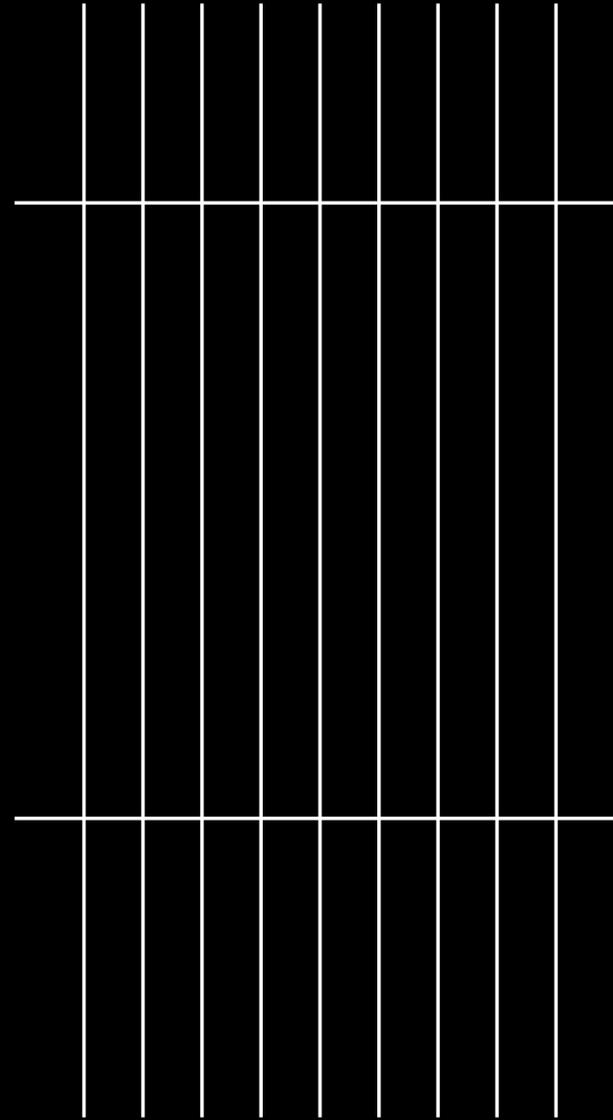


before the crime(s)



a feature film treatment

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logline

A naive accountant spends six years in prison for a crime he did not commit. Once out, he begins to prey on the population with strange new lusts and desires, seeking revenge against a society that has wronged him. He has never been suspicious or violent, but prison can change a person.



synopsis

...’Duncan Grey is given eight years in prison for embezzlement, fraud and man slaughter at his company’s firm. Except he’s innocent. Wrenched from his family, his wife, and young daughter, he must adjust to a new life in prison where deception, pride and violence are commonplace. After years of isolation, abuse, and torture, Duncan slowly changes. He gets tattoos. His world view shifts. He goes rogue to survive. All the while, relationships with his family begin to erode and deteriorate. After six and half years, he is let out onto the streets of London, but he is changed and so has his connections. His wife has remarried and his daughter won’t speak to him. Slowly, he begins to prey on random souls with newly formed lusts and desires, helping some, while seeking damnation to others, going from one extreme to another, living outside society and any moral code. When he finally rekindles his relationship with his now fifteen year old daughter, he is unable to unshackle himself from the past, and commits a shocking act of violence ’...



intent

This film will seek to explore two entirely different worlds, yet not wholly unconnected. That of prison life, and then the outside world. Our protagonist must navigate the terrain of a completely new environment. He must unlearn everything he knows in order to survive, but once out, he must then relearn everything that he has forgotten - but how easy is it to do that? What is prison life like in the 21st century? What do you have to do in order to survive? How does it change you? Filled with criminals from all walks of life, our protagonist is not a criminal himself, but he must learn to act like one. Once out, he must then reintegrate into a society that has forgotten him. But what has he learned inside that will now affect him outside? His great struggle is reconciling these two polar worlds, and what they now mean.



