

“Gun X”



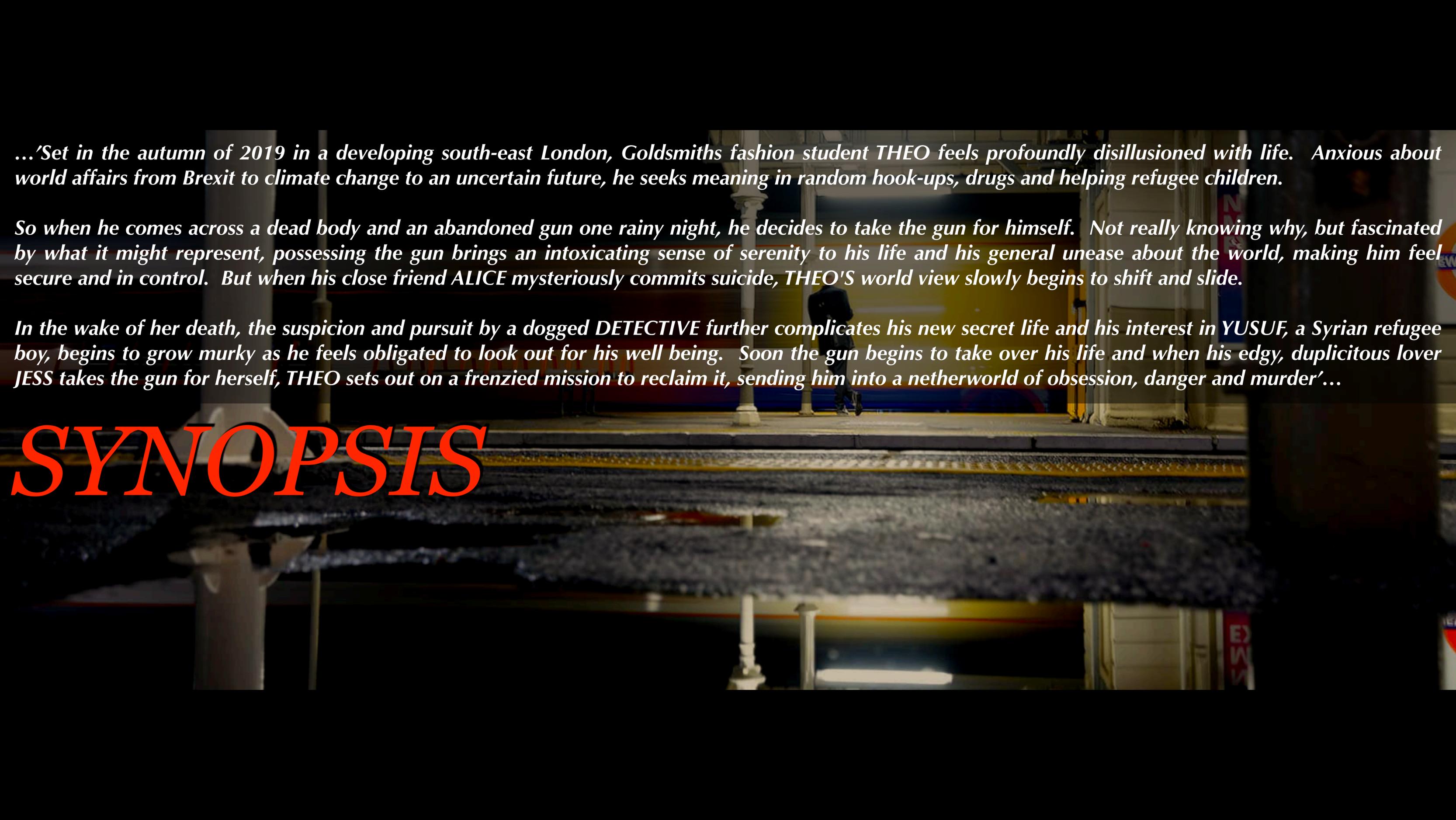
A feature film treatment

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LOGLINE

A disillusioned fashion student finds meaning when he discovers a gun in south east London, a decision that puts him on a collision course with a persistent detective, a duplicitous lover and a Syrian refugee boy.

