

# chop off

## PRESS KIT

### **SYNOPSIS**

Three Axemen. Three tall wooden posts. An epic battle between young and old.

### **DURATION**

5 Minutes 10 Seconds.

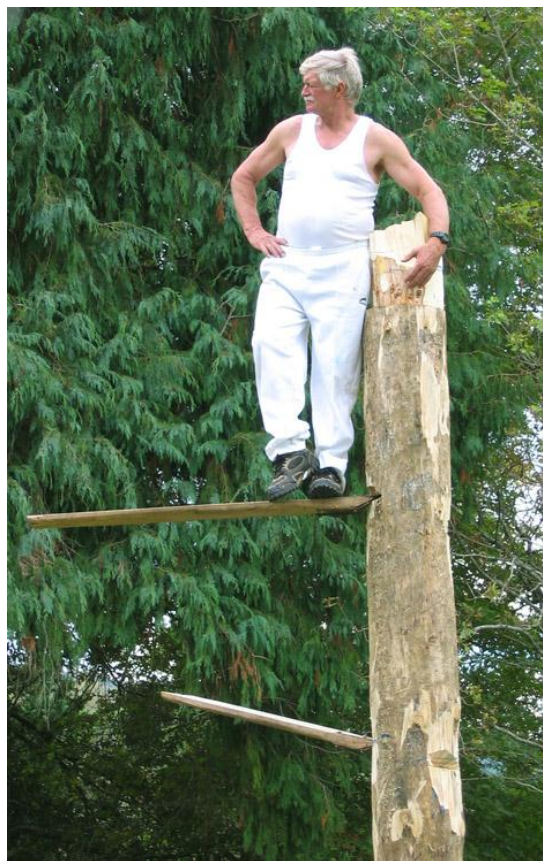
**COLOUR/35MM/DOLBY SR**  
**1:1.85**

### **PRODUCER CONTACT**

Grant Lahood  
P O Box 46174  
Herne Bay  
Auckland  
New Zealand  
Ph: +64 21 662820  
Fax: +64 9 3606351  
Email: [glahood@xtra.co.nz](mailto:glahood@xtra.co.nz)

### **INTERNATIONAL SALES**

NZ Film  
Juliette Veber  
P O Box 11546  
Wellington  
New Zealand  
Ph: +64 4 3827680  
Fax: +64 4 3849719  
Email: [juliette@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:juliette@nzfilm.co.nz)



## **FESTIVAL SCREENINGS**

2006 Hoferfilmtage International Film Festival, Germany  
2006 MIC Homegrown Film Festival, New Zealand  
2006 Telecom New Zealand International Film Festival, New Zealand  
2006 Rio de Janeiro International Short Film Festival, Brazil  
2006 Asiana Short Film Festival, Korea  
2007 Mo & Friese 9<sup>th</sup> Children's Short Film Festival Hamburg, Germany  
2007 16<sup>th</sup> Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia  
2007 St Tropez Antipodes Film Festival, France  
2007 Exground Film Festival, Germany  
2007 Regensburg Film Festival, Germany  
2008 Int'l Fest of Cinema and Technology, USA  
2008 Shorts Attack! Interfilm, Berlin, Germany

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

For years I've been amazed by the sport of competitive woodchopping.

This mainstay of A&P shows around New Zealand combines great physical strength and incredible grace to create an exciting spectacle.

Most impressive and difficult of the woodchopping disciplines is the one known as Tree Felling. The object of this event is to climb a five metre pole by cutting holes and placing special tree boards in the notches to ascend the tree in a spiral fashion. Whilst balancing on the top board, the axeman concludes by chopping all the way through a block of wood.

The event requires great skill and stamina and requires years of practice to perfect.

This unique activity provided a great subject for a very cinematic short film. One that combined well choreographed and photographed movement with an exciting narrative. All topped off by a big ending...

Our storyline pitches youth against experience. A Veteran of the sport comes up against two cocky young Axemen and has to draw on all his skill and know-how to try and win.

Woodchopping is an inherently masculine sport that carries

with it a strong sense of history and pioneering spirit. It comes from a time when men were men and cutting down a tree required a lot of physical activity.

This macho characteristic is central to our drama.

Woodchopping in general, and tree felling in particular, is not the sort of activity to be taken on by anyone other than an expert.

