaw experience loneliness and the isolation it brings which adds fuel to the crisis. Finally manifesting itself as some kind of demon or nightmarish world whose objective is to disable the individual's faith in themselves' and manufacture fear in its place.

This is the demon of their own making which they must dismantle in order to find peace.

'My heart is as clear as my mind when I perceive the scene between RICHARD and ISABELLA either side of the Gothic arched window. Her in bright sunlight and him in darkness, separated by the rusted iron bars of the gothic window grill. RICHARD feels imprisoned as ISABELLA reaches out through the bars in an attempt to comfort him. It is a Caravaggio tableau where light is able to shatter darkness but only in order to define the stark brutality between happiness and regret. The coming together of RICHARD and ISABELLA is about lost love, desire and longing. The sheer beauty of all that life has to offer and the futility of trying to control it. Life is a fleeting moment captured by our senses and stored in our memories. We can relive those memories but never recapture the moment.'

Vaughan's email to Neil regarding scene 5 with Isabella





*Isabella of Valois*



*Richard I*



*Anne of Bohemia*

### Some historical context

Richard was the son of Edward the Black Prince who died in 1376. At the death of his elder brother, Edward of Angouleme, Richard became the second in line to the throne. He was 4 years old. He succeeded to the throne at the age of 10 following the death of his grandfather Edward III in 1377.

Richard married Anne of Bohemia in 1382 and was said to be very happy until her death in 1394. Although the marriage was childless it was said she had a calming effect upon him and was greatly mourned by Richard.

In 1396, 7 year old Isabella of France became the wife of Richard in order to provide a political pact between England and France. Although Isabella was many years his junior it is said that they developed a mutually respectful relationship together. She was moved to Portchester Castle between 1396-1399 for safety whilst Richard was away in Ireland with his army. Upon his return Richard was imprisoned in London Tower by his cousin Henry Bolinbroke who ascended to the throne as Henry IV. Isabella refused to marry the son of the new king and was sent back to France. In 1406 she died in childbirth at the age of 19. Isabella was interred in Blois, in the abbey of St.Laumer, where her body was found entire in 1624, wrapped in bands of linen plated over with quicksilver

Richard had a personality disorder which added to the myth that he was mad. He stuttered when he became agitated. It is thought he was starved to death in captivity around 1400 although there is some question over the date and manner of his death. His body was taken south from Pontefract Castle (Pomfret), West Yorkshire and displayed in the old St Paul's Cathedral on 17 February before burial in King's Langley Priory on 6 March.

Rumours that Richard was still alive persisted after his death but never gained much credence in England. In Scotland, however, a man identified as Richard came into the hands of Regent Albany in Stirling Castle and served as a figurehead to anti-Lancastrians. Henry IV's government dismissed him as an impostor and it was suggested the man had a mental illness.

## Camera and Motion

‘There is an end appointed, Oh my soul! . . . the lamps fade and the stars. We are alone.’  
The night journey (Rupert Brooke 1913).

At regular intervals during the film we are reminded of the state of Richard’s mind by the settings he finds himself in and the characters which inhabit them. The opening scene is deliberately claustrophobic. Richard is sat in a dark hallway with his eyes closed and head tilted to one side. The only signs of life he displays are the occasional flicker of his eyelids reacting to some event taking place in his mind. Slowly regaining consciousness and without moving out of position he raises a voice recorder to his lips and begins talking. He stops momentarily and is joined by a pale faced child who appears from the shadows. The child sits down alongside Richard and the closeness of the two characters sat in the gloomy hallway serves to amplify the oppressive claustrophobia of the scene.

The sparseness of movement represents the interior of Richard’s mind suggesting that here is a place where life comes to an end. Only when the child moves forwards to peer down into the unlit area of the stairwell does Richard change his own body position to mirror the child’s actions and follow his gaze into the darkness below.

Eventually, Richard rises and to the single beat of a drum descends the stairs like a condemned man heading for the gallows. He is closely followed by the child and both become lost from view in the inky blackness of the stairwell.

