



DEAD WOOD

4 FRIENDS . 1 STRANGER . NO HOPE

R RESTRICTED 
SOME VIOLENT/DISTURBING IMAGES AND LANGUAGE

M1
MENAN FILMS

Contents

"Thoroughly enjoyable, decidedly spooky and heartily recommended. Dead Wood is a fine example of modern British indie horror."

Fangoria's MJ Simpson

"Dead Wood, more like Dead Good!"

James Whittington, Zone Horror

"An original and creepy horror flick which will both frighten you and surprise you in all the right ways."

Josh Nordstrom, Slasherpool



Menan Films
David Bryant, Sebastian Smith
and Richard Stiles

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Synopsis

Short synopsis

Four friends escape the city and head out into the woods for a relaxing weekend. Events take a sinister turn when a mysterious girl appears in their camp looking for her boyfriend. Soon the nightmare begins as they find themselves lost in an endless wilderness stalked by a deadly force.

As those left fight for survival they will discover the true nature of fear...

Medium synopsis

Four friends escape the grime of the city and head out into the woods for a peaceful, relaxing weekend. Events take a sinister turn when a mysterious girl appears in their camp looking for her boyfriend. Soon the nightmare begins as they find themselves lost in an endless wilderness stalked by a deadly force... watching... waiting... taking them one by one. As those left fight for survival they will discover the true nature of fear...

Dead Wood is the feature debut by a trio of British filmmakers: David Bryant, Sebastian Smith and Richard Stiles. The three have created a horror film that combines the primeval fears of the

Four friends escape the grime of the city and head out into the woods for a peaceful, relaxing weekend.

unknown, the dark, the supernatural and the panic of being lost and alone with terrifying results.

Long synopsis

Four friends; Larri, her boyfriend Webb, her cousin Milk and her best friend Jess, escape the grime of the city and drive out into the woods in an old camper van for a peaceful, relaxing weekend. Events take a sinister turn when a mysterious girl, Ketsy, appears in their camp looking for her boyfriend. They agree to help her but when one of the group disappears the nightmare begins. Desperate to escape and not knowing who to trust, they find themselves lost in an endless wilderness stalked by a deadly force... watching... waiting... taking them one by one. As those left fight for survival they will discover the true nature of fear...

Dead Wood is the feature debut from Menan Films, a trio of British filmmakers; David Bryant, Sebastian Smith and Richard Stiles who met at film school before embarking on a series of successful, award winning short horror films.

For Dead Wood they combined their strengths, not just directing but undertaking all creative roles, to make a horror feature that combines the primeval fears of the unknown, the dark, the supernatural and the panic of being lost and alone. The result is a terrifying display of suspense that cranks up the tension and keeps the audience guessing who will be the next victim.

Dead Wood will have you looking over your shoulder next time you take a stroll in the woods.

**David Bryant**

David is a founder of Bryant Brothers Productions producing promotional films for corporations, schools and charities.

He has also written and directed many short films including: Dead Wood (with Sebastian Smith and Richard Stiles), Heebie Jeebies and Saviour, which have been screened globally at film festivals (winning an award at Frightfest 2006), and on the internet at Urbanchillers, Filmaka and Triggerstreet.

**Sebastian Smith**

Sebastian is best known as an editor. He has cut numerous high-end documentaries and docu-dramas for major US broadcasters including The Discovery Channel, National Geographic and The History Channel.

Sebastian has directed many short films and music promos, including the award winning Hit and Run (with Richard) and Dead Wood The Short (with Richard and David). Dead Wood is his first feature film. In addition to directing, Sebastian is also Sound Designer/Editor.

**Richard Stiles**

Richard trained at Newport Film School where he met fellow Dead Wood creators Sebastian Smith and David Bryant. Since leaving film school, Richard has continued to make short films and low-budget pop videos.

Dead Wood marks his venture into feature length production. For the last year Richard has been concentrating on post production, overseeing the grading and compositing on the film's many special effects shots.

