

RACHMAN- e m p i r e o f d i r t

A REDSPUR/LAB ENTERTAINMENT FILM



INTRODUCTION

The 1950s "Never Had It So Good" generation experienced in a few years more social change in Britain than had occurred in the previous century - the old class divisions were fracturing as the nation rose from the rationing and mediocrity of post-war inertia, the sounds, styles and tastes of new cultures were impressing themselves on public life, and young people had a voice for the very first time. This is how the 1950s became the 1960s, and the turning point was the perfect storm of **SEXUAL SCANDAL, GANG VIOLENCE** and **MEDIA FRENZY**. In the middle of this storm was a portly balding Polish exile named Peter Rachman. He brought the new West Indian immigrants into Notting Hill, he hosted parties for Stephen Ward, Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice Davies, and he took on the Krays with a street-by-street gang warfare in West London.

RACHMAN - Empire of Dirt is the story of the man who lit the fuse that exploded into Swinging 60s London. It's a story that has never been told before.

SYNOPSIS

An exiled Polish Jew, Peter Rachman reinvents himself in post-war England as a notorious slum landlord providing housing to a generation of new immigrants. Beneath the unexpectedly charming, successful exterior is an anguished man whose fractured identity reaches out for affection, acceptance and status to the bizarre gallery of high and low-lives who are drawn to him (among other adventures, his relationships with Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice Davies ensnare him in the major political story of the Profumo affair). His increasingly desperate juggling of finances, girlfriends and tenants careers out of control, igniting the tinderbox that sparks the Notting Hill riots, and he finds that no matter how powerfully he recreates himself, the concentration camp guard is always at his shoulder.

It is a story that resonates on many contemporary themes – the fractures and fissions of large scale immigration, civil disturbance, the smoke and mirrors of the capitalist project, the collapse of public faith in political systems, the cult of celebrity – and a film which, while period set, expresses that narrative in a compellingly modern way.

It is the tale of a man who flees the abyss and builds an empire, only to find that what he has created is a palace in which to house the nothingness he fears.

Peter Rachman arrives at an English resettlement camp, and makes his own way to London with the intention of finding some way to scrap and scrape an existence. Existence is no small feat to Rachman, he suffered both in Nazi and Russian labour camps, and as a result both his body and mind are severely traumatised



Possessed of an extraordinary and charismatic will to survive, and finding his fractured psyche to be peculiarly in tune with a society undergoing profound cultural shifts in its structures and self image, Rachman discovers an appetite and instinct for capitalism. Unnervingly quickly he presides over the creation of an apparent empire fuelled by property lettings to prostitutes and new immigrant workers – the people no-one else will open any kind of door to. These people are not only a great opportunity, which he seizes, for material gain, they are also people he profoundly empathises with – the dispossessed, the alienated, the abused. In them he sees himself. He employs as rent collector one Michael DeFreitas, later known infamously as 'Michael X'.

The combination of such powerful empathies and appetites, with a profound need to belong, to be affirmed and endorsed, gives Rachman unusual access to all areas of a shifting, uneasy nation. Chameleon-like, he adopts the language, attitudes and behaviours of **down at heel jazz musicians as well as faded aristocrats and the nouveau riche – nightclub singers, actors** and the like, as the very first signs of a culture of celebrity become apparent. He is at the heart of everything. His acquisition and letting of houses in Notting Hill is directly responsible for the culture clashes that arise there in the 1950s, his pursuit of respectability and a sense of belonging has him rubbing shoulders with political leaders and high society, and his ravenous appetite for another kind of confirmation brings him into intimate contact with two girls from the suburbs who are about to be the focus of a major political scandal.

Rachman is a complex and contradictory character - compulsive womaniser, and yet a devoted husband; a man who wore tinted glasses, sharkskin suits and drove a white Rolls Royce, yet craved anonymity; who obsessively accumulated cash, and yet was capable of great generosity; mid-20th Century Man personified, a rootless, stateless, psychologically dispossessed, isolated individual in search of a home and an identity. In his coping with trauma, his re-invention of his own identity, his will to have impact on a world that has so cruelly impacted on him, and in his increasingly frantic, near-insane attempts to pack away and compartmentalise the conflicts and tensions his survival evokes, Rachman takes us into the realm of mythology. He is a character the size and complexity of Citizen Kane, as compelling and charismatic as The Godfather, and as poetically selfdestructive as Kurtz, his story told in the form of a **psychological thriller** in which we witness **the struggle and collapse of a compelling personality**. The intention is to tell Rachman's story from behind and through his eyes – to capture the frantic energy and damaged soul of the subject. Like one of Francis Bacon's tense, provocative character studies of that period, everything on screen becomes part of Rachman and his perception of the world; he dominates the canvas.



