

LIVING SPIRIT PICTURES PRESENT

WHITE ANGEL

PETER FIRTH HARRIET ROBINSON DON HENDERSON

Director of Photography JON WALKER Production Design MARK SUTHERLAND Sound PAUL LORD
Music HARRY GREGSON WILLIAMS Screenplay CHRIS JONES & GENEVIEVE JOLLIFFE Producer GENEVIEVE JOLIFFEE
Director CHRIS JONES

Copyright Living Spirit Pictures Ltd All rights reserved

“THE MOST CONVINCING
PORTRAYAL OF A SERIAL KILLER
EVER PUT ON FILM...”

BRIAN MASTERS
(AUTHOR OF DENNIS NILSEN'S AND JEFFREY
DAHMER'S BIOGRAPHIES)

“UNPRETENTIOUSLY GRIPPING
AND SOLIDLY COMMERCIAL”

FILM REVIEW

“TERRIFYING”
MARIELLA FROSTRUP

“MESMERISINGLY GOOD AND A
TRIUMPH OF BRITISH
INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION”

LFF

“CHILLINGLY IMPRESSIVE...SO
SCARILY SINISTER IT MAKES
PSYCHO LOOK LIKE AN OLD
EALING COMEDY”

NME

“EXTRAORDINARILY WELL
MADE...WHITE ANGEL HAS AN
INDEFINABLE HAUNTING
QUALITY...GROTESQUELY
COMPELLING”

STARBURST

“STYLISH, SLICK AND VERY,
VERY FRIGHTENING”

SELECT

“UNASHAMEDLY
ENTERTAINING”

VOX



Living Spirit Pictures Limited, Ealing Film Studios, Ealing Green, London, W5 5EP Direct Line 0181 758 8544 Voice Mail/Fax 0181 758 8559
email mail@livingspirit.com Web Site www.livingspirit.com

PRESS CUTTINGS

THE LONDON FILM FESTIVAL HANDBOOK
October 1993

CENTREPIECE FILM

15 MON 16.00 & 21.00 ODEON WEST END 1

White Angel

Dir: Chris Jones



UK 1993

Scr: Chris Jones, Genevieve Jolliffe

Leading players: Peter Firth, Harriet Robinson, Don Henderson, Anne Catherine Arton

R.t: 92 mins

UK Dist: Living Spirit Pictures

White Angel heralds the arrival of two young, talented filmmakers: producer Genevieve Jolliffe and director Chris Jones. More a film about serial killing than about a serial killer, White Angel offers a novel and very British view, whilst dealing with the complex (subtle?) differences between manslaughter and murder. Leslie Steckler (Peter Firth) is a soft-spoken dentist who rents a room in Ellen Carter's (Harriet Robinson) house. She is a successful writer on criminal psychology who is being hounded by the police in connection with her husband's

disappearance. Meanwhile, London is in the grips of a serial killer, 'the White Angel', and the dentist and the writer become entangled in a dangerous game of blackmail. The plot is full of surprises, twists and turns (all best left untold) that keep you on the edge of your seat, relying on powerful psychological devices and avoiding unnecessary gore. In many ways it's a first in its chilling (fictional) portrait of a very British way of serial killing. Mesmerizingly good, and a triumph of British independent production. *Rosa Bosch*

Bright lights...

TOM RIDGEWAY finds the Big Smoke illuminated by the best from the world of cinema with this year's LONDON FILM FESTIVAL



Ellen Carter finds happiness is a warm gun

Making a killing

***White Angel* Monday 15**

Filmmakers in the US have for years been making independent films, free of the mainstream film industry. It is not, however, the usual practise in this country where the TV companies now provide most of the financing. *White Angel* made their film from privately raised funds and they have created an unashamedly commercial film. As director Chris Jones, comments "Commercial is not always synonymous with crap."

However, unlike Danny Cannon's *Young Americans*, Jones' debut keeps a decidedly British feel to it. It is not just a calling card for Hollywood but an attempted different take on the British film. London is

in fear of a serial killer, the 'White Angel'. Ellen Carter (Harriet Robinson) is a writer who specialises in the psychology of killers. Suspected of the murder of her husband by Inspector Taylor (Don Henderson), she takes in a lodger, dentist Leslie Steckler (Peter Firth). Slowly the two become engaged in a game of blackmail and intrigue that takes over their lives.

Never resorting to slasher movie cliches, the movie plays more like a psychological drama exploring themes such as the differences between murder and manslaughter and personal dependency. Some of the usual Hollywood faults appear in the movie. There are

several plot gaps but the script is for the most part compelling. The games that the two leads play are tautly scripted creating genuine tension in their encounters. Robinson and Firth give notable performances, fully realising the characters.