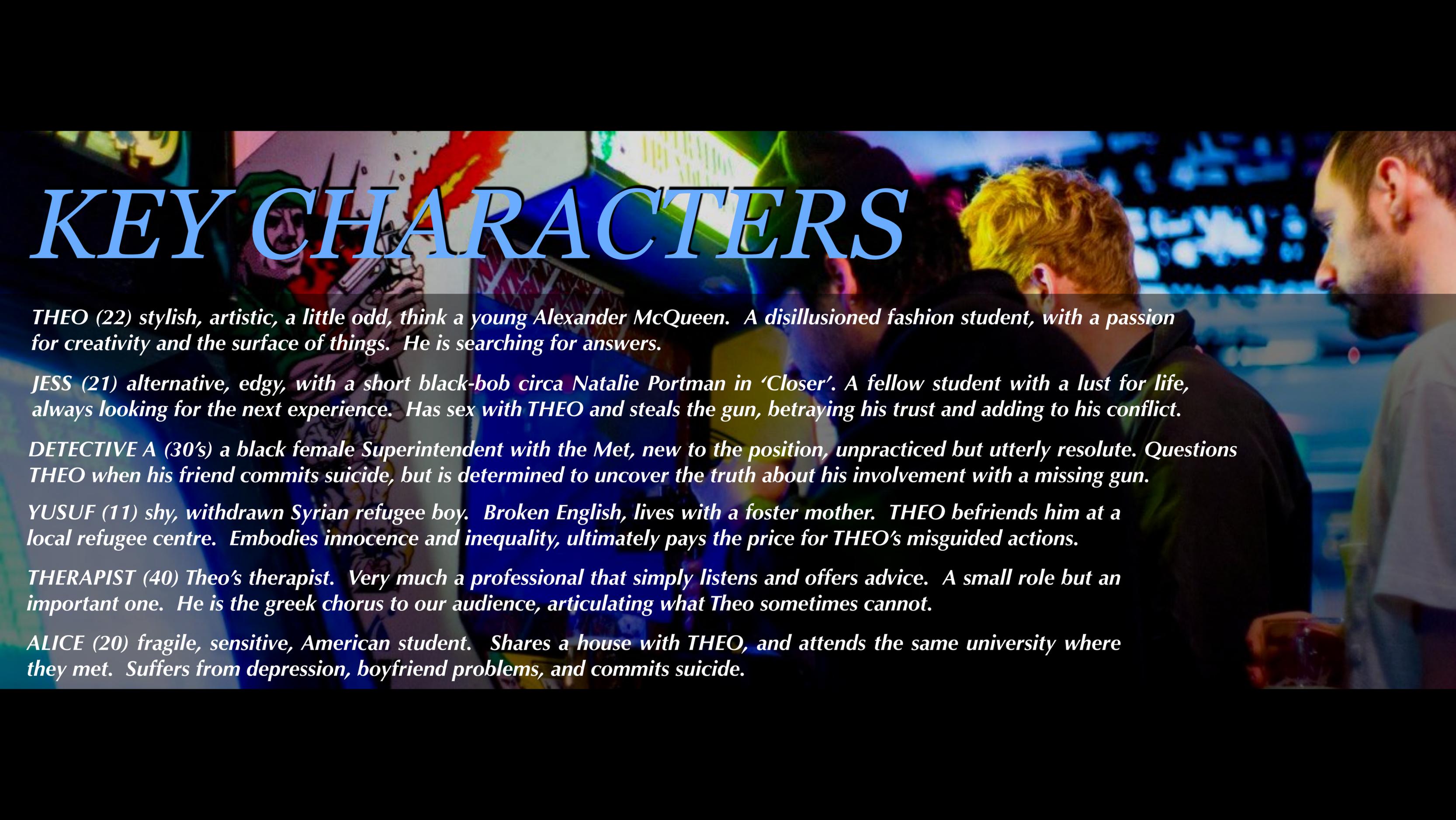
A dark, rainy street scene at night. A person is standing in the distance, looking towards a building entrance. The ground is wet and reflective. The overall mood is somber and mysterious.

...Set in the autumn of 2019 in a developing south-east London, Goldsmiths fashion student THEO feels profoundly disillusioned with life. Anxious about world affairs from Brexit to climate change to an uncertain future, he seeks meaning in random hook-ups, drugs and helping refugee children.

