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Meat Raffle



SHORT FILM PRESS NOTES

Meat Raffle

Written & Directed by **STUART ARMSTRONG**

Produced by **HARRY SHAW & SAMANTHA LOCOCK**

Length **14:54**

Shooting format **Digital**

Aspect ratio **1.66:1**

Language **English**

Audio format **Dolby 5.1**


IRIS PRIZE
BEST BRITISH SHORT FILM

FILM4 





LOGLINE

"Cumbria, 1998. Terrified he's turned his son queer, closeted dad Rich plots to rig his local pub's Christmas turkey draw to prove what it means to be a real man."

A group of children are gathered at a Christmas party. In the foreground, a boy on the left wears a brown paper bag hat with pom-poms and a silver tinsel headband, with a black mustache drawn on his upper lip. He is wearing a blue jacket over a white collared shirt and a patterned vest. To his right, a girl with blonde hair wears a silver tinsel headband and a red jacket over a white top. In the background, several other children are seated at a table, some wearing similar festive hats. The room is dimly lit with warm, yellowish light, and framed pictures are visible on the wall behind them.

CAST



MICHAEL HODGSON

Rich

A recent fan-favourite turn as vengeful drag queen 'Nan' in BBC Three's award-winning Middlesbrough-set queer comedy *Smoggie Queens* is just the tip of the iceberg for film, TV and theatre veteran Michael Hodgson.

A masterfully offbeat, layered character actor, he has previously worked with directors of the calibre of Martin McDonagh and Michael Winterbottom, and is a Royal Shakespeare Company mainstay.

In *Meat Raffle*, he brings a disarming darkness and depth to protagonist Rich which has been praised highly by critics.

"Hodgson is exceptional, his Rich is both tragic and impossible to look away from"
– Short Films Matter

"Through Armstrong's cleverly written subtleties and a deft and touching performance from Hodgson, we begin to understand [Rich's] softer, sadder side"
– UK Film Review

WILL LATIMER

Jackson

At just 18 years-old, Cumbria-born internationally successful fashion model [Will Latimer](#) delivers the kind of delicate, emotionally tuned performance as Jackson that you'd expect from a much more experienced young actor. Incredibly though, *Meat Raffle* marks Will's motion picture debut.

Having modelled for brands as diverse as Diesel, Burberry, Uniqlo and GAP, Will first crossed paths with director Stuart Armstrong by chance. Fresh from a string of modelling jobs in Tokyo, Japan and home for a visit, Will dropped in to ask about volunteering at the Carlisle workshop building *Meat Raffle's* toilet cubicle set. Stuart encouraged him to self-tape, and his raw, instinctive talent stood out immediately.

Now pursuing representation, Will is in early conversations with agents and poised for an exciting career ahead.

"Latimer brings an authentic presence that grounds the chaos."

– *Short Films Matter*





DOMINIC WEATHERILL

Alan

Giving a scene-stealing performance, Dominic Weatherill plays Rich's secret lover – the grotesque, bratty butcher's boy, Alan – with sly tension and a blackly comic edge. Painfully cruel yet strangely magnetic, his performance injects grit and unease into Meat Raffle's central, tangled romance.

With recent credits including *Star Wars: Andor* and *Boat Story* (BBC/Amazon), Drama Centre London-trained Dominic is fast building a reputation for his sharp presence and chameleonic range.

A close-up portrait of Julie Edwards as the character Tammy. She has a surprised or excited expression, with wide eyes and an open mouth. She is wearing a dark, festive top with a red scarf and a large red bow. The background is dark with out-of-focus colorful lights, suggesting a holiday or party atmosphere.

JULIE EDWARDS

Tammy

Lighting up the screen as Tammy, the sharp-tongued pub landlady, Julie Edwards brings warmth, wit and no-nonsense Cumbrian grit to *Meat Raffle*.

With a long list of television credits including *Coronation Street*, *Doctors*, and *All Creatures Great and Small* (Netflix), Julie is a seasoned performer with a knack for finding the truth in even the most heightened roles. Her turn in *Meat Raffle* is no exception – it's a part only she could have played.

