

THE COLONEL'S OUTING

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Number 8 Films

THE COLONEL'S OUTING

Logline

Two old war veterans find love in a rest home – but why is Matron so disturbed by their blossoming relationship?

Synopsis

Eighty-something Tristan Arthur Jones used to write about fictional war heroes, and fell in love with every single one. He always hoped he'd meet one for real, and with the arrival of Colonel Robert Leadley at his rest home, it seems like his dreams have come true.

The Colonel moves into Tristan's room and they grow very close, much to the concern of the patronising Matron, who seems determined to interfere at every turn. There's no option but to escape.

Armed with a picnic lunch and a hip flask, Tristan and the Colonel take off in his precious Chrysler for a fateful day on the town, where promises are made and painful secrets are revealed – but is their time up before it's really begun?

Contacts

Christopher Banks, Director
Number 8 Films
Ph: +64 21 036 0368
chris@number8films.com

Andy Jalfon, Producer
Number 8 Films
Ph: +64 21 808 178
andy@number8films.com

Number 8 Films
PO Box 21-491
Auckland 0650
New Zealand
www.number8films.com

Technical Information

SHOOTING FORMAT: HDCAM

EXHIBITION FORMAT: DigiBeta, Beta SP, DVD (PAL and NTSC)

ASPECT RATIO: 16x9 anamorphic (1.78:1)

SOUND: Stereo

RUNNING TIME: 16 mins 52 sec

COUNTRY: New Zealand

DATE OF COMPLETION: January 2011

Cast & Crew

Tristan	TYL VON RANDOW
The Colonel	DAVID FITCHEW
The Matron	ANDREA KELLAND
Mrs Pleasance	SHIRLEY McNEILL
Rugby Girl	MACKENZIE CAMERON
Judas Waitress	KATRINA MATHERS
Bar Patrons	KAREN CHANCE, CHRIS FREE, RICHARD LAMBERT, VANESSA CAMERON, DEAN SPOONER, BOB JALFON, PAULINA JALFON
Screenplay	CHRISTOPHER BANKS
Based on the short story "A Man's Man" by	STEVE ATTWOOD
Director of Photography	NEIL MORRISON
Camera Operator	ALLAN GEORGE
Gaffer/Grip	ISAIAH VAEGA
Second Unit Camera	ANDY JALFON, CHRISTOPHER BANKS, DEAN SPOONER
Sound Recording	DEB FRAME
Key Make-up & Hair	DEVIE PANCHIA
Props & Wardrobe Master	DEAN SPOONER
Stills Photographer	VINCE POL
Behind The Scenes Camera	KATHERINE SASSE
Location Manager	BOB JALFON
Production Assistants	BRUCE ASHTON, ALAN GRANVILLE
Drivers	JIM BOAG, ADE SZABO
Casting	AMANDA REES
Producer	ANDY JALFON
Directed by	CHRISTOPHER BANKS
Principal Sponsor	MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION OF NEW ZEALAND
Corporate Sponsor	TOMORROW
Crowdfund Sponsors	CRAIG BONNINGTON, JARROD CLAYWORTH, HILARIO DE SOUSA, JOHN FREEMAN, JOHN GREEN, ALAN IVORY, ALLAN-JOHN MARSH, KEITH TOWNSHEND
Penguin Books logo courtesy	PENGUIN GROUP (NZ)
Special Thanks	SCATHING ARC, RADIO WAVES, NEW ZEALAND HISTORIC PLACES TRUST, THE STAFF OF ALBERTON, GALBRAITH'S ALEHOUSE, AUCKLAND CITY COUNCIL

Music Credits

"NEAR YOU"

Performed by Patsy Riggir – from the album "My Little Corner Of The World"

Courtesy Stebbing Recording Centre

Written by (K Goell/F Craig) – Published by Warner/Chappell Music Australia Pty Ltd

"MISCHIEF"

Composed by Brian Meshears and Scott Meath – Published by Gozar Publishing (ASCAP)

Courtesy www.royalty-free.tv

"MY LITTLE CORNER OF THE WORLD"

Performed by Patsy Riggir – from the album "My Little Corner Of The World"