So when he comes across a dead body and an abandoned gun one rainy night, he decides to take the gun for himself. Not really knowing why, but fascinated by what it might represent, possessing the gun brings an intoxicating sense of serenity to his life and his general unease about the world, making him feel secure and in control. But when his close friend ALICE mysteriously commits suicide, THEO'S world view slowly begins to shift and slide.

In the wake of her death, the suspicion and pursuit by a dogged DETECTIVE further complicates his new secret life and his interest in YUSUF, a Syrian refugee boy, begins to grow murky as he feels obligated to look out for his well being. Soon the gun begins to take over his life and when his edgy, duplicitous lover JESS takes the gun for herself, THEO sets out on a frenzied mission to reclaim it, sending him into a netherworld of obsession, danger and murder'...

SYNOPSIS



KEY CHARACTERS

THEO (22) stylish, artistic, a little odd, think a young Alexander McQueen. A disillusioned fashion student, with a passion for creativity and the surface of things. He is searching for answers.

JESS (21) alternative, edgy, with a short black-bob circa Natalie Portman in 'Closer'. A fellow student with a lust for life, always looking for the next experience. Has sex with THEO and steals the gun, betraying his trust and adding to his conflict.

DETECTIVE A (30's) a black female Superintendent with the Met, new to the position, unpracticed but utterly resolute. Questions THEO when his friend commits suicide, but is determined to uncover the truth about his involvement with a missing gun.

YUSUF (11) shy, withdrawn Syrian refugee boy. Broken English, lives with a foster mother. THEO befriends him at a local refugee centre. Embodies innocence and inequality, ultimately pays the price for THEO's misguided actions.

THERAPIST (40) Theo's therapist. Very much a professional that simply listens and offers advice. A small role but an important one. He is the greek chorus to our audience, articulating what Theo sometimes cannot.

ALICE (20) fragile, sensitive, American student. Shares a house with THEO, and attends the same university where they met. Suffers from depression, boyfriend problems, and commits suicide.



INTENT

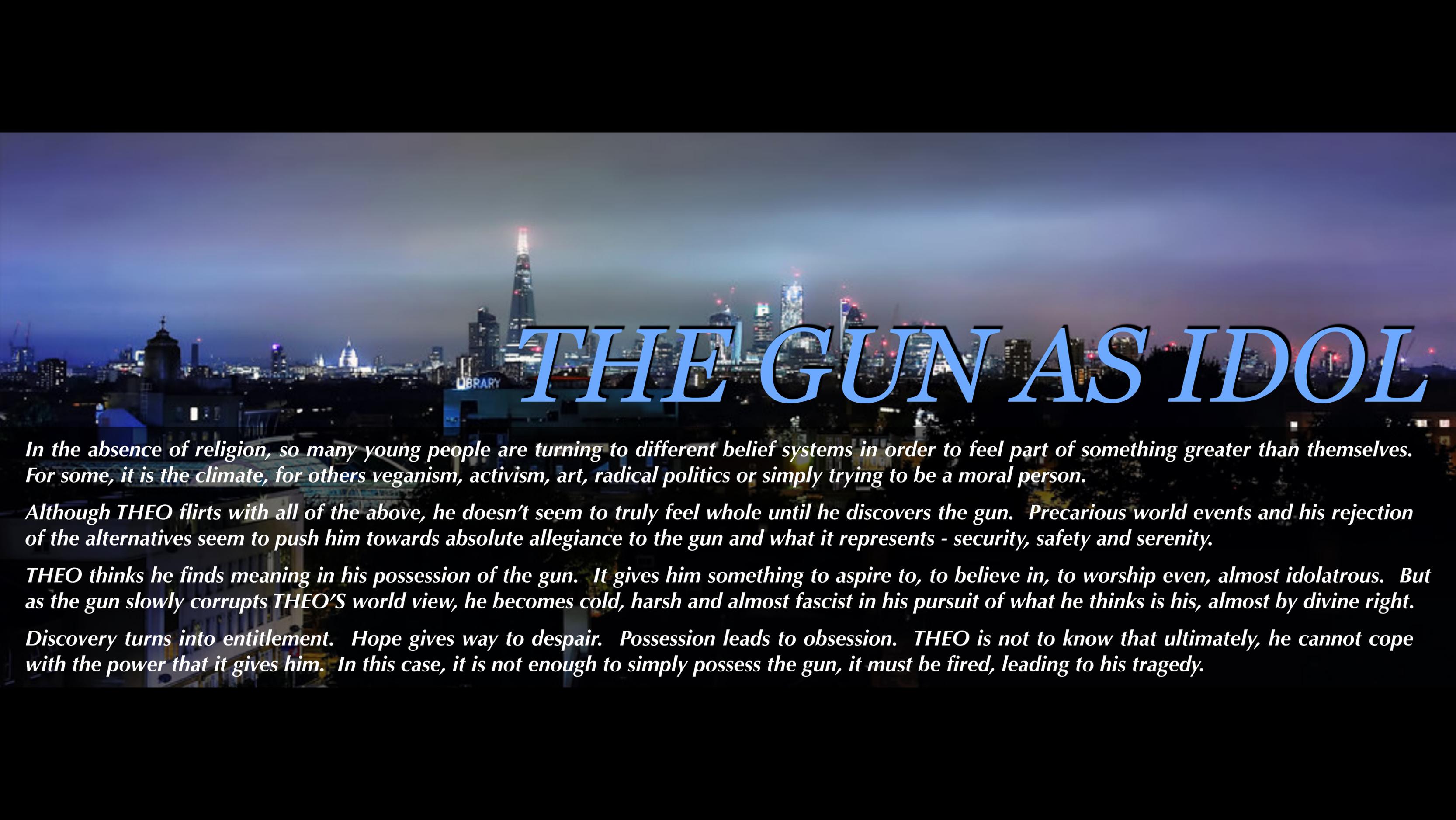
We want to make Idol a stunning psychological crime drama, akin to Paul Schrader, Martin Scorsese, Lynne Ramsay, and Damian Chazelle.

