

a UCL Film & TV Society production

ARRI

SMILEY FACE



Mark Mansfield as 'Zac' | Cara Chedid as 'Mum' | Directed by Hal Pilkington | Written by Saul Lotzof | Co-produced by Saul Lotzof & Susie Reed | Executive Producers Lucas Pavesio & Diego Collado | Cinematographer Saul Lotzof | Editor Bryn Chiappe | 1st Assistant Director Mahika Gautam | Production Designer Francene Ma | Costume Designer Charlie Bentley



A lonely middle-aged man is eating dinner..

...when several figures from his past resurface.

Smiley Face is a psychological drama, an exploration of the childhood guilt that afflicts its protagonist, *Zac*. Hounded by the memories of his mother's infidelity, his poor performance and insecure aggression at school, he experiences an unsettling, involuntary reversion to his youth. Battling with his guilt-ridden psyche, we observe as *Zac* interacts with the several characters that resurface from his past.



THE STORY

We open with ZAC (mid-30s), sat at the dinner table. His mother walks in, wearing a low cut, tight fitting black dress, giggling and texting on her phone. After she sits down, she authoritatively and patronizingly commands him to finish his dinner: a childish array of potato smiley-faces and fish fingers, transporting him back to childhood.

Bewildered, Zac complies, but his confusion increases as his mother raises his recent school performance, prompting the resurfacing of a new voice from his past, his school teacher. We learn that Zac has been distracted, underperforming, daydreaming and watching the leaves rather than focusing in class.

Haunting sobs emerge from a distant door frame, Zac's mum continues to giggle and text, oblivious to his increasing discomfort. The voice of an unknown man projects from her phone: 'baby I can't wait to...' - he's her lover. Zac's father appears, revealing and demanding the truth about what she's hiding from him, threatening to leave.

This traumatic recollection is cast against an insinuation of Zac's own violent actions - thumping noises emanate from an ajar door, the sobs of a young boy can be heard, pleading for Zac to stop.

Zac's evident discomfort increases, his guilt mounts to harrowing mania, and the haunting voices of his past blur into a dizzying and ominous cacophony.

We sit back and gaze with horror as his psyche dissolves, taunted by the mocking smiley-faces on his unfinished plate.

THE CHARACTERS

ZAC, an affluent and usually apathetic professional, is plagued by the residual guilt of his childhood actions, and throughout the course of the film the middle-aged protagonist enters into a distorted psychological space. His securities as a wealthy adult are stripped from him, recasting him back into his infantile dependence on the unstable characters that surround him. He is helpless.

Characterised by her callous infantilisation of **Zac**, **MUM** simultaneously exudes an eroticism that echoes the archetypal 'femme fatale'. She is overbearing, bitter and distant, central to the dizzying disintegration of **Zachary's** grip on reality. He is helpless.

HOPKINS, **Zac's** old school teacher is a projection of his inner turmoil, disillusioned by his students work. In chastising him for his bad grades and poor contribution, he is yet another instigator of **Zac's** shame and self-loathing, characters that surround him. He is helpless.

Appearing in unsettling flashes, **UNKNOWN MAN** is sinisterly effaced in 'Smiley Face'. Embodied through text messages and erotic voice notes, he taunts **Zac** as a symbol of his mother's infidelity; whispering in her ear, grazing his hand upon her neck.

Contrasting with the mother's dominating role, **Zachary's** father (**DAD**) is a notably absent figure, having left his mother due to her extramarital affair. Indeed, he fails to communicate with **Zac** at all, rather he is a haunting figure of betrayal and childhood abandonment.



OUR HISTORY

The UCL Film Society has been a forum for both cinema lovers and emerging filmmakers at UCL since 1948, making it one of the oldest film societies in the country. The society has produced a number of notable alumni, including director Christopher Nolan (President 1992-94), Emma Thomas and Harry Bradbeer.

Curiously, **Smiley Face** was the first production in over a decade to make use of celluloid, and the first production in a very, very long time to make use of our original Arri 16BL, bought by the society in 1965, and used for films such as Nolan's first feature, **Following**.