What makes *White Angel* admirable is the way that the conventions of Hollywood filmmaking have been used to make a very British film. The excitement builds through character, not cheap effects - although there are a few of those too. The genre of the serial killer movie is already overcrowded but *White Angel* is a quality entrance to the field. Very entertaining and yes, it is very commercial.



We believe serial killers are not monsters.' Genevieve Jolliffe and Chris Jones, stars of the London Film Festival

THE NEW HOT SHOTS OF BRITISH FILM

In their short working career (three years), Chris Jones, 25, and Genevieve Jolliffe, 23, have set up their own production company and co-written, produced and directed a feature length film.

Jolliffe is officially the youngest female feature film producer in the world (her first feature film, *The Runner*, was made when she was 19).

Understandably, they're feeling quite pleased with themselves; they are still buzzing from their trip to the Montreal Film Festival, where their debut feature, *White Angel*, was premiered. People are no longer put off by their youth ('It's a big disadvantage when distributing -I've grown a beard and Gen wears glasses'), and are beginning to take them seriously. Back home, they were greeted with 'at least 20 faxes, hundreds of messages, and six US companies making distribution offers'.

Jones' first creative steps on the home-movie front were, in his own words, 'pretty sophisticated zombie movies. They had no story, no plot. It was just a good excuse to do special effects, lots of exploding heads, that sort of thing'. He and Jolliffe met at Boumemouth Film School. Disillusioned with the way the school was

run, they left before graduation, taking with them 'the psychotic element that film school gives you; you believe anything is possible'.

Jones describes *White Angel* as 'a dark, psychological thriller'. It tells the story of a serial killer, Leslie Steckler (Peter Firth) aka The White Angel. Avoiding the sensationalism of *Silence Of The Lambs* or the gore of *Henry, Portrait Of A Serial Killer*, the film focuses instead on the killer-next-door who can blend into his surroundings. 'We believe serial killers are not monsters; what they have done is monstrous, but they are not born killers, they are made killers.'

The duo are keeping their next project firmly under wraps: 'We don't want Hollywood stealing our ideas.' Time instead to concentrate on the London Film Festival, and the inevitable faxes, phone messages and distribution offers that will follow.

VICKI REID

White Angel is the centrepiece in the British Film section of the London Film Festival and will be screened on November 15 at the Odeon West End, London WC2

FILM REVIEW

WHITE ANGEL

HHHH

Stars: **Peter Firth, Harriet Robinson, Don Henderson**
Director: **Chris Jones**
Certificate: **18tbc**
Running Time: **1hr 32mins**
Opening Date: **Apr 15**

Criminal psychology expert becomes entangled in the horror and mystery of a serial killer.

Crime writer Ellen (Robinson) lets a room in her suburban house to mild-mannered dentist Leslie Steckler (Firth). London is at fever pitch over the killings of the 'White Angel', who brings death to women in white. Ellen herself is being doggedly pursued by Inspector Taylor (Henderson) following her husband's disappearance.

Soon Ellen develops her own fearful fascination with Leslie, especially when long-term lodger Mik moves out. A cat-and-mouse scenario of blackmail unfolds; but will either emerge unscathed, or uncharged by the Inspector? There's many a complex twist *en route* to the verdict.

Coolly appraising the delicate balance between murder and manslaughter, this is a remarkably effective film about killing which glamorises no killers. The careful low-key photography by Jon Walker, crucially integrating video documents, is absorbing and frequently chilling in its affects. Peter Firth especially personifies this, but the leads all contribute to the all-too credible atmosphere.

Centrepiece of last year's London Film Festival, this first feature from Chris Jones and partner/producer



White Angel 'Effective'

Genevieve Jolliffe (who raised the capital themselves soon after leaving film school) augurs well for independent British film-making as an industry rather than art - and, naturally, for their own careers. Unpretentiously gripping and solidly commercial, White Angel deserves more than a little glorification.

Mark Wyman

H

STAY AT HOME!

HH

OK

HHH

GOOD

HHHH

RECOMMENDED

HHHHH

EXCELLENT

ENTERTAINMENT

The Scotsman (Full Page) 16th April 1994 Page 21

In warm blood

FILMS

CHRIS BROOKMYRE

WHITE ANGEL

(15) PETER FIRTH, HARRIET ROBINSON
DIR: CHRIS JONES

A FEW years back a critic (who shall remain nameless) attempted to excuse the inevitable box-office humiliation of a typically self-indulgent piece of British art-house fare on the grounds that "its champagne taste may prove too rich for an audience reared on popcorn". Offensive as this statement was, it nonetheless served to illustrate the reason why so many British films do no more than briskly burl round the festival circuit before plugging a few holes in rep programmes: not just a failure, but a fundamental and contemptuous *refusal* to address the country's own cinema-goers. These are the subsidy junkies: film-makers whose projects are largely financed by public money which is more or less written off, thereby relieving the film of the tedious burden of actually having to find an audience. Finally released, the movie barely makes dollar one, so when the film-maker plans his next project, it's out with the begging bowl again.

