



**SHANE
DUNN
WIS**

Electronic Press Kit

SWEET JUICES

is a short film
set in a world of
hyperbole
where
Chinese food
is the
supreme currency
with the power to
make lives
or destroy lives.



A dimly lit bathroom scene. A woman with long dark hair is sitting on the toilet, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. She is wearing a patterned dress. To her right, a man with a beard and a striped apron is standing, looking down at a smartphone in his hands. The room is lit with warm, orange light, possibly from a window with blinds in the background. The walls are tiled, and there are various items on a shelf to the left.

Logline

Genius cooks
SHIRONG and **TONY**
face eviction and
incarceration.

On a mission to clear their
names, they leave a trail of
saucy vomit, stolen
bicycles, unhinged
government officials, and
squirting dumplings that
deliver enlightenment.

Synopsis

SWEET JUICES is set in a world where Chinese food is the supreme currency with more power than sex, drugs and money.

The story begins with **SHIRONG**, the mad dumpling chef and **TONY**, her lover and apprentice. They race against time to make juicy dumplings to pay off assholes chasing them for fines, bills and rent.

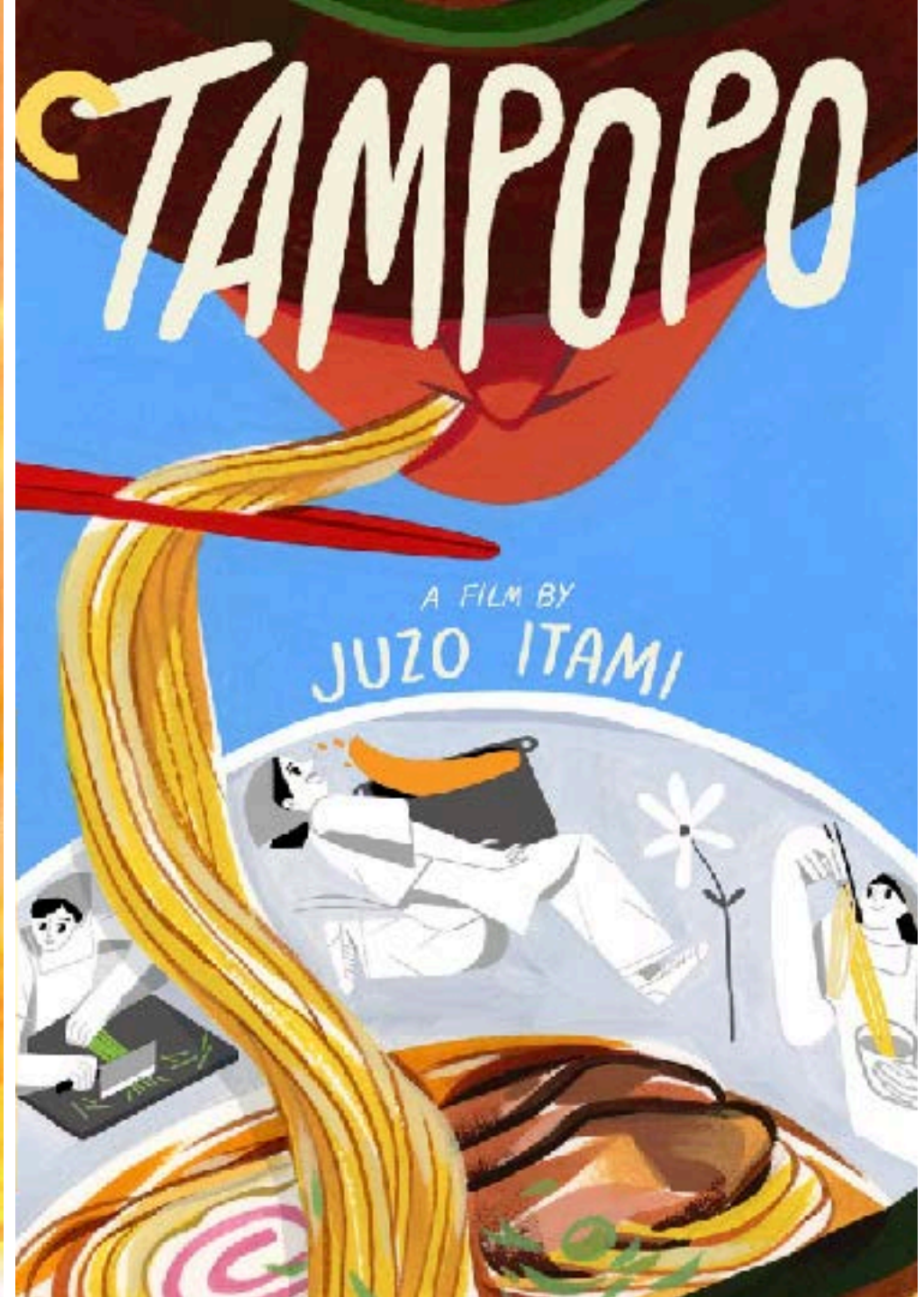
They're given one opportunity to start a new life when tensions between the couple reach breaking point. Tony starts cooking fusion dumplings, undermining Shirong's status as the authentic dumpling master.

