



HE DIED WITH A
FELAFEL
IN HIS HAND

PRESS KIT

HE DIED WITH A FELAFEL IN HIS HAND

SYNOPSIS

hell is other people

“We found him on a bean bag with his chin resting on the top button of a favourite flannelette shirt. He'd worn the shirt when we'd interviewed him for the empty room a week or so before. We really took this guy in desperation. He wasn't A-list, didn't have a microwave or anything like that, and now both he and the felafel roll were cold. Our first dead housemate. At least we'd got some bond money off him...”

Danny (Noah Taylor) is living in the 47th shared house of his late twenties. Obsessed with all the classic male existential dilemmas and the icons that they entail, Danny is trying to make sense of the bizarre and unexpected strangeness one can only get by living with a random series of complete strangers.

Starting in the tropical, testosterone-riddled environment of Brisbane, with an overabundance males and one tomboyish girl, Sam (Emily Hamilton), Danny decides to save himself by writing the ultimate existentialist novel. The arrival of Anya (Romane Bohringer) and a Miami Vice style rental dilemma, throws his life and ultimately the house he is living in, completely off track.

House #48 is in Melbourne... rain, sleet, serious young insects and dressing in black. Danny finds himself in a Kafkaesque nightmare, taking on the character of the city with a pair of philosophising Detectives and a hard-core collection of his drop-kick followers who end up discovering that in state of Victoria, the police have a tendency to shoot to kill.

Escaping to Sydney and House #49, Danny comes up hard against a 'Melrose on Acid' meets a 'Hetero-Fascist Sterility Conspiracy' life-style conundrum in a city that is busily re-inventing itself into a new Los Angeles with ocean views. In amongst this nightmare, he is dragged kicking and screaming into an emotional upheaval that finally points the way to his own salvation.

Throughout it all, Danny finds himself involved in a seemingly unresolvable love triangle between three people who are doomed to chase each other through Hell in a never-ending, unrequited, daisy-chain of desire..

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BACKGROUND TO THE PRODUCTION

“He died watching late-night MTV with the sound turned down... One of the hip young inner-city cops who turned up to investigate said he’d probably snuffed it half way through the hot one hundred. Just like a junkie, eh..”

Director Richard Lowenstein: “That image from the best-selling Australian book, ‘He Died With A Felafel In His Hand’ just hooked me. It immediately opened up questions to me that needed to be answered. I had a real sense of a story about to unfold, and not necessarily the one that was contained in the book. It seemed like something stimulating, dialogue dependent, character dependent, actor dependent. Great material for a character-based screenplay. I thought it should happen relatively quickly. It was to take five years before it was financed, shot and completed...”

“The book has very little in the way of structure or story. It starts and ends with a dead guy clutching tightly onto a half-eaten felafel roll. In between, a tapestry of idiosyncratic characters and anecdotes center round the writer, John Birmingham, and his observations and movements through almost a hundred shared houses up and down the east coast of Australia. As most of my films are based around anecdotal oral history, the appeal of this book to me was immediate. The challenge would be to create a narrative thread that would lead an audience through each scenario without turning the film into a plot-centric piece where everything ends up centering around ‘the bag of cash’ or ‘how do we get rid of the body..?’

“The one thing I wanted to achieve was not only a specific portrait of the ‘ups and downs, highs and lows’ of the shared house experience but a reflection of the social environment that spawns each character in the first place. The character of the city that each house is located in had to stand out as vividly as any of the characters that live within them. The psychologies and climates of Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, where most of the FELAFEL stories take place, have a universality about them and are full of reference points that relate to a number of definitive cities around the world. Brisbane tends to have that languid, lazy, tropical, Miami Vice atmosphere and oozing with vice and corruption; Sydney has your LA meets San Francisco sense of money, ruthless ambition, body beautiful lifestyle, and it’s fair share of vice and corruption; then there’s Melbourne with it’s very British sense of Kafkaesque angst, misery, dreadful weather, European style and it’s inevitable dose of vice and corruption. Yet within it all, each city and the characters that inhabit them retain their ability to surprise you when you least expect it.”

Richard developed a central character, a wannabe writer named Danny (Noah Taylor), initially based on John Birmingham, as he tries to make it through to shared house number fifty before he has a complete nervous breakdown.

