



The Cockatoo Inn

An original story by Gorana Jovanović and Kyla Simone Bruce



Short Synopsis

The Cockatoo Inn is a candid, sharp-witted road movie that explores the complicated relationship between two estranged best friends.

AL (25) and BAMBI (26) used to live in their own little world; filled with late nights, dirty jokes and playful jibes, until it all came crashing down when Al got pregnant, gave her newborn baby up for adoption, and then disappeared without a word. They haven't spoken to each other for five years, and Al has just turned up at Bambi's out of the blue. It isn't clear what she wants from her, but, in the confined space of Bambi's Datsun Cherry, on the meandering roads between Glasgow and Weymouth - we are bound to find out!

They set off; old friends feeling like strangers and tentatively pry into each other's new lives. As they catch up, they fall back into familiar patter, but seem unwilling to dive in deep. Al reveals her plan to open The Cockatoo Inn, a dreamlike B&B, where she and Bambi would live as eternal guests. During the trip Al and Bambi test their relationship; gauging whether the other has changed and, on reflection, whether they have changed themselves. As they travel towards the coast, the barriers Al holds against the past are slowly broken down, revealing an inability to cope with the emotional pain of a thwarted motherhood. Bambi's sympathy for her old friend is sparked, but a creeping fear of Al's hidden motive is building in the back of her mind.

The film explores themes of guilt, responsibility, co-dependency and self-acceptance. Bambi and Al are two people haunted by past decisions, both on a quest to mend things, but in search of two very different goals. Through the course of the film we see the fine line that their friendship treads.

At its heart *The Cockatoo Inn* is about the importance and fragility of love, motherhood and friendship.

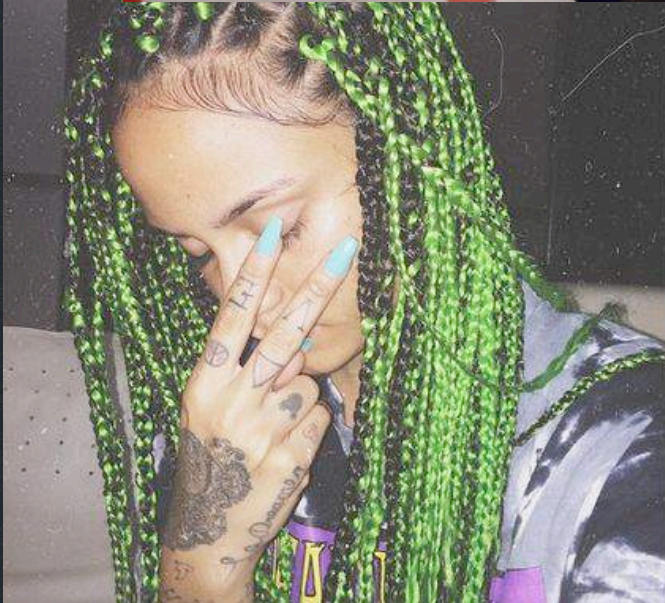
Mood Film available to stream here: <https://www.kylasimonebruce.com/the-cockatoo-inn>

Characters

Bambi (26): Bambi is intelligent, yet insecure and socially awkward, which gives her a certain innocent charm. Always in her own head and worrying what other people are thinking of her, she tries to be what people want her to be. She hasn't figured herself out yet and isn't comfortable in her own skin. She is pretty, prettier than she knows, but hasn't quite grown into her looks. An introvert, until she gets drunk and becomes the confident person she wants to be. Her self-doubt means she stands in her own way of progress. She over analyses everything and doesn't know how to communicate what she is really feeling. She acts as a self-appointed saviour to AI and makes AI's problems her own - doing whatever she can to repair the messes AI gets herself into. This gives Bambi a sense of worth and purpose, as well as being a distraction to her own issues. Both AI and Bambi used to be quite cut off from other friends and Bambi always relied on AI for entertainment, companionship and honesty. Bambi missed AI terribly after she did a runner, not knowing who she was without her, and now that she is suddenly back in her life, a lot of unresolved issues are bubbling under the surface.

