

STRONG LANGUAGE

UK press cuttings



CDs they'd bought, the last five films they'd seen, ten things that they liked about London, the things they hate, what jobs they've done. I needed their input for improvisation."

The narration underwent ten drafts. With the monologues, Simon worked closely with each actor and much was improvised. But there was to be no improvisation on set. Everything to the minutest detail, mannerisms, pauses, etc, had been worked out before the cameras rolled. The topics cover a broad sweep of issues that affect the young – sex, drugs, clubs, music, work, money. "Some of it's funny," says Simon, "and some of it's quite poignant. But there are no morals in *Thon*. We shoot them in the head."

"People underestimate the beauty of conversation, the effect it has on viewers. People respond to it. I take great inspiration from Richard Linklater. In *Slacker* there is no story whatsoever, it shows you don't need a narrative drive to make a film that people want to see. In order to compete with the establishment – be it Hollywood or Channel 4 – you've got to do something they wouldn't dream of doing. Which is what I hope I've done with *Thon*."

Rumley is obsessed with youth-culture cinema but he has to tread carefully – the track record of British films that try to chronicle youth culture have been, on the whole, embarrassing.

"The problem is scripts that needed improvement. *Trainspotting* is an excellent film, but you can argue that it isn't really about youth culture. It proved our generation is starved of cinema they can identify with, but there is a demand for it. Figment Films, the team behind *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting*, have all of a sudden kicked the British film industry up the arse."

There's little to dispute that cinema is the most vibrant and exciting art form of this century and Simon is the hungry to get stuck in. Rather than wait for months for a reply from Channel 4 – who receive 5,000 scripts a year – or a big break writing an episode of *Casualty*, Simon has put his hand in his pocket and done the best he could. But it is not possible to operate fully outside of the established industry, and for him there's still the distribution deal to negotiate, which will involve knocking on the big corporation doors.

"I don't read Nietzsche," comments Simon, "but I've got a book of his quotes and one of them says, 'It's not enough to be talented, you need to have permission to be talented.'" •