When Chris Jones and Genevieve Jolliffe plan their next picture, they'll have a head start on the financing, because *White Angel* will have made them a profit. Guess why.

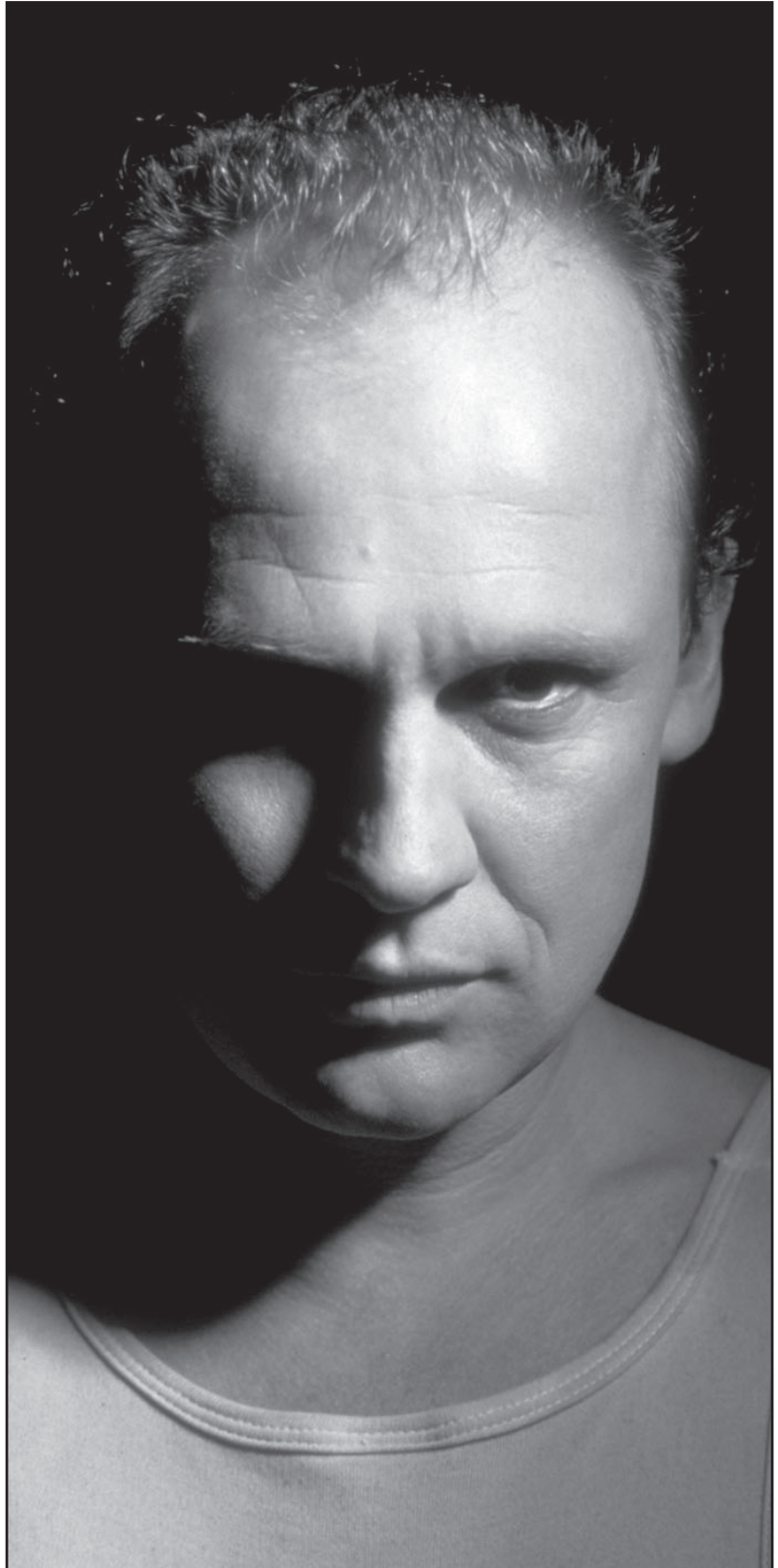
Correct.