Boiling with hatred and armed with their own unique flavours, the couple goes to war, but the power of delicious food transcends even love itself.



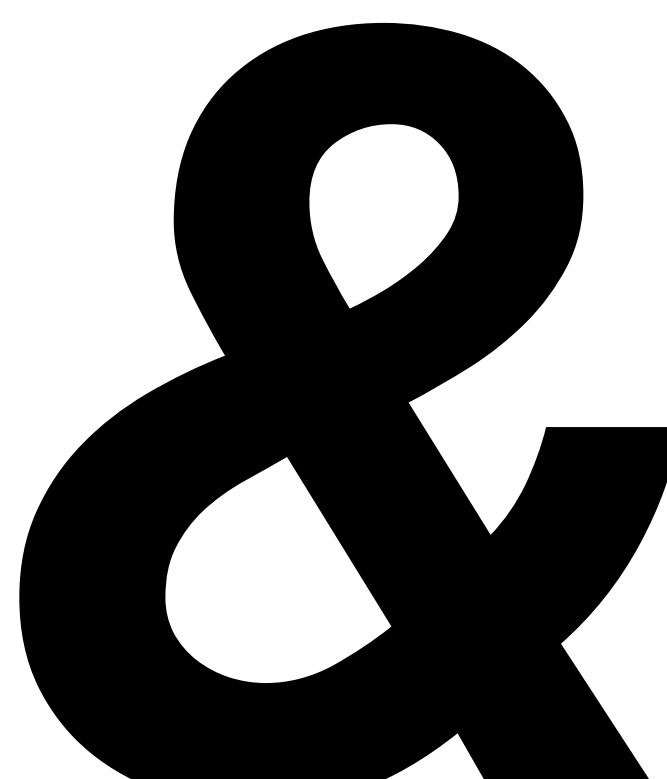
SWEET JUICES

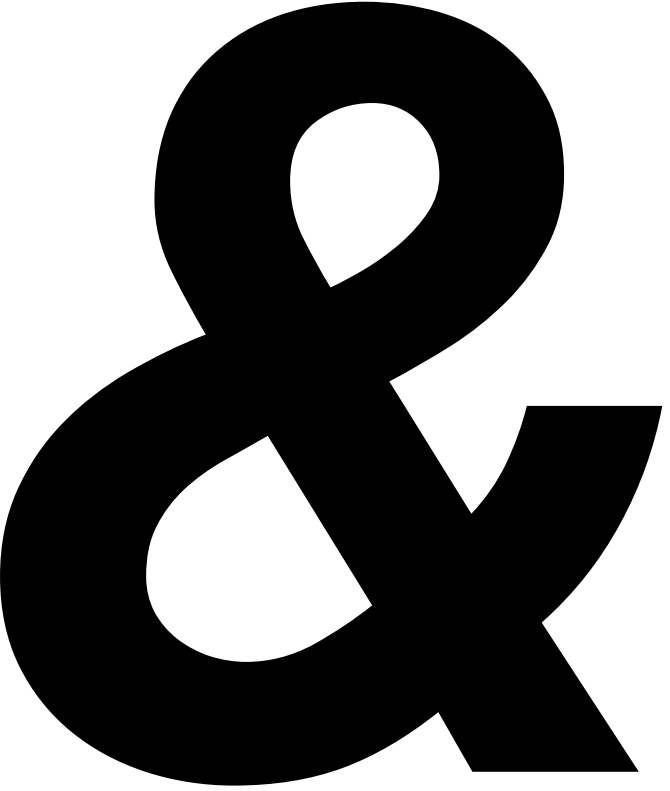
is the bastard child of a really
regretful fling between
two iconic genre's.



