



School of Life

Filmmuseum Potsdam 15.–19. Mai 2006

Pädagogisches Dossier

Special People

UK 2005

Director: Justin Edgar, Producer: Justin Edgar

Running Time: 12 Minutes 20 Seconds

Won „Best Short Film“ at the Chicago International Children’s Film Festival 2005

„A terrific comedy, which affectionately mocks the earnest, well-meaning but invariably misguided ‘minority arts project’ culture“
(Wendy Ide, The Times)

„I wanted to make a film about how truth can undermine pretension. I felt it was important that the film itself had a ring of truth, so I spent three weeks using my 104 method – improvising with Dominic – who plays Jasper and the three days in challenging conditions on the Malvern Hills in Worcestershire and reality quite often blurred with fiction!“ (Justin Edgar)

SYNOPSIS

Jasper is a film maker on the verge of a nervous breakdown whose latest project on top of a mountain with a cynical bunch of disabled kids might just push him over the edge.

INHALTSANGABE (deutsch)

Filmmacher Jasper versucht, einen „engagierten“ Film zu drehen, mit und über fünf Teenager, die im Rollstuhl sitzen. Als Metapher für ihren täglichen „Kampf“ hat er sich einen Hügel ausgesucht, den sie rollend erklimmen sollen. Die Jugendlichen boykottieren das präntentöse und scheinheilige Projekt jedoch und bringen Jasper erst zur Verzweiflung und dann dazu, den Film so zu machen, dass er ihnen gefällt.

THEMEN

Stereotypen über Behinderte, Selbstbestimmung, Bevormundung, Filmemachen

Der Film zeigt auf unterhaltsame Weise, wie die Welten eines Filmmachers und einer Gruppe an den Rollstuhl gebundener Jugendlicher aufeinanderprallen. Während ersterer einen „engagierten“ Film über ein „Minderheitenthema“ machen will und dabei eigentlich keine Ahnung von dieser „Minderheit“ hat und nur an sich selbst denkt, sind die Jugendlichen frustriert darüber, dass sie scheinbar im Mittelpunkt einer Sache stehen sollen, die in Wirklichkeit nichts mit ihnen zu tun hat. Ohne erhobenen Zeigefinger transportiert Special People die Botschaft, dass gut gemeinte Projekte und der Umgang mit behinderten Jugendlichen im Allgemeinen gegen jeden guten Willen schnell auf stereotype und vorurteilsbeladene Bahnen geraten kann, wenn die Ansichten und Vorstellungen der Protagonisten außer acht gelassen werden. In Special People wird aus einem Film „von Jasper über Behinderte“ ein Film von und mit Jasper und den fünf Kids.

STILISTISCHE MITTEL

Das trübe Wetter des Settings korrespondiert mit der trüben Stimmung, die zwischen Jasper und den fünf Jugendlichen herrscht. Für alle Beteiligten handelt es sich um ein reines Pflichtprogramm, und auch der Hügel, der laut Jasper den täglichen Kampf der Behinderten symbolisieren soll, wirkt doch eher wie ein Verweis auf das gesamte hochtrabende Projekt.

Da es sich bei Special People um ein fiktives „Making-Of“ handelt, werden die verschiedenen Ebenen außerdem stilistisch unterschiedlich gekennzeichnet. Beispielsweise sind die Aufnahmen der von den Jugendlichen geführten Kamera im Gegensatz zur normalen Kameraperspektive schwarz/weiß, unscharf und verwackelt.

Cast

Jasper	Dominic Coleman
Jess	Robyn Frampton
Dave	Jamie McKay
Tally	Annie Pears
Dan	Daniel Shutt
Alex	Alex Priest

TRIVIA

- The idea for the film came from a particularly disastrous community project where one of the disabled participants had a lamp explode in her lap and another was given an epileptic fit by the feedback on a video monitor.
- Justin Edgar previously worked on an educational film with the same group which won an Arts Council Arts Work Award and best film at Helsinki Disability Film Festival.
- There is another film called Special People from 1984. It is based on a true story of Diane Dupuy who creates a unique black light theatre company called Famous PEOPLE Players. The cast consists of people who are developmentally challenged. Seven members of the cast play themselves in the movie as well as the man who discovered this talented performance group and gave them their start in show business Mr. Showmanship – Liberace. Justin Edgar's Special People certainly alludes to that film commenting on the way disabled people have been represented in the cinema.