There's a serial killer stalking suburbia, dubbed the White Angel by the tabloids because a figure in a white dress and flowing blonde hair has been spotted fleeing the scenes of the murders. The media are afoam with the possibility of the UK's first female serial killer. But it's not a woman, it's Leslie Steckler (Peter Firth), a dentist whose unassuming charm and gentle manner make him a terribly *British* murder hobbyist, towards the Brian Cox end of the Lecter Scale.

Ellen Carter (Harriet Robinson) is also a killer. She's a crime writer who put the last full stop in her husband's story a couple of years back, but without a body the police couldn't get her to autograph her work. She lets her spare room to Steckler, who has had his eye on her from afar and soon - literally - unearths the evidence of her big secret. Knowing that the police net is closing, he blackmails Carter into writing a book about him, so that once he's inside, his crimes will be understood.

From here the plot concerns itself with Carter's attempts to escape Steckler's web, but far more fascinating is her probing of the killer's psyche in a series of disarming straight-to-camcorder interviews. These are at the heart of Firth's grimly believable performance; he squints at the light and squirms at the questions before ultimately turning the camera on Carter and teasing out the details of her own crime.

Admittedly the plot is as leaky as the St Mirren back four - for two so successfully evasive killers, they do leave a lot of highly illustrative evidence lying around - but this is compensated by two strong central performances, which lend the film credibility and generate a genuine sense of claustrophobia. And for all its flaws, *White Angel* represents a welcome British manifestation of the guerrilla film-making ethic that gave us movies like *The Evil Dead*, *She's Gotta Have It* and *El Mariachi*, and for that deserves to be encouraged.



Driller Killer : Peter Firth, mild-mannered dentist with the killer touch in Chris Jones's *White Angel*

Film crew shocked by coincidence of killings

BY ALISON ROBERTS
ARTS REPORTER

A NEW film about a serial killer was shot 100 yards from Cromwell Street, Gloucester, where the remains of nine women have been found buried at the home of builder Frederick West.

White Angel goes on general release next week, but was made two years ago. The film's plot revolves around a killer of 14 women who buries the bodies in his back garden and bricks them up in the walls of his home.

The cast and crew, who often parked their cars in Cromwell Street, were said to be "deeply shocked" by the macabre coincidence. Preparations for the film's release were being made at the time when Mr West was arrested and charged murder.

Chris Jones, the film's director, said: "This is absolutely uncanny. We shot quite a few scenes in the next street along from Cromwell Street and some of the parallels with what happens in the film are quite deep."

Don Henderson, who plays a hard-nosed detective on the trail of the serial killer, said that the connections were "odd, chilling and rather frightening. It's almost as if reality is imitating art," he said.

White Angel will be screened in cinemas across the country from April 15. It also stars Harriet Robinson as a crime writer and Peter Firth as the murderer. The film, which has a 15 certificate, will not be shown in Gloucester itself because of its sensitive subject matter.

□ Frederick West makes his fifth appearance in court today as police continue their search for bodies at two locations. It will be the first time all nine murder charges are publicly put to Mr West. At his appearance a month ago the ninth set of human remains had yet to be found at 25 Cromwell Street.



April 1994

WHITE ANGEL

Director: Chris Jones
Starring: Peter Firth, Harriet Robinson, Don Henderson (*Pilgrim*)

Murder and blackmail bring crime writer Ellen Carter (Robinson) and her lodger, dentist Leslie Steckler (Firth), together in an unusual partnership he reveals himself as a serial killer; she reluctantly agrees to write his story to let him explain his actions.

The script (co-written by director Jones) starts off weakly, but once past the clichés, it remains clever, manipulating its audience in an almost ashamedly entertaining manner.

Robinson is not as commanding a performer as the excellent Firth or Henderson as the raspy police inspector, but she plays her crucial role well enough to sustain interest.

Though *White Angel* may not have enough visual oomph to compete with its Hollywood counterparts, it's a decent alternative and for quality of content, much more satisfying. Its impressive, sharp ending will leave you smiling.

White Angel

Leslie Steckler, a mild-mannered dentist, likes to dress up in frocks and murder women in white - hence his nickname, 'the white angel'. Ellen Carter is a crime writer who kills her abusive husband in a fit of rage. She is also Steckler's landlady. When Steckler discovers the body of Ellen's husband he makes her a deal: he won't got to the police if she writes his life story (without bias). Not only has writer-director Chris Jones, aged 24, come up with an intriguing premise for his first film, but he has directed it with a commendable lack of melodrama, soliciting natural-

SELECT

MAGAZINE

April 1994

A genuinely chilling psychology-of-a-killer movie is the subterranean-budget, British made **White Angel**. Peter Firth stars as the anally fastidious dentist Leslie Steckler who moves in with Ellen Carter (Harriet Robinson) a crime-writer who has killed her husband.