As the drum continues its steady somnambulist beat we hear the sound of bolts being pulled back into their keeps and huge doors prised apart. Richard emerges from the darkness and is forced to shield his eyes as he steps into daylight, accompanied by the child. The landscape that he sees before him is in complete contrast to the one he’s left behind and in place of an imagined gallows it seems as if he’s been temporarily pardoned and granted his freedom.

The camera shot is suddenly wide on an expanse of coastal mud flats. Richard lowers his body and scoops up a handful of soft mud left behind from the outgoing tide. It’s the proof he requires to confirm this place is no dream but a land far removed from the decaying tenement block he’s escaped from. Here the air is clear, the land spacious and unblemished. Rising to his full height he gazes across the harbour’s muddy bed towards a distant stone tower and hears the sound of a lullaby being sung.. Lured by the sweetness of the song Richard seeks to discover its source and wanders through a wood before finding himself outside the tall flinty walls of an ancient garrison. Moving with stealth around the base of a large stone turret to avoid detection, Richard spies a maiden cradling a babe swathed in cloth whom she comforts with her song.

As Richard approaches he mistakes her for his first wife, Anne and it is only after she lifts her veil that Richard recognises Isabella, his child bride. Moving closer to the babe she cradles he sees the reflection of himself in a mirror where the child’s face should be. A reminder of his narcissist character and childless marriages.

This vision acts as a trigger to create a sense of loss, hurtling him back into a place of incarceration in the next scene. The camera shows Richard looking out from behind the rusty iron bars of a gothic stone window onto a brightly lit pasture. The darkness of the space he occupies is magnified by the arrival of Isabella whose youth and beauty seems to capture the very essence of the sun itself as she moves effortlessly across the pasture towards him. Placing herself within his touch she attempts to comfort Richard and lighten his heart. The close up camera work which moves back and forth during their brief exchange shows the dark exterior that Richard occupies in contrast to the bright open space of Isabella's landscape. It's as if he has returned to the dinginess of the tenement hallway from the opening scene and the despair that accompanied it. Although Richard is unable to retrieve the past for more than a few brief moments he is able to let go of it and in doing so, transcends the confines of the dungeon to a hillside overlooking the castle and the mud flats below. This is the first time that Richard has shown any sign of exerting control in his new world. The camera lens is now wide open and in juxtaposition to the dank interior of the crumbling dungeon Richard now stands tall looking across his kingdom stretched out beneath him. The shot suggests his spirit has risen above the agonies of his mind which regularly puts him in dark places and he now occupies a space of engagement, overseeing events. As he beholds the vista before him the image of Isabella rises like a giant phoenix into the sky and stares back at him from behind the bars he's escaped from. As if Richard is exorcising her memory she slowly dissolves into the ether as he walks out of shot.

The scenes which follow show Richard and the child moving beneath blue sunlight skies which help to expand the width and depth of the terrain. Spying a large Ferris wheel on the horizon they descend into an amusement park which temporarily offers Richard a light and colourful alternative to the inner road he travels. At this point he encounters the Conman and although he's drawn by his words and charismatic demeanour, Richard soon dismisses him as a sideshow trickster and leaves before the Conman can finish his act.

In contrast to the quicksilver skills of the Conman and the colourful, mobile amusement park which is his home, Richard next encounters the immovable blockwork of a church without a roof whose gates are guarded by a blind Priest. The juxtaposition of the superficial to the unequivocal, is deliberate and its message unmistakable: the sins of pleasure incur a price. A reckoning is due.

The perceived threat from the Priest's words is to place Richard back into another cold, hollow building, a church, where he'll be given another chance to contemplate life and death. A return in all but name to the hallway in the opening scene.

The tilted camera angle of the Priestess suggests an unnatural perspective moments before the Priest raises his arms to the sky to invoke his god. The shot pans to the heavens before descending into the dying light of day and as it continues its downward path we see the Devil leaning against a lamp post checking the hour on his pocket watch. The lamp post provides a beacon to illuminate the way for lost souls and as night falls we see the shadowy forms of Richard and the child appear descending a path towards the Devil.

Before the Devil can claim his prize, Richard is led by the child into a tunnel and the claustrophobic setting with its dank, decaying masonry echoes a continuing decline in Richard's state of mind. Unlike the stairwell in the opening scene that descended into darkness below, Richard sees a shard of light at the far end of the tunnel and with it the possibility of escape.