AI (25): AI is a free spirited wild child. People gravitate towards her; the life and soul of the party. She exudes self-confidence and can turn on the charm when she wants something. Lives in the moment, spontaneous, very creative, outrageous and energetic. She has made having fun into an art form. An extrovert. Beautiful in an unconventional and adaptable way. She has a unique look where you can't place her origins or categorise her style. She really knows who she is and what she wants, she is always honest with herself, even if she comes across as being creative with the truth. However, getting pregnant is the exception to the rule; a powerful contradiction that shakes her world. She is deeply damaged from her life experiences, but is determined that it won't hold her back, as life is too short. This darker, raw side is what makes her intriguing. However, not always dealing with her emotions means they have a tendency to force their way out in strange ways, which can put people off. AI grew up in care, moving from one foster home to another and doesn't really have any family. Bambi was always the one constant thing in her life that she could depend on. After AI gave her baby away for adoption, she couldn't bare the pain and just had to get away. Now she is back and needs her best friend to lean on, more than ever.

MOOD IMAGES



Treatment

It is a late Saturday morning. A Datsun Cherry with foggy windows is parked outside a pub, from which barely audible feminine snores escape. Al (25) and Bambi (26) lie asleep in the backseat, twisted in awkward positions. They wake up hungover and struggle with the bright sunlight. Bambi jokes about Al still being there. She thought that she had dreamt her up. Bambi gets herself out of her uncomfortable sleeping position by locking her arms around Al in a strange embrace. Al is surprised, but Bambi just turns to the steering wheel as though nothing happened. Bambi starts the car but, in her hungover state, can't understand why it's not moving. Al releases the hand-brake for her and they drive out into the street. They drive literally two blocks, and Bambi parks in front of her flat. Al tells Bambi to be quick. She's in a rush, but Bambi convinces her to come up by offering her a toothbrush.

A bit later, they get back into Bambi's car. Al makes a comment about the car smelling like sex. As they drive off, they simultaneously wind their windows down. Al asks about the clown in Bambi's flat - he's her boyfriend, Justin. Bambi's irked that she referred to him as a clown. Al says "clowns can be fun", but Bambi reminds her that she hates them. In any case, Bambi's not keen to talk about her relationship to Al.

Bambi and Al drive in silence, hitting the motorway, until Bambi gathers the courage to confront Al about the motives of the journey; if she won't tell her why she has asked her to drive hundreds of miles across the country, will she at least tell her where she has been all these years? Al responds by singing lyrics from Lisa Stansfield's "Been around the world". Neither Bambi or Al are keen to talk about themselves.

Bambi turns the radio on. After a few moments, Al turns it off and tells Bambi that she was locked up in jail. Bambi is shocked and upset by this revelation.

They sit in silence. Bambi tells Al that she should have known about something this big, and asks her if it was bad. Al tells her it was alright. Al explains she got through it by imagining worse situations to be in. Bambi just can't picture Al in prison, because she cannot imagine Al going for any long period of time without sex. Al explains that she did actually have sex. After Bambi pushes her, Al explains it was more penetration, than actual sex. Al goes on to describe how far a rolled-up magazine, wrapped in a plastic bag can get you, or a guard's baton - if you could afford it - etc... Bambi is shocked, which gees Al up to disclose more. Al explains how handy vegetables can be in prison! Cucumbers, aubergines, bananas... best of all sweetcorn! Bambi is disgusted, but ... success, it breaks the ice. Finally.