A man with short hair, wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored t-shirt, is looking down. The background is dark with a large, colorful bokeh of lights in shades of red, green, blue, and yellow. A person in a red coat is visible in the background to the left.

CREW

A photograph of Stuart Armstrong, a young man with glasses and a dark hoodie, standing in a dimly lit outdoor setting at night. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. In the background, there are other people, some holding cameras, and a string of colorful, out-of-focus lights. The overall atmosphere is that of a film festival or a public event.

STUART ARMSTRONG

Writer/Director

Stuart Armstrong is a 28-year-old filmmaker from rural Cumbria in the North West of England whose work combines black comedy with emotionally grounded, character-driven drama often rooted in queer, working-class, northern life. He is currently building his career outside traditional industry centres; from his hometown of Carlisle on the Scottish border.

As a screenwriter, his shorts included BFI-backed Scots language gothic horror *THE LEERIE* (2022) and BIFA-longlisted Beatles comedy *PAUL IS DEAD* (2018). Since these successes, Stuart has also begun to direct, and the BFI-funded *MEAT RAFFLE* (2025) marks his biggest project to date.

While only at the beginning of its festival run, the film has already been nominated for Film4 Best British Short at Iris Prize 2025, and will have its premiere at Bolton International Film Festival in October 2025. As such, *MEAT RAFFLE* is now both BAFTA and BIFA-qualifying and – thanks to Film4 and Iris Prize – will also be broadcast on television and available to stream via Channel 4 later in 2025.

With these recent achievements under his belt and a growing slate of TV and feature film projects in the works, including one with BFI Early Development Funding, Stuart is fast establishing himself as an exciting and distinctive voice in British independent film and hopes *MEAT RAFFLE* will be one to watch this awards season.

HARRY SHAW

Producer

Harry Shaw is a Royal Television Society award winning filmmaker from the UK. Producing across non-fiction and narrative film & television through his production company Everyday, his filmography has been broadcast on channels such as Channel 4 and Sky1 and screened at Academy Award, BAFTA and BIFA qualifying festivals such as BFI London, New York and Cannes film festivals. As a screenwriter, Harry's debut feature *We Need To Kill Your Father* is in development with Article 1 which is due to shoot in 2026 with a cast of BAFTA-winning British talent.

He has worked in the writers department on shows for Netflix and AppleTV. As well as his work in film, Harry co-founded Ban Conversion Therapy, the leading human rights campaign to end the vile practice in the UK.





SAMANTHA LOCOCK

Producer

Samantha Locock has been developing her production slate of short films which champion queer, POC or female-led stories including *SCOPE* (dir. Emma Moffat) an exciting 70s thriller which is scheduled for production in early 2025, *SCRAPS* (dir. Mohamed-Zain Dada) funded by the Art Fund and currently in its festival run, and *RICE BALL* (dir. Kristina Pringle) produced as one of five films made as part of the BFI x BMW Filmmaking Challenge, that was mentored by Michaela Coel, which premiered at BFI London Film Festival and played at BAFTA qualifying Cambridge and Norwich Film Festivals.

Samantha also works freelance producing commercial, music promo, and corporate films – handling budgets of up to £65k.



BEN COTGROVE

Director of Photography

Winner of ACS Australian Cinematographer of the Year 2024, Ben Cotgrove enjoys blending high concept visuals with dramatic storytelling and has an affinity for telling queer and diverse narratives. He has a diverse range of work across narrative film, commercial, promo and documentary and his work has screened at festivals including Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), SXSW, Sydney Film Festival and Aesthetica Film Festival.

He and MEAT RAFFLE director Stuart Armstrong worked closely to achieve the project's degraded, 1990s film-style look. The goal was to emulate the feel of a 35mm print that's been sat in someone's garage for 30 years. In the spirit of *The Holdovers*, the team used period camera techniques, shot colour chart grade refs on 35mm, ran the sound mix through tape reels, and added halation and gate weave in post to give it that rough, nostalgic, period-appropriate texture despite the film being shot on the top-of-the-range Arri Alexa 35.





