

THE UNSEEN

ABOUT THE FILM

Have you ever asked yourself if you're living in a horror film?

This project is - inherently - a horror. It started life as a creepy tale involving a young girl & witch doctor seemingly not of this world. Isolation, dimly lit streets and a scary music box and you have all the hallmarks of an eerie, twisted narrative.

However, scratch the surface and there is more to this than meets the eye. This project tells the story of young girl displaced while walking alone at night. Unfortunately, we live in a world where this is the not just the synopsis to a film, but a regular article in major news outlets. Most women, especially young women, have been followed or harassed when alone at night, some unfortunately are abducted.

This project is about abduction. Abduction in Manchester, the bohemian capital of the UK, a bustling, vibrant, student city in the heart of the Industrial North. A city full of eyes and a city full of life. Despite this, you can feel isolated, you can be left alone. Danger lurks in the shadows and despite the lives swarming around you, would anyone notice if you disappeared into the night?

This project is a horror film, but it's story is based in reality.

Runtime:

Genre: Horror

Year: 2023

Language: English

Country of Origin: UK

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XANDER ROSS

PRODUCER

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Most anyone who knows me will tell you I'm certainly no horror aficionado - at least not in the traditional sense. Most of the times I'd avoided them for fear of being unable to sleep that night. Strangely, however, one of my favorite TV shows is (and has been for as long as I can remember) Buffy the Vampire Slayer, a show that uses horror conventions as a way to convey complex themes about morality, adulthood, feminism and the difficulties of adolescence. Something which I've only come to appreciate more as I've studied filmmaking (and which has allowed me to begin to gain a better appreciation and understanding for the horror genre as a whole beyond just it's incredible scares and terrifying monsters), and it has become somewhat of a staple of projects I develop - using genre as a platform for showcasing and explaining social issues in a more entertaining way.

I would be remiss to speak about this project without also addressing the very real themes which it represents. As came to light during the #MeToo movement, we as a society have become aware of the all-too-real and everpresent threat posed by rape culture, and how it affects women, particular often women in education, and how this is a problem that isn't limited to dark alleyways as many of us might otherwise assume. It's on our campuses. In our cities. And it's in our culture. As we said, you don't need to be alone to be vulnerable. That to me was what I found most sinister. That idea that even in a bustling city full of people, we can still be isolated. We can still be alone. We can still be vulnerable.

Beginning with this as a theme, we then developed the idea, researching in depth on the topic and the genre, and working with an incredibly talented cast and crew to help bring these ideas to life in a way that is not only accurate, but also authentic. Originally the film was long and dialogue heavy (a typical mistake of many beginners), and it wasn't until our amazing producer Tom called this out that forced me to rethink my approach, stripping away most of the dialogue, allowing the cinematography, sound design and blocking to showcase the themes with little needing to be physically said. In an effort to achieve this I once more looked at one of my biggest inspirations (Buffy) particularly the episode "Hush" which serves as a metaphor for assaults that occur on campus, and how, importantly - they often involve taking away the voice of the victim, a trait which also used to showcase the systemic problem we were trying to showcase. In doing so, we believed that we could try and better capture the sheer terror and horror of this situation.

TOM PRITCHARD

PRODUCER

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PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

Horror would usually not be a genre that I would choose to delve into. It's not that I don't appreciate it, it's just never really been to my personal taste. So a fair question would be, why did I agree to produce *The Unseen*?

When Xander came to me with the script however, I was impressed with the potential for a story driven not by dialogue, but with eerie, unnerving visuals. It's a story that is open to interpretation, like any of the best horrors.

Scratch the surface however and you get a tale about abduction & the dangers faced when one is alone at night, especially young women. In the aftermath of the horrific abduction, rape & murder of Sarah Everard here in the UK, it's a tale that is all too close to home and should be brought to the attention of the public. *The Unseen* explore these unfortunate cases through the use of classic horror tropes.

That's what drew me to this project. The silence & the despair. It harks back to the great German Expressionist films of the 20s, the birth of Horror & Noir, films such as *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* and the original *Nosferatu*. I was keen for these influences to be explored both visually but also in the score, and I think the result was fantastic.

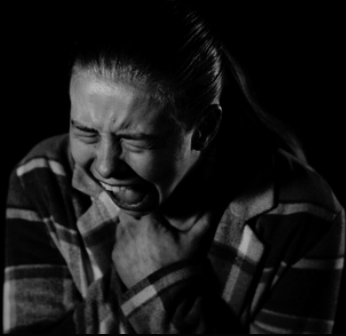
The Unseen is a true testament to Xander Ross, the true filmmaker behind this. But also the amazing cast & crew that it was my pleasure to work with.

Tom Pritchard

MEET THE CAST

Sophie Stewart - Willow

Sophie Stewart is a recent Salford University graduate, and currently focusing on performance for motion capture as a freelancer with Dock 10. They've previously trained in acting for screen, stage and voice acting - with one of their recent productions being Sydney Skye's *Reminiscence of the Heart*. Outside of acting, they're a keen gardener who takes pride with their windowsill basil plant.



Teddy Jones - Plague Doctor

Malca Wacks plays one of the secondary leads, Sarah (Adam's Mother) and brings an authentic emotional and layered performance that helps to ground the film's more fantastical elements in reality as she showcases Sarah's anxieties around Adam's diagnosis.



Joseph Hunt - Plague Doctor (Voice)

Vernon Harcourt plays the other secondary lead, Daniel (Adam's Father) and brings warmth to the role, balancing Daniel's anxieties about the situation with his more optimistic outlook on how to deal with it.



MEET THE CREW



Xander Ross - Writer/Director

After his last short film *Expiration Date* gained 31k views and managed to attract the attention of industry legends Red Giant, and was a finalist at the Student World Impact Film Festival, Manchester-born and based Director Xander Ross puts his years of experience of VFX and creating short films to the test as he tries his hand at crafting a terrifying horror.



Joshua Danyadi-Sharples - DOP

A rising star in the industry, Joshua is a talented and versatile cinematographer whose visual style shines through once again, having previously worked with Xander on short films *Expiration Date* and *Cancelled*, this dynamic duo clearly establish themselves as a cinematic powerhouse with a clear passion and talent for storytelling.



Tom Pritchard - Producer

Tom Pritchard is a British writer with a passion for social realism and infusing stories with themes of social justice and real world problems, having previously worked on projects such as *Lean*, focusing on the ethics of lean staffing and how it affects workers.

MEET THE CREW



Veronica Manuel - Composer

Meet Veronica Manuel, the brilliant music composer behind the spine-chilling score of the horror short film "The Unseen." Veronica's hauntingly atmospheric compositions added a layer of suspense and terror to the film, making it a must-watch for horror enthusiasts. Her masterful work on "The Unseen" demonstrates her exceptional talent for crafting immersive soundscapes that keep audiences on the edge of their seats. Dive into the world of fear and intrigue as you experience the film's sinister atmosphere through Veronica's captivating music.



Alexis Lanzaderas - Sound Mixer/Designer

Alexis Lanzaderas is a skilled sound mixer whose sharp ear for detail allowed him to bring the terrifying soundscapes to life, creating an immersive and terrifying experience for viewers.



Liam Hutchinson - Foley Artist

Liam Hutchinson is the masterful foley artist whose creativity and attention to detail helped breathe life into every scene, and truly worked as the unsung hero behind the scenes to ensure that every footstep, rustle, and creak enhances the film.