THERE GOES THE CHILD. THERE STANDS THE MAN.
AGE OF DESCENT

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There goes the child.
There stands the man.

The AGE of DESCENT is a poignant and powerful multi-strand drama exploring the emotional and psychological impact the knife crime epidemic and other issues of hostility and discord, have on today's younger generation, as seen through the eyes of five ordinary teenagers and their teacher at an average suburban school.

The story begins with the sadly familiar news of the death of a school child following a stabbing on a commonplace London street. We then go back to the beginning of that term and follow the journeys of five children and their young teacher, watching as their lives fragment and entwine through the chaos and heartbreak of such issues as cyberbullying, street crime, the pressure to succeed and the struggle of emerging sexuality for young gay people.

As we see them travel their own life journeys and cross each other's universes, we know that one is destined to become the child lost to a statistic and have his or her life stolen far too young and much too soon through a senseless act of violence. An act of violence the likes of which have become outrageously routine fixtures in current society and which tragically cloud the lives of today's youth.

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TELLING THE STORIES WHICH SPEAK OF OUR TIMES

"Usually when people are sad, they don't do anything. They just cry over their condition. But when they get angry, they bring about a change."

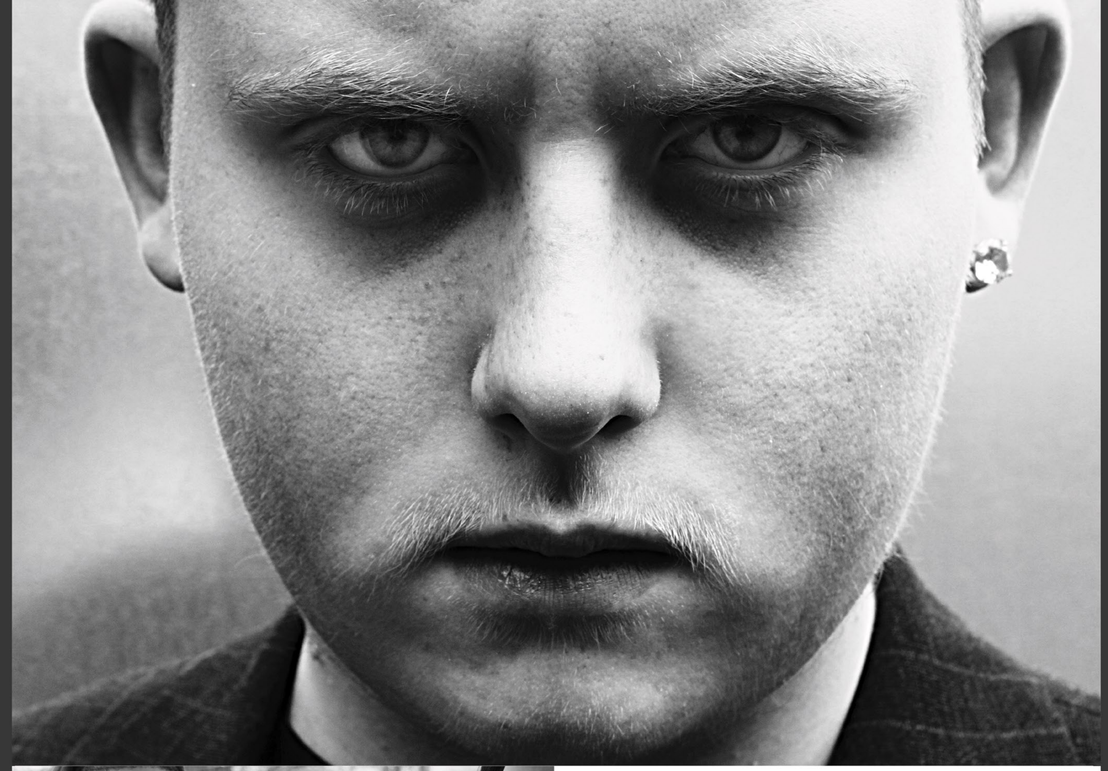
Malcom X, 1965

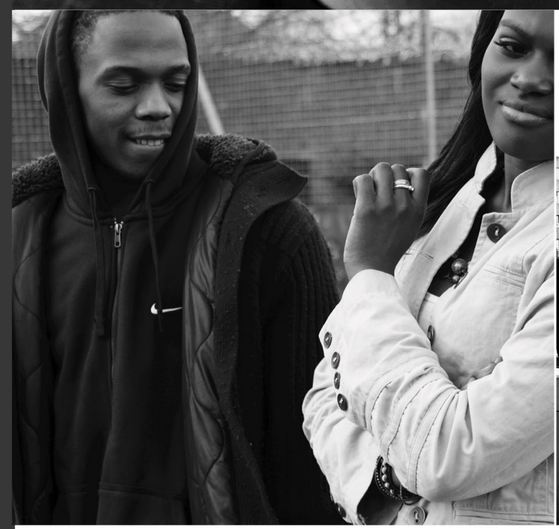
FILM AS AN AGENT FOR CHANGE

Story is a powerful medium.