By turns **funny and frightening, attractive and monstrous, energetic and depressed, subversive and needy**, we can never fix Rachman firmly in our moral compass, just as soon as we make a judgement about him he defies it. And ultimately we must question his own sense of himself – he has strived so hard to reconstruct the self, he may have locked him permanently away from himself. We stay with him because he takes us on a powerful, giddy ride, a truly cinematic experience which will not leave us outside the filmhouse. Our audience will have to take a bit of Rachman home with them. Which bit they choose is up to them.

VINCENT O'CONNELL - DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Creating the cinema that serves the story involves a very simple precept. Stay with Rachman. We know the world of the film only as the world apprehended by Rachman, it is the world he has created for himself and anything we know of it, we know through him. A simple idea, which affects every aspect of the story telling – shooting, design, soundtrack, everything is there to evoke the world as it impresses itself to Rachman, and Rachman as he impresses himself on the world. The film starts and finishes essentially inside Rachman's skull, and there is a sense in which we never leave there. This means that, in all cases, what we depict is either Rachman in his world, or the world which Rachman sees. What we see beyond and through this is the detail of the world at large – **1950s Soho, country houses, Notting Hill tenements, basement jazz clubs, as well as a Russian wasteland and snaps of wartime Warsaw** – and they impress in all ways, through photography, language, gesture, music and clothes. This is Rachman's dream, Rachman's nightmare, in which a memory, a fear, a longing, a fantasy all have the same reality and status as the present fact. As in the tale, so too in the telling, all that occurs happens either to or through Rachman, and every artistic decision will help articulate that fact

We start the film in what looks and feels an extreme place – emotionally, aesthetically, in every sense – a man on the edge of physical and psychological collapse, and a world caving in on itself. It is a shock. Then very quickly we are taken back to the start of Rachman's reinvention of himself, as he enters a resettlement camp in England. As we take that journey with him, the extremity of vision now takes gradual hold, so that by the time we arrive back at our point of departure, it no longer feels extreme. It now makes sense, because we have travelled with him – and development of a lens narrative, shooting and editing styles all take us on that journey. And the shock we must then experience is one of complicity, gradual acceptance of the unacceptable Rachman's personal journey takes him back to the Polish ghetto, where he and so many others committed the ultimate human crime – “I did the worst possible thing. I turned my face away.” In his moment of self revelation both he and we see how this **charming, funny, charismatic** force of nature could be complicit in **evictions, beatings, abuse and exploitation**.



Music is a big part of Rachman's world. Rachman hears for us the lounge sounds of crooners and their aching torch songs, and recoils to the shock of the new as both American bebop and South African township jazz add their amazing new rhythms, and later the primeval backbeats of Ska from the West Indies immigrants and that first bright, open chord of Hard Day's Night, which says that nothing will ever be the same again, all add to the **layers of song, rhythm and melody** which orchestrate his giddy psychosis. Underpinning it all, a pulse, sourced in memory, suggesting themes that not even music can express, the deep rhythms of Gorecki and his hymn to the slain. The rest is silence.

The artistic decisions about how to tell this story happily also render it a story that can be told at a low budget – we are filming a whole complex world, but filming it as filtered through one man's warped psyche. It is a serious film and is demanding of its audience. It is also **sexy, funny, unnerving, violent and mysterious**. It is a film that will appeal to a worldwide audience, telling a universal story in a compelling, properly cinematic style.



THE TEAM

Vincent O'Connell (Writer/Director)

Vincent is a writer and director in theatre, film, radio and television. His feature film ID won the Audience award at the Valenciennes Film Festival and was shortlisted for best screenplay by the Writers' Guild of Great Britain, his film CRIMINAL won Best Television Drama for the Royal Television Society, SWEET NOTHING won Honorary Mention at the San Francisco Film Festival and he wrote and directed the BAFTA winning education film BEYOND THE BOUNDARY. His direction of the Sarah Kane short screenplay SKIN has won many awards internationally and was showcased at the London Film Festival. He has recently completed a commissioned play for the National Theatre and is soon to deliver for the Lyric Theatre, and has completed a screenplay for Parallax Films/BFI Production – ID2. He directs theatre regularly in his home town of Brighton, and has an extensive current slate of film projects at various stages of development, both as writer and director. ID2 is due for production in late 2014, and his play PLAGUE MYSTERIES is to be premiered in Stockholm in May of his year.