Steckler's a uniquely English take on the serial killer, he's Richard Briers in *Ever Decreasing Circles* turned pathological murderer. He's the kind of creepy suburban obsessive who starts off insisting on replacing the telephone receiver the right way round, and ends up making tea for expired houseguests arranged in an awkward sprawl on his sofa. "The real problem, he confides, as if hosting a Swindon cable DIY show. "is the blood. Such a lot of it. Made a terrible mess of my car."

The film fully exploits its dormitory-town context: Steckler kills his wife over the sandwiches at a picnic; he tells us his story by filming himself with his video camera; Carter buys a gun from a small-time villain who's wearing a party hat and bearing the automatic in a giftwrapped box because he's in the middle of celebrating his kid's birthday. Although limited by its budget, details like this make *White Angel* stylish, slick and often very frightening - everything you don't expect from British movies.

FILM REVIEW YEARBOOK

istic performances from his two leads. The result is a chillingly real drama that is not above keeping its audience in uncomfortable apprehension. (JC-W)

Cast: Peter Firth (Leslie Steckler), Harriet Robinson (Ellen Carter), Don Henderson (Inspector Taylor), Anne Catherine Arton (Mik), Harry Miller (Alan Smith), Joe Collins (Graham), Caroline Staunton, Mark Stevens, Inez Thorn, Ken Sharrock, Samantha Norman, John Bennett.

Dir: Chris Jones. Pro: Genevieve Jolliffe. Screenplay: Jones and Jolliffe. Ph: Jon Walker. Ed: John Holland. Pro Des: Mark Sutherland. M: Harry Gregson-Williams. Costumes: Sheena Gunn. Sound: Wyndham Vincent. (Living Spirit Pictures). 92 mins.

The Daily Telegraph

How to make a killing

Instead of moaning about the state of the industry, two young film-makers went out and raised money for their new thriller themselves. They talk to David Gritten

GIVEN the gloomy state of our film industry it is more than a little noteworthy that *White Angel*, a small low-budget movie about a serial killer made by two young debutant British film-makers, opens on Friday in 15 cinemas, three of them in London. But there's more: producer Genevieve Jolliffe, 24, and director Chris Jones, 26, who also wrote *White Angel*, financed it wholly through private investors, without major distributors' backing. To seek comparisons for such an underdog triumph one must think in terms of Stalybridge Celtic winning the FA Cup.

How often do we hear that the British film industry is dead? Yesterday David Puttnam said that if Hollywood was like the Coca-Cola Corporation then European attempts to make films were like "the home-made lemonade business" Perhaps, but there is an astonishing amount of fizz left in the British lemon bottle and young film-makers on this side of the pond have proved time and again that a little ingenuity goes a long way.

British films have been financed privately before, but one of two things usually happens. Either the producers' mothers and fathers lose all their money and the film never makes it into cinemas, or a major film distributor steps in to save the film's tottering finances and assumes control of its destiny.

White Angel, astonishingly, has avoided both traps. "We've already told our investors they'll get their money back," says Jones, "and we've done it without any help from a big film company. We've kept control all the way."

He and Jolliffe persuaded some 50 people - most of whom had never invested in a film before to put sums ranging from

£50 to £30,000 into *White Angel*.

"We said to people 'Don't mortgage your house. Treat this like a flutter on the Grand National - with the knowledge that we have some inside info.'"

Making *White Angel* was a long, hard slog which started two years ago. Cast and crew worked for deferred fees, among them Peter Firth (currently in *Shadowlands*) as the mass killer with a distinctive way of dispatching his victims, and Don Henderson (from TV's *The Paradise Club*). Instead of having a script to show potential investors, Jolliffe and Jones scraped together enough money to get the film shot in 19 days.

"Then we edited a lot of scenes together to show some new investors what it was about," says Jolliffe. "They put money in. And some of the original investors saw what we had and tripled or quadrupled their investment." Eventually they made a distribution deal with a small company called Pilgrim.

But Jolliffe and Jones are vague about the exact finances of *White Angel*. They say it cost "under a million pounds" but their sheepish smiles suggest the real sum was far less. "When you sell a film," Jones admits, "the buyers look at its cost. They won't pay a lot for something that wasn't expensive to make." Already the couple have secured deals in the US, Germany and the Pacific rim.

All of this is good news to their investors, who include Alan Smith, publisher of video and camcorder magazines. He first met Jones and Jolliffe three years ago when his *What Video?* awarded them a prize for their short film *The Thing from Beneath the Bed*.