It will explore the themes of belief, anxiety, control, obsession, entitlement, power, and morality or its coded absence. Our film will attempt to be an accurate representation of middle class art students set against the very urban backdrop of multi-cultural South East London.

What happens when a disillusioned, but conscientious person such as THEO finds an object such as a gun? How does it affect his ethics? His beliefs? His behaviours? We want to normalise this discovery and ask the question... what does the gun mean to you?

Inspired by the 'God-Complex', found in Tarrt's The Secret History, or Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment, we are seeking to explore the role of the misguided student, above the shackles of society, asserting his will to power. We are interested in how the gun itself fuels this idea.

The gun will be represented as an almost malignant evil, taking hold of Theo's heart and soul, turning him from a benevolent student into a wayward murderer. Think how the ring changes Frodo in Lord of the Rings, or the Invisibility corrupts Griffin in The Invisible Man.



THE GUN AS IDOL

In the absence of religion, so many young people are turning to different belief systems in order to feel part of something greater than themselves. For some, it is the climate, for others veganism, activism, art, radical politics or simply trying to be a moral person.

Although THEO flirts with all of the above, he doesn't seem to truly feel whole until he discovers the gun. Precarious world events and his rejection of the alternatives seem to push him towards absolute allegiance to the gun and what it represents - security, safety and serenity.

THEO thinks he finds meaning in his possession of the gun. It gives him something to aspire to, to believe in, to worship even, almost idolatrous. But as the gun slowly corrupts THEO'S world view, he becomes cold, harsh and almost fascist in his pursuit of what he thinks is his, almost by divine right.

Discovery turns into entitlement. Hope gives way to despair. Possession leads to obsession. THEO is not to know that ultimately, he cannot cope with the power that it gives him. In this case, it is not enough to simply possess the gun, it must be fired, leading to his tragedy.

2019 was a year of global turmoil, anger, resentment and change.