Courtesy Stebbing Recording Centre – Written by (L Pockriss/B Hilliard)

Published by Universal Music Publishing Pty Ltd and Campbell Connolly Australia Pty Ltd

"PICTURES AND IMAGES"

Composed by Seth Stachowski – Published by Gozar Publishing (ASCAP)

Courtesy www.royalty-free.tv

"REFLECTIONS"

Composed by Damon Bradley – Published by Fireclown Publishing (BMI)

Courtesy www.royalty-free.tv

"THE WAYWARD WIND"

Performed by Patsy Riggir – from the album "My Little Corner Of The World"

Courtesy Stebbing Recording Centre

Written by (S Lebowsky/H Newman) – Published by Hal Leonard/Boosey & Hawkes Group

Director's Statement

To steal a line from a great movie, "we're all caught in our own private traps". And while, (thankfully) no character in *The Colonel's Outing* meets their demise at the blade of a butcher's knife while in the shower, they all encompass Norman Bates' philosophy of life.

And to some degree, I think we all do. Perhaps, like Tristan, we're not aware of it – stuck in a routine we've been living out for five, ten, twenty years or more, safe in the cloak of a secure job, parents or a partner who nurtures us in our security. But deep inside we yearn for something more.

Perhaps, like the Colonel, we can see the life we want to live, but are convinced that the world – or at least certain portions of it – are conspiring against us to keep our dreams locked down.

Or we could, like the Matron, be so trapped in the past and afraid to let go – afraid that if we do, we will cease to exist because we've broiled for so long in our memories that we have nothing left to move on to.

When I first read Steve Attwood's story "*A Man's Man*" about five years ago, I'd be lying if I said I was overcome by the above wave of melancholy thought – I simply thought it was a great story, with great characters that had not been seen on screen before, which is always a motivating factor for me when putting a film together.

But as I adapted the story and started to work on each of our three main characters, something happened – the realizations described above, the traps that Tristan, Colonel and Matron shared, along with their desires to live the lives they want to live. For everything to be perfect.

This, for me, is what is at the heart of the story and why I believe it will appeal to both young and old. As a 33-year-old man, my experience of World War II is limited to the vicarious experiences of my late grandfather and an endless array of historical accounts – some good, some garishly vapid.

But I often think about what life will be by the time I reach 80 years of age, and whether I will be happy. Whether I will be living the life I want to live, or whether something or someone (most likely myself) will be preventing me from doing that.

During the editing of this film, a friend of mine took his own life, and – along with my grief – made these thoughts only resonate deeper. Yes, some of us might not make it as far as the Colonel.

This film could not have been made without the financial support of the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand's Out Of The Blue programme, which combats depression. We are immensely grateful to Boris Sokratov and the team at the Foundation who saw the value

in this story being told, in seeing that a journey to wellbeing can start as simply as stepping outside your front door, asking a question, or – perhaps most importantly – being willing to listen to the answer.

I hope *The Colonel's Outing* will leave people with a sense that it's never too late to change, to adjust your life so you can wring a degree of happiness out of it, no matter how small or insignificant that may seem to others. Some people want to be pop stars. Others are just content with a place to live, a good bottle of wine, friends, and a pile of old records to pass the time.

Whatever your dream is, don't lose sight of it. Move towards it. Little steps are cool. Because we're only here once.

Christopher Banks

January 2011

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Birth Of A Colonel

Steve Attwood, author of the short story "A Man's Man", shares the Colonel's origins.

The story originally started when I was studying creative writing with Owen Marshall in Timaru, and he was taking us through a unit about putting on a voice that is not your own voice. One of the challenges was to write as a very old person.

At the time I was doing the course, I was dashing back to Christchurch at weekends to work in a gay bar - because I was a poor student and I needed money! While I was in the bar, a guy came in who obviously expected all gay bars to be staffed by beautiful young men. I went to serve him, he ignored me and said to the other barman, "how come you've got such an old c**t working behind the bar?"