Al mentions their old school friend who once showed Al his 'curvy banana'. Bambi is annoyed that this is yet another thing that Al hadn't told her till now. She thought they told each other everything. Bambi finally explodes, angrily asking whether Al ever considered how it felt for Bambi, that she just disappeared without a word. Al apologises, saying she is back now. Bambi fears that she is just passing through, to which Al responds by saying that she is possibly considering sticking around, depending on the result of this trip. Al describes to Bambi her dream of opening an idyllic B&B called the Cockatoo Inn, in which Bambi could live as an eternal guest. Al hints that she would run it with someone else, although she won't disclose who.

Bambi warms up and confesses that she is really happy to have Al back. This unexpected wave of emotions makes Al grow restless and she asks to stop for a wee at the side of the road. Bambi's mobile phone starts buzzing, it's Justin. He's asking lots of questions, but when Al gets back into the car, Bambi quickly finished the conversation and starts the engine.

Al reaches for some wet-wipes in the glove compartment, and discovers a box of out of date unused condoms. Al jibes that Bambi can't be having much sex. Bambi retorts that she had actually got them for her, that someone had to keep her out of trouble. "Well that was successful!" Al replies. Clearly some history there. As Bambi gives as good as she gets, Al doesn't like where the conversation is going and decides to change the direction by probing Bambi further about her sex life with her boyfriend. Bambi admits they are quite out of sync, because he is in a band and stays out all night while she sleeps. His band is called 'The Evil Bush' which sets Al off on a string of crude jokes.

They decide to stop at a rundown roadside cafe. Bambi and Al seem to be the only people there, apart from Billie (20), an awkward looking boy, who stands a safe distance away and just stares at the girls. Al asks for service, they are in a rush. Billie remains frozen as an iceberg. Bambi suggests perhaps he is deaf, Al thinks he might be 'retarded'. Wendell (55) walks out of the toilet, releasing the scent that was contained within. Al and Bambi cringe. He offers them something to eat and drink. Bambi orders off the strange menu, with dishe-names like 'The Butch and Kid Salad' and the vegetarian version 'Thelma and Louise'. Al just wants whatever is quickest. As they wait for their food, Al mocks Bambi for stopping at the weirdest cafe ever. Eventually Wendell comes out with Bambi's order and Billie follows him out with Al's, but stops frozen in his spot. Wendell tries to gently coax him over but Billie drops the food and drink on the floor. Wendell doesn't get angry, but just talks to him gently. He tells the girls the food is on the house. Bambi takes a fork to dive into the salad and only then notices it is full of baby corn. Al tries hard not to burst into laughter.

Wendell comes back out of the kitchen with some toast and juice for Al, he passes by Billie who is just standing staring at the mess on the floor. After apologising for the delay, Wendell goes to clean up the food and tells Billie not to worry, he tried his best. Bambi has manned up and is eating her corn. Bambi and Al watch Wendell comfort Billie, who is crying with his head buried in Wendell's chest. Al grows quiet, she is

clearly being affected by the tender warmth between parent and child. Al's silence makes Bambi nervous. Suddenly Al drops her toast and heads outside. Surprised and confused, Bambi quickly gets up too. Wendell won't let her pay. She grabs a piece of toast and heads out.

Al sits in the passenger seat, wiping jam off her hands with wet wipes. Bambi gets in the car and just sits there for a few moments. Billie is at the cafe window, looking straight at Al. She stares back at him as Bambi pulls out onto the motorway. They drive in silence for a while, until Al suddenly asks whether Bambi thinks she is a bad person. Bambi surprised by this, assures her that of course she doesn't think so. Bambi tries to figure out what is going on in Al's head. She notices a single teardrop lingering on her chin. Bambi's phone starts buzzing again, Justin. Bambi rejects the call, and glances at Al, who is still facing away.

Later on, Al falls asleep as they drive. She kicks the air and wakes herself up, only to realise that they are not moving - the car is parked on the side of the road. Al looks around and sees Bambi pacing, talking on the phone. Bambi is agitated and trying to keep her voice as low as possible. She is asking Justin why he doesn't just order some food. Fully awake now, Al sits up in her seat and honks the horn. Bambi cuts the conversation short and gets back in the car. Al is concerned that they are wasting time and wants to get back on the road. Bambi drives out onto the motorway, gradually reaching what seems to be her car's maximum speed - cars continue to overtake her regardless.