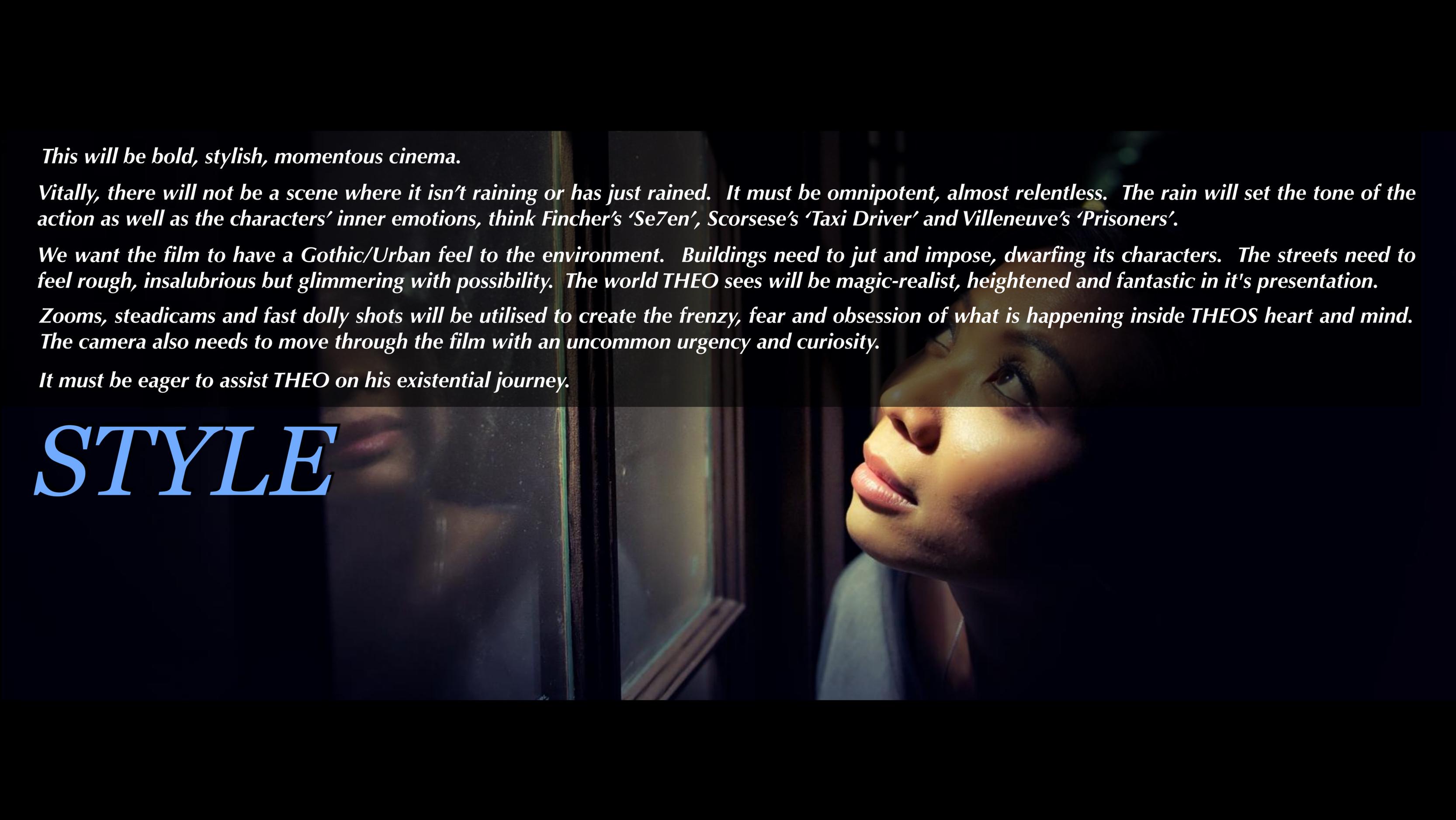
Anxiety, fuelled by Brexit, political volatility, climate change, rising inequality, sexual confusion, insecure job markets, and an algorithm-driven world run by technology we don't understand, has led people into a profound existential crisis. In the advent of global news and 24hr media coverage, we can now watch and listen and digest all of this, all the time. We cannot escape it. It is all round us. It is now part of our lives.

How does this unease, this confusion, this questioning of society on a second by second basis take its toll on our identities?

For THEO, he feels depressed, disillusioned, and in search of meaning in his life. It is important that throughout the film, we show and hear the arguments, the debates, the opinions of people on TV, on phones, on radios, on twitter, and on devices, raging into the ether.

We feel this backdrop is an interesting setting for which to explore our characters moral dilemma, speaking for all young people today.