Raunchy Asian Food Comedies

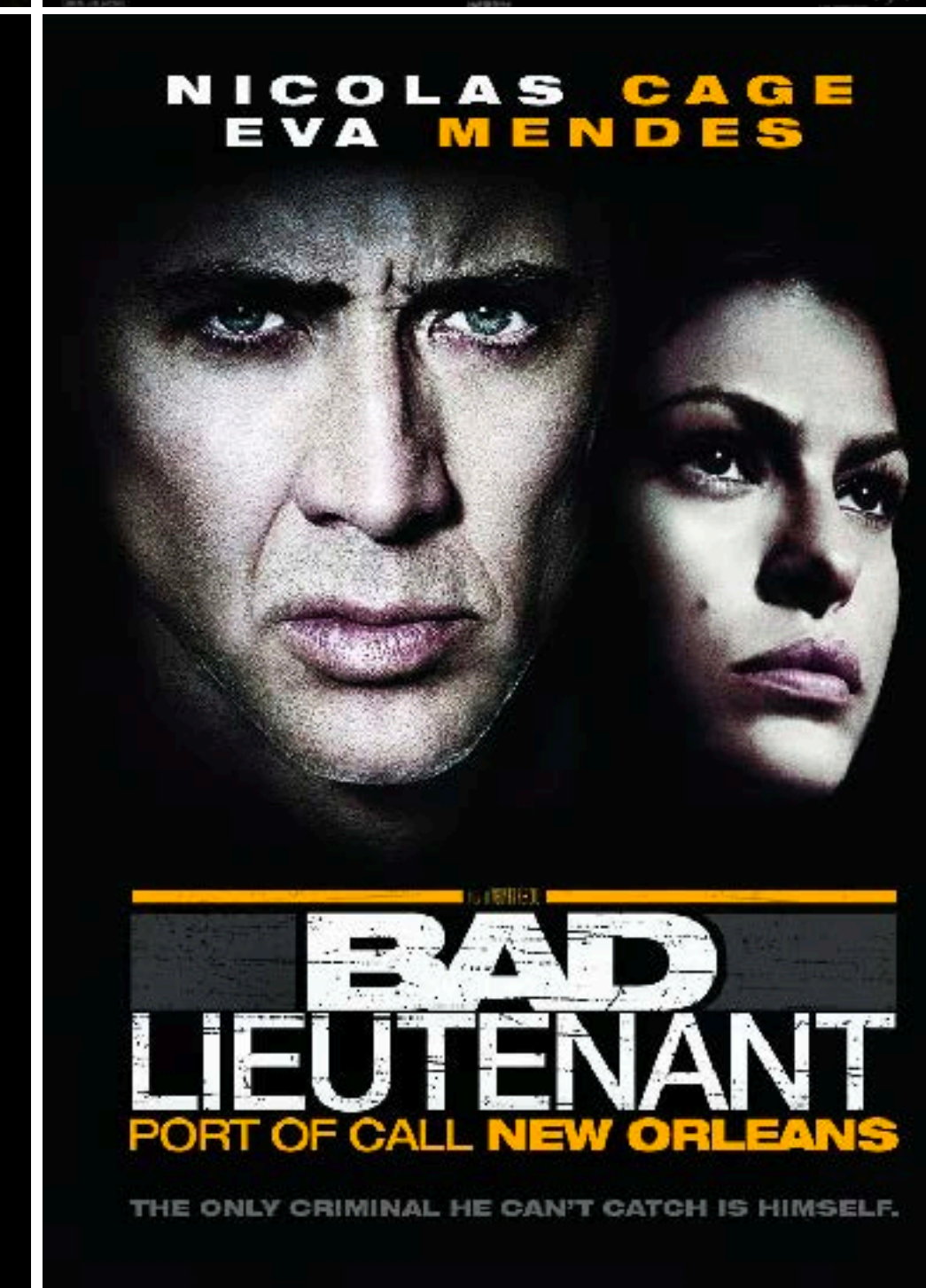
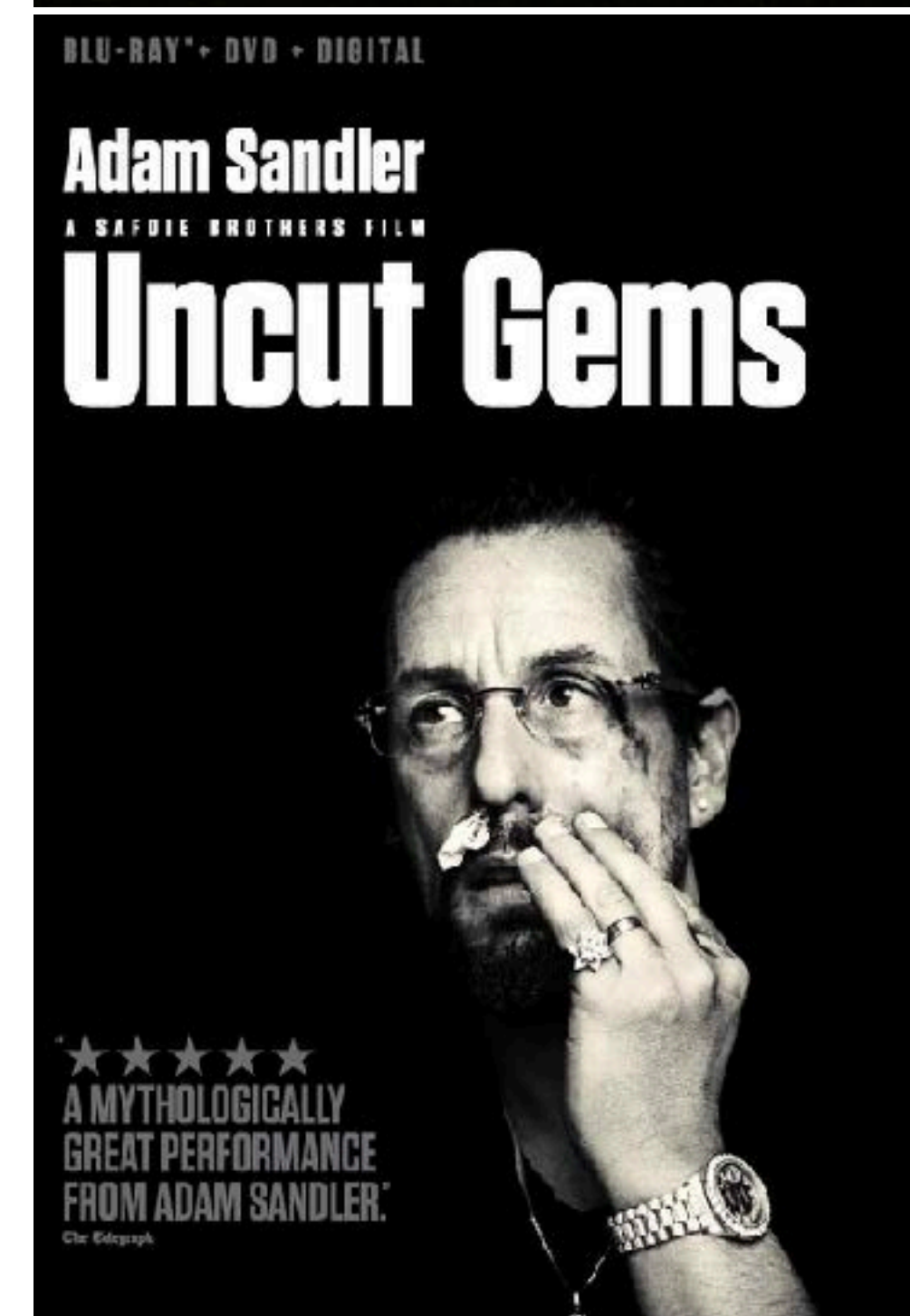
Where food is sex, and chefs have more power than God.





