

STRONG LANGUAGE

UK press cuttings

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OPENED **JANUARY 28**

Starring	David Groves, Paul Tonkinson, Kelly Marcel, Julie Rice
Director	Simon Rumley
Screenwriter	Simon Rumley
Details	1 hr. 16 mins. Cert. 18 UK

Mock documentary in which a bunch of twenty and thirtysomethings talk sex, politics and more.

Made on the sort of budget commonly referred to as "shoestring", and providing a great showcase for a bunch of unknowns, Simon Rumley's debut feature finally nabs itself some cinema space nearly four years after it was made. And while it suffers somewhat from the obvious cost constraints, it's still curious to consider that this spirited, clever little picture has been on the shelf for so long.

Taking on a documentary style that, like *The Blair Witch Project*, mixes film stocks with black-and-white footage, the 16 characters — ranging from the

colourful and eccentric (a fetish model, a hippie tarot expert), to the vaguely annoying (a bike fanatic, an upper-crust "It" girl), basically spend the film airing their views on everything from sex and politics to clubbing, restaurants and beer. While each piece of footage initially appears unrelated to the next, a 17th character — a narrator whose face is only gradually revealed as the action progresses, fills in some of the gaps, telling a disturbing story which ultimately provides some surprising and deceptive plot structure.

Strong Language suffers slightly in its abundance of characters — not all of them are completely convincing, and it takes some serious concentration to keep up with 17 people over such a slender running time. But the script is observant and witty, despite the fact that some of the material has unfortunately dated (in particular a protracted sequence discussing the merits of Blur's then-topical *Parklife*), the cast engaging and enthusiastic, and the direction highly promising, with Rumley avoiding any self-consciously hip tricks and focusing instead on his characters and retaining audience intrigue. It's unlikely to be seen by many



people, but it's a first feature that's certainly worth checking out if the opportunity presents itself. ★★★

CAROLINE WESTBROOK

THE KNOWLEDGE

- ◆ *Strong Language's* budget was actually a measly £50,000
- ◆ Actor Paul Tonkinson was a presenter on BBC2's short-lived *The Sunday Show*.

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