structure

The film will be split into two distinct acts. The first act will see Duncan in prison, taking place over six years, lasting from 2018 - 2024. Inside, Duncan will be subjected to a harsh new environment, one of horizontal lines, scheduled time, boredom, violence, duplicity and survival. The second act will see him in the real world, taking place in 2024, and cover roughly a few months after he has been released. Outside, Duncan will be given freedom, space, endless time, and the right to choose. This contrast of structure is very important in showing the change that will occur in Duncan's soul. Like a subversion of Dostoyevsky's 'Crime and Punishment', Duncan's punishment will be enacted *before* he commits a crime or *his* crimes. The film of two halves will highlight how an unjust society leads to Duncan's wrongful imprisonment, turning him from a relative innocent into a wayward murderer and a man desperate to find his humanity.



characters

Duncan Grey (29-36) ... low level accountant, quiet, unassuming, thrust into prison life for which he is not equipped.

Rebecca Grey (28-35) ... Duncan's wife, good looking, bright, with a penchant for money and the finer things in life.

Ellarita Grey (7-15) ... daughter of duncan and daughter, innocent little girl who grows up to be a fierce teenager.

J (35-38) ... friend to duncan in prison, teaches him French, confidante and listener, but dies due to coronavirus.

Paul (33-39) ... best friend to duncan outside of prison. Betrays him, by stealing his wife, and the business.



prison

Prison must be a character unto itself. Like society, prison has vicissitudes of its own, almost like a class system, noted by degrees of power and status. Physical strength will only get you so far, you must also have connections. Connections with the prison officers and the outside world. Groups can also be classed by religion and beliefs. Quid pro quo is the order of the place. You do something for me, I do something for you. Protection in exchange for goods, food, drugs, et al. But if you stop being useful to me, then you're out, on your own. In prison, you need friends, or the appearance of friends. Time is the killer. Keep busy. Read. Learn. Exercise. Anything to stop yourself from thinking. The psychological frailty of the prisoners is always a ticking time bomb. We must show how confinement, isolation, and fear can de-moralise or re-moralise you accordingly.



freedom

What is freedom? How do we use it? Do we take it for granted, especially when it is taken from us? When we've lost it, and we suddenly have it back again, how does it affect our state of minds? Our relationships with loved ones? Our place in society? Duncan's freedom is wrenched from his for six years of her life. He gets used to being told what to do, and when to do it. In the outside world, he is forced to make his own decisions, but how difficult is that to do? Prison life has affected his judgements, impaired his beliefs and philosophies, and fundamentally changed the way he views the world. Thus his choices, free of authorities, become murky, ill thought, random, irrational, and ultimately murderous. And yet, all a prisoner wants when they are inside is to be free. The tragic irony is that human beings long for freedom, but are seldom equipped to deal with it.



visions

At the beginning of her sentence, Duncan is tortured by a guard whereby his hands are strung up, stretched and ultimately broken. During his convalescence, he becomes addicted to pain killers, and has a series of strange dreams where he is told by a mysterious man that he is to avenge his wrongful imprisonment by taking it out on the real sinners of the world. Afterwards, he is never quite the same again, and he reverts to a kind of pre-verbal, pre-natal existence of grunts, moans and primitive communication. Once out, he seems guided by instinct or divine revelation in who to target and for what purpose. Like a man touched by God, he simply seems to know. What he is unaware of is that the power it brings him is ultimately too much to handle, as he is asked to kill his own daughter, leading to a reckoning with himself, his God and his loved ones.