“One of the problems of merging the mass of material from the book into a screenplay was finding a central character to hang it on. In the book that character is John Birmingham, the author, with his uniquely dry observations and droll sense of humour as he journeys through his own collection of existential dilemmas on his path to becoming a writer and journalist.

"Not having known John except through the pages of the book, it became obvious to me that I had to find my own way of re-inventing the main character in order to make him live and breathe for both me and the actor playing the part. I needed to find someone who could inspire me not only in the writing of the character, but in the execution of it. By an incredible coincidence, right at that point in time, Noah Taylor moved in downstairs from me for a while in St Kilda (Melbourne). I had known Noah on and off since he had been cast for a few days work on *Dogs In Space* (1986) at the age of fourteen. So ten years later, Noah suddenly appears downstairs, a number of hit movies under his belt, musing (in a very amusing manner), about life, love and this 'thing' he could do that would make 'the other side' go 'ga-ga'.

"In the weeks that followed, he ended up becoming an unknowing participant in a script-writing process that involved me mysteriously ducking off every now and then to write everything down before I forgot it all. Noah has this deadpan Keatonesque quality to his humor with an endearing combination of melodramatic tragedy and heartfelt honesty that is actually very funny. He was the thread I needed and together, we created the character of Danny, a buzzing, emotionally retarded, mass of contradictions who lived and breathed independently of all inspirations. It all just fitted together like a beautiful jigsaw puzzle."

With the script was finished, Richard thought financing it would be a breeze: "Noah's stakes were high due to *Shine* being a world-wide success. The response from Village Roadshow on the package was extremely positive and their enthusiasm to commit as the Australasian distributor of the project overwhelming. However this was only a small part of the financing process. Somewhere between 25-35% of the budget had to be provided from a private source in order to enable the publicly funded FFC to put up the rest of the budget and give us the green light.

"Things were looking pretty grim until one day I was sitting in a Sydney inner-city café getting bitter and twisted about the state of the local film industry and it's inability to nurture it's scriptwriters and directors, when a strange Italian man in his late thirties came over and introduced himself as Domenico Procacci. Domenico (and his company, Fandango) was already quite renowned in this country for co-producing the Rolf de Heer films, *Bad Boy*, *Bobby* and *The Quiet Room*."

The book, 'He Died With A Felafel In His Hand' was translated and published in Italy and had become a cult classic.

" I pulled out a script and gave it to Domenico. We met up the following morning on his way to the airport. He had read the script, loved it and we agreed to give it six months together trying to raise the money we needed. It was the fastest script read and response I had ever experienced. Three years later, we were actually fully financed.

"Me and Domenico then approached a local producer, Andrew McPhail, who I had been working with and had a very high regard for in the commercial world. Andrew is one of Australia's most successful commercial producers having been one of the founding members of the seminal production companies, Meaningful Eye Contact and Black. He responded positively to the script and the three of us went on to co-produce the film with Fandango, Village Roadshow (Australian and New Zealand rights), Intra (rest of world), Festival Records, the Australian Film Finance Corporation and the FTO (New South Wales Film and Television Office).

HE DIED WITH A FELAFEL IN HIS HAND

CASTING

Just when all the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle had finally come together, Noah Taylor was offered a key role in the Cameron Crowe (*Singles, Jerry McGuire*) film, *Almost Famous*. After much agonising, FELAFEL was put on hold for six months while Noah, went to LA to do the film. Noah, now living in London, had no firm plans to return to Australia to make a film, but felt a strong connection to Richard and the project.

"I had been interested in doing the film for a long time and had had a lot of involvement in the development of the script over the years. I felt very indebted to Richard for postponing the shoot to allow me to do the Cameron Crowe film. A combination of friendship and a belief in the script lead me to return to Australia. I have felt more involved than with any other film I've ever done," Noah says.

"I first met Richard when I was 14 auditioning for his film *Dogs in Space*, then in recent years we got to know each other at various film festivals, particularly in Italy, and began nutting out ideas for films. We have a kind of simpatico and there's not a lot of dialogue that needs to go on when we're working. I love Richard as a person, I think he is very funny and incredibly talented...and hopefully FELAFEL will be the beginning of an on-going filmmaking partnership.

"It is very rare to work with a friend and have it work so well. I think we both feel we couldn't have done the film without each other."

