

# THE WAITING ROOM



## Presskit



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# Production Notes

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Writer: Ian Hughes  
Director: Ian Hughes  
Producer: Emma Barnes  
Production Company: The Sugar Factory

Colour                      13 minutes                      35 mm                      1:1.85                      Dolby Stereo

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## Synopsis

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A man enters an anonymous waiting room and is issued a number by a female receptionist. When his number comes up he'll be allowed to ask a single question of an unknown Big Brother. The man debates the usefulness of this with an older man; who is also waiting, but is accepting of the circumstances. The man tries various subtle ways of getting the receptionist's attention. In the end he suggests leaving with her and she agrees. The older man remains waiting.

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## Director's Notes

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*The Waiting Room* was written in 1995 while I was living in the city of Prague. Hometown of Franz Kafka. It wasn't until I lived there that I fully comprehended his work. Life was a constant spiral of bureaucracy and logical mind-bending. For a city of 1.5 million this created lines that would stretch forever. People were actually paid to stand in line for others.

But as a foreigner there was another world that had no law or logic. I lived there for nine months renting and working without officialdom knowing anything about me because to actually live legally took more effort, stamps, forms and lining up than was humanly possible.

To stay or work you needed to go to one specific police station on the edge of the city to get your passport stamped. There you would stand in line outside a door

that had nothing but a handwritten sign that said "Do Not Knock". It could then take two days to be told you had lined up in the wrong place!

*The Waiting Room* is a black comedy about the afterlife. Heaven is in an old pragmatic public building that has been repaired, patched and repainted many times. Equipment has been updated at various times but with no real overall plan. It has become an institution infected with all that infects institutions: tiredness, boredom, petty power games and systems that are someone else's problem, someone else's responsibility.

It is also about the circumstances we find ourselves in that are not of our making. The three characters are stuck together in that room. All there for different

reasons. They do not expect to be there long, so why get to know each other? It is about the challenge of trying to live in the moment.

The young man is caught between his voice inside that is screaming "yell at someone", "get mad" and the reality of being at the mercy of a system that has no face but is petty and vindictive.

It is about questions. A lot of the dialogue is in the form of questions (in fact one of the drafts consisted of nothing but questions). The situations are left as a series of unanswered questions but sometimes getting answers is a red herring. Often they may only confuse us more.

I love the films of Finnish director Arki Kismaki. They are dark and cynical but ultimately joyful and very funny. He has a laconic stilted humour that is very Scandinavian but also is part of a very New Zealand humour.

Some other sources of inspiration: Barton Fink, *Brazil*, *Viva la Bohem*, *Ariel* by Kismaki; *Down by Law*, *One Night on Earth* by Jim Jarmuch, The heaven scene in *Betelgeuse*, *The Kingdom* (Von Treer), and the humour of Bob Newheart.

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# Credits

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## Cast

<b>Young Man</b>	Ian Hughes
<b>Woman</b>	Sara Wiseman
<b>Older Man</b>	Stephen Paps

## Crew

<b>Director/Writer</b>	Ian Hughes
<b>Producer</b>	Amanda Luise Barnes
<b>Co-Producer</b>	Emma Aubin
<b>Executive Producer</b>	Trevor Haysom
<b>Editor</b>	Cushla Dillon
<b>Director of Photography</b>	Simon Raby
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director</b>	Jennifer Butcher
<b>Camera Assist.</b>	Todd Bilton
<b>Production Manager</b>	Sophie Elworthy
<b>Production Assistant</b>	Dionne Davis
<b>Unit Manager</b>	Dean Williams
<b>Clapper Loader</b>	Louise Moore
<b>Production Designer</b>	Emma Aubin
<b>Art Department Assist.</b>	Hugh Sundae
<b>Construction</b>	Glen Jensen
<b>Set Painter</b>	Fiona Rennae
<b>Hair/Make-up</b>	Kelly Mitchell

# Crew cont...

<b>Gaffer/Grip</b>	Adrian Greshoff
<b>Gaffter Assistant</b>	Tony Lumsden
<b>Grip Assistant</b>	Andrew McFairlane
<b>Sound</b>	Dave Hurley
<b>Boom Op</b>	Adam Martin
<b>Stills</b>	Jodie Bisschops
<b>Assistant Editor</b>	Keng
<b>Post Production Sound</b>	Chris Burt