Story has the potential to prick a collective subconscious and demand society reawaken itself to what it has become immune to.

Knife and gun crime are constantly reported as being on the rise. One indicator purports that youth on youth violence claims the life of one young person every three days. And yet the faces, stories and personal tragedies of victims rarely make the news.





Street crimes, along with the prevalence of cyberbullying and internet danger, form the tip of a much bigger iceberg; the compounded fear, distress and anxiety experienced by our younger generation for whom such issues can be a part of life.

We are in danger of disregarding the widespread horror of knife crime. When it makes the news, it is often presented as little more than a statistic, or a dirty epidemic of which our country should be ashamed but can do nothing about. We are losing our outrage and becoming numb to its enormity. It is left only to they who have been directly affected by it to take a stand for those whose life circumstances often lure them into becoming involved. And others, suffering the tragic effects of its aftermath, to provide a voice for those who have been lost.

It is our commitment to bring the Age of Descent to an audience in the hopes that it may make our younger generation feel less alone in what they are going through and remind us that the next time we hear the 'statistics' that each one was the life of a child who lived and loved and dreamed of a future, and that they have left behind a circle of friends crippled with shock and a family destroyed by grief.

Youth Anthem, and Pioneering the AudioMovie

Few needs of the human heart are greater than the need to be understood,
to have a voice that is heard, respected and valued.

Youth Anthem

In keeping with the spirit of Age of Descent we are collating the words, thoughts and feelings of our younger generation and transfusing them into poetic and hard-hitting lyrics which will form a 'Youth Anthem', so that they may tell the story of their lives.

Those young people who have experienced first-hand the downward spiral of falling into a world where they partake of, or are subjected to, violence, or have suffered the hell of bullying, or have lost brothers, sisters or friends through street violence, are joining us to scream out with dignity and quiet rage at all they have endured.

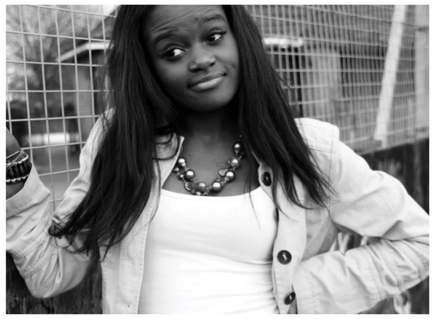
On completion 'Youth Anthem' will be more than a song. It will be an assemblage of human cries. Infused with the passion, depth and raw talent of the younger generation we think we know, prompting us to look again and see with new eyes all the complex, fragile and heroic layers that lie beneath the skin and sinew of today's youth.

Presenting the AudioMovie

The British Filmmakers Alliance has, for several years, been fighting for, and advocating the need of, a system which allows the most talented among our country's struggling filmmakers, writers and actors the chance for their talent to come to light.

Such things of the deepest worth in life are seldom easy to attain. It has never been harder for filmmakers and writers to get their projects off the ground. But as the British Filmmakers Alliance so firmly maintains, it will always be the responsibility of the filmmakers and writers themselves to get their projects to an audience.

What matters most is for storytellers to carry their messages however they can to those people who will be moved, inspired and reawakened by them. Age of Descent will be one of the British Filmmakers Alliance's first AudioMovies, the fusion of a movie and an audiobook, carrying the narrative drive and deep meaning of a novel as well as the excitement, energy and suspense of a film, courtesy of an ensemble cast and their compelling performances.



AGE OF DESCENT AND THE JOINING FORCES CAMPAIGN

"My job as an actor is to pretend. I pretend to be a *soldier, I pretend to fire a gun,*

I pretend to be brave, I pretend to be injured. The people who Emma Willis helps have done it all for real. Their lives have been physically and emotionally shattered. Along with their limbs, they have lost *self-esteem, confidence, and often their physical* struggle is compounded by post-traumatic stress - and they're the ones who survived! I have the greatest possible admiration and respect for our servicemen and women, whatever help we lucky ones can give is the least we can do, but do it we should."

Charles Dance

The British Filmmakers Alliance initiated the Joining Forces Campaign along with former Royal Engineer, Sapper Matthew Weston. It is an initiative designed to allow other early retired servicemen and women the chance to explore new life experiences, try out possible alternate career paths and once again feel the solidarity and teamsmanship as known during their time in the forces.

The Joining Forces Campaign's first film 'Love of Words' is a short starring Charles Dance, with a cast and crew comprised of filmmakers, actors and former servicemen.

Our first planned feature is 'Thin, Brittle, Mile', the story of a soldier who experiences his greatest battles on his return home.