In the film, Richard deliberately and openly plays with notions of pop culture, reflecting the nature of contemporary life as he borrows and references music, films, images, dialogue and literary plagiarisms, all in keeping with the themes, 'Pop will eat itself' and 'Nothing is new anymore, everything is rehashed..' An inwardly minimalist style of performance pays homage to the films of Buster Keaton, Ozu, Godard, Robert Bresson and Jean-Pierre Melville.

The delay in waiting for Noah at first was a blow to the production team. In hindsight, producer Andrew McPhail says, it allowed casting director Nikki Barrett to thoroughly cast the other roles. It proved to be a long search, both here and internationally with cast coming from France, England, New Zealand, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

The role of Anya, an iconic, exotic, mysterious and intelligent stranger in a strange land, a chaos freak (the anti-matter equivalent of a control freak) with the predisposition to create emotional and physical chaos wherever she goes became the next dilemma. Already a huge fan of French actress, Romane Bohringer's work in 'Savage Nights', 'Mina Tannenbaum' and the French thriller, 'The Apartment', Richard, Domenico Procacci and Noah Taylor flew to Paris to meet her for dinner and offer her the part.

"The image that comes to mind when you think of French actresses are the archetypal ones like Adjani, Sophie Marceau, Binoche and Deneuve...all great and immensely talented people...then you meet Romane, who is part Vietnamese, and she's blows it all away. She is extraordinary. I could put her up against a blank wall, put a camera on her and film her doing nothing for ninety minutes and she would hold you captivated the entire time. Maybe a hundred minutes might be pushing it a bit, but I think ninety would be fine. I became fixated with the idea of her as Anya. It was a bit like my attitude towards Noah - without her, I felt we couldn't make the film," Richard says.

Romane admits that it wasn't the script alone which enticed her to Australia – in fact, her command of English wasn't sufficient for her to fully understand the script at first – however the meeting with Richard, Domenico and Noah compelled her to trust her instincts enough to

jump on a plane to the other side of the world. She soon came to a greater appreciation of the best qualities of Lowenstein's screenplay.

"For me there are hilarious moments in the script combined with a wonderful exploration of relationships. I was interested in the strange mix between humour and tension – and after meeting Richard, Noah and Domenico I felt that by going to Australia I would share in something new and engaging," Romane says.

Romane describes Anya as a person addicted to fever and passion: "She is like a vampire of emotions. She needs people to be around and to care for her, then she takes what she needs from them. She arrives in Danny and Sam's world, creates chaos, unbalances them and forces it to become a relationship between three people. Ultimately she helps to reveal to each character what they really feel about each other."

Emily Hamilton, who plays Sam, has an English mother and an Australian father. She grew up in the UK and already has had an enormously successful career there, most recently appearing in the internationally acclaimed television adaptation of David Copperfield.

At the end of that production she came to Australia for a three-week holiday to visit her father and decided to meet some casting agents. She did a screen test for 'Felafel' on the day she flew back to London.

"Emily did the reading literally on the way to the airport, but as soon as we saw the tape we knew we'd found Sam," says Andrew McPhail.

"Casting Sam could seem easy," adds Richard "An Australian girl in her mid-20's - but because she has so much idiosyncratic dialogue which could lose its lightness of touch and sense of humour in the hands of the wrong person, it actually proved to be incredibly difficult. We looked at hundreds of local actresses for the role. I was in London with Noah when Nikki Barrett (Casting Director) sent me a tape of Emily from Sydney. The first thing that hit me was her lighting up the screen. Her eyes conveyed an honesty and a matter-of-factness and she was, without a doubt, our Sam."

Emily describes Sam as the least self-obsessed character in the film and as someone who, despite the chaos and turmoil around her, maintains a core honesty and strength which keep her on her own moral course.

"Sam is noble. She has a great truth and honesty about her and a huge heart. Playing someone with such a good soul was delightful," Emily says.

Emily toned her English accent down for the role but, in any event, an accent was in keeping with a particularly multicultural cast. The cast has English, Australian, New Zealand, French and Russian accents across the various roles.

"We didn't set out to have a multicultural cast, but it was very important to find idiosyncratic people who would fit their roles like a glove – it just happened that lots had accents. It also happened, ironically and to the budget's detriment, that most of the actors came from Melbourne, London, Paris or Auckland, when we were shooting in Brisbane and Sydney," Richard says.