Following Nolan's graduation speech at UCL in 2017, he took the Arri to be repaired after spotting it at the back of the studio, broken and unused. The camera was mysteriously returned in late 2020. Nobody knew whether it had been fixed, or if it even worked; it lacked any sort of power cable or battery, and was still in the same rusty case that it had left in.

Even Arri didn't seem to have a record of it, after we called them and asked about the camera. Eventually, in 2021, current President Saul Lotzof (22/23) worked together with Arri and former President Diego Collado (20/22) to get the Arri working again.

Whilst Saul made numerous trips back and forth to the UK Arri headquarters in Uxbridge, a member of the society personally collected what seemed like the only power cable for the camera in the world by hand in Cologne, Germany, so that the team would have it in time for production. Arri engineer and former BBC cameraman John Duclous then performed surgery on this relic cable to enable it to work with modern power supplies, and, four days before the shoot, the camera finally came to life. Arri made sure to collimate the lens and check over the camera while waiting for this cable, so old and foreign that they weren't able to procure one for us themselves.

Following some very rushed testing, it was confirmed that the camera worked perfectly. It has since been used as a fully functional part of UCL Film & TV society history, helping members making films to this day.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES



CREDITS

ROLE	NAME	COURSE	GRAD YEAR
Director	Hal Pilkington	BA Philosophy	2021
Writer	Saul Lotzof	BA English	2023
Co-producer	Saul Lotzof	BA English	2023
Co-producer	Susie Reed	BA English	2023
Executive producer	Lucas Pavesio	BA English	2023
Executive producer	Diego Collado	BA Classics	2022
Cinematographer	Saul Lotzof	BA English	2023
Editor	Bryn Chiappe	BA English	2022
1st Assistant Director	Mahika Gautam	BSc Architectural and Interdisciplinary Studies	2024
1st Assistant Camera	Jatin Naru	BSc Architecture	2024
2nd Assistant Camera	Jasmine Austin	BA English	2023
Gaffer	Hasha Dar	MEng Mechanical Engineering	2023
Spark	Leon Springer		
Spark	Emmanuel Neagu		
Sound mixer	Diego Collado	BA Classics	2022
Boom operator	Dominic Ko	LLB Law	2023
Hair and Make-up artist	Peicen Liao		
Associate producer	Bowen Xu	LLB Law	2023
Production designer	Francene Ma	BA English	2023
Assistant production designer	Serena Ives	BSc Arts and Sciences	2023
Script supervisor	Holly Mill	BA Archaeology and Anthropology	2022
Costume designer	Charlie Bentley	BA History	2023
Production assistant	Ania Juszczyk	MA History of Art	2021
Production assistant	Alex Walton-Keeffe	MSci Earth Sciences	2021
Production assistant	Faith Lee	LLB Law	2024
Stills & BTS photographer	Izzie Milford	MA Film Studies	2021
Social Media Manager	Izzie Milford	MA Film Studies	2021
BTS Videographer	Alina Hosu	BA French and German	2021
Composer	Zachary Davies		
Composer	Jatin Naru	BSc Architecture	2023
Dialogue editor	Lucas Pavesio	BA English	2023
Dialogue editor	Jenny Windbrake	BA Philosophy	2024
Sound editor	Saul Lotzof	BA English	2023
Foley artist	Jenny Windbrake	BA Philosophy	2024
Foley artist	Josh Moore	BA Philosophy	2024
Foley artist	Dominic Ko	LLB Law	2023
Foley artist	Saul Lotzof	BA English	2023
Dubbing mixer	Jenny Windbrake	BA Philosophy	2024
VFX artist	Diego Collado	BA Classics	2022
VFX artist	Saul Lotzof	BA English	2023
Colourist	Daniela Rotaru		
Mixer	Saul Lotzof	BA English	2023
Colour grade by	Glassworks London		
Special thanks to	Christopher Nolan		
	John Duclose and Rob Waters		
	Sam Clark		
	Sayf Adbeen	LLB Law	2022
	James Pratt		
	Charlotte Pilkington		
	Students' Union UCL		