The Youth Anthem, the AudioMovie and the film of Age of Descent will strive to enrich the lives of other former servicemen and women by utilising and promoting the Joining Forces Campaign.

JOINING FORCES

NO ARMY IS SO STRONG AS BROTHERS SIDE BY SIDE

Still from
Love of Words

Business

Age of Descent is principally about, and therefore would find great connection with, teenagers and young adults (who also comprise the highest cinema going demographic). Its uncompromising storylines and cultural relevance widen the scope to the adult audience as well. The challenging and harrowing screenplay has already attracted a slate of high-profile British actors and allows scope to discover young stars in the five leading teenage roles.

Recent dramas Top Boy, Kidulthood and Adulthood, as well as the so called 'Hoodie Horrors' Eden Lake, Harry Brown and Shank have proved commercially and critically successful and provided healthy returns for their investors.

Your Involvement

We would love to hear from you should you wish to be a part of, or like to hear more about, our plans for Age of Descent or any of our other projects and initiatives.

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Final passage from the Age of Descent young adult novel and forthcoming AudioMoive

In the years that were to follow Gary often visited the cemetery where A.J. Shah had been laid to rest.

He sat, sometimes for hours, on a nearby bench, often to think about A.J., sometimes to think about Joseph, Melody Taylor, Spike, Asbo, Amy. And always, always, to think about Jude.

A.J.'s gravestone remained purest white, its marble seemingly untouched by moss and dirt and the other savages of time and Gary eventually discovered that Ashish Shah made regular, perhaps even daily trips to the grave to keep his son's memorial pristine, perhaps in some last poignant effort to watch over him. The grave stood out like a gleaming beacon and attracted passers-by who stopped and gasped and shook their heads at the tender age of A.J. at his death and the words inscribed on his tombstone; 'tread softly, my son lies near.'

It occurred to Gary that perhaps all the teenage victims that had fallen to a similar fate as A.J. should be laid to rest side by side in the same sacred place, as were the soldiers fallen in the Battle of the Somme. That way their uniformed, neatly lined up graves could serve as a constant reminder of the unseen war of the young that raged in the country's streets. And the horror of the stories of slain youth, boys cut down only a whisper away from becoming men, could be brought home with the shocking simplicity, and slamming realisation so missing and so forgotten on the news and in the papers where the names and faces of the victims of these modern-day battles, fought and lost, barely occupied space.

'That would perhaps be a start.' Gary thought as he laid a bunch of daffodils against the foot of A.J.'s tombstone as though it were a reef of poppies. Yes, that would be a start, until some band of leaders, some fearless group of women and men, someone, in some high-exalted place, cared enough to take a stand and find a way to win this unseen war.

AGE OF DESCENT

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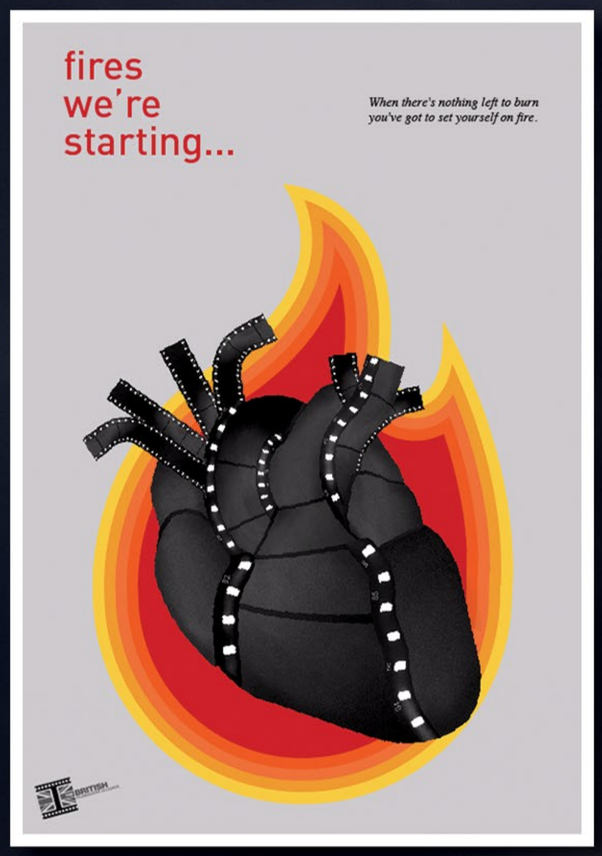