I was so angry, and was thinking that that weekend I had to write a story with an old man's voice. So I rushed home at 3 o'clock in the morning after my stint in the bar and wrote the bones of what was to become "A Man's Man". It evolved from there. So it actually was written as an "old guys can be sexy and attractive too, thank you very much!"

Some years after that story was written, I saw an advertisement for an American publisher that was producing an anthology of gay short love stories. And I thought, how am I going to compete in that market where there'll be thousands?

Then I thought, "I know, I've got that story about the two old guys in the rest home." And it sold, it sold to America, and was published in the anthology.

My mum was a geriatric nurse for many years, so I used to go and sing in the hospitals to entertain the old folks, so I was really familiar with the atmosphere and the language and

the personalities in those places, so those sort of background things all added colour to the story.

I think it's one of the sad things in our culture that you get over 40 and you start becoming invisible in the gay world. It's a healthy thing to be aware that our people grow up, they have lives away from the bars and the clubs and the lycra and the youthful gym bodies.

I'd like to see that redressed, and in what is now "The Colonel's Outing", I see that as part of redressing that invisibility.

I think companionship is important to anybody. I don't think we're geared or have evolved as an animal to be on our own. I don't think we handle being on our own very well.

I remember the first time I lived in Wellington back in the early 1990s, and I went to the tenth anniversary of New Zealand's homosexual law reform celebrations. One of the things I did then as a gay journalist was deliberately do interviews with gay couples that had been together for a really long time, because there was a perception that it wasn't worth giving us equal rights in relationship matters because we couldn't hold onto relationships anyway - and it's a myth.

Stories like this are a nice way of showing that we as gay men have lives, we have loves, we have feelings and deeply held beliefs – and it's nice to grow old with somebody.

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Production Notes

Two old war veterans find love in a rest home despite the schemes of an interfering Matron – a simple pitch that would melt the heart of the meanest curmudgeon, but the latest film from the award-winning Number 8 Films team of director Christopher Banks and producer Andy Jalfon was no easy sell.

Jalfon and Banks struggled for several years to finally bring *The Colonel's Outing* to the screen. Despite a strong script, based on an internationally-published short story, the film was rejected by local funding bodies and seemed doomed to sit on a shelf forever until an unlikely source came on board as a principal sponsor in early 2010 – the Mental Health Foundation's Out Of The Blue programme.

"Boris Sokatrov, who manages Out Of The Blue, had been very taken with one of our previous films, *Teddy*," says director Christopher Banks, "After reading the script for *The Colonel's Outing* he thought it fitted really well with the messages of Out Of The Blue, which works to encourage men to seek help for depression and improve their mental wellbeing."

With a green light for funding, casting and location scouting could finally begin. There were several challenges in meeting the requirements of the story, as producer Andy Jalfon notes, firstly in casting:

“We needed to find a pool of actors in their mid-to-late seventies, which is difficult in a small country like New Zealand. Casting young actors and making them up to look older was always going to be a last resort.”

Casting director Amanda Rees, who worked on the previous Number 8 Films production *Communication*, found the right people.

“It all happened really quickly,” director Christopher Banks remembers. “In little over half a day, we’d seen a number of enthusiastic and talented actors who were in the right age range, and it was also clear that we’d found a wonderful, thoughtful Tristan in Tyl von Randow and a beautifully nuanced Colonel in David Fitchew.”

The casting of the crucial Matron role came out of left field. Andrea Kelland is more familiar to those in New Zealand’s television industry for her work behind the scenes as the casting director of long-running TV2 serial *Shortland Street*. But she had seen the script and was keen to read for the role.

“She couldn’t come in on our audition day, but asked if we could see her at another time,” Jalfon says. “Although we’d seen some great actresses for Matron, we didn’t want to leave any stone unturned, and Andrea has a great reputation so we scheduled another half-day.”

By this time, Tyl von Randow had already been cast as Tristan, so Andrea was reading with the real Tristan, in a pivotal scene Involving Matron.

“Straight out of the box, she was fantastic,” Banks recalls. “She had just the right amount of aggression, passive-aggressive malice, and childlike vulnerability that we needed for the character.”