Sophie Lee, increasingly recognised for her comic roles, was cast as neurotic, Sydney-based Nina. Ian Hughes and Brett Stewart (Iain and Flip) are both from Auckland; Alex Menglet (Taylor) is originally from Russia.

"One of the real joys of working on FELAFEL," Noah Taylor says, "was watching the wonderful cast bring that rich, funny script to life. There are a lot of people in this film who usually don't get a look in in Australia and who were just extraordinary. Then there are the

girls, Romane and Emily, who are fantastic. Romane bring a classic, Garbo-like feel to the role which makes it very different to a lot of Australian films. Her performance is unique.”

Some very experienced Australian actors, such as Tim Robertson and Sophie Lee, agreed to take on small roles, principally because they fell in love with the character dialogue, which is often highly idiosyncratic and, unusually for an Australian film, not necessarily plot driven.

“For example, when the cops arrive they are talking about the end of Western civilisation. The actors just had a lot of fun with it so they didn’t mind doing a three-day cameo because they might have 10 pages of dialogue. Australian films usually avoid dialogue like the plague, especially character-based dialogue, but in FELAFEL there is lots of talk, usually about nothing” Richard says.

IN PRODUCTION

Production Designer, Iain Aitken had the challenging and fascinating role of creating the three different city environments. A New Zealander, Iain and Richard had previously worked together on some commercials over there. Richard had been “blown away by Iain’s vision, dedication and resourcefulness on a tight budget” and felt that a foreigner’s perspective on the three Australian cities would bring an interesting and objective eye to the task.

Richard didn’t want to create another inner-city, grunge, cluttered film: “People assume because it is a film about shared housing that it is grotty with mess spread everywhere, but I hate the very Australian habit of over-dressing a film set. Ian takes us beautifully through the ‘Melrose Place-On-Acid’ feel of the designer sparse Sydney penthouse apartment, through the rambling Queenslander-style house in Brisbane and the Melbourne inner-city terrace.

“Audiences may think they’ve got the visual look of the film worked out in the first half hour, then it shifts gear to Melbourne with it’s totally different look and feel and then on again to Sydney for the complete opposite of where we started.”

Ian loved the concept and the challenge of capturing the character and spirit of a city inside the four walls of a house.

“The Production Designer had to be extremely creative and flexible as we chose to shoot the whole film on location and not build a set. Finding the locations was a huge challenge and Iain has the perfect eye to create the differences between Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane on screen. It almost was like designing three different films,” Andrew McPhail says.

Cinematographer Andrew de Groot and Richard Lowenstein have had a long collaborative relationship since studying film together at Victoria’s Swinburne Film and Television School (now VCA). Andrew has shot most of Richard’s features, music videos and commercials.

“It is now at the point where Andrew takes a lot of my glory – he’s got a cabinet full of trophies which he brings with him on set. It’s done up like a little Bhuddist temple and we burn incense in there and offer up sacrifices to the Award God every lunchtime,” says Richard. “We don’t need to speak to each other very much anymore, except to discuss where all the new awards are going to go. Our working relationship is at that stage where we both think we know what each other is thinking, until we see the rushes and then we’re screaming at each other like cat and dog. He’s a fully fledged film-maker, cineaste and camera operator as well and since his eyes are the only ones looking through the camera it is exceptionally handy to have all that experience and aesthetic in the feedback you get on a take by take basis. I do have a suspicion though, that he is plotting to remove all of the director’s screen credit, because he keeps mentioning that the literal translation of the word ‘cinematographer’ is actually ‘film-maker’. I’m gonna have to go speak to the Director’s Guild about that...”

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PRINCIPAL CAST

NOAH TAYLOR as DANNY

The lead role of Danny, the emotionally retarded, existentially angst-ridden wannabe writer in the throes of writer's block and a love triangle, is played by Noah Taylor, one of Australia's most accomplished film actors.

Catapulted into international stardom by his leading role in the Academy-Award winning feature film *Shine*, Noah is now based in London. Since *Shine* he has had leading roles in the new Cameron Crowe film *Almost Famous*, *Tomb Raider* and in the UK film *Simon Magus*, with Rutger Hauer and most recently, *Sleeping Dictionary* with Bob Hoskins. HE DIED WITH A FELAFEL IN HIS HAND is his first Australian film in four years.

