

TRUTH AND LIES

Writer-director Simon Rumley wraps *The Truth Game*

While his debut feature, *Strong Language*, played recently at the National Film Theatre - before UK release on video and DVD - independent writer-director Simon Rumley was busy wrapping on his follow-up, *The Truth Game*.

The second in a proposed trilogy, *The Truth Game* is a witty drama on the lives of six young Londoners - and one outsider - at the end of the last Millennium. All old friends in their twenties, their concerns are similar - work, play, relationships, money, drugs, cars, pasta - and their approach is upfront.

As they settle down for a dinner together, events unfold to turn some of the jokes to truths and some of the truths to lies. As the evening passes, it becomes harder to tell one from another.

Says Rumley: "The film's actually an investigation into what truth really is and whether or not it matters in society today. I've always found it very interesting that the truth is something we're told should be adhered to... but in fact the pillars of society, the ones who tell us to be truthful, are actually the ones who are anything but."

"*The Truth Game* is about a bunch of reasonably average, youngish people living in the city. They're all getting on with their lives, not necessarily rosy, but equally so not in a f***** up way. As a group they actually all get on well with each other. But they're also lying to each other and the audience is the omniscient all-seeing eye."

Shot on location in Islington, the cast features Stuart Laing (*Three Steps to Heaven*), Jennifer White (*The Wild Life*), former model Selina Giles (*Crocodile Shoes*), Thomas Fisher (soon to be seen in *Simon Magers*), Tania Emery (*Strong Language*) and Paul Blackthorne (*Peak Practice*).

"After completing *Strong Language*, I applied for a Lottery grant to make *Club Le Monde*, another part in the trilogy. Nobody in the British film industry would take the bait when we showed them the script," says Rumley, 31.

However, one of the assessors was Piers Jackson who had liked *Strong Language* and read *Club*



Le Monde's script, and was interested in doing something. He and his partners in Screen Productions Associates green lighted the *Truth Game* project."

Says Jackson: "We liked the dialogue-lead script and with six characters and one location the story was very self-contained. We liked Simon's acute observation and refreshingly impish sense of humour and we also liked it because there were no explosives!"

Whereas *Strong Language* was shot for just £32,000 with Rumley acting as director/producer working with just a cameraman, boom and sound, *The Truth Game* has a full crew headed up by DP Alistair Cameron and editor Colin Sherman.

With a budget of \$1 million, the film has been shot in 80 per cent documentary style handheld camera using Fuji.

"I am quite excited about using this stock," comments Cameron, who was also DP on Tony Harrison's epic film poem *Prometheus*. "We're using all fast stock which can look very gritty on 35mm - the look that Simon wants."

"So far the results are excellent. This is such a fast shoot, doing up to 40 set-ups a day, we haven't had time to light extensively and it's been interesting to see how the stock copes with mixed colour textures. Zapping through it at this rate, it's been very



difficult to refine to give the stock a chance. So for me this has been a film to test the blow up potential of Fuji."

Rumley's trilogy was conceived in 1995 when he wrote a script which, he admits, was influenced by Richard Linklater's slacker classic *Dazed and Confused*. The first of the three, *Club Le Monde*, was written, cast and ready to go when finance was pulled at the last minute.

"Not wishing to waste time or the availability of this group of hotly emerging acting talent that we'd cast, I wrote *Strong Language* and shot it on a microscopic budget. Now it's a case of the film that hasn't been made spurring the other two and being pitted against the vagaries of the British film industry." ■ *MARTHA GEAR*

The *Truth Game* was originated on Fujicolor Motion Picture Negative

Photos main: the cast of *The Truth Game*; left to right, Selina Giles, Stuart Laing, Tania Emery, Paul Blackthorne, Jennifer White and Thomas Fisher; inset: *The Truth Game* Writer/Producer/Director Simon Rumley; Rumley with crew on the set