GLOBAL ANXIETY

A close-up, low-angle shot of a woman with dark hair looking out of a window at night. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on her face and the window frame, and deep shadows elsewhere. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an urban setting.

This will be bold, stylish, momentous cinema.

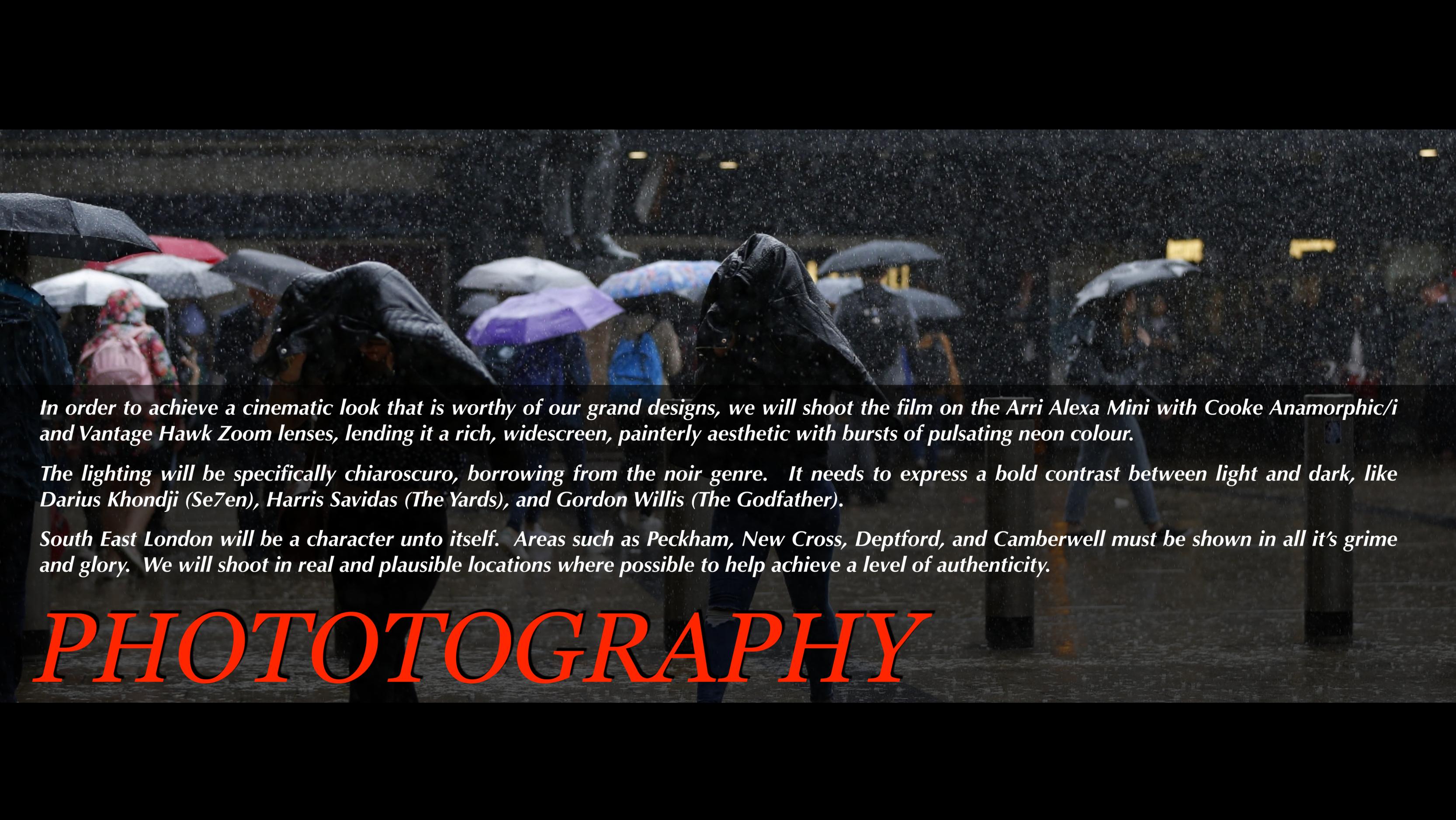
Vitally, there will not be a scene where it isn't raining or has just rained. It must be omnipotent, almost relentless. The rain will set the tone of the action as well as the characters' inner emotions, think Fincher's 'Se7en', Scorsese's 'Taxi Driver' and Villeneuve's 'Prisoners'.