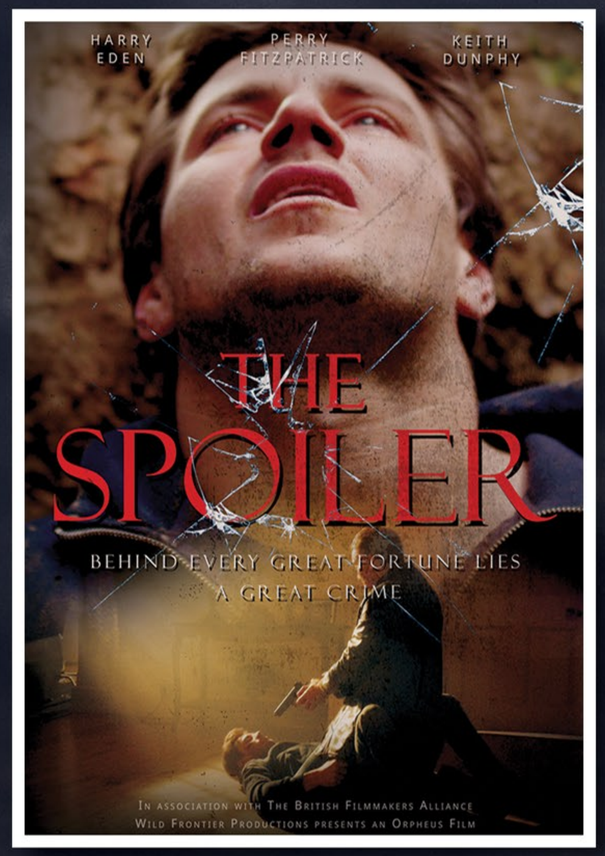

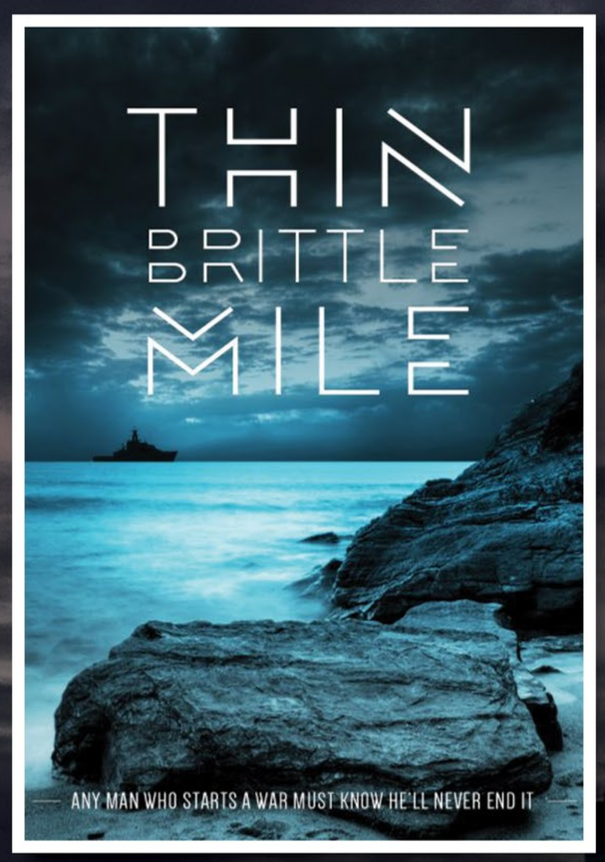

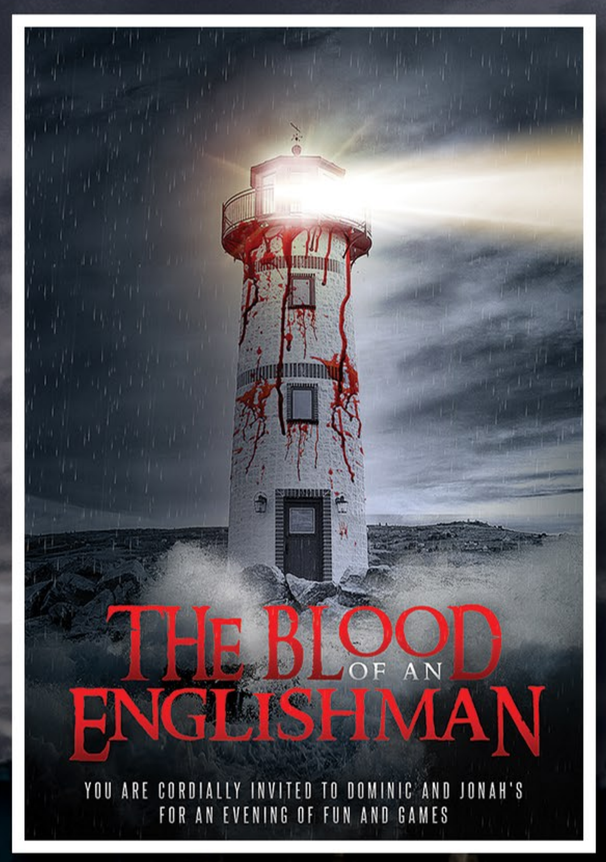

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