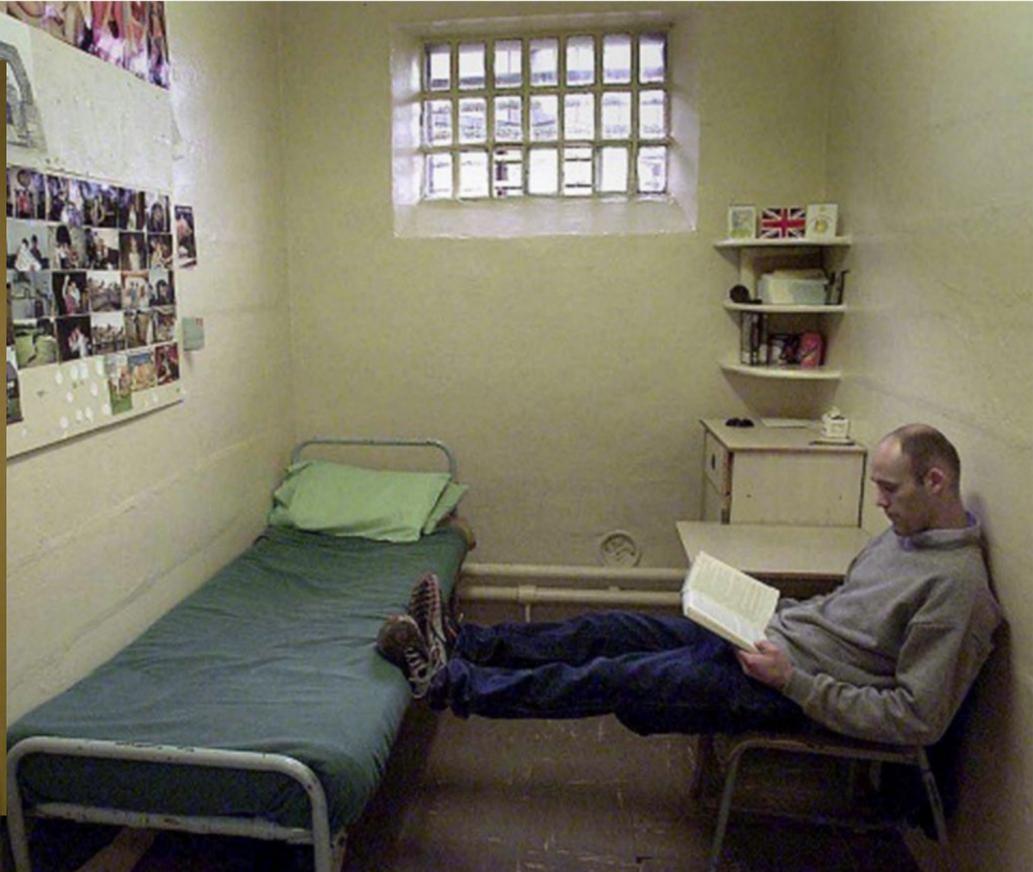
cinematography/style

In order to achieve a cinematic look that is worthy of the themes we wish to express, we will shoot the film on the Arri Alex Mini with Zeiss Master Prime lenses and Angeniux zoom lenses, lending the image a much need classicism. The lighting will be specifically natural, utilising low source lights to express the blandness of prison life. The style will be claustrophobic, using a lot of static set-ups and long lenses, making our protagonist feel small, insignificant and closed in. This is in contrast to the second act where the camera will be handheld, using a lot of wide lenses, keeping it loose, wild and scattershot, showing Duncan lost in too much space.