They head through a picturesque area in Somerset, accompanied by the song "Yellow Moon" by the Neville Brothers. The lyrics "Do you know something I don't know? Did you see my baby walking down the railroad tracks? Can you tell me if the girl's ever coming back?" ring out across the hills. Bambi and Al drive in a contented silence, as the song plays, enjoying the scenery. Al seems lost in thought. Bambi notices this and leaves her be.

A little while later, Al recognises "Carrie" by Europe, and turns the volume up on the radio. Bambi glances at Al, who already has a 'choreography' for this particular song, mimicking every keyboard note of the song's intro. Al gets fully into the dramatic mood of the song, grabbing the air and pulling it close, and singing along to it. Bambi is amused - this sight of Al is a familiar one that she has missed. She tries not to laugh as long as she can. Al also sings all the backup vocals. When the song reaches the chorus, Al changes the word "Carrie to "Bambi" and starts singing from the top of her lungs.

The radio starts losing signal, but Al makes sure to fill in the gaps. She hums the bits she isn't sure about. Then suddenly, something she sees outside catches Al's attention. She shouts at Bambi to stop! Startled, she steps on the brakes and brings her car to a halt near a road bend. Al gets out of the car. Bambi has no idea what has come over her, but she follows her outside. Al runs over to a road sign warning motorists about deer. Laughing, she tells Bambi she *must* get in front of it. Bambi tells her to piss off. Al begs, she really wants to take a photo.

Bambi tells her to get off the road. Al gives her the sweetest pleading look and moments later, stoney faced Bambi stands under the deer sign - like a tomboy forced to wear a dress.

On the other side of the road, Al struggles to take the photo, because her hands are shaking with laughter. A van comes rushing from the opposite direction, coming right at them. Bambi jumps out of the way, as the van swerves to the other side. Bambi ends up in Al's arms, shaken by the near-hit. Al asks her if she is OK, Bambi nods, Al hugs her. The 'Smiley's Coolers' van stops and short middle-aged man comes out of the van, slamming the door shut. The man, Smiley (45), approaches them with the most serious of expressions and an intimidating calm. When he gets to the girls, all that calm disappears in an instant and he shouts and swears at Bambi, insisting she nearly gave him a heart-attack - he could have killed her! He gets a handkerchief from his back pocket and wipes his forehead. Bambi apologises, but Al butts in saying he should have been paying more attention to the road signs. Smiley doesn't understand. Al points at the deer sign. Smiley looks at the sign, then back at Al, then at Bambi for any form of explanation regarding Al's comment. Bambi tells him not to listen to her, Smiley asks whether she is making fun of him. Al insists that he should have anticipated deer in this area. Al can no longer keep a serious face, she starts laughing violently. Smiley loses his rag. and grabs Al by the neck and backs her against Bambi's car. Al immediately stops laughing. Bambi freezes. Smiley shouts at Bambi, saying it only takes one moment to ruin someone's life and they almost ruined his. He lets go of Al and takes a few steps, before he gets his asthma inhaler out and takes a puff. Smiley tells the girls that he has a daughter their age and when Bambi ran in front of his van, he saw her. He looks at Al and tells her that one day she will be a parent too. Bambi looks at Al - Smiley's words seem to have affected her more than expected. Finally, Smiley tells them not to do it again, gets in his van and drives off.

They get back into the car and continue on their way, leaving the deer sign behind. Bambi and Al drive in silence. Bambi focuses on staying on the right track, while Al gazes at the passing landscape. They can see the coast and Weymouth in the distance. Al sits up, suddenly feeling uneasy. Bambi glances at her with a smile, thinking she'll be happy they finally made it. Al's breath quickens, as she stares at their destination in the distance. Al asks Bambi to stop the car.

