

# MANHUNT



ESCAPE. IF YOU CAN



A FILM BY RAFAEL STAR

PRESS KIT



**Title:** Manhunt  
**Genre:** Mystery/Thriller  
**Country:** Australia  
**Production Year:** 2025  
**Language:** English  
**Duration:** 82 minutes  
**Aspect Ratio:** 16:9  
**Screen Resolution:** 3840 x 2160  
**Frame Rate:** 25 FPS  
**Sound:** Stereo

**Website:** [www.rafaelstar.com.au](http://www.rafaelstar.com.au)  
**Phone:** 0401 669 488

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### Logline

Max is a very successful property developer but when certain events occur it makes him question who he is actually working for.

### Synopsis

In this eerie mystery thriller, Max is a young and very successful property developer in sunny Queensland, Australia who is also a loving son to his elderly Mum. With his model like girlfriend, Courtney and his boss, Andrew who sees Max taking over the business one day, Max's life seems picture perfect. This is until Ernesto, a property investor enters Max's life and makes Max question who he is actually working for.



## Directors Statement

I chose to write and direct 'Manhunt' as it allowed me the opportunity to entertain and engage audiences whilst also commenting on social issues affecting Australia currently including the cost of living crisis, the housing crisis, homelessness and climate change.

Furthermore, as this film was a micro/no budget feature film I had to create a story that I could actually afford to make. But rather than let the lack of funds limit my imagination, I embraced the challenge which required me to think outside the box on how to write a compelling story that also had some meaning.

So, by combining my love of classic genre films as well classic cars I strived to create a genre film that was distinctively Australian as well as being original and thought provoking.

Additionally, one of the real driving forces why I made this film was to promote and encourage inclusivity, equality and authentic representation for people with a disability as my sister, Vanessa was born with a physical disability. I am very proud that my sister co-produced and appeared as a supporting actress in this film.

When creating the story of 'Manhunt' I was inspired by a number of films including 'Bullitt' (1968), 'The French Connection' (1971), 'Don't Look Now' (1973), 'Marathon Man' (1976) and 'The Truman Show' (1998). Other inspiration came from computer games including Sim City, The Sims and Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit.

This film will always be special to me because it is my first feature film and I was able to make it with both my sister and my Mum who both co-produced it with me. Sadly, my Mum died before she could see the completed film which makes this film even more important to me.

**Rafael Star – Writer / Director**

## Key Creative Bios

### Rafael Star

Writer/Director/Producer/Cinematographer/Editor/Production Designer/Actor



Rafael Star is an award-winning Australian film director, writer, producer and cinematographer whose work has been shown nationally on Australian TV on both SBS and Foxtel.

Rafael was extremely creative from an early age excelling in the visual arts. After beginning a film course as part of his Year 11 VET studies and enjoying it so much, he left high school at age 16 to study film full time. After studying film at Eora College and North Sydney Institute of Technology he then attended drama workshop classes at Brisbane Backbone Youth Arts. Rafael then studied Fashion Design at RMIT University in Melbourne and pursued a career in the clothing industry whilst continuing his passion for filmmaking.

In 2018, Rafael started his own production company, Star Motion Pictures. Since then his short films have been selected by over 50 film festivals worldwide and received numerous awards including the top prize at the international Focus on Ability Film Festival (sponsored by Screen Australia) for his short film 'Gemma' where he won a brand-new car. 'Gemma' was also selected and shown nationally on both SBS and Foxtel. His other award-winning short films include 'One Size Fits All', 'The Life of Sophie' and 'Oblivious'.

Rafael is very passionate about telling stories across a wide range of genres that are both entertaining and meaningful, especially stories that promote inclusivity and equality for people with a disability.

He also highly enjoys the craft and process of seeing his characters and individual worlds being brought to life through a collaborative and creative process.



## **Christina Star**

Producer/Costume Designer/Actress



Christina was born in Sydney and graduated from University of NSW with a Bachelor of Arts. She would go on to work as a secondary teacher specialising in English and later worked in marketing and ran her own wholesale interior decorating business.

As a mother of a physically disabled daughter from birth, she devoted herself to raising her daughter, Vanessa to be as independent as possible. Later in life, after a lifelong passion for fashion she finally decided to study Fashion Design at Kangan Institute in Melbourne where she specialised in womenswear.

