



A man and a woman are lying in bed, looking directly at the camera. The woman is on the left, wearing a white bra and dark shorts. The man is on the right, shirtless and wearing white shorts. The bed has a white pillow and a patterned blanket. Numerous banknotes are scattered on the floor and bed around them. The lighting is warm and intimate.

**THIS IS A STORY ABOUT LOVE**

NoW Films (Bunning Naked) Ltd



# AND FRIENDSHIP

NoW Films (Running Naked) Ltd

A medium shot of two shirtless men standing in a boxing ring. The man on the left is wearing a dark grey knit beanie with a brown and orange stripe at the top. He has a neutral expression. The man on the right is bald and has a slightly open mouth, as if speaking or reacting. The background shows a large window with a view of a building and a red boxing ring rope.

**AND STREAKING**

NoW Films (Running Naked) Ltd

# THE STORY

Mark and Ben have been friends since meeting as teenage cancer patients.

Twenty years later, Mark is a successful, womanizing doctor while Ben has become a neurotic recluse – a prisoner of his own obsessive rituals and wacky habits.

A dramatic piece of news upends their lives and challenges Mark and Ben's friendship to the core.

To break Ben out of his shell, Mark stakes everything he – and Ben – has, and drags his mate on an adventure that will change both their lives.





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# SYNOPSIS

We first meet MARK DOHERTY and BEN TAYLOR as rowdy fourteen year-olds, streaking through the corridors of their hospital ward. Ben has a distinct knack of getting into trouble and Mark has a distinct knack of hanging out with Ben.

Twenty years later and the situation has reversed: Mark is an assertive, successful oncologist while Ben is a recluse who relies on a series of odd rituals to take a step out of his apartment.

Every year Mark and Ben need a medical check-up. But because of Ben's phobias, Mark goes to Ben's flat to get a blood sample. Here we see the full extent of Ben's OCD: doing everything to the count of five, carrying a beloved sponge ball, and working a dead-end job. The only event on Ben's planner is a weekly dinner with Mark.

Meanwhile, Mark's relationship with his girlfriend JADE DAS - a specialist at his hospital - is on

the rocks. She is tired of him flirting with other women and avoiding commitment. When Mark receives the results of his and Ben's blood tests he becomes alarmed.

Although Mark keeps the results a secret, he rushes to Jade, pleading with her to take him back. She refuses but Mark misses a weekly dinner with Ben in the process, promptly freaking Ben out. Mark decides to take a radical step that he hopes will break Ben out of his shell once and for all.

Mark takes Ben to the roof of his loft. With a grand view of Manchester in front of them, Mark gives Ben a copy of his blood test - Ben's leukemia has relapsed.

Ben quickly goes into neurotic overdrive. Mark argues that they should both jump off the roof -

CONTINUED

# SYNOPSIS

that it should be their final and most dramatic adventure together. Ben mercifully runs away.

Mark ups the ante yet further when he organizes an impromptu leaving party at Ben's work. He loads all of Ben's – and his – possessions into his car and, with Ben in tow, hawks them on the high street.

Their adventures continue: they lose all their money, they spend the night in jail, win a fortune at the dog track, meet a couple of nice girls – including SARA UNDERWOOD, they capsize a boat...

Ben, reluctant at first, begins to show flashes of his older self. But Ben is mortified when he learns that Mark faked the test results – Mark made Ben think he was dying in order to force

him out of his rut. How could Mark betray him like that? But Ben is slow to see the other side of the story – that Mark is the one who is truly ill and that the tests were own.

Mark does not tell anyone about his illness and instead plunges himself into his work. Meanwhile Ben gets on with his new life. Ben passes by the café where Sara works every day, eventually building up the courage to go inside. Jade meanwhile – not knowing of Mark's illness – continues to reject his advances.

Eventually the truth of Mark's illness comes out. Will Ben throw off his paranoia about hospitals and reconnect with Mark? How should Jade respond? How will Mark cope with his illness? Can he correct the mistakes he's made in the past?





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A cinematic still from a film showing two men sitting and talking. The man on the left has light brown hair and is wearing a light blue shirt under a grey sweater. The man on the right has dark hair and is wearing a teal t-shirt under a dark green jacket. The background is a plain, dark grey wall. The lighting is soft and focused on the subjects.