There's a river and a bridge going over it. Al comes out of the car and heads towards the river, Bambi follows. Al leans against the wall of the bridge, gazing at the running water. Bambi approaches her and does the same, except she's more focused on Al, than on the water beneath them. It's very peaceful. Apart from the running water, the only other sound is the odd car zooming by. Al points to the weir where floating pieces of rubbish gather, eternally stuck. She asks Bambi if they get stuck there forever. "Until someone thinks to clean them up" Bambi replies. Al is hypnotised by the sight of the bottles and the ball dancing in one spot which she names 'Lim-bottles' and a 'Lim-ball'. Bambi smiles at Al's stroke of inspiration. Al says that she is a lim-bottle and Bambi is the lim-ball. Bambi wants to ask what's bothering Al, but she just doesn't know how. Finally she asks why they have come to Weymouth. No response from Al, so Bambi asks her who is in Weymouth.

Bambi says she probably already knows the answer, but she wants to hear Al tell her she's wrong. Al holds her breath and doesn't say a word. Bambi tells her she can't get *her* back. She instantly regrets saying that and tries to backtrack by saying they never really got to talk about it. To Bambi's surprise Al actually responds, by asking what is there even to talk about? Bambi tries to convince her that there is so much to talk about, in particular Al's feelings. Al says she feels fine and suggests they head back to the car. With one last attempt, Bambi asks Al to please tell her that they are not going to see *her*. Al tells her what she wants to hear, makes a forced smile and heads to the car. Bambi is defeated.

Bambi's car crawls along a residential road, Al scans the houses they pass, until she indicates a house with a B&B sign. Bambi stops in front and takes a peek. It has a glass door, making the reception area visible from the outside. There is no one around, but the receptionist. Al confirms this is it. A second later, Bambi sees a little girl (5) running up to the lady at the reception, they act familiar, like mother and daughter. The little girl looks like a child version of Al. She doesn't look anything like the receptionist.

Bambi looks at Al, whose face confirms it. Bambi hits the button that locks all the doors on the car, instantly. She steps on the gas and heads out of there as quickly as possible. Al shouts at Bambi to go back! Bambi changes gears and speeds up further. In complete desperation, Al hits Bambi in the arm, shouting at her to go back! Bambi almost runs into a pedestrian crossing the street. She stops just in time to avoid disaster. Startled, the pedestrian stumbles, before crossing to the other side of the street. Bambi remains in the spot, shaken by yet another near hit. Bambi shouts at Al, asking why she always needs to do these things? Al orders Bambi to unlock the doors. Bambi ignores her and continues on ahead.

Bambi stops the car in a pretty deserted area on the outskirts of Weymouth. She finally unlocks the doors and turns off the engine. Al's eyes are red with tears. They look at each other for a long time. The sight of Al in this state makes Bambi's eyes instantly well up. Al locks her arms around Bambi in a firm embrace, mirroring Bambi's embrace from the very beginning. They stay like that until Al calms down and breaks away, wiping her face. Bambi looks at her waiting, not even knowing what for. Bambi glances around and spots a nearby bar, Al has also seen it. The girls exchange a look. Al sniffles.

Al and Bambi stand by the bar, waiting for the bartender to take notice of them. The bartender asks Al if she is already drunk. Bambi declares that she is not, but they intend to change that.

The girls sit at a table, with a pint each in front of them. After a long silence, Al says sorry over her beer, the glass half covering her mouth. Bambi takes in the apology and asks whether Al is OK, does she want to talk about it? Al shakes her head. They drink their beers. Bambi spots a group of guys, the same age as them, sitting at a table not far away, leering. Bambi suggests that they go home in the morning. Al nods. Some blues song starts playing. Without a word, Al gets up and heads over to the dance floor, further attracting the group of guys'. Alone on

the dance-floor, Al sways to the music, dancing with herself, like someone would do only in their bedroom with no one watching. Bambi enjoys the sight - it seems to be a familiar image to her, one that brings up memories. Bambi goes to the bar and orders another pint, and a shot of tequila.