The Directors



Cast



Fergus March: WEBB

Fergus is one of the UK's hottest new talents. An actor, writer, filmmaker and musician, he's just finished a yearlong stint as the male lead in the West End production of *Mama Mia*. His film and theatre production company, Jeamland Productions, is currently working on a feature film version of *Macbeth*.

Recent acting work includes *Tartuffe* in *Tartuffe*, Dan in *Closer*, Trofimov in *The Cherry Orchard* and Didi in *Waiting for Godot*. Fergus is currently editing a project for the BBC.



Emily Juniper: LARRI

Emily has performed in theatres around the world including Edinburgh, the West End and off Broadway. Roles to date have included: Isabella in *The Witch*, Lilly Wilson in *Chains*, Dabby Bryant in *Our Country's Good*, Fran in *Astrakhan Winter*, Tabitha Dule in *Visit London* and Marilyn in *What if it's Raining?*.

Screen work includes: Kate in BBC pilot *Headlong*, a music video for 6 Nation State directed by award winning Tristan McIlwan-Hefele and recurring Vodcasts for Maxfactor's website.



John Samuel Worsey: MILK

An actor of extraordinary versatility, John also plays leading roles in two other forthcoming feature films — psychological thriller *Together*, and Banquo in Jeamland's modern spin on *Macbeth*, alongside Anthony Head and *Dead Wood*'s Fergus March.

Recent theatre work includes: UK tours of *Macbeth* as Macbeth, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Rikki Beadle-Blair's *Gutted*. John is currently developing a show in collaboration with comedian Tom Price



Rebecca Craven: JESS

Immediately after graduating from Guildford School of Acting, Rebecca was snapped up to play Hermia in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Nights Dream* — touring across the UK. Since then she's toured with *The Bold Primadonna* and the Theatre In Education Group.

Screen work includes the short film *Every Day In Autumn* for Incandescent Films and recently appearing in idents for The Sci-fi Channel. Rebecca is currently developing a new play *After The End*.



Nina Kwok: KETSY

Since shooting *Dead Wood*, Nina is in high demand. She's been touring extensively with the Yellow Earth Theatre Company in Hong Kong, China and the UK. She played Zhao Di in the critically acclaimed *58* and will be playing Cordelia in *YET* and Shanghai Art Centre's bilingual production of *King Lear* (Mandarin and English) with runs in Shanghai and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Nina has just recorded *The Flower Room* for BBC Radio 4. She's also found time to star in unconventional action film *49* and *Blue Lantern* and appear in *Holby City* for the BBC.

David, Sebastian and Richard met while training at Newport Film School in South Wales. It was not until several years after graduating, however, that they first collaborated on a short film also titled Dead Wood. The film was a great success on the internet and horror festival circuit. Off the back of this acclaim the trio decided to embark on a horror feature employing the same style and bare-bones production technique that had been used on the short.

"The script for Dead Wood grew out of necessity. We wrote the script based around what we had and what we could afford. We kept the cast small with virtually no supporting artists and set ninety percent of the film in the woods to avoid expensive locations and sets. We decided to set up the classic slasher movie scenario of a group of teenagers on a weekend camping trip in the woods, and then subvert that by telling a creepier supernatural tale. We spent a lot of time in pre-production developing the script and storyboarding every single shot. We knew that on location we would be fulfilling all the crew roles so we wanted to be as prepared as possible.

"...the directing is also extremely innovative with angles that I've never seen before, that are so intriguing that they alone make the movie worth while"

Josh Nordstrom, Slasherpool

"The cast were all great — they were all complete unknowns and we dropped them straight in the deep end with little preparation. We had one really intense week of shooting with very long days and gruelling night shoots, and then several months of weekends for pick-ups and reshoots. No one ever complained and they all gave brilliant performances, really bringing the characters to life. Nina (Kwok) had a lot of fun playing the mysterious Ketsy. We wrote her in such a way that the audience doesn't really know until the very end whether she is a villain or a victim and Nina played both sides beautifully."