# A CRISIS

NoW Films (Running Naked) Ltd



**IS A TERRIBLE THING**

NoW Films (P) 2011



**TO WASTE**

NoW Films (Running Naked) Ltd

# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

**RUNNING NAKED** is a comedy with a soulful edge. At the heart of the film are Mark and Ben, roles for two fantastic actors. The film's humour and pathos comes from the interplay between these two characters. The set will be a free space where actors can find the heart of the story.

We will use portable cameras (e.g., Alexa Mini), real locations and real people as bit-players. I will draw on my extensive documentary experience to get the most out of this approach. Shooting from unusual angles on long lenses will give the film an unique, cinematic look.

Inspirations include 'Beginners', an acutely-balanced comedy-drama, and the intimate style of 'Blue Valentine'.

My favorite filmmaker is John Cassavetes, director of many films including 'Husbands'. That film is forty-five years old, but it has an ageless wit. I've never seen a more intense film about male friendship.

The main message of **RUNNING NAKED** is that humour is our best ally in challenging circumstances. I aim to build on Cassavetes' philosophy to create a comedy drama with a true heart – a film that, yes, makes you both laugh and cry.

NoW Films (Running Naked)

A street scene from the movie 'Taxi Driver' featuring John Cazale and John Cazale. The man on the left is wearing a dark jacket and a t-shirt with a cartoon character. The man on the right is wearing a brown jacket and holding a briefcase. A woman in a blue hoodie is walking away in the background. The text is overlaid in yellow.

**"ALL YOU HAVE TO DO  
IS NOT PRETEND"**

**- JOHN CASSAVETES**

A photograph of two women sitting at a bar. The woman on the left is wearing a blue floral top and looking towards the camera with a neutral expression. The woman on the right is wearing a black top with a white collar and looking slightly away from the camera. The bar has several beer taps with labels like 'LEAVIN' and 'CARLING'. There are various bottles and glasses on the bar. The background is a wall with more bottles and a metal mesh. The text 'CAST & CHARACTERS' is overlaid in large yellow letters across the middle of the image.

# CAST & CHARACTERS

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# MARK

**DR. MARK DOHERTY**, 30s, seems to have it all. Good looks, an important job, a sharp sense of humor, and a winning smile. Of course, perhaps inevitably, behind it all is a man who doesn't really know himself. A man who believes that everything in life, including himself, is all too temporary. Mark refuses to be pinned down.

A shadow has always chased Mark: cancer. Mark's mum, who was an English teacher, died from the disease when he was 22. And it wrecked his childhood before that: he was diagnosed with leukemia as a 15 year-old. The silver lining is that, beside him in the ward, he met Ben. The two have been friends since.

Mark receives a piece of news that changes everything. He decides to use this news to pry Ben out of his shell. But, as he does this, Mark become conscious that of the shell he has built around himself. If he can save his friend, maybe he can begin to save himself? But is too late? Can he win back ex-girlfriend Jade? Can he leave a more permanent mark on the world?



# MATTHEW MCNULTY

is a terrific actor from Manchester recently known for such films as *The Syndicate*, *The Mill*, *The Musketeers*, *The Terror* and about to be released *Domina*.

# BEN

What happened to **BEN TAYLOR**? The world seems to have gotten away from him. Ben has folded into himself. He's an obsessive, locked in the prison of his own mind. Now in his 30s, Ben survived cancer as a teenager. Ben now only feels safe relying on inflexible habits and strictly self-imposed schedules. He even counts out his obsessions to the number '5'.

Mark has remained Ben's friend since they were teenagers. Now a doctor, Mark informs Ben that his leukemia has returned, and that Ben only has a few months to live. He leads Ben, kicking and screaming, through a series of adventures that, hilariously and painfully, help Ben to unlock his self-imposed prison. Ben tastes freedom until he learns that Mark was lying to him: Ben is perfectly well. Ben is upset, especially as there is a truth behind Mark's lie that hits hard. Now more than ever, Ben determines to break out of the cycle of his obsessions. He needs to prove that he can lead a functional life, which means approaching a girl he likes – Sara. He, like Mark, has to take some risks and run naked, finally free of some of his inhibitions.



# ANDREW GOWER

has recently been seen on *Black Mirror*, and is known for his role as Prince Charles Edward Stuart in *Outlander*. He appeared in Jon Stewart's *Rosewater*, joined the fourth season of *Being Human*, and is a lead in Amazon's *Carnival Row*.