Noah first came to prominence in the John Duigan films *The Year My Voice Broke* and *Flirting*, produced by the Kennedy Miller company. He went on to star in *The Nostradamus Kid*, directed by Bob Ellis.

Among Noah's other pursuits are drawing, painting and writing and playing music.

EMILY HAMILTON as SAM

Emily Hamilton, who has an English mother and an Australian father, grew up in the UK where she attended drama school. She was signed by an agent immediately on graduation and has become one of the most compelling young faces on British television.

Emily starred as Agnes in the mini-series *David Copperfield* and had significant roles in *Silent Witness*, *City Central* and *Verdict*. She came to Australia for the role in HE DIED WITH A FELAFEL IN HIS HAND directly from a season of *Twelfth Night* performed in London's Regent Park, then in Bath and Dubai.

ROMANE BOHRINGER as ANYA

Exciting new French cinema actress Romane Bohringer spent much of her childhood on film sets with her father, French film star Richard Bohringer. A film set is where she feels most at home and, while making FELAFEL, she cheerfully operated the video split and shot stills photographs.

Romane's first role, at the age of 13, was in the film *Kamikaze*. More than a dozen film roles since include the hits *Rembrandt*, *L'Appartement* and *Mina Tannenbaum*.

PRINCIPAL CAST
CONTD.

ALEX MENGLET as TAYLOR

Alex, who graduated in acting and stage direction at the Moscow State Institute of Drama in 1977, comes from an established Russian theatrical family. He emigrated to Australia soon after graduation and has dozens of film, television and theatre credits.

Alex has been a regular at the Playbox Theatre Company, the Melbourne Theatre Company, the Anthill Theatre and Belvoir St Company B. Recent television credits include *Sea Change*, *High Flyers*, *The Genie From Down Under*, *State Coroner*, *Janus*, *Bordertown* and *The Damnation of Harvey McHugh*. On film he has appeared in *The Zone*, *Children of the Revolution* starring Judy Davis and Sam Neill, *Wills & Bourke – The Untold Story* and Paul Cox's *A Woman's Tale*.

BRETT STEWART as FLIP

Brett Stewart appears as Flip, the character of the title, who dies from a drug overdose while watching television, a felafel in his hand.

Brett also featured in the hugely-popular New Zealand film *Topless Women Talk About Their Lives* and in the television series of the same name. Other television roles have been in the series *Hercules*, *Shortland Street* and *City Life*.

SOPHIE LEE as NINA

Sophie Lee's exquisite comedic talents were first recognised in her hilarious portrayal of the sluttish bridesmaid in the smash hit film *Muriel's Wedding*, directed by P.J. Hogan. She subsequently appeared in another box office hit, *The Castle*, directed by Rob Sitch, in Jane Campion's *Holy Smoke* and Dein's Perry's *Bootmen*. On television, Sophie's credits include *Raw FM*, *Good Guys Bad Guys*, *Halifax FP* and *The Flying Doctors*.

Sophie also has considerable life experience at shared housing and remembers living in a vacuum cleaner closet at a house in King Cross whilst earning money as a waitress serving greasy eggs to American tourists at a second-rate hotel!

PRINCIPAL CAST
CONTD.

FRANCIS McMAHON as DIRK

Francis McMahon plays the gay Sydney flatmate Dirk, although Francis was reared in a conservative Brisbane household and now lives in Melbourne! This is his first feature film role since graduating from the University of Southern Queensland in 1991, although he has appeared in a number of short films and in the television series *Blue Heelers*. Francis also has appeared regularly in theatre including roles in Twelfth Night Theatre productions, at La Mama Theatre in Melbourne and La Boite Theatre in Brisbane.

IAN HUGHES as IAIN

Although a New Zealander, director Richard Lowenstein says Ian Hughes captured perfectly the dark angst of the Melbourne character he portrays.

Ian has appeared in two of New Zealand's most recent successful feature films *Topless Women Talk About Their Lives* and *Channelling Baby*, both of which starred Danielle McCormack. He also had roles in the films *I'll Make You Happy*, *Memory and Desire* and *Desperate Remedies* as well as the television series *Hercules*, *Xena: Warrior Princess*, *Shortland Street* and *Sinking of Rainbow Warrior*. Ian is also a regular in New Zealand theatre productions.