Her other passions included creative writing, art, music and movies so when her son, Rafael decided to pursue a filmmaking career she would assist or be entirely responsible for the costume design and also frequently appeared in front of the camera as an actress in one her son's short films.

## **Vanessa Star**

Producer/Music/Actress



Vanessa Star is an award-winning Australian actress who is also experienced in producing and composing film scores.

Her notable accomplishments include, winning the 'Best Acting Award' for 'One Size Fits All' at the Focus on Ability Film Festival (sponsored by Screen Australia). She also played the main actress in the award-winning short film 'Gemma' which was selected and shown nationally on both SBS and Foxtel.

Vanessa's passion for acting started as a child when she attended workshops at Australian Theatre for Young People. Vanessa's other passions include dancing and playing the piano which, she has studied for over 5 years. She also composed the scores for a number of her brother, Rafael's short films.

As someone who was born physically disabled, she is a proud advocate for promoting inclusivity and equality, as well as authentic representation for people with a disability.

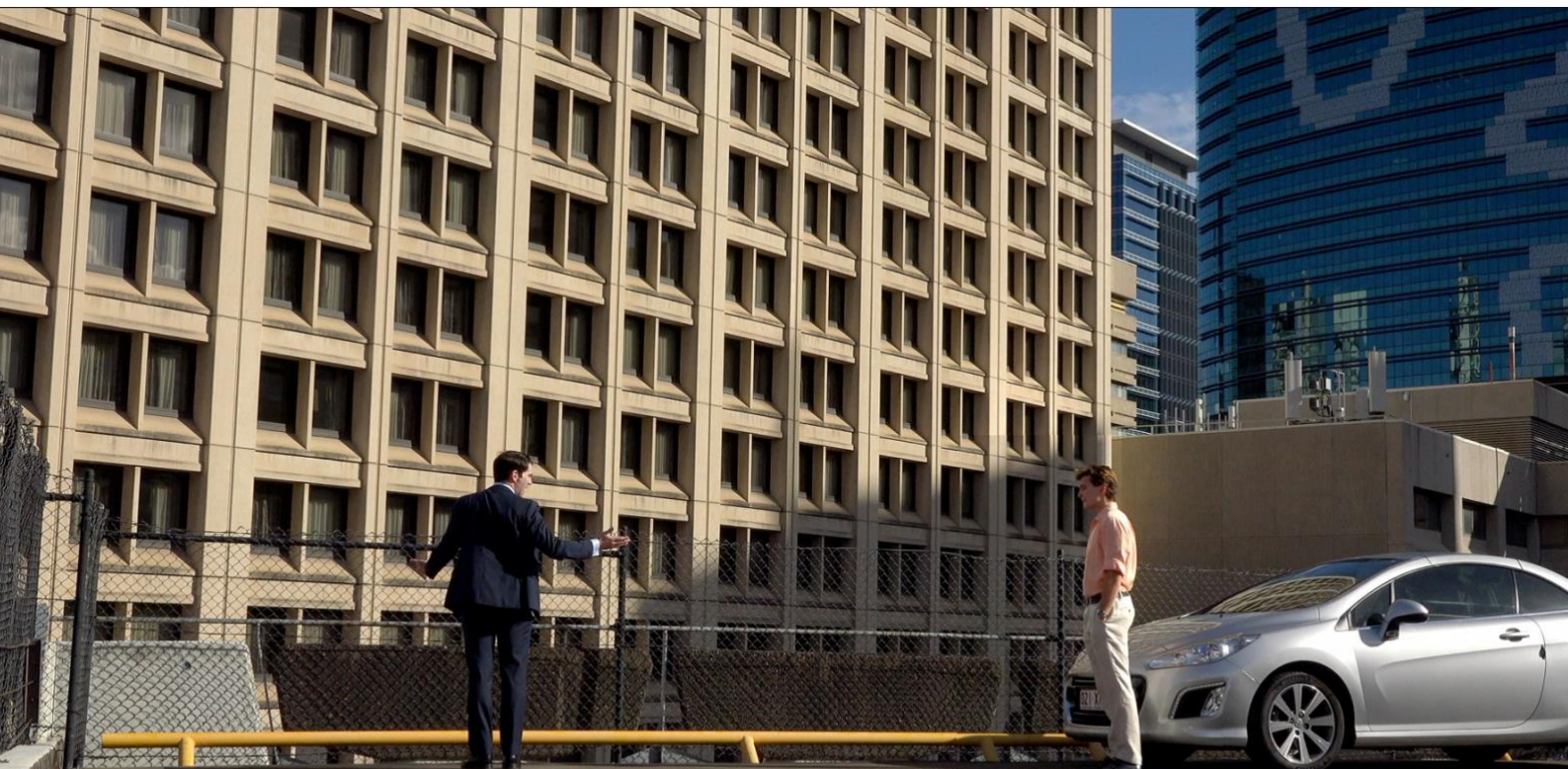
**Shaun Smith**  
Editing Consultant



Shaun Smith is an award-winning editor with over 20 years of experience in the film industry across multiple genres. He has been an editor and assistant editor on a wide range of productions including the feature documentary *Australia's Open* (premiered at MIFF 2023), the Fremantle series *Wentworth*, the HBO series *The Pacific* plus feature films *The Eye of the Storm* (dir. Fred Schepisi), *Kath and Kimderella* (dir. Ted Emery), *Balibo* (dir. Robert Connolly) and *High Ground* (dir. Stephen Johnson). In 2021 he won an award for editing the short film *Trust Frank* starring screen legends John Flaus and Brenda Palmer.

Shaun is proficient in a range of editing systems and is conversant with the full post-production process. He is a past chair of the Victorian branch of the Screen Editors Guild and current member of their Committee.

He also teaches editing, which is how he met Rafael Star. Shaun has worked as an editing consultant with Rafael for several years and has enjoyed being part of Rafael's journey as an emerging director who goes from strength to strength, garnering a few awards along the way; he also shares Rafael's deep and eclectic appreciation of Australian music!



## Key Cast Bios



### **Harry Duckworth (Max)**

Harry is an Australian actor, writer and director best known for his award winning short 'The 12th Round'. As a fresh face in the industry, he continues to gain credits whilst honing his craft through intensive training with the industries best.



### **Stella Duncan (Courtney)**

Stella is an emerging Australian actress based in Sydney. With a background in theatre, she won First Place in the Actors Championship at the Sydney Eisteddfod in 2016. She has since expanded into screen acting as well.