American Gangster Dramas

Where the drugs are incredible, and the characters are charmingly corrupt.



EXT. DERELICT FRONT YARD. NIGHT

Sandwiched between two houses is a woman, SHIRONG (28).
She's doin the Asian squat with Louboutin heels next to a
dodgy fence with electrical wires poking out.

In her mouth: Lipstick. Electrical tape.

On her neck: HECTIC BLING.

On her body: A dirty apron.

In her left hand: Exposed electrical wires.

In her right hand: Pliers wiring another cord in place.

All of a sudden:

The lights on the house to the right pop **OFF**.

The lights on the house to the left pop **ON**.

NEIGHBOURS

(distant)

What the fuck babe? The power's out again.
How many times do I have to tell you to fix that shit already.



Will Suen

Writer
Co-Director
Co-Editor

During the lockdown, my housemates and I would go out and get food, and I just became impressed by how hard small food vendors were hustling during this time to make ends meet. It reminded me of my childhood.

My dad was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, and my mother was left to raise three children by herself on minimum wage. Our family resorted to making dim sum in our family kitchen and sold them to the neighbourhood. My mum would go so far as to bring dim sums to doctors, lawyers and piano teachers to hustle free services for our family. It worked tremendously well.

This served as the inspiration for the film; what if you can literally get anyone to do anything if you bribed them with homemade dumplings?

Over the next day, without overthinking, I spitballed a draft script using my housemates as the characters. It occurred to me that I essentially wrote a gangster film in the genre of 90's Asian food comedy that was filled with toilet gags and cheap adult humour.

My family comes from a long tradition of being Cantonese chefs; I spent my childhood watching crass 90's Cantonese comedy on VHS. I revisited them and found a treasure trove of what felt like fresh and original ideas that had been lost in time.

It became my mission for this film to bring crass Cantonese humour into an extreme genre film about the Sydney I grew up in.



Shirong Wu

Shirong Wu was born in 1993 in Xian, China. Her dad was an academic history teacher, and her mum was an electrical engineer.

They moved to Australia soon after, where she won a scholarship to attend the prestigious Kilvington Girls Grammar school. Soon after graduating as a 17-year-old, she self-funded a one-year solo trip to Europe. Upon returning to Australia, she enrolled in 16th Street Acting Studio.

Working professionally as an actor, she's been cast in multiple theatre productions with Sydney Theatre Company, including being cast as "Xiao" in the International play WHITE PEARL.

Breaking into screen, she was recently cast as the lead character for the TV mini-series APPETITE.

