



Q&A with Director Zak Hilditch (*These Final Hours*)

As a writer/director, what do you look for in terms of finding the right project to take through the development process?

So far I've really just generated my own projects that I've taken through development. I guess an idea that has enough meat on the bone to withstand the war of attrition that is the development process is what generally keeps me going. If the core idea isn't strong enough, you soon find out.

Premiering at MIFF and supported by the [MIFF Premiere Fund](#), *These Final Hours* follows the struggles of a few people living their last hours on Earth as the world is about to end. What made you decide to focus on these specific characters?

The main character we follow in the film is James, a guy in his 30s who is ready to move on from his hedonistic, party lifestyle and settle down with the woman he truly loves. The problem is he's scared to truly commit as he knows hedonism is the pain-free way to experience the end of the world. I felt this would be an interesting dilemma for my main character to have to deal with as chaos reigns around him.

The film involves an impressive cast including Nathan Phillips (*Wolf Creek*), Daniel Henshall (*Snowtown*) and Lynette Curran (*The Boys*) amongst others. How did you prepare them to play these roles that demanded such a heightened level of performance given the extraordinary stakes?

I think it's impossible to know how we would really react if we knew the end was nigh, but the best thing about my main cast is they were all given a character that was reacting in a completely different way from one another, eg: denial, acceptance, fear etc ... So it was fun to explore the full gamut of emotions through them. It was relatively easy to prepare the cast as I was lucky enough able to work with such extraordinary actors who had all connected with the material in such profound ways.

Are you more interested in the emotional journey of characters facing the end of civilisation or would you also love to have the chance to direct a big budget Hollywood film about it?

I'd love to have a crack at a big budget Hollywood film with a bunch of great characters dealing with the end of times. Where do I sign up?

What are your favourite films in this apocalypse sub-genre?

28 Days Later, *12 Monkeys*, *The Quiet Earth* many old *Twilight Zone* episodes.

Although a serious drama, was there a lot of humour on set about the end of the world between takes?

There were many, many fun times between takes. Nathan Phillips helped keep the mood very light.

I'm sure you've spent time thinking about what you would do if the world came to an end. Can you share your thoughts with us?

I'm not sure but I know it wouldn't be pretty.

What are you most proud about regarding this project?

The fact that we managed to pull it off. There were so many amazing people that worked on this project, I just feel privileged to have even been put in a position to get my story on the screen.

The [MIFF Premiere Fund](#)-supported *These Final Hours* is screening on the following dates:

Friday 2 August, 9.15pm at Greater Union / Tuesday 6 August, 6.30pm at ACMI / Saturday 10 August, 4pm at Hoyts.