Another casting joy came in the form of Shirley McNeill, who came to read for the minor role of rest home resident Mrs Pleasance. McNeill, in her mid-80s, has had a number of television appearances but appears on film in *The Colonel’s Outing* for the first time. She has been acting since her teens.

“There can be a tendency for actors to ham it up in roles like this, but Shirley displayed a wonderful comic touch by playing Mrs Pleasance’s confusion completely straight,” Banks says.

With a great cast in place, the next problem was where to put them – the evocative rest home setting is carefully described in Steve Attwood’s original story, which is set in Nelson.

“Taking the production to Nelson wasn’t an option on our budget. We knew there were homes like that described in the story in Auckland, but the question was would anyone let

us film there?" Jalfon says. "We were looking through real estate listings to see if we could shoot in private homes, but most people were understandably reluctant to let a crew of complete strangers come in and take over their home."

The eventual solution – Auckland's historic homestead, Alberton – had been under their noses the whole time.

"We were only a few weeks away from the shoot and after quite a few location rejections we were starting to get desperate," Jalfon says. "Chris knew of Alberton from old school trips, but being a museum and run by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, we never in a million years thought they'd let film crews in there."

Taking a stab, Jalfon phoned up and found the team at Alberton to be more than accommodating. In fact, the home has quite a pedigree in New Zealand cinema, having been used for scenes in Jane Campion's Oscar-winning film *The Piano*.

"They had a wedding on the weekend we wanted to shoot, but thankfully we could plan around it," says Jalfon.

The crew took to the historic home on Friday and Sunday of the three-day shoot, with the Saturday being reserved for the "outing" scenes at Auckland's famous landmark One Tree Hill – immortalized in the U2 song of the same name – and its Cornwall Park surrounds.

The final piece of the puzzle was transport. In Steve Attwood's original story, the Colonel has an old 1930s Rolls Royce, which is his prize – and perhaps only – possession, a relic from his past glory days.

"We knew it was going to be a very tough ask trying to find a car exactly like the one described in the story, so we settled for finding something similar from the era," Jalfon remembers.

Their search took them all over Auckland, to museums and classic car clubs, a search detailed in a tongue-in-cheek promo Youtube clip to Monterey Park in Hobsonville, a haven for all kinds of classic cars from Model T Fords to Deloreans – unfortunately none of them in current working order.

"Email won out in the end – we had Jim Boag from the Auckland Veteran & Vintage Car Club referred to us, and he had a beautiful 1930s Chrysler Tourer in mint condition which he was more than happy to let us use," Jalfon says.

Boag came on set to drive, as did Ade Szabo, who lent his quirky Hillman Superminx to the production for Matron to drive.

"Matron's car is not specified in the original story," Banks says, "but I always imagined her in something sturdy, compact and practical, like an Austin 1100 or perhaps even a Riley Elf. As the shoot dates got nearer, we sent out a blanket call for classic car enthusiasts and waited

to see what came back. When Ade Szabo emailed through a picture of his Hillman Superminx, we knew it was just right for Matron."

Many of the crew from previous Number 8 productions *Teddy* and *Communication* returned for *The Colonel's Outing*. The 16-minute film was shot in just three days with no major mishaps.

"The feeling of producing a third film in three years is very satisfying," Jalfon says. "There is a real sense of interest and anticipation from people both here in New Zealand and internationally who have enjoyed our previous work.

"In this production we have a great cast who have been fantastic to work with and who have given emotional performances that will instantly draw in the audience. Making films is a difficult process and it doesn't get any easier each year to overcome potential barriers like finances, but with some perseverance, and help from our generous sponsors, we've managed to tell a story that is both unique and touching.

"I can't wait to get it onto the festival circuit for everybody to enjoy."

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Cast Biographies

Tyl von Randow - Tristan

Retired from his life as an architect, Tyl is now realizing his life as an actor. He has many stage appearances to his name, including *Dracula* and *Ernest* with the Fortune Theatre back in the seventies. Previous film appearances include the schoolteacher in "The Map Reader". Tyl likes to keep up his development training and is currently engaged in studying Michael Chekhov acting technique under Elena Stejko.