Chris Jones and Genevieve Jolliffe, who found they had been filming near the scene of real serial murders

"When they came back and said they were setting up *White Angel*," Smith recalls, "I was pleased to invest. I was just backing a hunch." He is the major investor, with a 30 per cent stake. As a tribute, Jolliffe and Jones named a gangster character in the film after him. "From a low base, they've made this film and got a national release," Smith says. "I think they're remarkable."

Equally remarkable is their demeanour. They are down-to-earth, polite, enthusiastic, and confident without being arrogant. Jones, thick-set with a wispy beard, seems even younger than his years; he and Jolliffe, a vivacious young woman with cascading red hair, finish each other's sentences.

They started five years

ago, borrowing £5,000 from Prince Charles's Youth Business Trust. They bought some office equipment and a year later received a further £2,000 expansion loan from the Trust.

Thus their company, Living Spirit Pictures, was born. At first they made Gloucestershire their base, but recently have moved to Brighthampton, a village near Oxford.

"In London we'd be small fish in a big pond," says Jones. "Anyway, people there spend their time talking about it, not doing it." "And there are too many long lunches," adds Jolliffe.

Jones caught the film bug while studying for A-levels. He made a Super 8 film for £50 and showed it at his college in the lunch hour, charging 10p admission. "The whole college turned

out and I got a standing ovation."

Jones, who hails from Wigan, met Jolliffe, from the Isle of Wight, at Bournemouth Film School. She left after six months, and he fell foul of the school's attitude that movies should be politically correct and socially redeeming. After Bournemouth he applied to the National Film School but was rejected as being immature. "They said most of their applicants were 27 or 28," he remembers. "So I'm still not old enough to be there - yet I've made a feature film."

Now they're anxiously awaiting reviews of the film. They had a shock a few weeks ago when it emerged they they had shot a few scenes only a mile away from Gloucester's

Cromwell Street, site of a real serial killer's exploits. Given that a character in *White Angel* boards up a body inside a house, this was uncomfortably close to art imitating life.

If the film is a success, Jones and Jolliffe say they will not be tempted to follow other bright young things to Hollywood. "One doesn't live to make films, one lives and makes films," Jones says.

They have no plans even to leave Brighthampton. Two more films are in the pipeline, and they aim to develop their relationship with investors. "We're anxious not to get too big too quick," says Jones, "because that way lies disaster."

FILM

EDITED BY GAVIN MARTIN

WHITE ANGEL

DIRECTOR Chris Jones

STARRING Peter Firth,
Harriet Robinson, Don
Henderson

RELEASED IN the wake of the Gloucester multiple murder revelations, *White Angel* is a timely look at compulsive and revenge killings. Grounded in suburban sitcom land, its protagonist is the balding middle-aged Steckler (a superb Firth), a dull suburban dentist who moves into the house of crime writer Ellen Carter (Robinson).

But neither character is what they seem: we discover creepy Steckler is the local serial killer and that Carter murdered her husband three years previously before the opening credits are up. When Steckler finds the husband's body bricked up behind the fireplace he blackmails her into writing his biography. During the ensuing cat-and-mouse confessionals, and between the light relief thrown in by Don Henderson's crabby misogynistic old cop, the difference between revenge and repeat killings, survival, psychosis and culpability, becomes horrifically blurred.

A chillingly impressive film, written and produced by two young British film-makers, details are scrupulously observed, and tension is sustained right up until the final twist in the already tourniqued plot. Digging deep into the disturbed, dark psyche of middle class Britain, *White Angel* is so scarily sinister it makes *Psycho* look like an old Ealing comedy.

Sam Steele
NME April '94



Either a very dark comedy, or a strangely ironic drama, *White Angel* is an accomplished British made tale of a true crime writer (Harriet Robinson) who takes in a new tenant (regular Brit character actor Peter Firth). Unfortunately he turns out to be a serial killer - but she can't turn him in, because he's found out that she murdered her husband, and, as a murderer himself, wants to be the subject of her next book. The tension in the suburban house is superbly handled, interspersed with bloody murder scenes and the semi-detached reflections of the killer, as he discusses both his unusual hobby and his victims: "number eight, I think the press called her - she wasn't even one of mine." (DG)