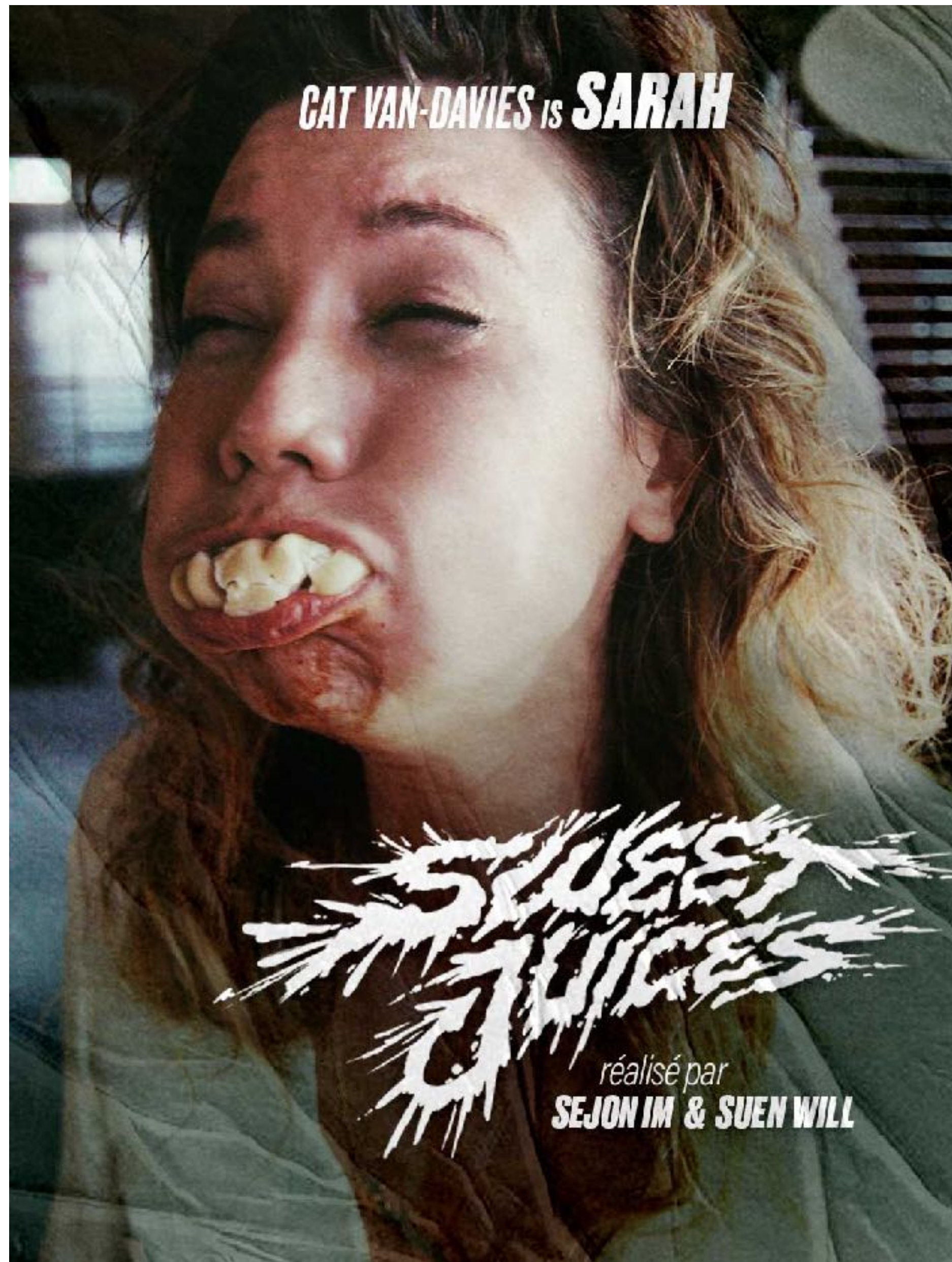
Anthony Roy Barton

Anthony Roy Barton studied his master of Directing at the prestigious Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne.

As an actor, he studied at 16th Street Acting studio in Melbourne.

His life experiences span broadly from basic training in the Australian army, working as a kitchen hand in Scotland and spending time in Egypt with Coptic Orthodox monks.





Cat Van-Davies

Văn-Davies' mother was a refugee from Vietnam who arrived in Australia at the age of 18. Văn-Davies was born in Canberra, spent a part of early childhood in Indonesia and her school years in Brisbane, Queensland. After graduating from high school she first studied for a business degree at the Queensland University of Technology but then switched to acting and earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2006. Văn-Davies couldn't get an acting job for three years, her first job was finally a well-paid role in a TV commercial. She used the money to take acting further at the HB Studio in New York City.

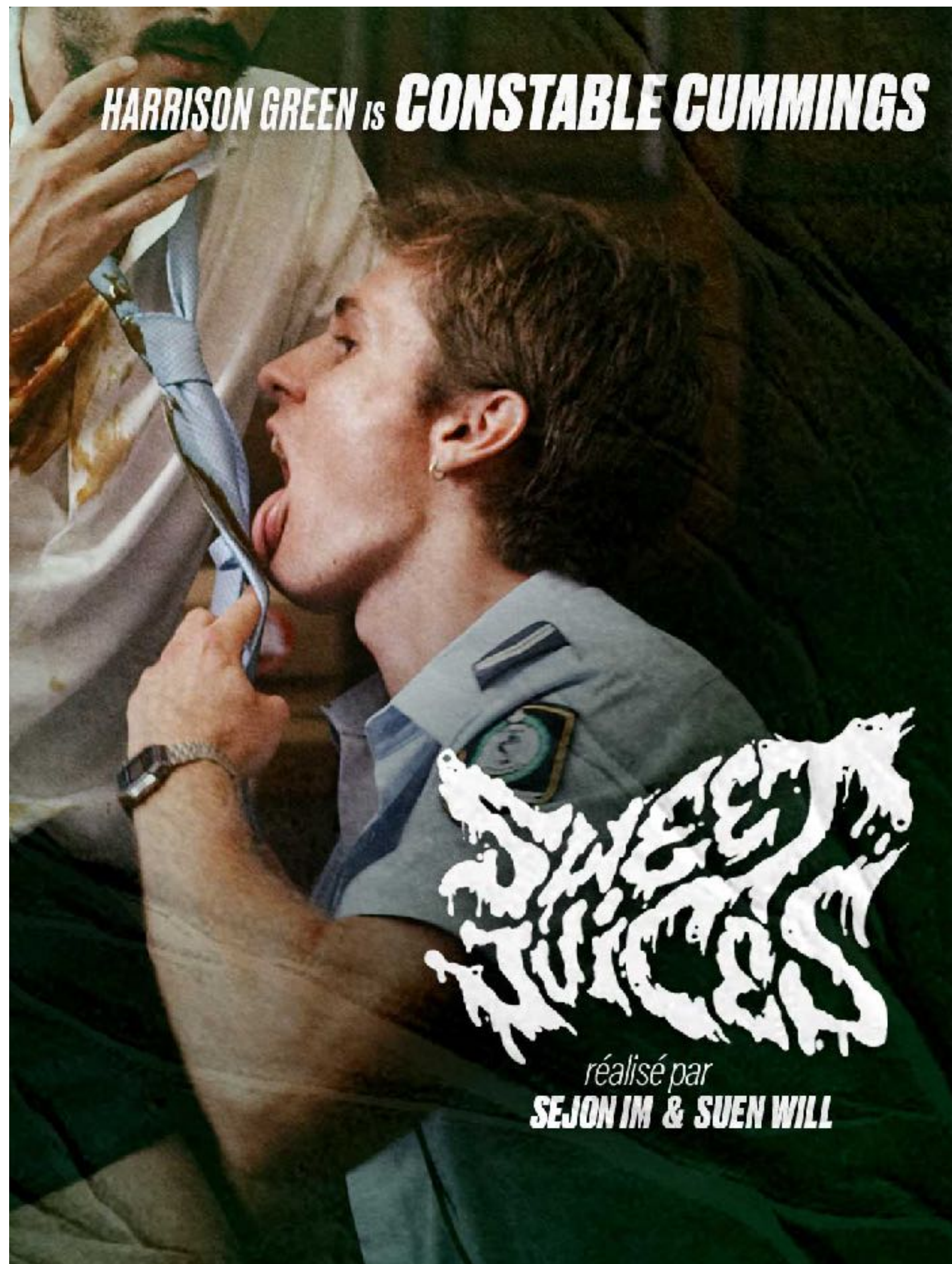
After returning to Australia, Văn-Davies moved to Sydney and worked mostly in theater. She played in different theaters in Sydney and also toured nationally with plays. In 2019 she won a Sydney Theatre Award for Angels in America (best female support) and another one for White Pearl (best ensemble). In addition to her theater work, Văn-Davies also appeared in a couple of Australian TV series, most notably in Hungry Ghosts (2020) and Amazing Grace (2021). Văn-Davies is in a relationship with fellow Australian actor Fayssal Bazzi since 2014.

