

CASTING

MISTAKES

a short film by ALEC BOWMAN_CLARKE

EMMA 20s/30s

Funny, furious, exhausted. Emma has come to collect her things at the end of a relationship with Dan. What she does know is – she is finished with it. He does not appear to feel the same.

DAN 20s/30s

Intelligent, hurt and needy. Convinced he is being reasonable. Dan wants to understand exactly why Emma is leaving him. Unfortunately, he thinks understanding is something he is owed and when he doesn't get it, things go badly for everyone.

MISTAKES is an experimental domestic horror film in which a very ordinary conversation is fractured by increasingly impossible continuity errors.

**TWO ACTORS
ONE ROOM
ONE DAY**

DETAILS

SHOOT: *ROTHESAY, ISLE OF BUTE*

DATE: TBC

PAID ROLE: £50 each + travel + lunch. This is a self-funded, low-budget short.

Looking for actors who want a hyper-focused, performance-heavy showcase piece for their showreel.

Guaranteed fast turnaround on high-quality, professional 4K graded footage and audio mix. Will be free to watch on the Massive Overheads YouTube channel.

This is a performance-led two-hander dealing with coercive behaviour and implied fatal domestic violence. The violence is not depicted, but the film will contain blood effects and disturbing imagery. The film does **not** glamorise, glorify or excuse domestic violence.

Full script & content will be provided before commitment.

TO APPLY: alec@massiveoverheads.com

SUBJECT LINE: **MISTAKES** – include links.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

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This is not an audition for who can perform the most distress, menace or horror. The film works if the conversation underneath the formal device feels completely ordinary, specific and alive. Boring, but loaded.

Emma has come back to collect her things after ending the relationship. Dan wants the conversation to remain open; Emma considers the decision already made. They are not having the first argument of their relationship. They know each other's rhythms, weak spots and tactics.

The screenplay fractures the conversation with deliberate continuity errors: objects move, a mug changes, blood or earth appears and disappears, and people occupy contradictory physical states. Do not perform those changes. For the actors, this remains one continuous, recognisable breakup conversation. Let me orchestrate them around you.

THE MOST IMPORTANT DIRECTION = DO NOT PLAY THE HORROR.

No ominous pauses. No secret knowledge. No 'something terrible is coming'. No signalling the continuity errors. If a hammer appears, it is not an invitation to suddenly enter a thriller. The edit and the images will do that work.

Please prioritise listening and interruption over polish. It is fine to overlap, hesitate, get a word wrong, stumble, change direction halfway through a sentence or allow an ugly silence. We are looking for behaviour, not a pristine recital. Your reactions will likely be on-screen more than your words.

EMMA

Emma has finished the relationship. That does not make her serene or morally perfect. She is tired, angry, funny, impatient and capable of deliberately hurting Dan. She has practical things to do and would like to leave.

She does not need Dan to understand why she is leaving. A lot of her frustration comes from being forced back into a conversation she believes is already over. Avoid playing her as frightened from the beginning. When Dan says, 'You don't have to be afraid of me,' her answer is true: she is not.

Protect the simplicity of: 'I just don't like being around you anymore.' It is not a speech or a revelation. It is the plainest thing she can finally say.

TRIGGER WARNING. IT IS NOT VERY NICE.

DAN

Dan must not arrive as a villain. He is hurt, needy and convinced he is trying to behave reasonably. He wants an explanation, then an explanation of the explanation. He keeps converting Emma's decision into a discussion in which he still has a vote.

His control is most useful when it feels plausible to him. Avoid obvious menace, simmering-murderer acting or knowingly threatening delivery. Lines such as 'I'm trying to be reasonable' and 'I'm not stopping you leaving' should be playable as things Dan genuinely believes about himself in that moment.

His self-pity can be real. 'No-one's going to want me now' is pathetic because he means it, not because he is performing a manipulation for the audience.

FOR THE ZOOM READING

We are not expecting props, costume, blocking, a matching kitchen or any attempt to reproduce the continuity devices. Be anywhere you are comfortable. The text is enough. We may read a section more than once with a small adjustment. That is not because the first version was 'wrong'; we are interested in responsiveness, chemistry and how the scene changes under light direction.

tone

Domestic. Petty. Familiar. Occasionally funny. Increasingly unpleasant. The scene should be able to exist without the formal horror conceit. If we removed every continuity error, we should still believe these two people once loved one another and are now having a bad morning.

CONTENT

MISTAKES deals with coercive behaviour and implied fatal domestic violence. The violence itself is not depicted, but the finished film contains blood effects and disturbing imagery. The film does not glamorise, glorify or excuse domestic violence. Full content information will be discussed before commitment.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

Not a predetermined 'correct' performance. We are looking for two actors who can make the language feel spontaneous, listen closely, stay emotionally connected through repetition, and remain grounded while the filmmaking around them becomes increasingly strange.



EXPLANATION

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MiSTAKES is a visual dissection of the tactics abusers use to control a partner, told entirely in the language of continuity error. Every “mistake” in the edit is doing one of two jobs.

Some show **what Dan wants seen** – his self-justifying version of events, edited in like his internal defence (*Emma holding the hammer, photographs “proving” a nice Christmas, the poster flipping back onto the wall*).

Others are **truth leaking through that he can’t fully control** – *the mug breaking, blood, earth, burial* – because he genuinely can’t hold the memory of what he did. People who do this kind of harm block it out; so does the film.

Underneath both tracks is the harder reality: Emma isn’t grey-rocking. She’s engaging, defending, explaining herself – which is human, and exactly what someone running DARVO needs from her to keep working. These truths are sometimes seen – Emma covered in dirt, blood running down her forehead – because nobody can hide everything.

The mistake in the title isn’t the continuity errors.

It’s EMMA staying in the room and attempting dialogue with a man who is not capable of that.

The film never shows both tracks colliding at the same moment – control-track edits and truth-leakage edits occupy different beats, never the same beat, which is exactly how dissociation works in real accounts. The blank spot and the self-serving story don’t coexist, they alternate.

That’s a usable principle for coverage – every setup is unambiguously one track or the other, never both, which should make blocking and continuity planning more tractable than the script looks on a first read.

The MUGS are the NOLAN CLOCK of MiSTAKES – DAN drinks from a mug once before washing it so the MUG tells us where we are in the story, we can believe them. Everything else lies.

He is drinking from a BLUE MUG when EMMA arrives. As they talk, he drinks from a YELLOW MUG, which he hits her with, cutting her head. During burial, he drinks from a RED MUG and when he has cleaned up, post murder, he drinks from a GREEN MUG.