# JADE

**JADE DAS**, 30s, is a talented obstetrician. She has dedicated her whole life to delivering and to saving babies. So how could she be nearly forty without any kids herself? All those hours on call and on rotations have gone by in a flash. She decided to go quids in for Mark, believing that he wanted to settle down. Mistake. In theory, Jade and Mark are perfect for each other. They are both high achievers, and dedicated doctors. Jade can match wits with Mark, but she has realized that Mark is still trapped inside himself. Jade pushes on, so adept in many other aspects of her life, but tired of running toward a horizon. She has to make a decision that empowers her: but which turn should she take?



# RAKHEE THAKRAR

is a brilliant actress from such TV series as *EastEnders*, *Page Eight*, and *Cloud9*. She recently appeared in the Netflix series, *Sex Education*.

# SARA

**SARAH UNDERWOOD**, late 20s, Sarah is a likeable and funny. She is artistic, creative but not always as confident as she should be. She thinks Ben is a total weirdo when she first meets him – well, most people do? But Sarah has her own idiosyncrasies and her own secrets to bear (witness the scars on her arms). And she realizes that Ben has a genuine heart. She understands the courage it takes for him to get over his awkwardness. Now can she overcome her own?



# TAMZIN MERCHANT

is best known for her roles as Georgiana Darcy in the 2005 film *Pride & Prejudice*; Catherine Howard on the Showtime series *The Tudors*; Annie Hale in the US series *Salem*; and Imogen Spunrose in Amazon's *Carnival Row*.

# EVIE

Evie works in the laboratory, doing blood work for the hospital. She is young, dynamic and dreams of a more glamorous life. She has a crush on Mark, the most eligible doctor in the hospital where she works.



# SACHA PARKINSON

has been acting since she was eleven. She is best known for *Awaydays*, *Coronation Street*, and *The Crash*. Her career spans multiple films and TV series.

# LOTTIE

Lottie owns a local restaurant named 'Baby Russets'. She dreams of becoming the next Jamie Oliver. But for now, keeping her customers fed is job #1. She hired Sarah to work as a waitress at her restaurant.



# EMMA STANSFIELD

is an actress from Wales, recently appearing in multiple TV series like, *Jamie Johnson*, *Doctors*, and *The Tudors*.



## DIRECTOR

**VICTOR BUHLER** is an award winning writer-director with projects featured on HBO, Showtime, Discovery, BBC, and more. His dramatic work includes directing the comedy-drama series 'Sirens,' as well as 'Foreign John,' both for Channel 4.

A graduate of Harvard and Tisch, Victor directed six episodes of the BAFTA-winning drama 'Belonging' and the Academy Award-nominated dramatic short 'Chaperone,' executive produced by Martin Scorsese. Victor's feature documentary work includes the Emmy-nominated 'Rikers High,' 'The Beautiful Game,' and 'A Whole Lott More.'



## PRODUCER

**MICHAEL KNOWLES** is an award winning and BAFTA nominated producer. His most recent feature film 'Away' starring Timothy Spall and Juno Temple, premiered Edinburgh Film Festival. Other prior projects include: 'Birthday,' starring Stephen Mangan, written by Joe Penhall ('The Road'), directed by Roger Michell ('Notting Hill') and 'Best Laid Plans' starring Stephen Graham & Maxine Peake.

Michael's work has been released through Sony pictures and sold to the BBC. He's proud to have been mentored by Andrew Eaton through the UK's Guiding Lights scheme.

# Dirty Robber

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

**DIRTY ROBBER** is an LA film production company.

Dirty Robber have produced a number of award-winning documentary series and features including 'Breaking2' for National Geographic, 'Kobe Bryant's Muse' and 'Shut Up And Dribble' for Showtime, and 'Behind the Cam' for Apple Music.

They were nominated for a short film Oscar for the drama 'Buzkashi Boys' directed by Sam French. The company is led by Martin Desmond Roe and Chris Uettwiller /



## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

**MARK FOLIGNO** is a producer who is and has been involved in a number of Film & TV businesses in the UK. Including most recently being a founding Partner of CoreStar Media.

Mark has a strong track record in the commercial and creative side of the media business. In 2003, he bought Molinare, transforming it into one of the largest privately owned Editing and Post-Production companies in the UK. He co-produced and executive produced BAFTA winning 'Moon', and 4 Time OSCAR winner and 7 Time BAFTA winning 'The King's Speech'.



## COMPOSER

Craig is the songwriter and keyboardist for the band Elbow, who have released seven studio albums, including their latest 'Little Fictions'. All their albums have reached the top 15 of the British album charts.

Elbow have won the Mercury Music Prize in 2009 for their album 'Seldom Seen Kid' and the Brit Award for Best British Group.