Our two young athletes very quickly perceive their unknown opponent as an old relic who shouldn't be in the same contest as them.

Will he prove them wrong or not?

As I researched this film, it was immediately obvious that genuine Axemen rather than Actors would be required to play the main roles. This set me off on a hunt to find three 'real men' who could not only handle the physical requirements of the part, but also deliver credible and compelling performances.

I'm thrilled with all three I found to play the parts, but the real discovery was 60 year old Terry Wilkins from Mamaku, who not only coped with the great demands of the tree felling event, but also did all his own stunts - all while looking like a real movie star!

## **GRANT LAHOOD**

### **BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Born 1962, in Inglewood, Taranaki.

Joined film industry in 1983.

Trained as a lighting cameraman, then progressed to directing after the success of first short film SNAIL'S PACE.

Writing and Directing since 1989.

### **FILMOGRAPHY**

SNAIL'S PACE (1989)

Writer/Producer/Director.

4 minute timelapse short film, about a common garden snail's high-speed mission to cross the road for a feast of lettuce.

-Sold to TV in New Zealand, Australia and eight European channels.

-Cinema releases in New Zealand, Spain and USA.

-Film festivals - Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Sydney, Oporto (Portugal), Wine Country (California), and Vancouver (Canada).

THE END (1990)

Writer/Producer/Director.

9 minute black comedy about an unusual day in the life of a gravedigger.

-Sold to television in New Zealand, France, Germany, Sweden and Finland.

-Film Festivals - Wellington, Auckland and Canterbury.

THE SINGING TROPHY (1992)

Writer/Director.

13 minute comedy about a hunter/taxidermist whose bizarre collection of mounted animal trophies sing Strauss' "The Blue Danube" to him.

-The film debuted at the 1992 Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hamilton and Palmerston North film festivals.

-Had a theatrical release around New Zealand with "Strictly Ballroom".

- Winner of Best Short Film at the NZ Film and Television awards 1993.
- Selected for competition as a Grand Prize nominee at the 1993 Kobe International Independent Film Festival, Japan.
- Official selection, short film competition at the 1993 Festival International du Film, Cannes. (Received Special Jury Mention for Technical Excellence)
- Other Film Festivals - Canterbury, Sydney (voted 2nd best short film), Melbourne, Telluride, Sitges (Spain), Sao Paulo (Brazil), Stockholm, Fantasporto (Portugal), Comedy Vevey (France), Ismalia (Egypt), Vancouver, HOF (Germany), Larissa (Greece), Goteburg (Sweden), Brisbane, Philadelphia, Mostra Curta (Rio de Janiero), Cinemalia (Phillipines).
- Television sales to around a dozen overseas territories.

LEMMING AID (1994) Writer/Director/Editor.

- 12 Minute comedy about a group of NZ animal rights activists who travel to Norway to stop the annual mass suicide of Lemmings.
- Official selection, short film competition at the 1994 Festival International du Film, Cannes. (Won first Jury Prize)
  - Other film festivals - Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Sydney (voted fourth most popular short film), Melbourne, Brisbane, London, Flanders (Belgium), Taipei Golden Horse, Umea (Sweden), Dublin, Olympia (USA), Mill Valley, Comedy Vevey, Hof, Clermont Ferrand, Ankara, Larissa, Hamburg.
  - Part of "New Look Aotearoa", a showcase of NZ short films held in Los Angeles for invited industry guests.
  - Part of a NZ nationwide tour of short films selected for Cannes.
  - Theatrical releases in Germany, New Zealand, Australia.
  - TV sales - Channel 4 UK, Germany ZDF, Canal Plus France and Spain, SBS Australia, TV 1000 Finland and Sweden, Star TV Hong Kong.

CHICKEN (1996) Writer/Director.

- Black comedy feature film about an ageing rock star who fakes his own death in an attempt to revive his flagging career.
- Eighteen print NZ national release in May 1996.
  - Festivals - Montreal, Quebec, Asia Pacific (Auckland), Fantasporto (Portugal), Umea (Sweden), Comedyfest - Saint Vincent (Italy).

ARC (2000) Producer/CO-  
Director/Editor.  
23 minute dance film.  
This film trilogy of solo dance works choreographed and performed by Douglas Wright premiered at the 2000 NZ film festivals.  
-Other festivals - Moving Pictures (Toronto), ReelDance (Sydney), IMZ (Monte Carlo), Dance on Camera (New York).

