

## Alexis John Bicât - Personal Statement

I was born in London to a fine art painter and a playwright. My dad is of Chechen, Russian, French and Irish descent and my mother is English.

I started in the arts performing professionally at a young age at Chipping Norton Theatre. Leading roles in *Aladdin*, *Robin Hood* and *Ernie's Incredible Hallucinations* led to small parts in TV movies *Christmas Present* (Channel 4 TV) and *Inappropriate Behaviour* (BBC).

Originally a kit drummer, I was classically trained on the trumpet, became principal in the Oxford County Music School Orchestra and played cornet for Chipping Norton Silver Band. At seventeen, I was offered the drummer's job in pop band *Ride* which I turned down.

Pre-gentrified Chipping Norton was rural, rough and parochial. Weekend binge drinking and bullying were rife, and being a gentle effeminate boy, I had two stand-up knockdown fights every three weeks for ten years. In rural working-class England, violence has always pervaded the lives of young men, and this was very much normal life.

The world of film was my escape route. My grandmother's lover introduced me to WC Fields, Laurel and Hardy, Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, The Marx Brothers and The Three Stooges. At sixteen I gathered a small crew of people together and made a feature length movie. It was a life affirming moment and a spring board to get out.

After six months soul searching in Nepal and Tibet, I studied English literature and Film at the University of North London and the City University of New York. I lingered in New York for two years. Being part of American society helped me understand that movies exist on a bedrock of shared social themes.

Returning to England, I directed the Raindance Film festival, co-directed the third largest film market in the world, co-founded the world's first ever online film market and produced and then directed two critically acclaimed, award-winning shorts *To Catch a Crow* and *Noise Control*. Both short films were released theatrically nationwide.

The early success opened doors all over town but the London film scene was not immediately receptive to an angry young man from a rural comprehensive. Plus, my focus on being a producer/director meant I had no written work to pitch. So, I left England again. This time for California, where I reluctantly decided I had to learn to write.

While living between a tent on the side of a mountain in Big Sur and a home in the Hollywood Hills I was accepted into an indigenous American community in Ventura, dated a Hollywood star, worked as a bartender, carpenter and volunteer firefighter, and developed five feature length films and one TV show bible.

Returning to the UK my heist movie was optioned by Barry Hanson (*The Long Good Friday*) and Michael Wearing (*Edge of Darkness*).

The calling to be a filmmaker never goes away. Development. The tug of being on set. Working with creatives. Lights. Camera. Action. Post production. Directing genre movies with universal social themes where regular joes must uncover something deep inside to overcome extreme situations. In short, independent movies with breakout potential.

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