"Post production on Dead Wood was a long and laborious process. Because of budget and time restrictions there were a lot of mistakes on the main

shoot. The original assemble edit bares little resemblance to the film we have now. We re-wrote and re-shot a lot of scenes and there were a lot of additional scenes which were dropped altogether. The structure and pace changed greatly and we found that an unexpected amount of humour worked its way in. The soundtrack was almost completely wiped and recreated from scratch with ADR and foley. Each shot was also individually graded and fixed where necessary and Chris Bouchard and Adam Langston created us a fantastic original score."

"We hope that we have created a good little horror film which is creepy, scary, funny and above all entertaining."

Statement by the directors

FAQ

1. This is the first film in memory co-directed by a trio, how did that situation work?

We not only directed together but collaborated as a trio on pretty much all other production roles, in fact, except for prosthetic effects the three of us were the entire crew. As this was our first feature we decided to collaborate fully, this meant sharing all artistic decisions. The dynamic of three works pretty well as there is always a majority in any decision. The theory was to avoid any arguments on location by meticulously storyboarding the film scene by scene. However, planning a shot in a warm office is a very different matter to shooting it in the cold, damp woods so there were moments of 'lively' discussion.

2. Why the horror genre for your feature debut?

All three of us are big horror fans and have made a few shorts in the genre, so it was a natural progression to produce a horror as our debut feature. It is also a genre famous for classic films made on tiny budgets, in fact, it's possibly the only genre where budget doesn't

We wanted to make a film where real characters and mood carried the narrative forward, rather than relying on gore and special effects.

necessarily impact on the film itself. Horror works by playing on universal fears that everyone can relate to, which a low budget film can achieve just as well as a big budget movie.

3. There are so many horror films out there, how do you come up with something different?

We looked around us, at what we had or what we could use freely, such as the VW camper and the woods, and then built a story structure around that. We planned to take the familiar plot of people travelling into an unknown wilderness, but not deliver the same teenagers hacked to death in woods story that we have seen so much recently. We wanted to make a film where real characters and mood carried the narrative forward rather

than relying on gore and special effects. The result is a genuinely creepy film that appeals not just to horror fans, but a wider audience too.

4. The film is almost entirely set in the woods, what made you choose this location?

We had made a short, also titled Dead Wood, set in the woods, and thought it would be a beautiful yet eerie location for a feature. We agreed we didn't want to shoot in the city as this can be expensive in terms of permits, lighting and art direction, whereas in the woods we could shoot freely in natural light and use the glorious English forest landscape. It also cuts down on the need for supporting artists and props.

FAQ

(continued)

5. How did the actors take to filming out on location?

The actors were great throughout the shoot and through the numerous additional days and reshoots. Fergus, Emily and John were close friends before and Nina and Rebecca fitted neatly into the group. I think they loved the outdoor filming — the locations definitely helped them with their characters, especially the tiredness of long days and nights and being out in the spooky forest after nightfall. They had a great rapport and camaraderie, Fergus and John are a brilliant double act to keep everyone laughing.

6. Were there any truly scary moments during the filming?

There were many nights shooting out in the woods and that can be very creepy, especially when the generator fails, plunging everyone into total blackness, so dark that you literally can't see anything at all. Add to this being alone, trying to follow a trail while creatures of some description are rustling through the undergrowth just out of view — nerves were pretty frayed by the end of the shoot.

7. How did the film change from script to screen?

With the assembly cut complete, we immediately found problems with pace and structure and set about rewriting, reshooting and re-editing. This meant the film veered away from our original vision, but felt much improved. We also found more and more humour creeping into the film through the performances, again, a blessing we never envisaged that raises the entertainment factor in earlier scenes and makes the horror scarier when it arrives.

8. Dead Wood does not look like a typical low budget horror movie. How did you achieve such a polished finish on such a tight budget?