Later, Al comes out of the toilet, and spots Bambi on the karaoke stage singing her lungs out with a random couple on the second microphone. It's a Beatles song; 'Don't let me down'. Bambi doesn't notice Al, she is having too much fun with the random couple, showing her rarely seen confident side. Al sees a free seat at a nearby table and sits there, happy to be on the outskirts of what is happening.

Moonlit night, Bambi's car is moving, but she is not driving it, because she is asleep in the back. The driving is bumpy, which eventually snaps Bambi out of her slumber. Bambi blinks at the passing landscape, from her upside-down position in the back. Slowly, Bambi comes to her senses and sees that Al is driving. Bambi swears at Al, but there's nothing she can do. Al insists they are going back. Outside dawn is breaking. They drive back in the direction they came from. Bambi can't believe she fell for it.

Al brings the car to a halt, but won't look round at Bambi, who tells Al she is insane. Al's eyes well up. She tilts her head back to keep the tears from rolling out. Bambi tries to convince her to go home, but Al pleads to check in to the B&B just for one night. Bambi thinks this notion is madness. Al promises that she would never ask her anything again, if she would just help with this. Bambi asks what good Al sees coming from this. Al says that she just really wants to see her, that's all. Bambi responds saying that they saw her yesterday, isn't that enough? Bambi tries to catch Al's eye several times, but Al won't look at her.

Bambi sighs, shaking her head, with a punishing hangover. Al turns around and looks at Bambi wide-eyed - Al seems to have a puss-in-boots-effect on Bambi.

Bambi drives them right outside the B&B. Just as Al is about to step out, Bambi locks all the car doors once again. Al turns around and looks at her, she sees one serious face. Bambi is battling herself about whether she should say anything. She takes a deep breath and unlocks the doors. Al immediately gets out and Bambi follows.

Al and Bambi wait at the B&B reception. The receptionist, Mary (40) emerges from the back, baffled by such an early arrival. She asks whether she can help them, Al and Bambi ask to book a room. No availability, due to the annual Iron Man race that is taking place. Bambi suggests they get some breakfast instead, but then regrets saying it, when Mary offers them breakfast inside or out in the garden.

The girls sit at a table with plates of good-looking food, in the B&B garden. Al hasn't touched hers. She sits there in grave silence while Bambi's appetite remains as healthy as ever. There is a seventy-year-old couple having breakfast in the garden. It is far too early for anyone else.

Al looks in the direction of the reception desk and sees a child run through the hallway. Had she blinked, she would have missed it. She keeps her eyes locked in the same direction, like a hound dog, waiting for the possible mirage to confirm itself. Which it does. She watches as the child speaks to Mary. The elderly lady in the garden, waves her arm, and Mary heads towards the couple's table, leaving the girl alone by the reception desk.

Al instantly gets on her feet, saying she'll use the toilet and then they can go. Bambi is surprised and glad to hear that. Bambi picks out a few veggie bites from Al's untouched plate.

Mary heads back to reception, flashing a wide smile at Bambi as she passes by. Bambi watches as Mary's face gradually turns to worry. Bambi's mouth drops, as she realises that Mary is looking for the girl. Bambi runs to the toilets, but Al is not there.

Bambi rushes out of the B&B - her car is still there, but there is no one around outside. Bambi drives down the street slowly, peeking into every side street she passes, but neither Al nor the girl are anywhere to be seen.

She brings the car to an abrupt stop. After a quiet moment, Bambi starts violently hitting the steering wheel, the window - anything in her range, and calls herself stupid, STUPID! In her rage, Bambi also hits the rear-view mirror and the radio, which she accidentally turns on. On the program: one of the participants in the Ironman triathlon is being interviewed. Bambi tries to switch the radio off, but misses the button. Bambi finally manages to turn the radio off. She rests her arms over the steering wheel and buries her head, sobbing quietly. Bambi's mobile phone starts buzzing. For the first time, it's not Justin, but an unknown number. Bambi quickly picks it up; she knows it's Al.