DIALOGUE LIST
INSIDE BUS

JESS

What did you say your name was again?

JASPER

Jasper

JESS

And what are we meant to be doing today?

JASPER

Making a film

JESS

What about?

JASPER

About you lot climbing a mountain

JESS

We've made a film before you know

JASPER

Yeah I know. I realise that, but not with me you haven't

JESS

Who was that idiot we made a film with before?

DAVE

I think it was Gavin

JESS

Gavin – right idiot he was

TALLY (to JASPER)

Have you seen the fast and the furious?

DAVE

Yeah! Can we make something like that?

JASPER

Well – not really. Because we've got a budget of about six thousand pounds. The Fast and the Furious was shot on a budget of about sixty million dollars

JESS

Yeah, but it was good though

JASPER

Yeah, if you like overblown juvenile macho rubbish, I suppose its a good film

JASPER

Well we can try and do something like that I suppose you know

JASPER

I think probably a good start would be me getting out of the van and getting you lot ready to go, yeah, alright?

JASPER

Come on it'll be fun. It'll be fun

DOOR OF BUS

JASPER (to JESS)

Right ... Errrm ... errr ... how how how errm ... how mobile are you?

JESS

What do you mean?

JASPER

I mean can you move your arms?

JESS

Wait there. I'll just try and be less disabled for you. No, sorry, its not working

JASPER

No I didn't mean that, I just want someone to help carry the equipment, that's all

JASPER

Well, I'll pop round, clip these on and we'll get going

ALEX

Good for you

MOUNTAIN PATH

JASPER

Come on guys

JESS

We can't get up there!

JASPER

Oh come on, well how do you know if you don't try?

TALLY

Its impossible

JASPER

Its not impossible. Nothing's impossible is it?

DAVE

Why aren't you carrying anything?

JASPER

Well erm I've earned my stripes. I already know how to carry equipment, but its something that you lot need to learn. Besides, wheelchairs are very good devices for carrying equipment, and we can use them for impromptu tracking shots

JESS

We're actors though

JASPER

Well, okay, you can earn your acting stroke carrying equipment stripes. I know its cold, I know its damp. Yes – it's a struggle and that's what this films about – it's about struggle. Now come on, lets get on with it. Come on

MOUTAIN PATH

JASPER

Okay, have you used one of these cameras before?

TALLY

Yeah, the last film we made, I used exactly the same one

JASPER

Great, now this is how you turn it on. There's a power button just down there

JASPER

And errr Alex, errr yeah! Excellent

JASPER

Okay now Dave

DAVE

Dan

JASPER

Er yeah Dan Sorry. Dan. Now you see this mountain? This is like the struggle that you face everyday of your life, so i want you to really struggle along this path, okay? Can you do that?

DAVE

But its easy!

JASPER

Yeah, we know that, but he has to pretend that it isn't, yeah? The films about struggle, okay? Its about the struggle that youface everyday in life, so really rrrr!

JASPER

Okay roll camera and action

JASPER

Cut! Cut! Cut! Cut!

JESS

Whats the matter with that?

JASPER

Well your poles in shot for a start!

JESS

Its meant to be a boom and there's no microphone on the bottom

JASPER

Yeah, look it doesn't matter about that. This is an educational project. Yes?

JESS

Why is it educational?

JASPER

You're learning to hold the pole! Okay?

JASPER

Now can we go auto focus please and Dan you're meant to struggling mate. This film's about struggle yeah? About the struggle you go through everyday of your life! Okay excellent. Everybody happy?

JESS

Whatever!