We want the film to have a Gothic/Urban feel to the environment. Buildings need to jut and impose, dwarfing its characters. The streets need to feel rough, insalubrious but glimmering with possibility. The world THEO sees will be magic-realist, heightened and fantastic in its presentation.

Zooms, steadicams and fast dolly shots will be utilised to create the frenzy, fear and obsession of what is happening inside THEOS heart and mind. The camera also needs to move through the film with an uncommon urgency and curiosity.

It must be eager to assist THEO on his existential journey.

STYLE

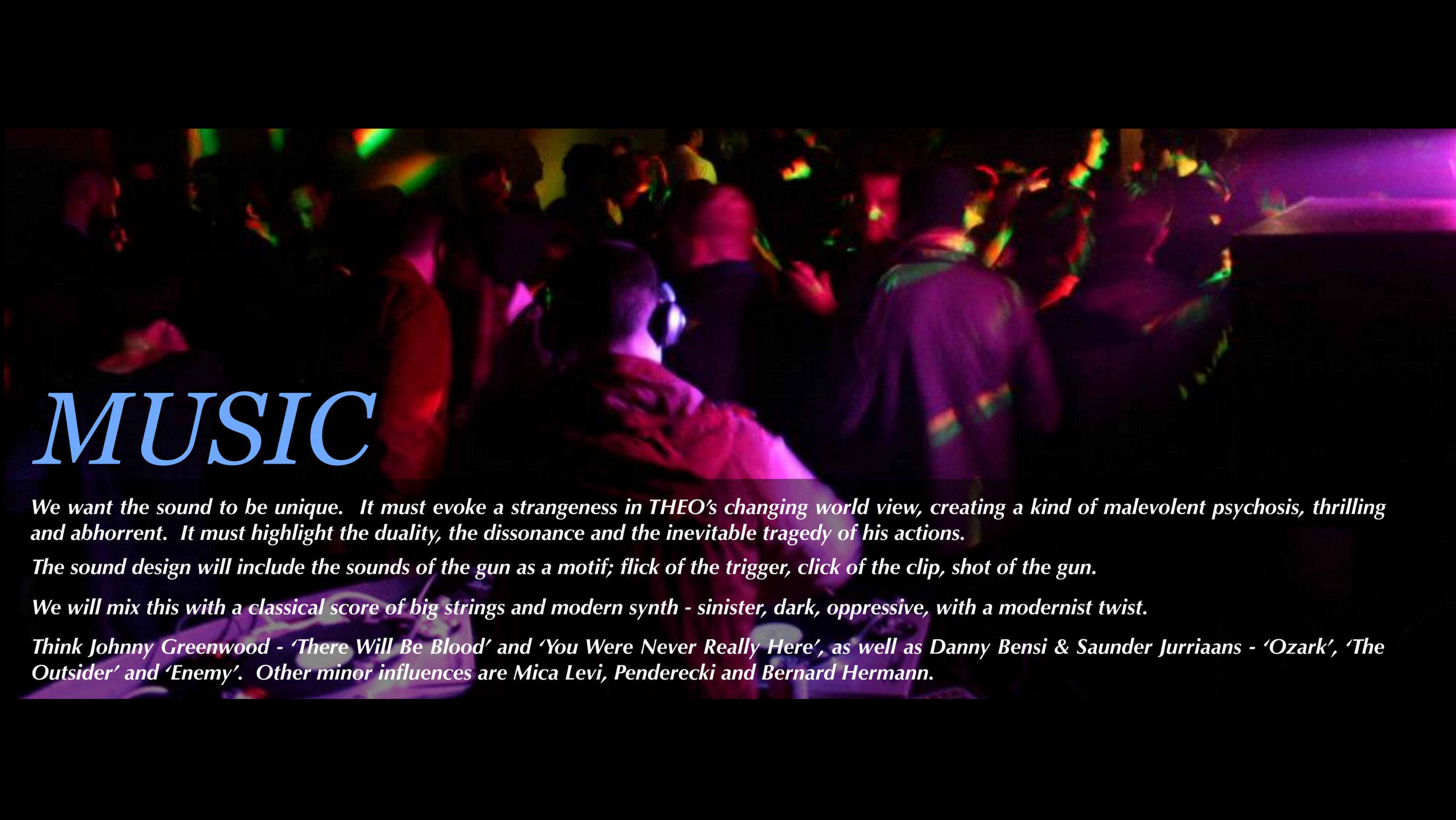


In order to achieve a cinematic look that is worthy of our grand designs, we will shoot the film on the Arri Alexa Mini with Cooke Anamorphic/i and Vantage Hawk Zoom lenses, lending it a rich, widescreen, painterly aesthetic with bursts of pulsating neon colour.