KOMBI NATION (2002)  
Writer/Director/Performer/Editor  
Second feature film.  
A road movie, mockumentary which follows a group of young New Zealanders on a Kombi van trip around Europe.  
-Festivals - UpOverDownUnder (London)

BOGANS (2003) Director/Executive  
Producer/Editor.  
22 minutes.  
A comedy about three kiwi lads who attempt to convince Peter Jackson to cast them as Hobbits in his multi million dollar Lord of the Rings movie.

BAD DATES (2005)  
Producer/Director/Writer/Editor.  
15 minute comedy.  
A group of mismatched singles come together for a disastrous speed date evening.  
(Winner Audience Award at 2006 Richmond Road Film Festival)

CHOP OFF (2006)  
Producer/Director/Writer/Editor.  
5 minute short film.  
Three woodchoppers face off in a battle between old and young.

### **TELEVISION**

NATHAN HAINES' FAMILY ALBUM (2005) Director.  
Half hour arts documentary - part of TV One show 'Artsville'

Following musicians Nathan, Kevin and Joel Haines as they unite for the concert of their lives - playing with the NZ Symphony Orchestra.

Directed several stories for Maori Television Service 2006 Anzac Day special.

Currently in Production on a one hour documentary for TV One for Anzac Day 2007.

### **COMMERCIALS**

Since 1991 have directed more than a hundred TV commercials, firstly with Motion Pictures Ltd. and more recently Flying Fish Ltd. Clients include Arnotts, Bond and Bond, Caltex, Clear, DB, ECNZ, Firestone, IRD, Lion, Lotto, Mobil, NZ Post, TAB, Tip Top and Telecom.

### **MUSIC VIDEO**

Over the last ten years have directed several music videos for such groups as Zed, When the Cat's been Spayed, Ma V Elle and the Brainchilds.

## **CREDITS**

**WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY**  
GRANT LAHOOD

**CINEMATOGRAPHER**  
SIMON RIERA

**EDITOR**  
GRANT LAHOOD

**MUSIC/SOUND DESIGN**  
PLAN 9

### **CAST**

#### **AXEMEN**

TERRY WILKINS  
COREY WILKINS  
KYLE LEMON

#### **ANNOUNCERS**

CLIFF HUGHES  
VAL BAKER

#### **CROWD**

THE PEOPLE OF KATIKATI

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
RENEE CARTER

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**  
PUTI SIMICH-PENE

**FOCUS PULLER**  
GEORGE HENNAH



**CLAPPER LOADER**  
DUNCAN PATERSON

**GAFFER**  
PETE GILMOUR

**GRIP**  
JAMES BRUCE

**ART DIRECTOR**  
BRETT SCHWEITERS

**PROPS**  
ADAM BILIK

**STUNT COORDINATOR**  
STEVE MCQUILLAN

**CATERING**  
ONE WILD CHOOK

**TELECINE COLOURIST**  
DAVE GIBSON

**MUSIC PERFORMED BY**  
DAVID DONALDSON  
STEVE ROCHE  
JANET RODDICK  
CHRIS O'CONNOR  
JEFF HENDERSON

**FILM SUPPLIED BY**  
KODAK

**NEGATIVE MATCHING**  
UPPER DECK FILM SERVICES

**LABORATORY AND SOUND MIXING**  
PARK ROAD POST

**THANKS TO**

VAL BAKER  
GRANT CAMPBELL - KODAK  
PANAVISION  
FILMLAB  
DIGITAL POST  
MARK HARRIS - STUNT PRODUCTIONS LTD.

BAKER TIMBER SUPPLIES  
DON SAMSON  
WESTERN BOP DISTRICT COUNCIL  
ELAINE FISHER - KATIKATI ADVERTISER  
KATIKATI PARTY HIRE  
KAIMAI VIEW MOTEL

FLYING FISH  
WHARAKAWA FAMILY TRUST  
KAINGAROA TIMBERLANDS  
CLIFF HUGHES  
MEMBERS OF THE KATIKATI AXEMEN'S ASSOCIATION  
MOUNT MANGANUI COLLEGE TIMBER SPORTS TEAM

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