DAMIAN WALSH-HOWLING as MILO

Damian Walshe-Howling was a regular on the series *Blue Heelers* and *Neighbours* and has had guest roles in *Sky Trackers* and *Halifax FP*. He also featured in the up-coming film *A Wreck A Tangle* and had the co-lead role in the ABC TV/Australian Children's Television Foundation program *Boy Soldiers*.

TORQUIL NEILSON as OTIS

Film credits for Torquil Neilson include *Love and Other Catastrophes* and *Amy*, while on television he has appeared in *Halifax*, *Frontline* and *Blue Heelers*. Theatre credits include *The Talented Mr Ripley* with the Melbourne Theatre Company and the Belvoir Street Theatre production of *Thieving Boy*.

HE DIED WITH A FELAFEL IN HIS HAND

PRINCIPAL CREW

WRITER/DIRECTOR/PRODUCER – RICHARD LOWENSTEIN

Richard Lowenstein graduated from the Swinburne Film and Television school in 1979 having written and directed a half-hour dramatised documentary called *Evictions*, winner of the 1980 Erwin Rado Award for Best Australian Short Film at the Melbourne Film Festival.

He went on to write and direct the feature film *Strikebound* (1984), the UK featurette *White City* (1985) for Pete Townshend of 'The Who', *Dogs in Space* (1986) with Saskia Post and Michael Hutchence, *Say a Little Prayer* (1993) and the *Ghost Story* telemovie for the ABC series 'Naked' produced by Jan Chapman

He has also directed a number of award winning music videos, particularly for the group INXS, and TV commercials including one for the Sandinista Government of Nicaragua's 1990 election campaign.

Strikebound was nominated for nine AFI Awards, winning for Best Production Design, won the Jury Prize at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival in 1985 and was officially selected for Critics Week at the 1985 Venice Film Festival. *Dogs in Space* was in official selection for the Berlin, Taormina, London, Edinburgh and New York Film Festivals and *Say a Little Prayer* was also selected for Berlin.

PRODUCER – DOMENICO PROCCACI

Domenico Proccaci's company Fandango debuted with the 1990 Italian film *La Stazione (The Station)*, the debut film for director Sergio Rubini, which won the Critics Prize at the Venice Film Festival.

Domenico began his close association with the Australian film industry by producing Rolf de Heer's feature *Bad Boy Bubby*, which was selected for competition at Venice winning the Special Jury Prize, and which won four Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards in 1995. Domenico worked with de Heer on his subsequent films *Epsilon*, *The Quiet Room* (selected In Competition for Cannes in 1996) and *Dance Me to My Song* (selected In Competition for Cannes in 1998).

Domenico also steered Fandango into a series of successful co-productions with European partners, while maintaining a strong production base in Italy.

Fandango films include *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin* by Jiri Menzel and Tim Roth's *The War Zone*, both co-productions with Portobello Pictures, *Come Te Nessuno Mai (But Forever in My Mind)*, directed by Gabriele Muccino and which was selected for the Venice Film Festival in 1999, and Muccino's 1998 Venice Film Festival selection *Radiofreccia (Radio Nights)*.

Recently Fandango established a publishing company and a documentary production division.

PRODUCER – ANDREW McPHAIL

After leaving a BA Communication Degree at the NSW Institute of Technology where he majored in Film and Fiction Writing, Andrew McPhail began in the film industry in 1981 as an assistant editor at the Australian Broadcasting Commission. Between 1983 and 1985 he worked on numerous programs and films in a variety of roles from film editor to actor to art department runner to assistant director.

As a producer, Andrew began in 1986 with the *Spirits of the Air – Gremlins of the Clouds*, a low budget feature debut written, directed and co-produced by Alex Proyas (*Dark City*). Andrew produced numerous music videos both in Australia and internationally for such bands as *INXS*, *Crowded House*, *Fleetwood Mac*, *Yes*, *Joe Jackson* and *OMD*. After a sabbatical directing television commercials in Italy he returned to Australia to take on the role of Executive Producer at Sydney production company Meaningful Eye Contact establishing its commercials division.

