



BE GAY DO CRIME: A SEASON OF QUEER CRIME FILMS

The Living End

The Living End

An irresponsible movie by/Directed by: Gregg Araki
©/Production Company: Strand Releasing,
Desperate Pictures

With financial assistance from:
American Film Institute

In association with:

National Endowment for the Arts

Presented by: Strand Releasing, Desperate Pictures

International Sales: Fortissimo Films *

Executive Producers: Evelyn Hu, Jon Jost,

Henry Rosenthal, Mike Thomas

Produced by: Marcus Hu, Jon Gerrans

Co-producer: Jim Stark

Associate Producer: Andrea Sperling

Written by: Gregg Araki

Shot by: Gregg Araki

Lighting: Christopher Münch

Stills: Michael Matson

Edited by: Gregg Araki

Assistant Editor: Tommy Hule

Paintings by: Beth Muehl

Props: Johanna Went

Title Design: Steven Hankinson

Titles Shot by: Mar Elepano

Negative Cutting: Karen Kennedy

Original Music by: Cole Coonce

Benevolent Music Gods [at Waxtrax!]: Matt Adell,

Jim Nash

Sound Designer: George Lockwood

Sound Recording: Dave Cash, Joyce Brouwers,

Jack Kofman

Assistant Sound: Marianne Dissard

Post-production Sound Remixing:

Muscle & Hate Studios

Dedicated to: Craig Lee

Cast:

Mike Dytri (Luke)

Craig Gilmore (Jon)

Mark Finch (doctor)

Mary Woronov (Daisy)

Johanna Went (Fern)

Darcy Marta (Darcy)

Scot Goetz (Peter)

Bretton Vail (Ken)

Nicole Dillenberg (Barbie)

Stephen Holman, Magie Song (7-11 couple)

Peter Lanigan, Jon Gerrans, Jack Kofman

(Three Stooges)

Christopher Mablí (Melrose neo-nazi)

Michael Now (Tarzan)

Michael Haynes (Jane)

Peter Grame (Gus)

Craig Lee, Torie Chickering (Ralph's couple)

J. Sidney Beswick (Buddhist)

Paul Bartel (Twister master) *

USA 1992

84 mins

* Uncredited

Contains scenes graphic violence, scenes of a sexual nature and uses of homophobic language.

SPOILER WARNING The following notes give away the film's ending.

After they're both diagnosed with HIV, and following an act of violence, a queer odd couple take to the road with the motto 'f--k everything'. From its tongue-in-cheek opening proclamation that describes itself as 'an irresponsible movie' to its nihilistic yet deeply moving ending, *The Living End* is pure Gregg Araki – boisterous, uncompromising filmmaking from a pioneer of New Queer Cinema.

bfi.org.uk

A contemporary review

'Fuck the world', screams the graffiti in the opening shot of this self-styled 'irresponsible movie by Gregg Araki', which is dedicated to 'the hundreds of thousands who will die because of a big White House full of Republican fuckheads'. This anarchic shout reverberates through Araki's low-budget, high-octane film. Executive produced by Jon Jost, the guru of the no-budget movie, *The Living End* has an energy that belies its impoverished finances. The pace is fast-forward, and though it was shot on 16mm, its Californian sun-scalded images easily stretch to 35mm. Aesthetically and politically this is an instant film. It is immediate, desperate and intentionally disturbing, with its two HN positive heroes, lonesome cowboys for the 90s, who take to the road to get lost to an America that has betrayed them. Like *Swoon* and *Poison*, *The Living End* is a queer tale that makes a virtue out of the connection between homosexuality and criminality. In a rampantly homophobic culture Luke and Jon are inevitably beyond the law.

To begin with, Araki's movie is almost playfully picaresque. The pair encounter a succession of archetypes *en route*, ranging from two women in an open-top Chevrolet (a manifestly lesbian Thelma and Louise) and a trio of thugs out for gay blood, to quarrelsome couples in car parks. The depiction of women is open to criticism, particularly in the case of the wife who murders her philandering husband after reminding him that the fashionably bisexual 70s are over. But she belongs with the other pop-up ciphers who are negligible in the final analysis. Besides the two male protagonists, the only other rounded character is Darcy. She is a sympathetic presence who somewhat redeems Luke and Jon, and a touchstone for the audience as the two lovers skid out of control (although the role is hardly the caricature 'fag hag' it has been accused of being, it is weakened by Darcy Marta's irritatingly melodramatic performance).