Christian Byers

Christian Byers (born 31 July 1993) is an Australian actor. In 2006, he made his film debut in *Opal Dream* where he was nominated for an AFI for the Young Actor's Award, before featuring in *December Boys* alongside Daniel Radcliffe. In 2007, he portrayed Jacob in *Hey, Hey, It's Esther Blueburger*.

He's now plays one of the lead roles in the wildly popular tv series *BUMP*.





Harrison Green

Harrison Green (Harry) , is an Australian-born Actor. Born the 17th of September 1997 in Bunbury Western Australia to Rosslyn Green a banker and Michael Green an officer in the Police Force. Harrison attended Perth Film School in Western Australia and completed his studies in 2015.

He won Best Supporting Actor at the Los Angeles Film Awards and as well at the New York Film Awards for the short film "Darkest Age". He was cast as the lead in the feature film which is now in post-production.

Will Suen

Will Suen was cast as Puck and Henry V in high school. He didn't take acting further but went into filmmaking when he purchased his first DSLR.

He studied directing at AFTRS, where he learnt acting. He was cast as one of the lead roles in the indie Australian feature *EVICTED! A MODERN ROMANCE* which took home the Audience Award at Sydney Film Festival. The film has now been sold to Indigo Entertainment based in the UK.



Production Trivia

Will Suen the Producer/Director/Writer hand made every dumpling you see on screen.

Shirong and Tony are Will's real life housemates and the roles were written for them.

The main house we shot in was the real house that Will, Shirong and Tony live in.

The film was entirely self-funded with no fundraising done whatsoever.

We filmed this on 5 cameras in total, this includes 3 different cinema cameras, a GoPro and an iPhone.

All of the talent had glycerin in their hair and face for days to make sure the sweat pops in every shot.

This was filmed over 7 days, roughly 2 pages of script per day.

We did 2 overnight shoots, we were shouting and yelling all through the night and not only did the neighbours not complain...they came by excitedly to watch.

Harrison Green plays Constable Cummings, his dad is a real policeman.

Christian Byers was one of the lead actors in December Boys. He starred alongside Daniel Radcliffe. He initially declined to play the part, but said yes if he could wear bike shorts and Nike TN's as the Premier.

The final scene "Juices" was made of soy sauce, milk, food dye and rice bran oil. In hindsight we probably should have used ingredients that didn't smell as bad.



How does it feel to be on the precipice of audiences getting to dig into this piece of extreme genre filmmaking?

SEJ

I'm loving it. Will and I have are obsessed with films and music videos from all different kinds of genres, so I think this film was really just the human version of DALL-E taking in all our inspirations and spitting out a mutated baby.

WILL

Genre filmmaking is not about breaking the rules; it's about stretching the rule's definition.

