

Blame

Electronic Press Kit



Synopsis

Logline

After the announcement of the first lockdown in the UK, step-siblings Elijah and Harriet find themselves stuck together. Through the torment of living together, they rediscover their strained relationship throughout childhood, learning to overcome their differences.

Summery

After the death of their father, Elijah and Harriet, in the midst of clearing their family home, find themselves trapped together after a surprise lockdown announcement. Elijah has no choice but to let his sister extend her visit. As Harriet makes herself comfortable, settling in for the long haul, Elijah becomes increasingly irritated by her changes around the house in fear of catching Covid: she'd distance herself from Elijah, and clean the house erratically. Even wearing a comically large space helmet as an extra precaution.

Whilst the first vaccine is underway, Harriet attempts to skip the queue by pretending that she is vulnerable to her GP's receptionist. She eventually declines after hearing the side effects. Elijah has no knowledge of this.

Later, however, Harriet starts to feel sick. She begins taking pilates as a hopeless attempt to fight her illness, locking herself away from Elijah. The two share a moment, speaking across the door. The two reflect on their late father, revealing Harriet's fears for Elijah suffering the same fate.

One week later, Harriet, fully recovered, is on a cleaning spree—binning Elijah's stock of sugary snacks. Upon discovering this, Elijah confronts Harriet, eventually discovering that their anger to each other is due to their childhood experiences, growing up with each other. However, a voice message on their answering machine interrupts their call, revealing Harriet's deception. Elijah explodes, eventually kicking her out.

Harriet, in tears, leaves Elijah alone in the house. He discovers a present left by his step-sister: a space helmet to help keep him safe.

When family comes to stay... indefinitely.



Blame



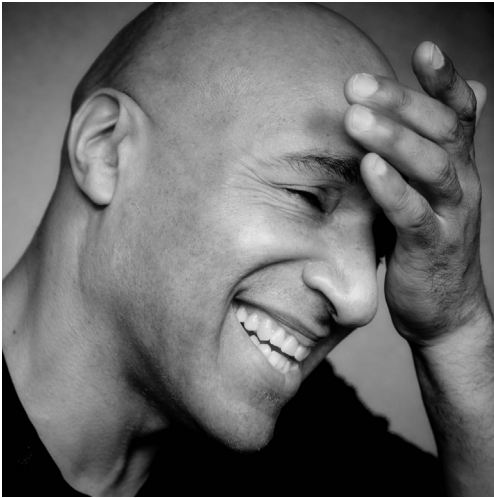
JUMPSTART PICTURES PRESENTS A CHRIS FERNANDEZ / JACK MARSHALL PRODUCTION DAVID VIVIAN JOHNSON JULIA MUNROW 'BLAME'
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR TOMOS HARRISON MUSIC BY LOUIS VANN JOHNSON FILM EDITOR JACK MARSHALL DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY BEN VACHER
WRITTEN BY DAVID VIVIAN JOHNSON STORY BY DAVID VIVIAN JOHNSON & JULIA MUNROW PRODUCED BY CHRIS FERNANDEZ JACK MARSHALL DIRECTED BY JACK MARSHALL

#BlameShortFilm
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COMING SOON



Lead Cast/Writers



David Vivian Johnson, Writer / Executive Producer / Elijah

David is a Londoner of Jamaican parentage. He started to play the piano aged 9, the baritone sax aged 11, and the clarinet aged 12. Like Elijah he understands the pressure of performance in childhood and the endless categorisation of “others” by the white mainstream. He gets on brilliantly with his real life siblings.

David’s playwriting explores life for black men in Britain whilst his academic writing focuses on the contribution of black British and African Caribbean theatre practitioners to British mainstream theatre. In 2021 Methuen Drama first published his book entitled; Talawa Theatre Company; A Theatrical History and The Brewster Era. Methuen will launch the newly edited paperback in July 2022. David’s novel writing positively explores the relationships between Caribbean fathers and their British sons.