The lighting will be specifically chiaroscuro, borrowing from the noir genre. It needs to express a bold contrast between light and dark, like Darius Khondji (Se7en), Harris Savidas (The Yards), and Gordon Willis (The Godfather).

South East London will be a character unto itself. Areas such as Peckham, New Cross, Deptford, and Camberwell must be shown in all it's grime and glory. We will shoot in real and plausible locations where possible to help achieve a level of authenticity.

PHOTOGRAPHY



MUSIC

We want the sound to be unique. It must evoke a strangeness in THEO's changing world view, creating a kind of malevolent psychosis, thrilling and abhorrent. It must highlight the duality, the dissonance and the inevitable tragedy of his actions.

The sound design will include the sounds of the gun as a motif; flick of the trigger, click of the clip, shot of the gun.

We will mix this with a classical score of big strings and modern synth - sinister, dark, oppressive, with a modernist twist.

Think Johnny Greenwood - 'There Will Be Blood' and 'You Were Never Really Here', as well as Danny Bensi & Saunder Jurriaans - 'Ozark', 'The Outsider' and 'Enemy'. Other minor influences are Mica Levi, Penderecki and Bernard Hermann.



REFERENCES



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STOX PICTURES

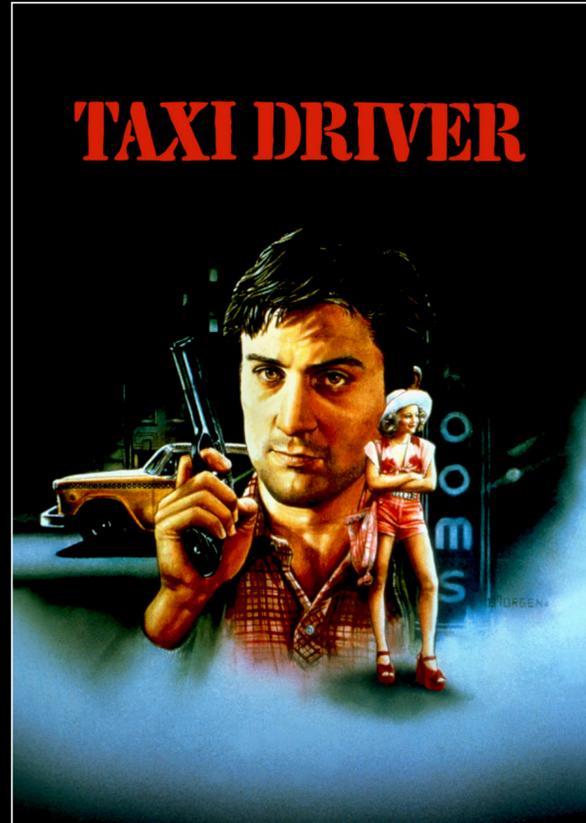
Stox Pictures is unique in that we are a production company consisting of three brothers: Eadward, David and George Stocks. We sought to create a company that allowed us to make films collaboratively. Eadward and George write, Eadward and David step behind the camera to direct, with George taking on the leading role as actor.

We made our first feature, 'Palace of Fun' on a very low budget on location in Brighton. The film was something of a passion project which took us three years to complete. It then premiered at Raindance Festival and secured distribution in the U.K. and North America in 2017. The film is now playing on multiple platforms (Amazon, BFI, TLA).

COMPARISONS



'Stray Dog' dir. Akira Kurosawa - 1948



'Taxi Driver' dir. Martin Scorsese - 1976



'Whiplash' dir. Damien Chazelle - 2014



'First Reformed' dir. Paul Schrader - 2017



'You were never really here' dir. Lynne Ramsay - 2017