Sarah Best (Producer)

Sarah began her career in film and television production as a teenager in Liverpool before moving to London to work as a junior script editor for Jude Law and Ewan McGregor's Natural Nylon production company in 2000. She met Mark Langthorne during her time as Head of Development in Film and TV for Simon Fuller and Ma Young at 19 Entertainment. Sarah and Mark formed their production company LAB Entertainment in April 2010, along with business partner Marc Almond, with 'Rachman' leading their slate. Sarah continues her freelance work with many established producers and production companies as a script executive and development producer, alongside her role as Head of Film and Television Development and Production at LAB.

Alan Rickman (Executive Producer)

Alan's career spans theatre, film and television as actor and director. His stage credits include 'John Gabriel Borkman' (Abbey Theatre and New York), 'Private Lives' (London and New York), 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses' (London and New York), as well as working at The RSC and The National Theatre. His diverse film work includes the recently released 'A Promise' and 'The Butler' and the Harry Potter series. As a director his theatre work includes 'Creditors' (Donmar Warehouse and New York), 'My Name is Rachel Corrie' (Royal Court and New York) and 'The Winter Guest' (Almeida Theatre). He also directed the film version of 'The Winter Guest', which premiered at the Venice Film Festival, winning two awards, and was judged Best Film at the Chicago Film Festival.



Mark Langthorne (Executive Producer)

Mark Langthorne's first move into the entertainment industry began with Music Management, working alongside many musical icons. Mark's true entrepreneurial passion lies in creating credible, and authentic projects. This is no more visible than in his partnership with the designer Roland Mouret. Mark has been with Roland throughout his career, and is more active than ever as CEO of the world famous fashion brand. It was whilst encouraging Roland's talents in fashion, that he made the move with Roland to Simon Fuller's XIX Entertainment, a joint venture that became 19RM. Under this creative umbrella, Mark acts as a consultant to a huge variety of projects, more recently as Annie Lennox's Creative Director across all upcoming projects. Mark has also managed Marc Almond independently for many years and continues his successes with Marc in the music industry; Marc won the Ivor Novello Inspiration Award in 2013. In 2010 Mark set up the Film, TV and Publishing company, LAB Entertainment, alongside 19 Entertainment's outgoing Head of Development for Film and Television Sarah Best and Marc Almond, which allows him to explore the breadth of these mediums. Whilst acting as Creative Director across all LAB projects, Mark also works on his own original material, including his first novel, the first of the Littlemore Chronicles to be published in 2014. In addition to consulting for a number of entertainment icons throughout the years, Mark has most recently been working with Kanye West on the business development of his fashion brand.



Viviana Marcus (Executive Producer)

Viviana worked at BBC Enterprises, in business and marketing development, reinvesting profits from television sales into BBC television dramas and later for BBC Films that included Truly Madly Deeply and She's Been Away. She is the director of Redspur Films.



Colin Ludlow (Executive Producer)

Colin has worked extensively as a script editor and producer, spending much of his career at the BBC but with credits latterly in the independent sector. He has produced many feature-length films for television including Not Even God Is Wise Enough, directed by Danny Boyle, and This Could Be The Last Time, directed by Gavin Millar. On-screen talent he has worked with ranges from Tim Roth and Emma Thompson to Dames Wendy Hiller and Joan Plowright. Among his other productions are The Scarlet Pimpernel, starring Richard E Grant, an acclaimed dramatization of PD James' An Unsuitable Job For A Woman, and two-seasons of award-winning shorts by emerging writers and directors

Amanda Bannister (LAB Entertainment)

Amanda Bannister is a Film and Television Lawyer with 22 years experience and now practises as an independent business affairs consultant advising production companies as well as individuals. Amanda trained as a media lawyer at Denton Hall where she practised for 8 years leaving to become one of the founding team of Popworld: Simon Fuller's ".com" music platform and highly successful, long running television series. In 2006 Amanda joined Simon Fuller's 19 Entertainment to handle legal and business affairs for 19's scripted development, film and television division, working with Sarah Best and Mark Langthorne. Amanda left in 2008 to set up her media business affairs consultancy which she now runs and her clients include XIX Management, a number of independent production companies such as Keo Films, Fresh One, Nutopia and Renegade Pictures as well as individuals including presenters, composers, artists, photographers and fashion designers. Amanda spent 6 months in 2012 as acting CEO for Renegade Pictures. Alongside Amanda's business affairs consultancy, Amanda is LAB Entertainment's Commercial and Business Affairs Director with responsibility for commercial, business and legal matters for the Company.

