

Sundance

14

WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS

Digital Press Kit

A feature film by Taika Waititi and Jemaine Clement



WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS

What we do in the Shadows is an 85-minute documentary comedy about New Zealand vampires, co-written, co-directed, and co-starring Jemaine Clement and Taika Waititi.

Title: **WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS**

Writer/Director: Taika Waititi & Jemaine Clement

Producers: Taika Waititi, Chelsea Winstanley, Emanuel Michael

Production Company: Shadow Pictures, Defender Films, Unison Films, Two Canoes

Running Time: 85 minutes approx

Starring: Jemaine Clement, Taika Waititi, Jonathan Brugh, Cori Gonzalez-Macuer, Stu Rutherford, Jackie Van Beek

Director of Photography: Richard Bluck, DJ Stipsen

Editors : Jonno Woodford-Robinson, Yana Gorskaya, Tom Eagles

Original Music Plan 9

Production Designer: Ra Vincent

Hair and Makeup Designer: Danelle Satherley

Costume Designer: Amanda Neale

Casting: Tina Cleary & Loren Taylor

CONTACT:

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SHORT SYNOPSIS:

Flatmates Viago, Deacon, and Vladislav are three vampires who are just trying to get by in modern society; from paying rent and doing housework to trying to get invited in to nightclubs, they're just like anyone else - except they're immortal and must feast on human blood.

When their 8000 year-old room-mate Petyr, turns 20-something human hipster Nick, into a vampire, the guys must show him the ropes and guide him through his newfound eternal life. And in return they are forced to learn a thing or two about modern society, fashions, technology, and the internet. But it's the introduction of Nick's human friend, Stu, that really changes the vampire's lives and attitudes towards the ever-changing world around them.

When Stu's life is threatened, the vamps show us that maybe humans are worth fighting for, and that even though your heart may be cold and dead, it doesn't mean you have no feelings.

ABOUT THE PROJECT



This feature is based loosely on a short film that Waititi and Clement made in 2005. Although it has been 8 yrs since they came up with the idea, this certainly proves that good things take time, but vampire mockumentaries take about 8 years.

Waititi and Clement co-wrote, co-directed and co-star in the 85-minute film, alongside a host of their NZ comedy peers, including Cori Gonzalez-Macuer, Jonny Brugh, Jackie Van Beek and Rhys Darby. The film was shot between Wellington locations and a sound stage in Miramar, utilizing a lot of local crew and talent. The interior of the house was entirely created from recycled materials by Ra Vincent, and the costume and make-up design was created by Amanda Neale and Dannelle Satherly, both of whom Waititi has worked with on his previous features.

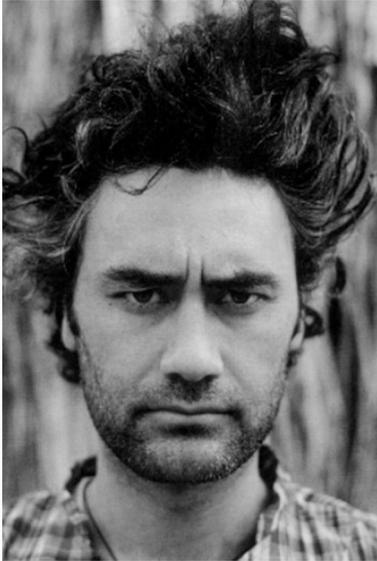
The shooting took place over 5 weeks starting in September 2012 and completed with one week of pick up's in August 2013. It was entirely improvised around a script that Taika and Jemaine had written, but didn't show to the cast. Because of the random and often prolonged nature of the improvised takes, the guys came away with about 125 hours of footage from which they needed to create 90 minutes of story. Therefore the editing process took almost a year, with the post and VFX being addressed slowly throughout.

The sound mix and final grade were all completed at Peter Jackson's prestigious Park Road Post facility in Wellington.

MUSIC

The soundtrack is an eclectic mix of New Zealand, Balkan, Russian, Gypsy, Indian, Punk, and Folk from around the globe; a melting pot of different ethnic vibes and popular contemporary pieces held together with very deliberate scoring by Wellington film composing legends, Plan 9.

FILM MAKER & CAST BIOS



TAIKA WAITITI - Viago Writer / Director

An acclaimed artist, comedian, writer, actor and director, this is Taika Waititi's 3rd feature film, and the first in collaboration with his long time comedy mate, Jemaine Clement.

Taika became an international name in 2005 when his short film, *Two Cars, One Night*, was nominated for an Oscar. The concept was eventually expanded to a feature length film, *Boy*, shot in 2009, which went on to break all box office records in New Zealand, becoming the highest grossing local film of all time.