We had worked with the digital camera technology on previous projects and really knew how to get the best out of what we had. For example we always tried to shoot on very long lenses with a large aperture and avoided using wide angle lenses wherever possible. Not only did this give us a very cinematic look, but the way it distances the viewer from the characters creates an almost voyeuristic documentary style, as if you are observing a scene covertly.

Due to our budget and crew restrictions however, much of the footage still needed work after shooting. But as we were making this ourselves the one thing we had was time. This gave us the freedom to individually treat every shot — from sky replacement and colour grading to adding extra background and foreground layers not to mention some very special CGI.

Likewise with the sound, the bulk of the full 5.1 surround mix was built up in the studio using thousands of individual sound effects; the result is a full, rich mix that plunges the audience into the heart of the action.

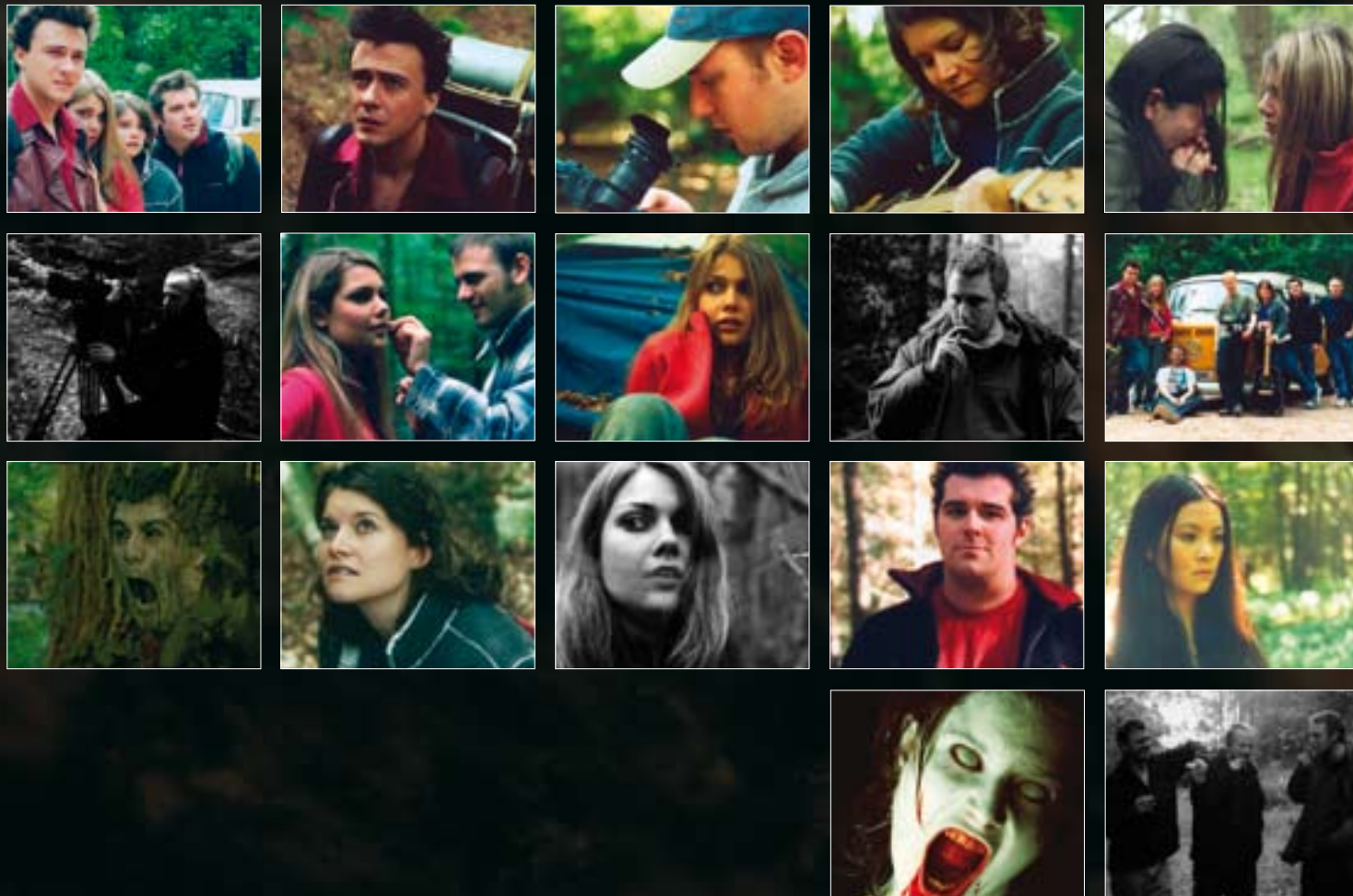
9. How did you approach the music for Dead Wood?