### **Douglas Ballard (Aaron)**

Douglas was born in Melbourne and performed at Stage School Australia as a child, with his notable role being Aladdin. After moving from Melbourne in 2023 to the Sunshine Coast, Douglas started working more actively on screen, securing roles in multiple feature films and various projects.



### **Robert H. Wainwright (Andrew)**

Robert is an award-winning actor who trained in classical acting in London, and has worked extensively in both the UK and Australia, as a citizen of both countries. Since graduating from The Academy Drama School in London, he has accumulated over 18 years of professional acting experience in a broad range of screen and stage productions, including on London's West End, the Edinburgh Festival, the BBC, and ITV.

## **A Conversation with Rafael Star**

**You had many roles in 'Manhunt' including being the writer, director, cinematographer, production designer, editor, sound designer, stunt driver, location scout, sound recordist and also acted in the film. How was that experience?**

It was a lot of work but I come from a very indie filmmaking background so I was used to wearing many different hats whilst making my previous short films. Over the years, I've developed my own methods that allows me to reduce the costs of making a film but also simplifies the workflow which definitely helped me a lot when it came to making 'Manhunt' on a very limited budget. Additionally, some of the benefits of having such a small crew (generally myself plus 1 – 2 crew and the talent on any given shoot day) meant that logistics were simpler plus my filmmaking activities were considered low-impact by authorities.

**What was the timeline from writing the script to actually filming?**

Writing the script took about 8 weeks. Preproduction went for 4 weeks. Throughout the whole process of writing and making 'Manhunt' myself and most of my crew and cast were also working other jobs or studying so it really was a massive accomplishment from everyone involved to even finish this very ambitious project.

**How did you raise the funds to make this film?**

I funded a lot of it myself. My Mum and sister also made significant contributions and my uncle assisted with the remaining funds so 'Manhunt' was entirely funded by the Star family.

**What was the casting process like for 'Manhunt'?**

Casting for 'Manhunt' was quite extensive and lot of work and consideration went into choosing the final cast. Six of the main lead roles including the roles of Max, Courtney, Andrew, Aaron, Vance and Scarlett were advertised online. Applications from across Australia were received including over 100 applications for the role of Courtney alone, so I was totally blown away by the response and the amount of interest considering 'Manhunt' was a micro/no budget feature film. In total there were 10 featured speaking roles and another 8 different voice over artists were required to make 'Manhunt'. None of the cast in 'Manhunt' had previously had a speaking role in an Australian feature film before so I am very proud that I was able to provide an opportunity to all these actors and actresses and I hope that being in 'Manhunt' furthers their respective careers and allows them to pursue their goals.