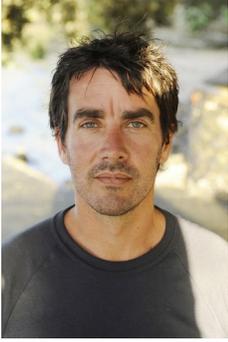
After Jemaine's appearance in Waititi's first feature, *Eagle vs Shark*, Taika became one of the writers and directors on the HBO TV hit, *Flight of the Conchords*, and has since directed for ABC, MTV, and other companies with three letters in their name.



JEMAINE CLEMENT - Vladislav Writer / Director

Jemaine is a New Zealand comedian, actor and multi-instrumentalist, best known as one half of the musical comedy duo *Flight of the Conchords* along with Bret McKenzie. Becoming a popular name in the US with his HBO TV series, *Flight of the Conchords*, Jemaine has gone on to act in some of the biggest films of the last few years, including *Men in Black 3*, *Dinner For Schmucks*, and *Gentlemen Broncos*. He has also lent his voice to animated films such as *Rio* and *Despicable Me*.

Jemaine has spent a lot of time in front of the camera and he now turns his hand and eye to directing. This is his first feature film as a director, teaming up with his mentor and father figure, Taika, extending their creative working relationship.



JONATHAN BRUGH – Deacon

Jonathan Brugh plays DEACON, a young (107 yrs) impulsive vampire who is most affected by the new vampire, Nick. He was also part of the original short film 8 years ago.

Comedian Jonathan Brugh has been performing his unique brand of comedy theatre for over 15 years. He began with the absurdist tragic-comic duo *Sugar & Spice* who won critical acclaim throughout New Zealand and Australia and won the Chapman Tripp Award for best Comic Performance in 1996 and the Billy T Award in 1998.

Jonny has appeared in several local films, including *How to Meet Girls from a Distance* and *Tangiwai*. His television drama credits are extensive and we are thrilled to have him on board the film.

CORI GONZALEZ MACUER – Nick

"A cunning comic who delivers substance by stealth." - theatreview.org.nz

As seen on TV3's *7 Days* and *Jono's New Show!* Cori has been a professional stand-up comedian for over 10 years. In 2006 he claimed the coveted Billy T Award and has performed his unique style of comedy all over New Zealand, Europe and as far afield as the Middle East.

This is Cori's second appearance in a feature film, his first being one of Jemaine's side-kicks in *Eagle vs Shark*.



STU RUTHERFORD – Stu

Stu is new to the acting game and this is his first ever role in a feature film.

Originally a professional in the I.T. world, Stu fell into the role of Stu because of who he was. When Taika and Jemaine were making the original short film, Stu was assisting them because he was Taika's flatmate. When they needed another human character they asked Stu to fill in. His ability to just "be himself" and inhabit the character naturally is what led to the role being reprised for the feature. The

role was written especially for him and no, he did not have to audition.

JACKIE VAN BEEK - Jackie

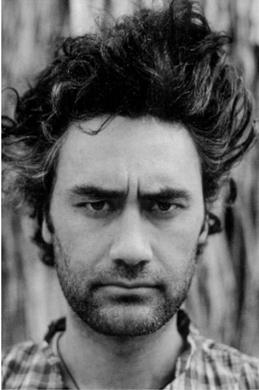
Jackie van Beek works as an actress, writer and director in theatre and film. She lives with her young family in Auckland, New Zealand.

In 2005 she paired up with comedian Jon Brugh to create the twisted comedy, *My Brother and I are Pornstars*. Jackie moved to Australia in 2006 and began making short films. Her films have played in international festivals around the world including the prestigious Berlin Film Festival, London Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival and the WIFT International Showcase. They have picked up a number of awards including Best Indigenous Achievement in the St Kilda Film Festival (Australia) and Kodak Best Film in the Show Me Shorts festival (New Zealand). She is currently in development with her feature film, 'In the Roar'.



PRODUCERS

TAIKA WAITITI



This is Taika's first feature as a producer. He likes the unlimited money and power that comes with the role, but thinks there's definitely too much paperwork involved.

CHELSEA WINSTANLEY

One of New Zealand's most promising new producers, Chelsea has aligned herself with some of the hottest new directors emerging from New Zealand. With a background in documentary directing, Chelsea began producing Television and Short Films with business partner Desray Armstrong, and since then has gone on to make some of the most successful NZ short films of the last 4 years, including having films in competition at the Cannes Film Festival two years in a row - *Nightshift* by Zia Mandviwalla, and *Meathead* by Sam Holst respectively. This is Chelsea's first feature film. Future projects include Waititi's upcoming WW2 drama, *Jojo Rabbit*, and the feature documentary, *Brave*.