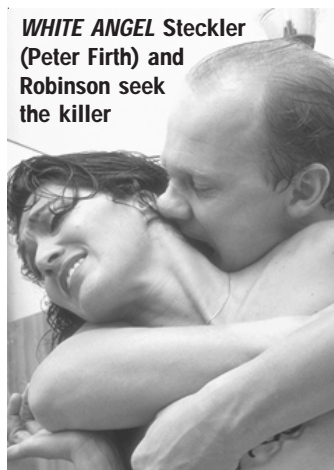
The Guardian Guide Nov '97

PREVIEW

By Alan Jones



WHITE ANGEL Harriet Robinson (Ellen Carter) finds trouble



WHITE ANGEL Steckler (Peter Firth) and Robinson seek the killer



WHITE ANGEL has an indefinable haunting quality

White Angel

Who is the real 'White Angel', the first 'female' serial killer to hold London in a grip of terror? Is it mild-mannered dentist Leslie Steckler (Peter Firth) who hides a blonde wig and a pair of red high heels under his bed? Or could it be crime writer Ellen Carter (Harriet Robinson) personally investigating the mechanics of murder in much the same way Michael Gough did in **Horrors of the Black Museum**? Such is the intriguing premise of Chris Jones and Genevieve Jolliffe's remarkable home movie, made under their 'Living Spirit' banner, shot on location in and around Ruislip, North West London.

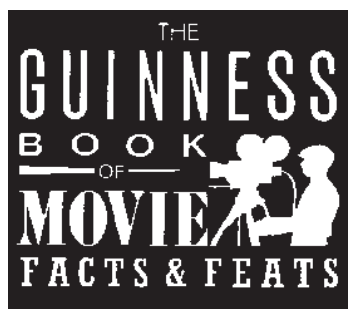
Rather than being the pretentious amateurish bore I was expecting (sorry guys!), **White Angel** actually gripped me until the rush of climactic contrivances and pedantic broadstrokes tended to almost obliterate all the subtle shadings and unusual twists which had gone before. Despite its flaws, obviously due more to financial headaches than any lack of artistry, and occasional cleverclogs attitude, **White Angel** is still another worthwhile portrait to hang in the cinematic rogue's gallery

alongside Henry's one.

Firth must be a godsend to people like Jones and Jolliffe. Someone who is not afraid to go for it all the way no matter how cashpoor a production is. What he did for *The Pleasure Principle*, he doubles for *White Angel* and delivers an utterly convincing portrayal whether in drag, uncovering layers of genteel English dementia or making the most of the kitchen sink atmosphere. Canadian Robinson is adequate in a part needing an unstudied ambivalent attitude to carry it off and Don Henderson as the affable Inspector Taylor is nothing more than another marquee name.

Even so, *White Angel* has an indefinable haunting quality which refused to let me go until long after it had concluded. It could be the documentary style punching it over in the same grotesquely compelling way TV news uses footage of bereaved relatives. Perhaps it was the short, sharp, shock cuts of murder in the first degree providing the slow-burning power. Then again, in perhaps the most direct life from Henry, it could be Steckler's home video of his wife's sudden demise. Whatever, Jones and Jolliffe's labour of love can't be dismissed as just another cheap exploiter. Extraordinarily well made, 'Living Spirit's high maintenance study in tense urban terror heralds the arrival of two very talented individuals whose work deserves to be seen. (Starburst rating: 6)

WHITE ANGEL: Producer, Genevieve Jolliffe. Director, Chris Jones. Screenplay, Jones & Jolliffe. Music, Harry Gregson-Williams. Starring Peter Firth, Harriet Robinson & Don Henderson. 92 mins. Cert R/15. Released America: To be announced. Released Britain: April 15th.



Producers

Britain's youngest producer was 20-year-old Genevieve Jolliffe, who claimed that her 'slam-bang action picture' *The Runner* (GB 91) was turned down for financing by the British Film Institute Production Board because they were only willing to subsidise films which lost money. With start-up backing from Prince Charles's Youth Business Trust, Ms Jolliffe's Living Spirit Pictures raised production money from accountants and dentists with surplus funds at their disposal and the balance of the £ 100,000 budget came from a small-time distributor whose advertisement she had seen in the trade press. Shooting of what the tyro producer claimed was a million dollar American production made on an island off the coast of Canada actually took place in Nantwich, Cheshire, with some underground tunnel scenes shot at a colliery in Wales. The American leading man, Terence Ford, was Harrison Ford's younger brother, desperate to get out of soap opera into feature films.



Britain's youngest producer, Genevieve Jolliffe, was 20 when she made her 'slam-bang action picture' *The Runner* (GB 91).

On the first day of shooting, the 22 year-old director Chris Jones, who had seen the completed script for the first time, asked how many of the 22 strong crew had been on a set before and was somewhat dismayed when no one put up their hand. The completed picture was premiered at BAFTA in the presence of the Prince of Wales, who presented Living Spirit Pictures with an award for the 'most tenacious' business established in 1989 by the Youth Business Trust. It was subsequently sold for cinema, TV or video release in Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Benelux, Yugoslavia, Poland, Turkey, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Korea, Japan, Australia, Canada, the US and UK.