**How do you hope audiences will feel after seeing 'Manhunt'?**

I hope audiences will feel they have seen an original and entertaining Australian film that is both thought provoking and meaningful. I also hope 'Manhunt' starts a conversation about people with a disability appearing in more feature films in a wide range of roles. Lastly, I hope audience members who are also car enthusiasts enjoy and appreciate seeing a 1965 V8 Ford Mustang Fastback feature in a film without any computer-generated imagery, green screen or special effects.

**Your Mum and sister are both co-producers on 'Manhunt' who play supporting roles as well. What was that like?**

Prior to making 'Manhunt' I had made a number of award-winning short films and both my Mum and sister were heavily involved across all of my short films whether it be through acting, music, costume design or a range of other capacities. I come from a very creative family and we all love movies so it was literally a dream of mine to work with them on my first feature film. As well as being co-producers, my Mum was also the costume designer on 'Manhunt' and my sister worked on the music. So, 'Manhunt' simply would not have been possible without their financial and creative contributions.

**What was the most challenging aspect of making this film?**

There were over 100 locations used across Brisbane and the Gold Coast so scouting and filming across so many locations was one of the most challenging aspects of making this film. But I felt that it was very important to shoot in so many locations to do the story justice and provide the scale I was after. I also love filming on location! But from a logistical perspective it was quite challenging especially as the majority of locations were outdoors but fortunately we had good weather most of the time.

**'Manhunt' features a 1965 Ford Mustang Fastback. Why this particular car?**

Simple, the 1965 Ford Mustang fastback is THE original muscle car! It's an icon of motoring history. Its design is timeless. Plus, I've never seen a 1965 Ford Mustang Fastback feature prominently in any Australian feature film before so I thought it would be really cool to make this car an integral part of the story. Additionally, being the stunt driver was really fun!!