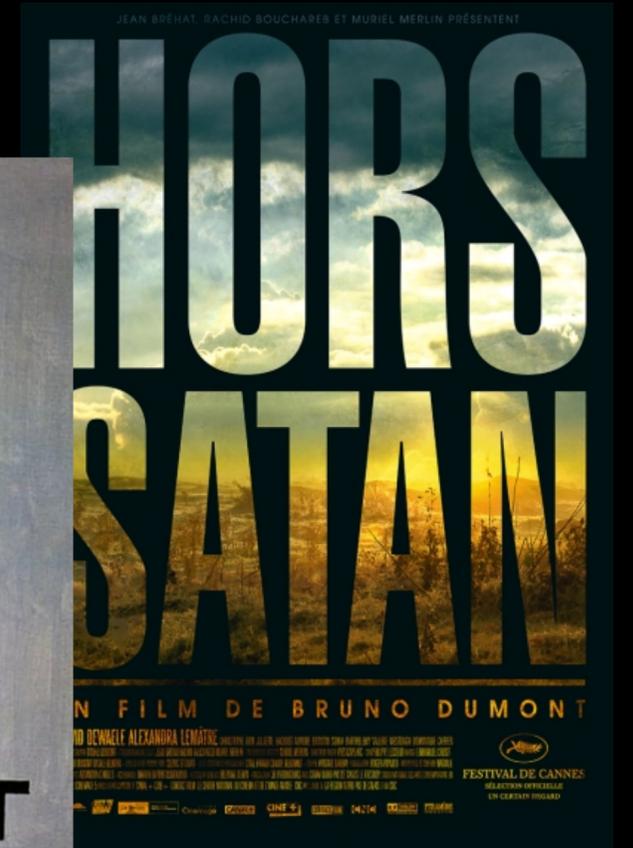
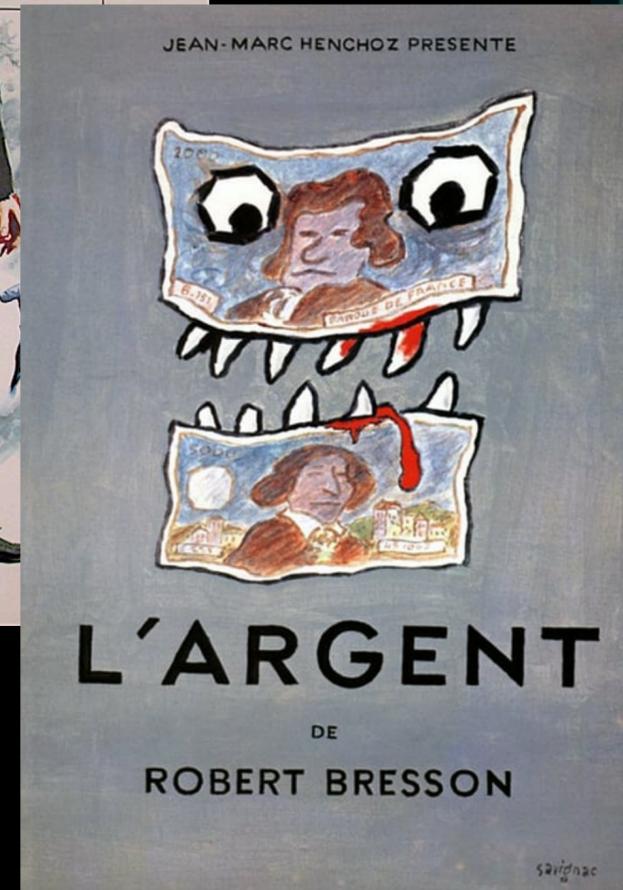
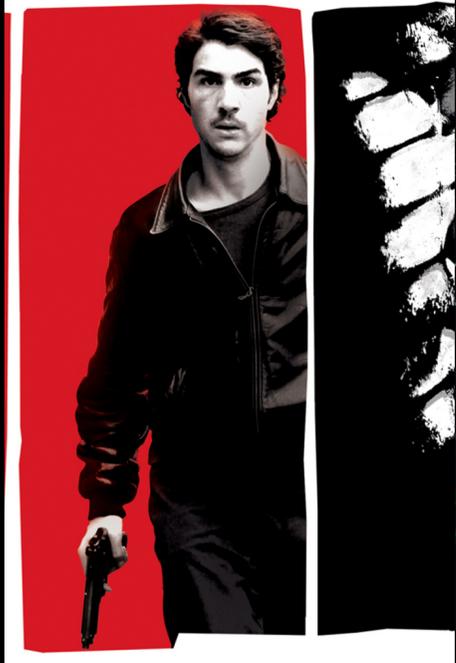
music

The film will have a curiously modernist approach. Using synth and classical instruments, it must unsettle and burrow beneath the skin of our protagonist, making her feel displaced, fearful and off kilter. There must be an existential dread to his surroundings that must keep him constantly on edge, as if he were on a narrow tight rope, always afraid of falling off into the void. Once he has been released, the music must shift into something more classical, revealing a profound sense of impending tragedy in his actions with those that have forgotten him. It must move you and provoke you, expressing an empathy for the human condition that ultimately becomes universal.



references

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comparisons