Lucy Tucker (LAB Entertainment)

Lucy Tucker has been working within Film & Television, Publishing, Fashion and Music Management since 2008. Lucy's skill sets are somewhat unique due to her diverse roster of projects and a long standing working relationship with Mark Langthorne across several companies; including Simon Fuller's 19/XIX Entertainment, Roland Mouret, Marc Almond, LAB Entertainment and also a range other projects outside of these banners. Lucy currently works as the Head of Music and Production, and Development Coordinator within LAB Entertainment, as Co-Manager of Marc Almond and new signing, singer/songwriter Sam Ford, and works closely alongside the CEO of the fashion house Roland Mouret. In 2013 Lucy produced LAB Entertainment's first short film in conjunction with Roland Mouret, Stable Films and InStyle Magazine.

Suzanne Reid (Co-Producer)

Suzanne started her career in Film and Television at Channel 4 working on numerous sponsorship and branding campaigns. After leaving Channel 4 she decided to concentrate on her first love, feature films, and since 2005 she has worked as Production Manager on Feature Films 'The Flying Scotsman', 'Stone of Destiny', 'The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus', 'Valhalla Rising', 'The Eagle', 'One Day' and 'Railway Man'. She also line produced low budget films 'Outpost', 'Up There' and 'Shell'. She recently Co-Produced 'What We Did On Our Holiday' with Origin Pictures.



ARTISTIC ASSOCIATES

Marc Almond (Music Supervisor)

Marc Almond is an internationally successful, critically acclaimed and award winning artist, singer, songwriter, musician and performer. After teenage years in Theatre groups, and five years at Art College studying Fine Art, Performance Art, Theatre and Film, he formed Soft Cell with musician David Ball with whom he had a string of hits including the international number one Tainted Love. He has pursued a diverse solo career since 1983 during which he had another international number one Somethings Gotten Hold of My Heart, as well as recording songs of French Chanson and Russian Folk, experimental electronica, dance music and cover songs as well as keeping true to his love of Pop Music.

In recent years he has returned to theatre productions such as 'Ten Plagues' which won an Edinburgh Festival First Award, the experimental Rock Opera Poppea at Paris' famous Chatalet Opera House, and 'The Tyburn Tree' with award winning Composer and musician John Harle.

In 2010, Marc formed LAB Entertainment with Mark Langthorne and Sarah Best which has since expanded with Amanda Bannister and Lucy Tucker completing the team, with a view to developing interesting projects in Entertainment, Film, Television and Music. Marc is a Creative Director and Consultant for LAB with a special interest in the musical side. As well as other projects, he is currently in the process of developing 'Rachman' with Lab after purchasing a share in Vince O'Connell's wonderful script. It is currently the project most dear to his heart.

Roland Mouret (Costume Supervisor)

For over a decade Roland Mouret has created the most coveted of women's wear collections. The designer has defined the era of the iconic dress which have become known by a single name - Galaxy, Titanium, Moon – and have earned Mouret a reputation as magician, master of structure and silhouette and as a man with an intuitive understanding of the female form.

Mouret was born in Lourdes, France. His mother worked in a hotel as a waitress and his father was a butcher. He first learned about fabric while working in his father's shop, watching the folding of the butcher's apron and learning to fold it to reveal a clean aspect, seeing the pattern of the blood on the white linen. He learned to cut from watching the way the skin of an animal is sectioned and divided with the knife. A confidence, a directness and boldness, informed his aesthetic and his approach defined by these early memories.

Roland's childhood in Lourdes inspired the concept for LAB Entertainment's first short film project, with his creative involvement across all aspects at its heart. The film was premiered by the British Fashion Council at London Fashion Week 2014.

BUDGET

Suzanne Reid has produced a third draft budget with a grand total of £2,030,473 based on a 6 week shoot.

The budget and schedule are available from **Sarah Best** on request.

RACHMAN CONTACTS

For further information on the project please contact:

Sarah Best

sarahbest79@gmail.com or sarah@labentertainment.co.uk
07801017469

Mark Langthorne

via LAB Entertainment Production and Development Coordinator

– **Lucy Tucker**

lucy.tucker@rolandmouret.com
07990 973019

Suzanne Reid

suz.reid@me.com

Viviana Marcus

viviana@marcus99.fsnet.co.uk
07729 897312

Vincent O'Connell

e.vince@btinternet.com
07715 467038
www.vincentoconnell.co.uk



ROOMS
TO LET