REVIEWS



"Fizzing with more nerve and charm than plenty of features ... Meat Raffle is a blast of pure northern glory that juggles laughs, secrets and tender emotion without dropping a single ball. Armstrong has created something deeply personal. Unmissable. Outstanding!"

– Short Films Matter

"Meat Raffle is full of surprises and the excellent cast are beautifully photographed by Stuart Armstrong."

– Ian McKellen

"Armstrong's contained and concise Meat Raffle is as absurd as it is entertaining, filled with plenty of heart and poignancy to boot ... the whole thing makes you feel like you've just walked in, ordered a pint and are now stood leaning on the bar watching the entire crazy saga unfold."

– UK Film Review

Q&A

With writer/director
Stuart Armstrong

Where did the idea for *Meat Raffle* come from?

It started with my own experiences growing up queer in a small village in Cumbria. There's still a real silence around sexuality, especially among middle-aged or older men. Even today, Grindr is a wall of faceless, "discreet" profiles. For a while I've wanted to tell a story about those men who've never had the tools to understand and explain their own feelings. So when I had the idea of an exasperated character who's desperately trying to win a meat raffle, the two threads seemed to marry really nicely.

What is a meat raffle?

Meat raffles are a weirdly brilliant and absurd pub tradition where

buy a ticket and might win a pack of sausages or a beef joint, or in our case, a Christmas turkey. That mix of bleak and funny felt like the perfect setting for a story about male repression and identity and all the stuff blokes don't say out loud. I've worked in pubs with those kinds of old gadgies. Big personalities and lots of skeletons in the closet.

What's Rich's story?

He's a closeted, divorced dad who's recently lost his job at the local animal rendering plant (there's a big, minging one near me which causes the affectionately named 'Penrith pong'). He's clinging to this generational trauma around masculinity and wants to impress his teenage son,



but is skint and doesn't know how. So he gets it into his head that he'll rig the pub's Christmas meat raffle to win a big turkey in order to prove himself a provider. He's tragic and daft and full of contradictions, and I think a lot of men will see something of themselves in him, whether or not they share his secret. I know I do.

What kind of tone were you going for?

A mix of the grotesque, the tender and the ridiculous. I didn't want to lean too hard into social realism. I love kitchen sink drama, but I also wanted the film to have moments of heightened style. A bit of fizz. So if you've left Meat Raffle bemused, with an awkward smirk and tear in your eye, I've succeeded in what I set out to do!

How did it all come together?

We absolutely couldn't have made this film without the support of Film

Hub North and the BFI NETWORK funding, as well as our Kickstarter backers. But Carlisle also really showed up for us. We had local extras, a turkey donated by a local butcher, a church that let us build a toilet cubicle set in their 15th century barn. The local support was bonkers. There's not much of a film industry up here, but lots of our crew were local and came back up home just to work on it. We also found Will Latimer, who plays Jackson, totally by chance. He'd never acted before, just happened to be visiting the workshop where our set was being built. I got him to self-tape and he absolutely smashed it.

Any response to the film so far that's stuck with you?

Sir Ian McKellen was incredibly kind to us. He has family connections to Cumbria, so I emailed his people, not expecting to hear anything

back, but he came back with some wonderful words of encouragement and a quote for our poster!

What do you want people to take from the film?

I hope it makes people laugh and wince in equal measure. And I hope it says something honest about how men – especially northern men – hide their feelings. But this labour of love only got made because of the support, humour and goodwill of everyone who gave their time to it, and we had an proper blast making it, so I hope that comes across more than anything else.

Thank you for taking the time to watch our film – I really hope you enjoyed it.

WIN A PRIZE TURKEY!



MEAT RAFFLE

Druids Arms, Carlisle

6pm Christmas Eve

All proceeds to charity!

CONTACT US

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