JASPER

No not "whatever" actually. Right let's do this before the cloud comes over and ruins the whole shot

JASPER

Roll camera, and action! Okay cut cut cut

JASPER

Take your time

JASPER

Struggle, roll camera and action!

JASPER

I don't want to be difficult but you're moving the camera

JASPER

Take Five. Ready

JASPER

And ... action

JASPER

You spoke in the shot

TALLY

No I didn't!

JASPER

You did

JASPER

The performance was great. You moved the camera! Is it not locked-off?

JASPER

Cut! Just cut!

JASPER

No, I said action, then you spoke!

JASPER

Action!

JASPER

No you can't do that, Cut! If you zoom then I'm going to be in the shot

JASPER

Come on! Yeah?

JASPER

You did, I heard you speak. Did anybody else hear her speak? Okay, maybe its just me then. Alright, my mistake, but you need to struggle more. Do some acting, you're an actor

JASPER

Cut! I said autofocus

JASPER

As far as the cameras concerned, we go as we've always gone with a static camera

TALLY

I did not touch the camera!

JASPER

Debateable. We'll go again

JASPER

I'm coming pretty close to losing it big time!

JASPER

So run camera and action

JASPER

We're losing the essence of the scene. I'm trying to sort of keep things going here. We've been here all morning, this is our first major set-up we've got nothing, we've got nothing. I'm not criticising anybody. We've basically wasted the whole morning its lunchtime and we haven't got nothing in the can

DAVE

Oh yeah, Lunch!

JASPER

Yeah, its lunch!

LUNCHTIME

JESS

Do you get paid for doing this?

JASPER

Well I don't do it for love

JESS

Whatever they're paying you, I'll pay you double if you take us home

JASPER

It's none of your business what they're paying me

JESS

What do you do the rest of the time?

JASPER

I'm a professional film-maker

JESS

That means you're on the dole then?

JASPER

No, it means I've got several screenplays in development actually

JESS

Got a girlfriend?

JASPER

I used to

JESS

She dump you?

JASPER

Right, let's get back on set shall we

JESS

Fine

KIDS LINED UP ON HORIZON

JASPER

Right, I am on camera and sound from now on, okay?

JESS

And what are we meant to be doing?

JASPER

What I want you to do is I want you to go up the mountain as far as you can and keep going until I say cut

TALLY

Down the mountain?

JASPER

No, up the mountain

JESS

Until you say action?

JASPER

No until I say cut

JASPER

Stop challenging me!

TALLY

I thought we were supposed to be the challenged ones

JASPER

You just want to do everything your own way don't you? Which happens ...

ALEX

Yeah and want to get paid

JASPER

It happens to be the wrong way, quite frankly

DAVE

Do you want to comfort eat

JASPER

No I do not want to comfort eat

TALLY

Are you on anti-depressants?

JASPER

No I am not. Right, for the last time

ALEX

Yes about time!

DAVE

That'd be good

JASPER

Please. For the last time, this is a struggle. Life is a struggle. I want to see pain on your faces, okay? Now on me. We go on action ...
Action

JASPER

Action!

JASPER

Where are you going? Its this way, I said this way. I am sick of trying to tell ... its that way, Where are you? You're going the wrong way! You're doing it wrong again!

WAITING AT BOTTOM OF HILL

JESS

Is he still crying?

TALLY

Not sure, but I think so

DAVE

How are we gonna get home now, I'm starving?

JESS

I think he's just been dumped. I'm gonna go get him

JASPER AND JESS ON MOUNTAIN

JESS

Sorry mate, we kind of get a lot of idiots. We had to do Morris dancing last week

JASPER

It's a rubbish film

JESS

Yeah, kind of

JESS

It is -a rubbish film

JESS

Do you want to come back down, because they're getting a bit hungry

JASPER

Yeah

JASPER ARRIVES BACK TO GROUP WITH JESS

DAVE

You alright mate?

JASPER

I'm fine thank you

TALLY

So how do you want to finish the film off then?