The tunnel leads directly into a Labyrinth, a refuge to flickering lights and whispering shadows re-animated by Richard's footfalls disturbing the chambers' dust. The open spaces of previous scenes that had galvanised his spirit and instilled a sense of purpose in him have long since gone but his mind, as a result, has become fully absorbed by the illumination of detail.

Emerging from the Labyrinth he is once more in the open but instead of day, it is night. The sudden contrast in space suggests that having solved the Labyrinth's puzzle his mind is now agile enough to control the conditions which continually threaten to suffocate him. Ahead lies a round tower and from its tallest parapets a monster proclaims itself king and as Richard moves forwards to confront it the child seats himself on steps nearby to observe the imminent conflict.

The setting suggests Richard has come full circle. His ordeal in the opening scenes has manifested itself into the shape and form of the worst aspect of himself, Monster, which must be confronted if he is to attain the absolution he seeks. Richard rallies against the creature by shaming him into wishing he'd be better as a beggar!

Inside the tower, Monster descends a dark staircase (as Richard had in scene 1) and appears in the tower's doorway before taking the last few steps down onto the courtyard to face Richard.

Occupying the centre of this small arena, Richard physically places himself at the heart of his crisis, the fulcrum between his younger self, the child and the older version of himself, Monster. In confronting it face to face, Richard believes he can finally relieve himself of the obstacle that is trying to extinguish his flame. This is the scenario of the opening scene being played over again with different details but providing the same enigma: Richard facing his own demise.

By confronting his inner demon Richard finally unburdens his soul and the shadows of his past which have plagued him throughout his journey gang together and flock together to devour Monster.

The past has caught up with the present and Richard confesses to the child, '*thus play I in one person many people and none contented,*' suggesting a lack of self-belief, before moving closer to the child and placing his hand on his shoulder. This is the first time that Richard has emotionally embraced the child as he continues to confess his naivety in handling his life's affairs.

The wide camera shot becomes a close up as if the vista into which Richard escaped is now being closed down. The close up becomes extreme when the child cuts short Richard's speech, leans forward and whispers into his ear, '*Father?*' Immediately followed by a close up of a knife being plunged into Richard's side.

Nadir, the lowest point that Richard had sought to avoid: bearing witness to his own unavoidable death.

As Richard staggers up a few steps before slumping down with his back to the wall he is followed by the child, like a predator tracking its dying prey. With his life force draining away Richard turns his head to the side and assumes exactly the same position he was in from the opening scene. As he does so the child sits down beside him and concludes the monologue which Richard had begun in scene 1. The final positions of Richard and the child suggest that Richard has never left the hallway of the tenement block.



'Thus play I one person in many people.'















Photograph by Nilima Rao

‘And here is not a creature but myself’...and several other most important ones! A journey which began with an idea of me wandering along a busy shopping precinct delivering the monologue to innocent bystanders (whilst our cinematographer, Neil, carefully tracked my movements with his camera from a distance) grew and developed into an epic journey both artistically and technically. The resulting film was only made possible by the help and support of all the people willing to devote their time and energy to the project. Without their hard work, patience and creative input Richard would have not existed in his present form. I will be forever grateful for the help and assistance of Toby Hornby Patterson, Rebecca Bellinger, Anthony Noon, Kye Wilson, David Jenkinson, Melanie Rose Ledger, Nilima Rao, James Waterfield, Grant Capstick, Charley Petty, Cerys Roberts, Alex Fountain, Sophie Marie-Merryweather, Sibylle, Andre Pedro, Edwin Spraggs, Lyn Ciampanelli. Isabella Larter for her help with the design and make up with the Minotaur. Keith & Kristina Jeff at One Legged Jockey for their assistance with costume and accessories. Lydia Mellor at PCC for her support and advice with locations filming. Neil Hunt for his guidance, time, expertise and continuing belief in the project and Extra Special Thanks to Niki Roberts for her undying commitment and support. But most of all for supplying us with Calum!





‘...these images must be thought of as lacking in solid content, hence as unconscious. They only acquire solidity, influence and eventual consciousness in the encounter with empirical facts.’

Carl Jung 1928

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