EMANUEL MICHAEL



Emanuel Michael is the Founder and CEO of New York-based Unison Films, an Oscar® winning film production and financing company launched in 2004. In addition to producing *What We Do in the Shadows*, Michael is also in pre-production on his fourth film with Oscar® nominee Taika Waititi, the Blacklisted script *Jojo Rabbit*. Michael's recent producing credits include the double films *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby: Him* and *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby: Her* starring Oscar® nominee Jessica Chastain, James McAvoy, Oscar® nominee Viola Davis, Isabelle Huppert, Bill Hader, and Oscar® winner William Hurt which made their world premieres at the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival and will be released internationally by The Weinstein Company; Mike Newell's *Great Expectations* starring Oscar® nominee Ralph Fiennes and Oscar® nominee Helena Bonham Carter; Yaron Zilberman's *A Late Quartet* starring Oscar® winner Philip Seymour Hoffman, Oscar® winner Christopher Walken and Oscar® nominee Catherine Keener; Sean Fine and Andrea Nix Fine's 2013 Oscar®-winning documentary *Inocente*; and Oscar® nominee Fernando Meirelles' *360* starring Oscar® winner Anthony Hopkins, Oscar® nominee Jude Law, and Oscar® winner Rachel Weisz. Michael was born, raised and currently resides in New York City, and is a graduate of Brown University.

CREW BIOS



PRODUCTION DESIGNER - RA VINCENT

Ra Vincent is a Production Designer and Set Decorator currently working in New Zealand. Nominated for an Oscar in 2013 as set decorator for his work on *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*, Ra has had his work recently added to the Academy Library and published in the companion book: *The Art Of The Hobbit*.

With his various skills Ra involves himself in every aspect of the design process, from creating conceptual art to set design and set decoration. With a strong background in sculpture and painting Ra has in the past worked as a Sculpting

Supervisor, Scenic Artist, Construction Forman and an Art Director on numerous New Zealand and International films.



EDITOR - JONNO WOODFORD ROBINSON

Jonno Woodford-Robinson has edited such films as Taika Waititi's debut *Eagle vs Shark* to Peter Jackson's *King Kong*. Woodford-Robinson's other features include ensemble drama *Fracture*, and pioneering Fijian film *The Land Has Eyes*. He has also worked on documentaries such as the environmental film *The Last Ocean* by Peter Young which has been touring film festival this past year. He also edited Tom Scott's TV feature *Rage*. Born in the most southern part of New Zealand, he moved to the capital in the early nineties where he has been editing primarily feature films ever since.



EDITOR - YANA GORSKAYA

Gorskaya received the American Cinema Editor's Award for her first feature, the Academy Award nominated documentary *SPELLBOUND*, which followed eight children on their way to the National Spelling Bee. She had the infinite pleasure of consulting with Taika Waititi on both of his Sundance world competition features *EAGLE VS. SHARK* and *BOY*. Other credits include the dark comedy *ROCKET SCIENCE*, which won the Sundance directing prize for long time collaborator Jeffrey Blitz. Other films at Sundance include Blitz's documentary *LUCKY*, the Miramax comedy *SMART PEOPLE*, and the dramedy *CELESTE AND JESSIE FOREVER*.

Yana frequently consults on both documentary and fiction films. Yana immigrated to the United States from Russia as a child, and is now a dual citizen of France and the US. She received her BA from Columbia University and MFA from USC's School of Cinema Television with numerous honors. She also holds an honorary degree from Whittier College.

HAIR & MAKE UP DESIGNER - DANELLE SATHERLEY

Make up and hair designer Dannelle Satherley has 13 years experience in film and television. She has designed for a wide range of television drama and feature films such as Boy, My Wedding and Other Secrets and is currently working on the historical drama Slow West. She has also worked on such films as the Hobbit Trilogy, River Queen and King Kong.



COSTUME DESIGNER - AMANDA NEALE

Amanda and Taika Waititi have been collaborating since 1998. They first met when Amanda worked as a costume designer on Robert Sarkie's film, Scarfies - which established Taika as an up-and-coming actor. When Taika made the move to feature films, he chose Amanda as his design collaborator. Her work on both Boy and Eagle vs Shark received critical acclaim.



Amanda has worked with other notable New Zealand directors, including Jane Campion, Peter Jackson, and Robert Sarkies. She has assisted costume designer luminaries Ngila Dickson and Michael Wilkinson. Amanda has been working as a costumer for nearly 20 years. Her training began on set, working on studio classics such as Hercules, Lord Of the Rings and Last Samurai. She moved into costume buying for films such as Without a Paddle, King Kong and Avatar. Amanda also worked as a costume designer for the 3D animation Tintin, helping bring Herges illustrations to life, and last year co-designed Jane Campion's acclaimed TV series Top Of The Lake.

Amanda has a passion for costume design, a passion for narrative and helping to create convincing characters in the context of their world. She loves working closely with actors and helping to develop their characters. She believes that costume plays an essential part in creating authenticity and credibility in a character, and can be a vital part of the actor's process.

Amanda enters into the world of the characters alongside the actor and the director - it is this approach, along with her skill and experience that makes her such a unique and sought after collaborator.