

## **In the Bar with Jeremy Caddy**

Last month the Society showed a particularly long film [for some members, too long!] called *The Banishment*. Because of its length very few, if any, members of the audience actually made it to the bar for a drink and a chat about the film. I was, however, able to glean a few snippets of conversation from people as they left the auditorium. Overall the impression I was left with that this film was really appreciated by the majority. The programme notes and the introduction given by Julia, our chairman, before the showing were considered to be really helpful so that one was aware of what to expect before the film started rolling. It was, therefore, not a shock to find that one had to do a lot of thinking during the film! For some this was an intellectual challenge that they relished – for others it spoilt the evening. This was the sort of film that lent itself to debate and thoughtful discussion but, alas, we did not have the time to do so.

### **Audience Reaction to Last Month's BFS Screening**

#### **The Banishment 8/10**

“Never seen a film like it – wonderful moments and the watcher had to be alert all the time. The programme notes prepared us well for a unique experience.”

“Superbly framed – again and again. Wonderful, wonderful images”

“Haunting music, brilliant cinematography.”

“Beautiful imagery. Chekovian dialogue”

“Long and dull”

### **Next Month's BFS Evening: 7.45pm 9 December 2008**

#### **Blindsight (PG)**

Dir. Lucy Walker, UK, 2006, 108 mins English/Tibetan/German with subtitles

Set against the breathtaking backdrop of the Himalayas, *Blindsight* follows six sightless Tibetan teenagers who set out to climb a 23,000-foot mountain guided by professional climbers. Uplifting and inspirational documentary that avoids mawkishness, and cannily contrasts the attitudes of the youngsters and the guides.

***To be followed by a post-screening discussion in the cinema.***

**BFFS Best  
Programme  
Notes  
2007 & 2008**



**BFFS  
Film Society  
of the Year  
2003**

at

South Hill Park

Presents

## Shotgun Stories (12A)



**US, 2006, Running Time 90 minutes**

*Feature Film Award 2007 Austin Film Festival  
New American Cinema Award 2007 Seattle IFF  
Fispresci Prize, Viennale 2007*

**7.45pm Tuesday 11 November 2008**

Our thanks to Andy Stephenson for providing this month's programme notes.

## **Shotgun Stories (2006)**

**Written and Directed by Jeff Nichols**

***Writer and Director***

Jeff Nichols

***Producer***

David Gordon Green

Lisa Muskat

Jeff Nichols

***Cinematography***

Adam Stone

***Editor***

Steven Gonzales

***Original Music***

Ben Nichols

Lucero

**Cast**

***Son Hayes***

Michael Shannon

***Boy Hayes***

Douglas Ligon

***Kid Hayes***

Barlow Jacobs

***Cleaman Hayes***

Michael Abbott Jnr

***Mark Hayes***

Travis Smith

***Stephen Hayes***

Lynnsee Provencel

***John Hayes***

David Rhodes

***Annie Hayes***

Glenda Pannell

***Shampoo Douglas***

G Alan Wilkins

***Nicole***

Natalie Canerday

***Cheryl***

Coley Canpany

***Carter***

Cole Hendrixon

***Melissa***

Vivian Morrison

Set in present day rural Arkansas, three brothers ("Son", "Kid" and "Boy") struggle with life on the edge of a back water town. They share the bond and burden of a childhood deprived of parental care, with only each other to rely on for support. From their estranged mother they hear of the death of their father, the alcoholic who had abandoned them but then reformed himself to remarry and to become a respected pillar of the local Christian congregation.

The brothers make the ill-fated decision to interrupt the funeral where the eldest, Son, speaks for them. Unable to find words sufficient to express his anger and bitterness, he concludes his impromptu speech by spitting into the coffin. As a matter of honour, the four sons of the father's second marriage cannot allow such an outrage to pass.

All the elements of classic Greek tragedy are to be found in this story of a simmering family feud in which, step by step, events escalate out of control to their inevitable conclusion. Even when, left to themselves, the players might find reason to call a halt, fate sends its messenger – in this case the go-between ne'er do-well and stirrer "Shampoo" – to provoke them onwards.

Jeff Nichols debut film is highly impressive. The main characters are afforded space, which allows them to establish their credibility.

The tale unfolds slowly, against the glorious backdrop of wide scenes of cotton fields and the barren, dusty landscape, which modern technology seems to have by-passed. The violence depicted is never graphic nor gratuitous, but understated.

Ultimately, the film conveys an anti-war message, and may be seen as an indictment of US policy post 9/11. Revenge serves no purpose. Violence merely begets violence. Actions, which lead to tragedy, are driven by a misplaced sense of pride, honour and duty, where to back down may be regarded as a betrayal.

**AS**

### **Director's Statement**

“There is no victory in revenge. This is an idea I chose to explore with *Shotgun Stories*, a film tracking a feud that erupts between two sets of half brothers following the death of their father. So often in literature, film, politics and society, revenge, and more importantly the execution of revenge, is considered success. Whether it's Edmund Dantes fulfilling his pledge to ruin Danglars in *The Count of Monte Cristo* or Hans Gruber falling to his death in *Die Hard*, the euphoric feeling we get as an audience watching the villain meet his or her comeuppance is undeniable.

With *Shotgun Stories*, I wanted to work against this notion. I wanted revenge to be an awkward thing to exact and a cause not necessarily championed by the audience. Violence is an unusual task for these characters, just as it is for most people. Their anger and emotions are validated, but their reactions to those emotions are not precise. My hope is that *Shotgun Stories* gives an honest portrayal of normal, hard working people responding to the pain and heartbreak they find, and at times create, in their own lives.”

[www.shotgunstories.com/](http://www.shotgunstories.com/)

***Please join us in Café Atrium after the Screening***