If you follow the rules, you can literally do anything you want, no matter how stupid and ridiculous, and it would work; that's the beauty of genre and why I love it so much.

SWEET JUICES is, on the surface, a dumpling heist, but it's also a rom-com, a crime thriller, and an absurdist comedy; all our characters are pieces of shits in cracked pot pressure cookers, who will explode at any second in the worst possible way.

All of these elements work together because we sorta followed the rules, hahaha.

The film is a dizzying ride through a world where Chinese food is the supreme currency, and anyone will do anything to get a bite. What sparked the idea to tell this story?

WILL

As the writer of the film, it was super important to me that SWEET JUICES is a Sydney film.

Growing up, my parents didn't speak much English. To get anything done in the family, my mum would bring homemade dim sums to accountants, lawyers, builders; you name it.

The friendships she made and the number of free services our family got through delicious Cantonese food were incredible. For my parents, every conversation revolves around food, and every comparison in life revolves around food; Sydney has one of the best food cultures in the entire world.

These experiences are the Sydney that I know and love, and this is the Sydney I want the world to see.

What was the process of writing and then directing & editing the film with the talented Sejon Im?

SEJ

Overall it was an insanely beautiful experience as Will and I were able to really bring our strengths together. Often as a director you're deep in your own head with ideas swimming around and it's not uncommon to be doubtful of some of them. But it was mad to have Will as a bouncing board where I'd divulge my ideas with him and I'd get an immediate "Nah that ain't it" or "That's genius, let's unpack this." And vice versa with me giving him feedback. It was also both our first time ever co-directing, and so with us having our L-plates there were unexpected hurdles as we got deeper and deeper into making the film. However, we managed to find a groove and to pick our battles with certain disagreements. It helped that we saw eye to eye on a lot of things stylistically and filled each other's blindspots.

WILL

We're not the cliché creative team that fills in each other's weaknesses; we're the psychotic duo constantly echo-chambering each other's strengths.

I firmly believe that there is a right and wrong when it comes to filmmaking, it either works or it doesn't. Having Sej along really meant we could smell each other's bullshit which was super dope when it came to making sure every beat and idea in this film pops.

For me, what stood out most about the cast was their willingness to dive into the insanity of the story. What was it like directing this assemblage of amazing actors in these extreme scenes?

WILL

Shirong Wu and Anthony Roy Barton (Tony) are both actors who were my housemates during lockdown; we've skinny dipped together at Bronte beach at midnight and took big shits in the ocean.

They trusted me to go ape-shit with them, and we went to town. There were, unfortunately, a few situations when we pushed too far, hahaha and it was not cool. We paused filming a lot, sometimes for weeks, to unwind, talk through things, and make sure we all knew our boundaries and how to work within them. A big lesson I learnt in this film is that you should never underestimate trust and intimacy; they must be in place so everyone can do their best work.

Christian Byers is a very experienced actor; he starred alongside Daniel Radcliffe in December Boys, was nominated for an AFI award, and is now one of the lead actors in the wildly popular Stan show "Bump". I've been his mate for years; we bonded over our love of documentary filmmaking. When I asked him to be one of our film's characters, he initially turned me down but decided last minute that he would do it as long as he got to wear and do whatever he wanted in the role. We enthusiastically agreed.

I could talk for hours about what it was like to work with Cat Van-Davies, but none of it would do her performance justice. From the moment the camera started rolling, it was take after take of non-stop dopamine rush.

Harrison Green who plays Constable Cummings is the biggest legend, he came on last minute and slayed the role. His dad is also a real policeman which was perfect.

SEJ

I feel all the actors had some hidden unhinged-ness, some less hidden than others, so it was really just about Will and I massaging it out of them. Also, they all knew what they were getting into so it rarely felt off-brand asking them to get even weirder.

WILL

That's what actors do, they gift you with raw emotion, and I cannot thank and apologise to all the actors enough, especially Shirong and Tony.

You actually learnt to make an array of borderline ornate and delicate dumplings for the film! What did you learn about making them that you didn't know before? Is it a skill you still whip out to this day?

WILL

I'm proud to say that I made every dumpling you see on this screen.

Dumplings are tough to make. It took me four months to finally reach the level I needed.

My dad used to be a dim sum chef, and my mum has worked in hospitality for her entire life, so naturally, my family helped bring my skills up.

Getting the dough perfect is the key to getting the right texture so that all the crazy fold patterns are possible.

It did feel like Breaking Bad, going to different supermarkets to experiment with all the different types of flour and gluten ratios.