Julia Munrow, Writer (Story by) / Executive Producer / Harriet

Julia Munrow is an actor / director from London whose comedy improv group, A Drunken Sailor, performs stories from real life drawn from the audience. She enjoyed working on Blame because it depicted - in a disturbing but comic way - the disruption within families lockdowns can cause.

Film / TV includes Luc Besson’s Anna (Lionsgate), Love Again (BBC). Mankind (BBC) Letters from Chechnaya (BBC) , Dear Anne Frank (Qualia) , playing Lesley in Emmerdale. Theatre includes Rossetti’s Women (No. 1 tour), Underground (Barbican / Brighton Theatre Royal), Humble Boy (New Vic), Hamlet (Harrogate Theatre), Absent (Royal Opera House), working for Alan Ayckbourn and Mark Rylance’s companies.

Cast Credits

Elijah - **David Vivian Johnson**

Harriet - **Julia Munrow**

Dad - **Raymond Johnson**

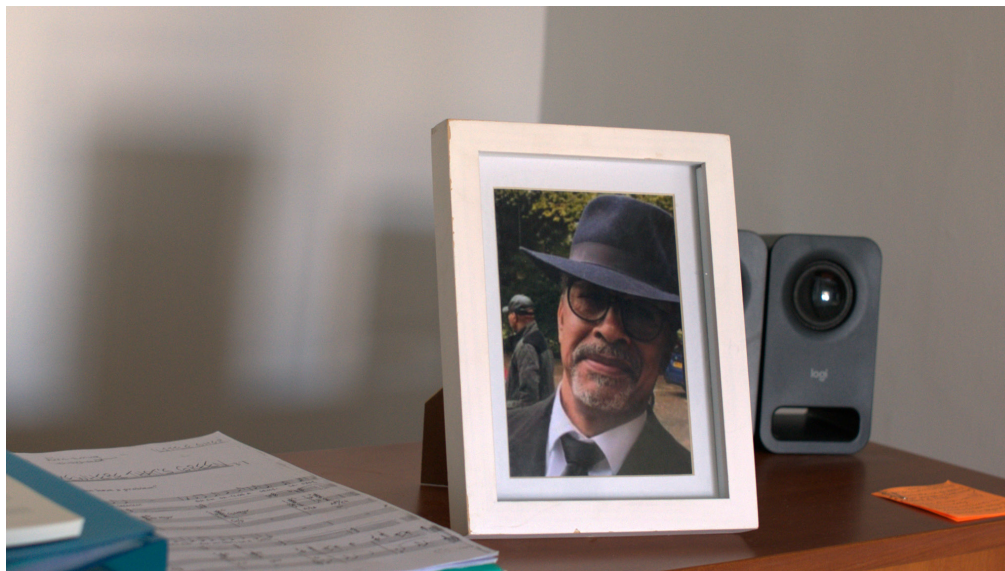
Summerdale Practice Receptionist - **Toby Mclellan**

Elijah's Daughter - **Kuffasse Boane**

Elijah's Daughter - **Aline Salloum**

Elijah's Daughter (Voice) - **Leah James**

Radio DJ, Radio Host, & Caller (Voice) - **Louis Vann Johnson**



Crew Bios



Jack Marshall, Director

Jack Marshall is a freelance director & writer based in London. After graduating from university, Jack is now working in the film and television industry. Jack is also one of the founding members of JumpStart Pictures and conceived the concept for the Kodak Student Commercial Award-winning advert, "The Mattress Man".

Jack enjoyed directing Blame and collaborating with the crew. Filming during a heatwave is never fun, but Blame was a blast from start to finish.



Louis Vann Johnson, Composer

Artist, musician, and producer, Louis Vann Johnson, has written and performed for various film soundtracks, notably "The Hatton Garden Job", "Accident Man" and critically acclaimed "Obey".

As a natural born entertainer and creative venturer removed from the confines of any singular genre, Louis offers a plethora of musical options when it comes to film scoring.



Tomos Harrison, 1st AD

Tomos Harrison is a freelance director / production assistant from Shropshire. Based in London, he is currently working in the film and television industry.

"Acting as 1st AD on Blame was a big learning experience, but the highlight was certainly collaborating with the fantastic cast and crew."



