



Anarchy in Aotearoa

'We've maintained a silence closely resembling stupidity'

P R O J E C T D E T A I L S

Screenplay	Dale Corlett
Director	Dale Corlett
Producer	tbc
Production Company	Jigsaw Productions
Project Status	Third Draft

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Title

Anarchy in Aotearoa (working title)

Log Line

We've maintained a silence closely resembling stupidity

Synopsis (Short)

1981. The winter of discontent. New Zealand, a country gripped with racial and political tension is rocked by riots in the streets, protesting the Springbok Rugby Tour. A year on and this normally quiet country is now starting to return to its former sleepy contentment except for one young man, Neil Roberts. An anarchist who is passionate about making his country wake up and face the reality they are living in, something he's willing to die for, if he has to.

Directors Note

Inspired by true-life events, *Anarchy in Aotearoa* is the story of Neil Roberts, a NZ anarchist who was committed to making a difference and challenging the state, at whatever cost. Following the 1981 Springbok Tour, New Zealand tries to return to its peaceful existence. The apathy to the ever-growing police state that is now becoming the norm, is the main driving force behind our protagonist, forcing him to find even more extreme ways of making his stand and challenging the system

'Anarchy' is a violent and unpredictable film inspired by the New Zealand story that the world has never been told. It is a human story of a misguided young man whose passion and absolute belief would drive him through to his ultimate act, sacrificing his life for his cause.

This dramatic urban tale will be realized in an urgent and contemporary way. Utilizing the vibrancy of the Punk culture coupled with the music and fashion of the era this film is both a period and yet contemporary piece of work.

The interweaving of both archive and recreated footage for the street riots helps blend the past and present while the predominately hand held heavily perspective overall shooting style ensures we are on the journey with Neil at every stage throughout the film.

Neil's ultimate act will make him forever etched into New Zealand's history yet unknown to him, what he leaves behind, would have changed his life even more.

By telling this passionate story set in the early 80's we challenge the audience to look at whether things have really changed in twenty seven years, and how much of what Neil was fighting against has actually come true? Have we continued to maintain a silence resembling stupidity?

Synopsis (Long)

1981. Aotearoa - The Land of the Long White Cloud. A place of serenity, tranquility and calm. Not anymore. Ever since the government allowed the South African Rugby tour to go ahead the country has been gripped with racial and political tension, and now it is being rocked by riots in the streets between tour protestors, rugby supporters and the police. This is the winter of discontent.

Its 5.45 am when we meet 21 yr old anarchist Neil, awake, lying in bed with his English girlfriend Sal in his arms. He has an unsettled, yet determined look on his face. The tattoo on his chest that reads "*this punk won't see 23 – No future*" eludes to his fate and willingness to stand up for what he believes in. He is one of the many of the 'no future generation', a group of young, disengaged, unemployed people, the only difference with him, is he has a passion, a passion for changing the system and the way we live. Joining in the riots in Auckland Neil's temper and unpredictability is exposed for the first time, shocking even those closest to him. Following the riots he continues to try and fight the system, becoming very well known to the local law enforcement. Each time experiencing more and more police brutality as he is locked up. This only serves to fuel Neil's hatred of authority.

Following Neil and Sal we are immersed in the NZ punk scene with the music of Sex Pistols and the Clash dominant. We see they are both in love and lust with each other. Their passion for each other is tangible as is their shared belief in changing the system. We see them spending time together celebrating Neil's 22nd Birthday, graffitiing across the city the many anti government messages they have and generally continuing their fight against the authorities and the police state that NZ finds itself in. But as the tour begins to fade into the distance memory people's desire for change subsides. Without the central focus of the tour it seems that people are now unable to mobilize themselves, to fight anymore. And Neil, Sal and their mates are becoming more and more isolated in their cause. A year on this normally quiet country has now returned to its former sleepy contentment. People somehow now accepting the Police State they live in. Dawn raids on Pacific Island families that have 'overstayed' their visas or welcome are considered 'every day' and necessary for NZ to manage its expanding population. Something that is now frustrating and annoying our protagonist on a daily basis. And when Neil's mate, Oscar, a twenty-year old Samoan suddenly gets his front door burst open by baton wielding police, who take his screaming and wailing family away in a van in the early hours of the morning, Neil is incensed, and decides he has to do something about it, now. He is going to make this country wake up and face the reality they live in, something he's willing to die for, if he has to.

Sal then discovers she is pregnant. Not something her or Neil have ever thought of or planned for, something that could cause a real conflict between them, possibly ending their relationship. So she decides not to tell him, for now anyway. Neil has now found his target. The Wanganui Computer centre, the place where the government holds all the information on NZ citizens. The plan, to blow it up and make the country wake up. Neil and his mates are half through their planning for the attack on the centre when following a party at Neil's house, a drunk and stoned Oscar, is chased by the police in a stolen Mark I Ford Cortina. This chase ends in catastrophe with both Oscar and his passenger dying after smashing into a lamppost head on.

Now driven on by the death of his best mate Oscar, and the heavy-handed police presence at his funeral, Neil has made his ultimate decision, to blow up the computer centre the next day, on his own.

“This will wake up the nation”

A pregnant Sal is left sleeping as Neil makes his way towards his final act, an act of self-destruction and self-belief. It will be his last act in a life dedicated to fighting the system. Before he bursts through the glass door of the computer centre and detonates his homemade bomb, killing himself, he leaves his last message of graffiti on the wall of the toilet block outside. It reads: *“we have maintained a silence closely resembling stupidity”*

A message that is even more relevant today than it was 27 years ago.

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Directors Biography – Dale Corlett

Dale has had extensive experience as a director and producer both in the UK and in his native New Zealand. His directing credits include theatre, film, music promos including the sell-out season of King of Stains and the NZ Fringe Festival hits and multi award winning Anorak of Fire and Saving Grace. His short films have screened at festivals throughout the world with his latest, The Man on the Side of the Road, chosen for OFFICIAL COMPETITION, at the PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL in 2008, where it was voted an Audience Favourite.

His debut feature film, RUNNING IN TRAFFIC (www.runningintraffic.com) a co-production with Dabhand Films, has been selected for OFFICIAL COMPETITION at the 2009 EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL where it is nominated for the prestigious Michael Powell Award for Best British Film. Dale was also nominated for BEST DIRECTOR at the BAFTA Scotland New Talent Awards 2009. He has a number of other film projects in various stages of development with his production company, Jigsaw Productions, in the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

In 2004 he took up the position of Executive Director of Glasgow Media Access Centre (GMAC), Scotland's leading development agency for new and emerging film making talent. Through this position he has worked closely with all the UK film industry funders developing and delivering a number of initiatives including commissioning up to ten new short films per year. Films produced and talent developed during his tenure have won numerous local, national and international awards including Scottish BAFTA's, Best Short Film Awards at International Film Festivals and the prestigious Golden and Silver Bear Awards in Berlin.

Prior to moving into directing & producing Dale worked as a professional actor in NZ with credits including the American TV series Xena, Hercules, core cast in the NZ police drama series Plain Clothes, various theatre productions and American and New Zealand feature films. Dale is currently based in Edinburgh, Scotland.