Where is she? No response. A car comes behind Bambi, honking. Annoyed, Bambi puts her phone on speaker mode and places it back in its usual spot. She moves the car out of the way, so that the other car can pass. Over the phone, background noise of what could be waves hitting the shore can be heard. Al pipes up, asking Bambi whether she will help her. Bambi drives back the way she came, looking down the side streets towards the coast. Bambi asks her to please just tell her where she is. Al says she will tell her, but she has to promise to help her. Bambi sees the sea at the end of one of the side streets and makes a turn. Bambi agrees. Al tells her they are at the beach. Bambi speeds up.

A crowd of people has gathered on the beach to watch the beginning of the Ironman triathlon. Hundreds of racers wait at the edge of the sea, all dressed in the same diving suits, with same-coloured caps on their heads. Bambi drives out into the Esplanade, close to the pier. Bambi glances left and right, no idea where to look. Al tells her they are at a fairground. She spots a colourful fairground roof and heads there.

Bambi parks near the fairground, and immediately spots Al and the girl. Al is standing by the carousel with a phone to her ear. The girl sits on one of the horses, rocking. She looks a bit shy, but not frightened. Bambi tells Al that she is here. She can see Al turn around, looking for her and finally spotting her. Bambi tells her not to take her. After a long stare between them, Al hangs up the phone. She then turns to the girl and whispers something into her ear. The girl looks up at her and nods. Al gets the girl off the horse and takes her by the hand. They walk out of the fairground and head down the coastal path towards the racers. Bambi follows Al and the girl with her car, crawling slowly behind them. Al and the girl stop at the ice cream vendor. Bambi can see Al getting her phone again and calling someone. She looks at her own phone by the steering wheel, but it doesn't ring. Al finishes the conversation and puts the phone in her pocket. She asks the girl something and the girl nods. Al buys her an ice-cream. The girl offers her ice cream to Al, who didn't get one, but Al just smiles and shakes her head.

Bambi spots a taxi coming from the opposite direction. She looks at Al and the girl, and then at the taxi again. The taxi passes by them without slowing down. Al and the girl sit on a bench overlooking the sea. Bambi parks her car the same distance away that she had kept up until then. Further down the beach, hundreds of men and women in spandex await the signal for the race to begin. They look like ants from where the girls are. Bambi observes Al with the girl and the sight of them together makes her emotional. When she sees Al smile at something the girl has said, Bambi too instinctively smiles.

So focused on Al and the girl, Bambi fails to notice the police car. Bambi only notices it when two police officers, a man and a woman, come out of the car and head towards the bench. Al gets up to greet them. The male police officer crouches down to greet the girl. Bambi can see Al pointing in the direction of the fairground, explaining something. For a moment, Bambi catches Al's eye. Something that the girl tells the male police officer directs his attention to Al. The female police officer asks Al a question. Bambi slowly exits her car to get a better view. Another police car arrives.

There is an all-around exchange of looks between all three police officers. The second female officer takes the girl by the hand and walks her over to the police car. As they walk away, the girl turns around and waves at Al, while still holding her ice cream. Al waves back at her with a big smile. Her eyes are welling up with tears, but she seems happy, at least for that moment.