Chris Fernandez, Producer

A producer & director from Coventry, operating in the West Midlands and London. Chris is one of the founding filmmakers of JumpStart Pictures.

A focus of his is exploring racial inequality through films, seeking to teach others of the experiences of minority groups. With experience on larger productions as a sound trainee, and a self-proclaimed musical fan, Chris hopes to also create films with a focus on music and dance.



Ben Vacher, Director of Photography

Recently joining ScreenSkills' Camera Trainee Scheme, Ben is an aspiring cinematographer who is excited to continue expanding their knowledge of the camera department on HETV and Film productions.

"Working on Blame was a brilliant collaborative experience and choosing a handheld approach allowed us to mimic the erratic emotions of the characters, being trapped within a confined environment."

Crew Credits

Production Crew

Camera Operator - **Ben Vacher**

First Assistant Camera - **Charlotte Elson Whittaker**

Second Assistant Camera/Spark - **Max Adams**

Second Assistant Camera/Spark (Dalties) - **Ingrid Ho**

Gaffer - **Alfie Thompson**

Sound Recordist - **Alex Rosling**

Sound Recordist - **Tammie Teoh**

DIT & EPK Photographer - **Chris Fernandez**

Post-Production

Sound Editor - **Jack Marshall**

Sound Mixer - **Louis Vann Johnson**

Colourist - **Ben Vacher**

Motion Graphics & Visual Effects by **Chris Fernandez**

Original Soundtrack Composed & Performed

by **Louis Vann Johnson**

Feature Piano Performed by **David Vivian Johnson**



Statements

Director's Statement

For me, *Blame* explores the relationship between two step-siblings and the strain the pandemic puts on their already withering relationship. Although many found themselves reconnecting with family over lockdown, for some, it was far harder, and I wanted to focus on that aspect specifically. Ultimately, exploring the story of two characters that are trying hard to connect but can't quite get there. I enjoy delving into stories where characters are isolated, and the humour that derives from intense living situations.

Furthermore, whilst exploring the idea of race, I felt I could bring a relatable perspective on white ignorance through the character of Harriet and her clumsily trying to relate to Elijah. Moreover, collaborating both with our producer Chris and our writer David, helped strike a balance between how the humour of Harriet's ignorance contrasts against the frustration of Elijah's experience as a person of colour.



Statements

Producer's Statement

Blame, to me, explores the delicate relationship between racial issues (as well as other issues experienced by minority groups) and the majority in how they respond to these issues. All packaged with a heartwarming comedy between a brother and a sister. Using COVID as a backdrop for this film provides context for a time when racial tensions were allowed to rise as well as placing the characters within a scenario where they have to confront their differences and allowed the writers/cast and director to play with the racially motivated behaviour like microaggressions.

The creative team on this film had not received many opportunities to direct or produce at university. We were desperate to make something high quality at this scale before we no longer had access to uni equipment. This film was the last thing we had shot during our third year but represents the first of many short films under our new label, JumpStart Pictures.



Technical Specs

Running time: 33 mins.

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Camera: Arri Alexa Classic, Sony A7Siii

Shooting Format: Digital, ProRes 4444

Mastering Format: ProRes 4444, ProRes 422 HQ

Sound Mix: Stereo

Year of Production: 2021

Location: Brixton, London



About JumpStart Pictures

A New Production Collective

JumpStart Pictures is a collective of young filmmakers from the West Midlands and London. This label was formed to represent the projects produced and directed by filmmakers, Jack Marshall, Chris Fernandez, Tomos Harrison, & James Farrell – mainly short narrative films.

Make the Jump.

Aside from short films, JumpStart Pictures produces small-scale commercial content for small businesses, charities as well as artists, hoping to enter their respective industry. The determination to offer affordable services for new business and individuals to provide professional looking content and “jump start” their brands or careers.

For the founding directors, the hope is for JumpStart Pictures is to operate as an agency, where the production label serves as a portfolio of work for the director's to gain larger scale work in the future.

Blame serves as the first short film under the JumpStart label, highlighting the start of the collective's journey into independent filmmaking.



Contact

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