## Film Festival Selections

### Ramsgate International Film and TV Festival

Official Selection

World Premiere

Ramsgate, England

26<sup>th</sup> March, 2026

### Gold Coast Film Festival

Official Selection

Australian Premiere

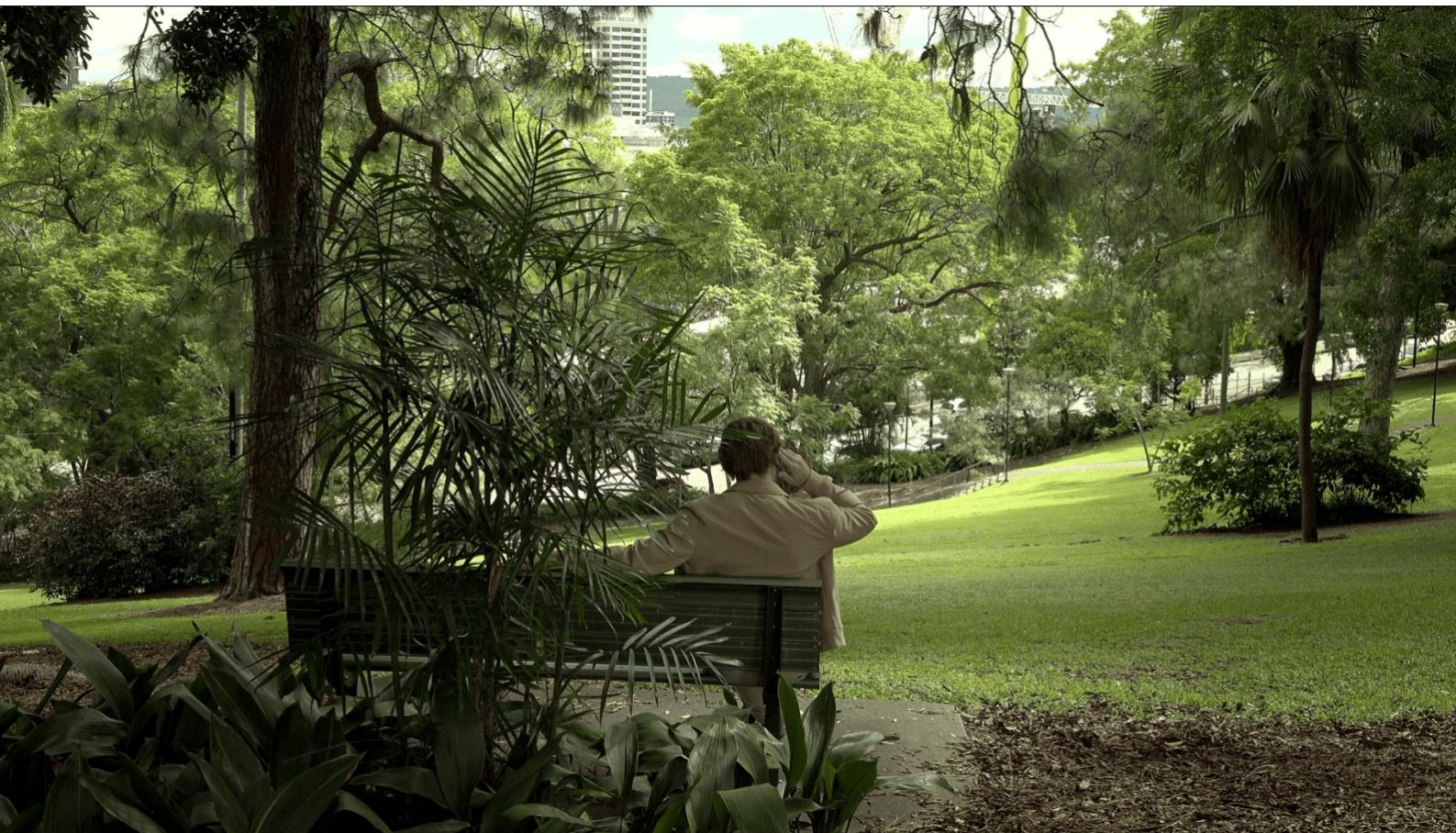
Gold Coast, Australia

2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2026

### Useful Links

Film Trailer

[www.rafaelstar.com.au/feature-film/](http://www.rafaelstar.com.au/feature-film/)



## Credits

### Key Heads of Department

Written, directed, cinematography, edited, production design, sound design and stunt driver - Rafael Star

Producers - Rafael Star, Christina Star and Vanessa Star

Editing consultant – Shaun Smith

Costume design – Christina Star

Music – Vanessa Star

### Key Cast

Max – Harry Duckworth

Courtney – Stella Duncan

Aaron – Douglas Ballard

Andrew – Robert H. Wainwright

Ernesto – Rafael Star

Mystery Woman – Vanessa Star

Max's Mum – Christina Star

Vance – Dominic McDonald

Scarlett – Simona Varga

Bethany/Creepy Girl/Girl in Elevator – Ella Muggeridge

Dead Man at Creek/Max's Body Double – Harrison Sharp

Man Who Suffocates Max/Man Who Disappears – Jethro Howes

Man Who Shakes Max's Hand – Myles Freeman

### Voice Cast

Tanya/Hayley – Emily Walklate

Radio News Presenter #1 – Rafael Star

TV News/Train Station Announcer/Voicemail/Horror Voice – Simona Varga

State Premier/Crime Stoppers – Chris Timms

Train Driver/Radio News Presenter #2/Officer Charlie 34 – Nathan Holman

Woman on Phone in Elevator – Vanessa Star

Hospital Receptionist – Deanna Reginato

Christian Radio Speaker – Damien Whippy

Police Dispatch – Theresa Lynch

Officer Bravo 21/Night Radio News – Shawn Sharp

Officer Delta 72/Air One/Officer Echo 35 – Harrison Sharp

### Crew

1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director – Emily Walklate

Location Scouts – Rafael Star, Emily Walklate, Ella Muggeridge

Camera Operators – Rafael Star, Jethro Howes, Harrison Sharp, Myles Freeman, Emily Walklate, Ella Muggeridge, Carys Ramsey, Vanessa Star

Sound Recordists – Rafael Star, Jethro Howes, Harrison Sharp, Emily Walklate, Ella Muggeridge

Runners – Jethro Howes, Harrison Sharp, Emily Walklate, Myles Freeman, Ella Muggeridge, Clare Gillespie, Patrick Roach

Art Department – Henry Sweasey and Rafael Star

Visual Effects – Haruki Ryles

Digital Artist – Damien Whippy

Special Effects Make Up – Carys Ramsey

Colourists – Rafael Star and Warren Eagles