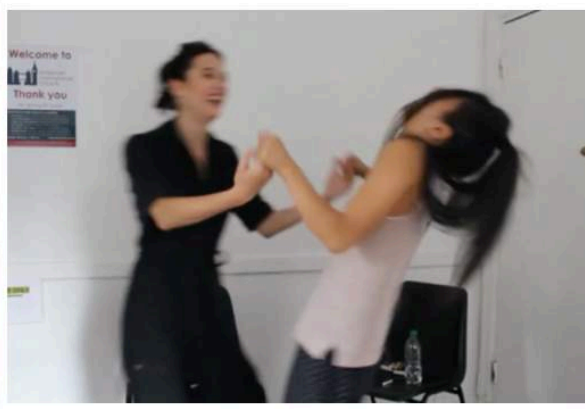
The two remaining police officers start asking Al questions. The expressions on their faces are much less courteous than at their arrival. The woman brings out her radio and reports something into it. Al acts confused. The police car with the little girl inside pulls out and drives away. Al

looks at it disappear into one of the side streets. Bambi also sees it. She looks back at Al, who has her hands in her pockets. Suddenly, Bambi's mobile phone rings - it's the same unknown number as before. Bambi picks it up - it's Al's phone and it's in her pocket. Bambi can hear muffled sounds of the female police officer talking to someone on her radio. Then, she hears numbers being dialed in a certain order to create some kind of a melody. Bambi looks at Al's face - she rolls her eyes, like a child. Although heartbroken by the entire scene that she had witnessed, Bambi laughs wholeheartedly. Al winks at her, while suppressing a grin. As the police officers escort Al to their car, Bambi gets back into hers. The police car pulls out and heads down the street. Bambi follows it. As she drives behind the police car, Bambi can only see the back of Al, in the backseat. At one moment, Al turns around and smiles when she sees Bambi is following them - her eyes are red, but she is smiling, which makes Bambi smile back.

They continue driving like that, following the coast. At the same time, on the beach, the long-awaited siren rings out. Hundreds of men and women simultaneously run into the water, as the race begins.

Development

With our current draft of the script, we explored containing the drama that bubbles under the surface, mainly by using subtle subtext where possible, and restraining the characters at heightened moments. While working on "Mercury", a proof of concept short film that takes place five years earlier with the same characters, we have developed a full and detailed backstory for them. We are also workshopping with the actors. This work has informed us tremendously, given great depth to our characters, and is allowing us to elaborate what happens in a more organic and compelling way. It has also reminded us how important and strong their friendship is and must remain throughout. With our next draft we will experiment more with how and when to best communicate the underlying drama for maximum emotional impact. For example, we would like Al to be less contained - a little more her old wild self. This will give us opportunities to amp up the drama, and have some fun, creating a few more daring and memorable moments. We also want to try conveying to the audience earlier, that Al gave her baby up for adoption, so that we can better empathise with her actions and emotional state. We also want to explore the possibility that Bambi believes they are on a journey to find Al's birth mother, as Al too was adopted. This will emphasise more clearly the notion of history repeating itself and the struggle to break this cycle. This would also allow Bambi to have a more active emotional drive in the journey, no longer forcing her to pick up on clues to work out what is going on. It will further expose her character trait of being too involved in Al's problems. If she believes they are going to find Al's birth mother, it will give her a sense of purpose. She will set out doing something positive to help her friend, only to have that illusion shattered when she discovers that they are not on a journey to repair Al's past, but instead on a destructive path, to kidnap her child - an unrealistic and nihilistic goal.



We are exploring cinematic devices for filming as most of the drama happens within the very confined and limiting space of a car interior. The choice of car will of course be paramount, but equally the choice of camera, lenses and shooting style. This is another crucial part of the project development, and we are able to experiment with when we shoot "Mercury". We also want to zoom in to Bambi's ultimate dilemma - should she help her friend, do as she requests, or learn to say 'no'? This final resolution requires Bambi to grow, to recognise the fragility of these precious relationships, the absence of straightforward absolutes in all things relating to human bonds and responsibilities. For this final moment, we would like to allow the drama out of its protective shell, and make the moment bigger. In the end, the outcome and realisation is the same, that these two fragile and complicated women have grown in their own separate ways, both learning massive life lessons, however more than ever their love for each other is strong and their friendship will prevail.

VISUAL REFERENCE - Light & Framing: Wim Wenders' 'Paris, Texas'