Sex and death drive *The Living End* forward, shadowing it with a terrifying fatalism. Indeed, death is figured everywhere, from bumper car stickers to cut-away shots of wasted bodies. The studiously morose Jon (his music heroes include such poets of angst as Joy Division, Echo and the Bunnymen and

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The Living End

Tue 22 Aug 20:40; Mon 28 Aug 14:30

My Brother the Devil

Thu 24 Aug 17:50

Female Trouble

Fri 25 Aug 20:45

Fresh Kill

Sun 27 Aug 13:20

Dog Day Afternoon

Sun 27 Aug 18:15

Bound

Thu 31 Aug 18:10

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Morrissey) writes his thesis on 'The Death of Cinema' in his room decorated with Godard and Jarman posters. This *fin de siècle* necro-romanticism suggests, a little too self-consciously, that culture is about to implode. Meanwhile, cool Luke, a James Dean *manqué*, taunts Jon with a 'Live young, die young and leave a beautiful corpse' credo. With his bare bronzed torso, his fashionably ragged jeans and cigarette hanging from the corner of his mouth, he represents the homoerotic ideal of hard masculinity. This iconography is echoed in the hoardings advertising Marlboro cigarettes and cowboy boots that flank the roads during the couple's journey. The libidinous Luke endows their relationship with a remarkable sexual charge. The eroticism disappears, however, in the shockingly poignant final scene when Luke seeks ultimate abandonment in self-annihilation while telling Jon that he loves him more than life. This uncompromising and uncomfortable equation of sex with death makes *The Living End* a film dangerously lacking in hope, which leaves its two heroes stranded on the beach.

Lizzie Francke, *Sight and Sound*, February 1993

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

S.O.U.L Fest Opening Night Preview: Brother + Q&A

Fri 1 Sep 20:10

S.O.U.L Fest Shorts and Awards

Sat 2 Sep 14:10

Brian Cox: 50 Years on Screen

Tue 5 Sep 18:00

Manhunter

Tue 5 Sep 20:20

Film on Film: Mildred Pierce on Nitrate

Fri 8 Sep 18:15

TV Preview: Boiling Point + Q&A with actors

Vinette Robinson, Stephen Graham, Hannah

Walters, Stephen Odubola, director Philip

Barantini and writer James Cummings

Thu 14 Sep 18:15

Doctor Who: The Five Doctors

Sat 16 Sep 12:00

Mark Kermode Live in 3D at the BFI

Mon 18 Sep 18:15

50th Anniversary: The Exorcist + intro by Mark Kermode

Mon 18 Sep 20:20

TV Preview: Ghosts + Q&A

Tue 19 Sep 18:15

Attack the Block + panel discussion

Thu 21 Sep 20:35

Danny Dyer in Conversation

Mon 25 Sep 18:20

Preview: The Old Oak + Q&A with director Ken Loach and writer Paul Laverty

Tue 26 Sep 18:00

Jung Jae-il in Conversation

Sat 30 Sep 18:10

REGULAR PROGRAMME

Experimenta: Jane Arden: Explode the Language

Sat 9 Sep 14:00

Experimenta: The Other Side of the Underneath + Q&A with psychotherapy workshop film

participants Penny Slinger (pre-recorded) and Natasha Morgan, led by Jane Arden focus co-curator Sophia Satchell-Baeza

Sat 9 Sep 17:40

Silent Cinema: The Crowd + intro by Bryony Dixon, BFI National Archive Curator

Sun 10 Sep 15:30

Seniors' Free Matinee: Bronco Bullfrog + intro and Q&A with Ian O'Sullivan, BFI Library and special guests tbc

Mon 11 Sep 14:00

Art in the Making: Punch and Judy. Tragical Comedy or Comical Tragedy + intro by Jez Stewart, BFI National Archive Curator

Tue 12 Sep 18:20

African Odysseys: Ama: An African Voyage of Discovery + intro by His Excellency Papa

Owusu-Ankomah, Ghana's High Commissioner Q&A actor Georgina Ackerman and director Kwesi Owusu hosted by film lecturer, Imruh

Bakari

Sat 16 Sep 16:30

Relaxed Screening: Good Morning (Ohayō) + intro and discussion

Mon 25 Sep 18:30

Projecting the Archive: Miranda + intro by Josephine Botting, BFI National Archive Curator

Wed 27 Sep 18:10

Film Wallahs: Kuch Kuch Hota Hai + intro

Sun 1 Oct 13:00