

Justin Stokes



SHORT FILM
Method Actor

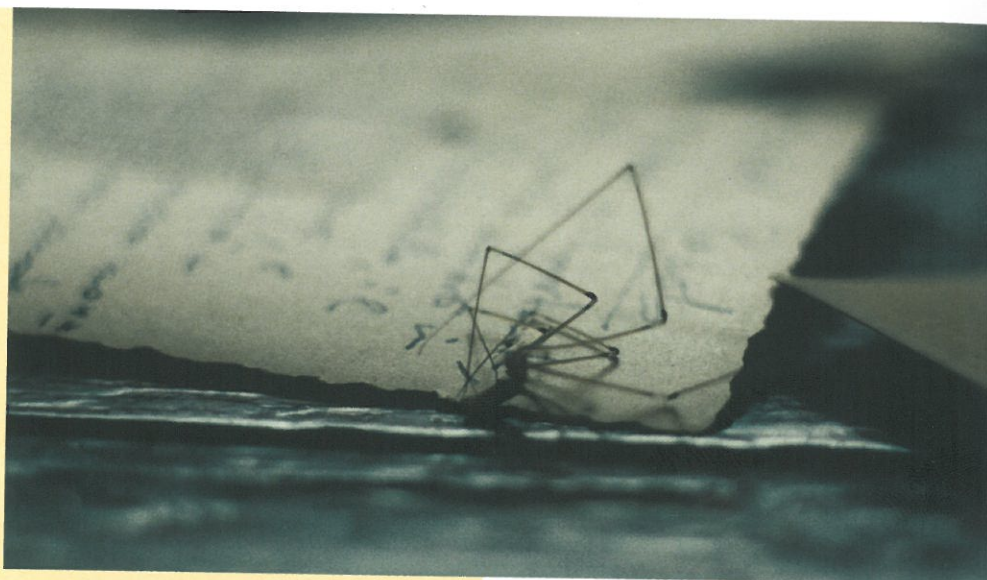
Justin Stokes was just six years old when his father started bringing image catalogues and photography books back from the office, and he was instantly captivated by the myriad worlds caught on camera. He has been following his passion for photography and filmmaking ever since – from homemade holiday movies filmed on a Hi-8 to his Best Documentary Photograph award from *The Times* newspaper in 2008.

“I can’t remember ever getting into photography, or ever not being into it,” describes the Buckinghamshire-born photographer and director. “I do remember being on a geography field trip at school and being told to bring a camera along – so I brought my Olympus 35mm SLR, and I couldn’t believe it when everyone else just had point and clicks. Since then, I’ve carried a camera with me at all times, and still nearly always shoot film rather than digital. I don’t have any formal training, but I learned everything I needed to know through books and the website Flickr, and most of all by continually taking photos.”

Accomplished in both stills photography and moving image, Stokes is now signed to HLA in London and it was his powerful short *Method Actor* that caught the eye of the team at *shots*.

A simple yet potent tale, the film focuses on one central character and combines strong imagery with poetic monologue to powerful effect. “I wanted to make something dark and beautiful about a misanthropic character,” Stokes explains. “It developed into a challenge to myself to be able to tell a story with a complete narrative arc in less than three minutes, using just a single character in one room. It’s a monologue of reminiscences, and we get an insight into a dark, confused and embittered mind. All along, I saw it as more of a poem than a traditional film, in that I wanted to keep metaphor at the forefront and meaning ambiguous, but at the same time present it in a formal cinematic structure.”

Stokes spent some time toying with the concept of the film before collaborating with then Ogilvy copywriter Glenn Smith, and over a two-year period wrote and rewrote the script before bringing it to life. The duo’s effort impressed acclaimed actor John Shrapnel – of *Gladiator* and *Troy* fame – who signed up to play the sole character. “I was amazed when John accepted the role,” says Stokes, “he was exactly the actor



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I was looking for, and his voice was perfect, but it felt pretty daunting that I would be working with an actor of such calibre, with so much experience, and I worried that he might be difficult to work with. But we met up in a cafe and John immediately said how much he liked the script. We discovered we both loved bikes, and the same films, and both had similar views on his character. He was nothing but brilliant to work with, and amazingly generous.”

A forceful presence on screen, Shrapnel’s performance completes the film’s success and Stokes is hoping to go on to recreate the formula in the future with more music videos, commercials and short films.

Ben McCambridge



TEST
SONY PS3 Kids

Despite a stint spent at film school, it wasn’t until Ben McCambridge upped sticks to the City of Angels and got a job as a runner at edit and post company The Whitehouse that his filmmaking education really began.

“When I was in film school I never thought a million years I’d ever say this,” says McCambridge “but I really became enamoured with commercial during my early years in advertising post production. I remember watching reels from guys like Rick Lawley and being so inspired by the work. It was shocking. A well conceived and executed spot is a beautiful thing.”

Raised in York, Pennsylvania right next to Amish country, McCambridge says an active imagination was needed to make anything interesting happen, and he found his outlet making home movies.

“I was always making terribly bad videos with my buds,” he reminisces. “Tons of in-camera edited VHS films, and things became pretty epic when I bought my first MiniDV camera and got the video editing software Pinnacle Systems installed on the Dell. There were many choreographed match action fight scenes.”

Since kicking off his career in post production