When scoring Dead Wood I tried to capture the tone of each scene; usually, how dark the music should be. Some of the first cues I wrote were for the night time sequences, and by doing this I had a ceiling level of intensity and darkness that I could work towards when writing the rest of the music. The hiking scenes scattered throughout the film were interesting to score, because they got darker each time they occurred.

The most fun parts to score included the climax of the final showdown, the running scenes, and of course the trailer! (Answered by Adam Langston)

10. Now the film is complete, what are your plans for Dead Wood and the future of Menan Films?

Our plan with Dead Wood was always to screen the film at festivals worldwide in order to seek distribution. The internet is the best way to get people to know about your film and we hope to reach horror fans and movie fans as well as gaining the interest of production companies for future films. To follow Dead Wood we have two more screenplays for features and a wealth of other ideas in development. We plan to stay in horror, at least for the next film, but after that we have big plans for other genres.



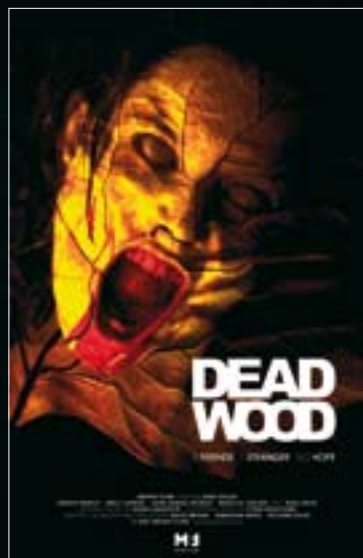
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**All images shown on this page
can be found in high resolution
on the DVD**

- 01 Actors group photo
- 02 Fergus March as *Webb*
- 03 David Bryant
- 04 Rebecca Craven as *Jess*
- 05 Nina Kwok and Emily Juniper as *Ketsy* and *Larri*
- 06 Richard Stiles
- 07 Emily Juniper, Sebastian Smith
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- 11 John Samuel Worsey as *Milk*
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- 17 Directors group photo
- 18 Rebecca Craven and Emily Juniper as *Jess* and *Larri*
- 19 Emily Juniper, Rebecca Craven, and Fergus March as *Larri*, *Jess*, and *Webb*
- 20 Emily Juniper as *Larri*
- 21 Nina Kwok as *Ketsy*
- 22 Emily Juniper and Fergus March as *Larri* and *Webb*
- 23 Cast and crew group photo
- 24 David Bryant as *Rob*
- 25 Sebastian Smith

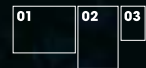
Production stills





All promotional material shown on this page can be found in high resolution on the DVD

- 01 Original film poster *quad* size
- 02 Original film poster *one sheet* size
- 03 Flyer



DVD contents:
digital images, text and trailer

Promotional material





Cast

Webb	Fergus March
Larri	Emily Juniper
Milk	John Samuel Worsey
Jess	Rebecca Craven
Ketsy	Nina Kwok

Written, produced and directed by

David Bryant . Sebastian Smith . Richard Stiles

Original music Adam Langston

Additional music Chris Bouchard

Duration: 82 min

Status: completed – seeking distribution

Rights available: worldwide (except USA and Canada)



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