David Fitchew - The Colonel

David has performed roles in "Shortland Street", "Hercules", "Young Hercules", "Xena Warrior Princess", and the feature film "End of the Golden Weather". He has appeared in numerous TV Commercials, industrial training videos and a vast number of professional and amateur theatre productions. David trained mainly in Canada, supplemented with some New Zealand tuition.

Andrea Kelland - The Matron

A familiar face on New Zealand's big and small screens, Andrea's TV roles include "Shortland Street", "Outrageous Fortune", "The Jacquie Brown Diaries" and the "Topp Twins" TV series. Big screen roles have included "Piece Of My Heart", "Spooked", "End Of The Golden Weather" and "Queen City Rocker". She is a founding member of Theatre Corporate, and

when not in front of the camera she can be found behind it as the casting director for long-running serial "Shortland Street".

Shirley McNeill - Mrs Pleasance

Shirley came to acting for film and television later in life, after many years in amateur theatre, and she has been quite successful securing roles for "Shortland Street", the film "Fallout", as well as hero and featured roles in commercials. Shirley is an inspiration – in her mid-80s, she is currently studying at university and takes on all new challenges with energy and drive.

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Filmmaker Biography

Writer/director **Christopher Banks** and producer **Andy Jalfon** have been recognised internationally for their achievements, including extensive exhibition/distribution for their body of work to date.

Christopher Banks wrote, produced, directed, edited and scored his debut feature *Quiet Night In*. It played to festival audiences in Toronto and the UK in 2005, followed by an Australasian DVD release in 2007. His work as a reporter and director on the award-winning *Queer Nation* series has recently been chosen as one of a handful of episodes from the show's nine-year run to be showcased by the NZ On Screen web project.

Since graduating from the New Zealand Film Academy in 2005, Andy Jalfon has produced and directed behind-the-scenes series for two of New Zealand's most popular and successful programmes, *Shortland Street* and *Dancing With The Stars*. He was the Content Producer during the development of the first online catch up service in the southern hemisphere, TVNZ Ondemand, which has won the internationally-recognised Content+Innovation Award. He was also an integral part of the multi-million dollar project for the redesign and launch of the new TVNZ entertainment site. His production company produces a variety of films for a range of platforms, from on screen to online.

Their first production together, the short film *Teddy*, was released in 2009. It has won three awards, and become the first New Zealand film to be nominated for the prestigious Iris Prize for short film-making in the UK. It has played to sold-out audiences in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch as part of the Out Takes Reel Queer Film Festival; and internationally to audiences of thousands at some of the world's largest GLBT film festivals, including Toronto, New York, San Francisco, London, Tokyo and Los Angeles, where it has garnered high praise from filmgoers and festival directors alike.

Their second production, *Communication*, was released onto the film festival circuit in 2010, and has won two international awards - including Outstanding Short Film at the QBliss

Creating Change Community Awards in the United States. Other QBliss award-winners included "Precious" director Lee Daniels, "Tales Of The City" author Armistead Maupin, and N-Sync star Lance Bass.

The Colonel's Outing builds on the bittersweet mix of emotion which captured the hearts of audiences for *Teddy and Communication*, portraying a relationship between two men in the twilight of their lives in a way which few have cared to acknowledge or celebrate.

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About Number 8 Films

Number 8 Films is a charitable film-making trust founded by writer/director Christopher Banks and producer Andy Jalfon in late 2009.

Number 8 Films encourages and facilitates the highest standards of artistic achievement in the production of New Zealand films, to increase opportunities for New Zealanders to see locally-made stories and enrich our cultural heritage. Revenues earned by its productions are reinvested into future films to ensure the sustainability of New Zealand's local film culture.

The charitable purpose of the Trust is to promote growth within and community awareness of film-making culture in New Zealand. In achieving this purpose, Number 8 is committed to:

- Facilitate, encourage and support the creation of film projects in New Zealand.
- Provide training, support and assistance to people of all ages interested in performing and screen arts by experienced practitioners.
- Promote and explore opportunities for people of all ages interested in performing and screen arts, and enhance the culture of film amongst the wider community through promotional activities and information dissemination.

Number 8 Films is registered charity # CC43680 with the Charities Commission.