In 1991 Andrew opened up his own commercials production company Black with directors Jeff Darling and Alan White, producing to 1998 over 100 local and international television commercials, simultaneously helping the company to the unique position of producing over \$50 million worth of production with the majority of contracts being awarded out of the USA, French, German, English and Asian markets. During this time Andrew also produced the short film *Page 73*, Jeff Darling's award winning drama debut, plus developed several screenplays with such writers as Justin Monjo, Robert Drewe, David Roach and Strepshyn Mappin.

For the past two years Andrew has worked full time in production and development of feature films and television series. *HE DIED WITH A FALAFEL IN HIS HAND* is his first feature film in the new venture.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY – ANDREW DE GROOT

Andrew de Groot is a graduate of the Swinburne Film and Television School in Melbourne. His first major work was with fellow ex-student, Richard Lowenstein in 1983, on the feature *Strikebound*.

He has continued to work with Richard on subsequent feature films *White City* (a cinema music/drama featurette for Pete Townsend), and *Dogs In Space*. He was also cinematographer for Scott Murray's 1989 feature, *'Devil In The Flesh'*, and has collaborated with him on three completed screenplays. His cinematography on Lynn-Maree Milburn's multi-award winning cinema docu/drama featurette *Memories And Dreams* has been widely acclaimed. For this film Andrew designed and constructed an Animation/FX Rostrum, which was used to re-animate the hand tinted sequences as well as create the film's haunting special optical effects.

His most recent drama credit as cinematographer has been on John Hillcoat's cinema feature *To Have & To Hold*, set in New Guinea. Since then he has been collaborating with the director John Hillcoat on a number of scripts in development. Other cinematography credits include the documentaries *The Image Makers* and *The New Settlers* and numerous music videos. He also co-produced the documentary *Chasing Buddha*.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER – IAIN AITKEN

Iain Aitken first worked with Richard Lowenstein on a television commercial in his native New Zealand, where both realised they shared a design sensibility. Iain designs for film, television, opera and theatre.

He designed recent productions of *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Magic Flute* and *Don Giovanni* for the Auckland Opera and the Australia Opera production of *Falstaff*. Recent theatre credits include *Threepenny Opera* for the Sydney Theatre Company, *Hysteria* for the Melbourne Theatre Company (for which he received a Greenroom Awards nomination) and *Angels in America* for the Auckland Theatre Company.

Iain production designed the New Zealand television productions *McCormick Country*, *Shark in the Park (series 2)* and *Coalface* and the short film *Lovelock*.

His work has been exhibited at the National Theatre in London and at the Prague Quadrennials of 1983 and 1991 and he received Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Study Grants in 1981, 1983 and 1985.

COSTUME DESIGNER – MEG GORDON

Meg Gordon is a graduate of the Sydney College of the Arts in Fashion & Textile Design. She was costume designer on the successful television series *Murder Call* and *E Street* and costume buyer on the feature films *Babe*, *Babe 2 – Pig in the City*, *Diana and Me*, *The Phantom* and the television mini-series *King in Grass Castles*. Meg is also one of Australia's most experienced costume designer for television commercials.

HE DIED WITH A FELAFEL IN HIS HAND

PRINCIPAL CAST

Noah Taylor	as	Danny
Emily Hamilton	as	Sam
Romane Bohringer	as	Anya
Alex Menglet	as	Taylor
Brett Stewart	as	Flip
Damian Walshe-Howling	as	Milo
Torquil Neilson	as	Otis
Sophie Lee	as	Nina
Francis McMahon	as	Dirk
Ian Hughes	as	Iain
Robert Rimmer	as	Derek
Tim Robertson	as	Suit 1
Robert Morgan	as	Suit 2
Sayuri Tanoui	as	Satomi Tiger

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PRINCIPAL CREW

Producer/Director/Writer/Editor	Richard Lowenstein
Producer	Andrew McPhail
Producer	Domenico Procacci
Line Producer	Helen Panckhurst
Director of Photography	Andrew de Groot
Sound Recordist	Ben Osmo
Production Designer	Iain Aitken
Costume Designer	Meg Gordon
Art Director	Rebecca Cohen
Casting (Australia & NZ)	Alison Barrett Casting
Casting (Brisbane)	Tracy Lemin
Unit Publicity	Tracey Mair Publicity
Stills Photographer	Lisa Tomasetti