MOVING PICUTRES INTERNATIONAL 10 March 19th

HRH MEETS LIVING SPIRIT

HRH the Prince of Wales became the proud owner of a VHS copy of *White Angel* last Thursday, following a meeting with the film's producer and director,



Royal film performance: HRH, Jones and Jolliffe

Genevieve Jolliffe and Chris Jones. The duo met the Prince, and handed over a VHS of the thriller at St James' Palace, during a presentation-cum-celebration of successful businesses helped by The Prince's Youth Business Trust. Jones and Jolliffe set up their production company, Living Spirit Pictures, with financial assistance from the Trust in 1989. They have since completed two features and are currently in pre-production with their third. "We told the Prince that the British film industry needed a strong base of commercial films to support art films," commented a forthright Jones.

White Angel opens in the UK on 15 April.

VIDEO VIEW March '95

WHITE ANGEL

POLYGRAM

PG 1078

MAY 17

£39.95

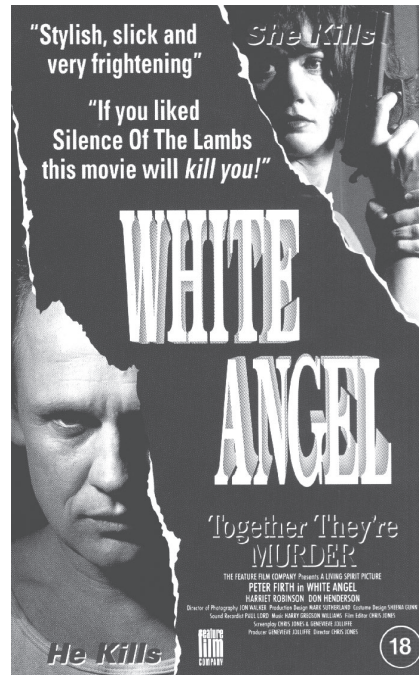
THRILLER, 18

With the dust still flying on the Frederick West serial killer revelations, this taut and eerie thriller receives a timely release.

Any deliberate similarity to the West case is denied but bizarrely the film was shot just a mile away from where he lived - although a year previous to his unmasking. The public's ghoulish interest in the West case, with his wife still in court, should ensure interest in the title.

White Angel stars Peter Firth (Shadowlands) as the cross-dressing serial killer, Harriet Robinson (Love Potion No.9) as the woman he blackmails and Don Henderson (TV's Sweeney) as the hard bitten detective. Its twisting tale unfolds intriguingly and involves copious, though not graphic murders. Renters who favour strongly plotted thrillers should be aimed in this direction.

The effective sleeve should help see this off the shelves as will the coverage



garned in a limited cinema run. The PR push is already hard at work with a double page spread already in the News Of The World. Recommended as a UK Silence Of The Lambs. (Holdbacks: satellite one year; TV two years).

A serial killer moves with a writer and secrets are revealed.

Timely terror

RENTAL ACTIVITY 75%

VIDEO WORLD

May '95



WHITE ANGEL

PolyGram/ Peter Firth,
Harriet Robinson, Don
Henderson / 18/ 94 mins
Release Date - May 17th

Peter Firth was once a flavour of the month blue-eyed boy, giving powerful performances as the disturbed young horse-stabber in *Equus*, and as the weak landowner who rejects his milkmaid wife because of a former liason in *Tess*.

He's worked steadily, though quietly since, with roles in *Letter To Brezhnev* and *Shadowlands*, but this is his first meaty part in a decade and he launches into it like Lestat into a jugular.

Outwardly he's mild-mannered dentist Leslie Steckler, who rents an apartment from former crime novelist Ellen Carter (Harriet Robinson). Ellen killed her husband and bricked him up behind the lounge wall, explaining to neighbours that he'd simply gone abroad. The inspector in charge of investigating the disappearance (Don Henderson) believes she's murdered him, but doesn't have the proof. Leslie, though, uncovers the body, and tells Ellen the price of his silence is for her to write his life story. Leslie claims to be the White Angel, a serial killer who's been attacking women and disposing of their bodies in rubbish bags all over the area.

So begins an elaborate game of wits between the two killers, with Ellen frantically dreaming up schemes to dispose of her tormentor, and Leslie always one step ahead.

For some reason there's been several attempts to draw comparisons between this story-line and the Cromwell Street murders, but apart from the fact there's one body hidden in the house, and two assassins are involved there's little reason to associate them.

What we do have, though, is a cracking thriller with plenty of edge-of-the-seat tension, a creepily restrained performance by Peter Firth, and more twists and turns than a Dune sandworm. Harriet Robinson is equally impressive as the nery author who's never quite what she seems.

It might make you want to keep the light on tonight!

Guide to Review ratings

- * Poor
- ** Good
- *** Very Good
- **** Excellent!

