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## Mercury | Press Kit

**Tagline** - *What's the worst thing I could do?*

**Logline:** Two best friends on a car trip where everything changes.

**Short synopsis:** Bambi drives her very pregnant best-friend Al to hospital to have her baby. They've decided that she's not going to keep it. Al's mood darkens as the inevitable and irreversible reality sinks in.

**MERCURY** is just the beginning of a longer journey, a bigger adventure. Kyla and Gorana have a great feature idea. It's called **THE COCKATOO INN**, a Road Trip movie with estranged best friends AL and BAMBI, which was submitted and long-listed for the **Sundance Script Lab** and is currently in development here at **LTLF**. It's about female friendship, responsibilities and thwarted motherhood, facing up to choices made earlier in life and growing up (boo... Yeah we all have to do it eventually!!). We've made **MERCURY**, set six years earlier, to help cement the concept, and to uncover the electric dynamic between our two talented young leads (**Isabella Laughland** as Al and **Harriet Cains** as Bambi).

**Producer's Note:** Mercury is a well observed and insightful portrait of a friendship between two young women in their early 20s. One is pregnant and they are on their way to the hospital where she will give birth to the baby and then give it away. The film is the short journey from home to the hospital when it all sinks in, and we see the massive impact it's about to have on all their lives. Al's mask of detachment unravels, and ever-reliable Bambi can't magic the problem away...

At a time when women's stories are being championed, a new gaze in cinema is emerging, bringing to our screens both the every day and the dreams from women's perspectives. **Mercury's** story comes on the wave of the new Irish Vote for/against abortion, the #MeToo campaigns, and the 50/50 and equal pay campaigns. In Kyla's work, she champions the misfits, the outsiders, with a strong voice and distinctive vision, making bold directorial choices, without ever compromising on truth - she gives us bold fresh worlds worth leaving the house and computer screens for!! The casting of **Isabella Laughland** and **Harriet Cains** has been an enormous success. It has indelibly and infectiously shaped our two characters and brought them to life, shaping the development of the feature. After **Mercury**, you too will want to know what happens next with **Al and Bambi**. With **THE COCKATOO INN** - you will find out!!



# The Team

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KYLA | **DIRECTOR**   OHNA | **PRODUCER**   GORANA | **WRITER**   LILY | **PRODUCER**



**Kyla Simone Bruce**, award winning Director. She graduated with an MA with Distinction from The London Film School in 2013, with her film *THE INTERPRETER*, which was awarded 'Best Student Short' presented by SHOOTING PEOPLE, as well as receiving a special mention for 'Best Woman Director' at the London Short Film Festival and has been long-listed for the BAFTA Short Film Award in 2015. Her Documentary *SILVER RAILS* (following her father, the late Jack Bruce, and collaborators recording his final album in Abbey Road Studios) has been licensed by the BBC.

Her feature length international collaboration *UNDOCUMENT* (a series of character driven dramas exploring the complex theme of illegal immigration; set in Iran, Greece and England) premiered at the East End Film Festival, 2016 and was long-listed for two BIFAs, for Best Debut Director and Most Promising Newcomer, as well as being nominated and winning many other international awards.

**Gorana Jovanovic**, who is hard at work on the script from her home in Serbia. She is a graduate of the University of Westminster. Her graduation film *KING FOR A DAY* has been nominated for a student award by the Royal Television Society. Her short experimental film *SMOKE* premiered at 2015 DokuFest. In 2015, she won the Best Pitch award at the European Short Pitch forum in Luxembourg with her short fiction project *REQUIEM FOR LAIKA*, which is currently in pre production.

**Ohna Falby**, has an outstanding track record in short films - check out the Life to Live Films website to discover more about the talent she collaborates with, the films and awards. She is known for discovering distinctive emerging talent, through insightful dedicated development work. In 2011 she founded Life to Live Films, to produce her widely diverse slate of independent films and **Lily Ashton**, a multi-talented Manchester graduate - stage manager director producer of plays and stand-up (Edinburgh Fringe 2016), takes on her first short film producing experience with Mercury from development to production and right through to festivals.



# PRODUCTION STILLS

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## **Mercury Director's Statement**

Mercury is an honest and direct portrayal of a 13 minute car journey to the hospital with best-friends Al and Bambi. Al is pregnant and unhappy, trying to swallow her true feelings to cope with the fact that today is the day of her planned caesarean section. Bambi is there to drive her, to support her unconditionally and to laugh at her jokes, as a distraction to the pain she knows deep down, her best friend must be feeling. Al grasps at any opportunity to escape her impending doom; forgetting her overnight bag, drinking alcohol to dampen the heartache, stopping for an impromptu dance... However, Bambi is always there to keep her in check. Through the girls' banter, we begin to understand that Al will be giving the baby up for adoption, but that's for the best, right? As they eventually approach the hospital, Al's inner most confused feelings start to leak out; is she doing the right thing? Could she actually be a mother? Actually, keep the child? Testing these notions on the person who knows her best, leads only to more pain, as Bambi doesn't buy it; assuming this is just another one of Al's last ditch attempts to avoiding the consequences of her actions. Realising that even her closest friend doesn't believe she would make a fit mother, Al must now find the courage to face the music.

I am fascinated with the moments in life where we are truly tested, when we are pushed into moral dilemmas that have no wrong or right answer, yet each outcome will result in immense consequences. Al has created life and now must decide how best to deal with the repercussions. She feels she can't be a mother, it's not what's best for her and it's not what's best for the baby. Adoption is a good solution. But how did she let it get this far? Why didn't she have an abortion? Could it be that deep down she wants a family? When it comes to crunch time, she is torn inside. Keeping the baby seems like a fantasy, but that doesn't mean she can turn the inevitable maternal instincts off. I myself am now at the age where I could be thinking about having children, so the questions of what it is to be a responsible parent and whether it is something I want for my life, are often at the forefront of my mind. Bambi and Al are based on my own experience of an intense friendship and the weight of helping someone through such a heavy time. I believe female platonic love is important and vital and something often misrepresented in film. The aim with my films is always to find the genuine truth within a character, a scene or a moment. I developed these characters with scriptwriter Gorana Jovanović and then more so with our actors Isabella Laughland and Harriet Cains, with the goal of achieving naturalistic performances.

Drawing from experience and working with improvisation, we created deep characters with their own internal truths. Every aspect of making the film supports this, from the use of natural light, to the honest frames - erring on the side of claustrophobic compositions, to convey Al's state of mind. This short journey consistently takes place in and around the car; preventing Al from escaping her situation, as well as encapsulating her rising emotional distress. We wanted to play with how much information to give the audience and when, allowing backstory and intention to be exposed naturally in the small details, yet communicating enough to keep the viewer engaged and invested. This is a simple, honest story with levels of humour to balance the deep emotional intensity. At its heart, Mercury is about the importance and fragility of love; motherhood and female friendship.

### Long Synopsis (300 words)

Mercury is a raw fast-paced comedy drama. It opens a window into the lives of Al (21) and Bambi (22), two best friends who are embroiled in a symbiotic friendship. Taking place over the short journey to the hospital where Al's scheduled C-section will take place, it focuses on this small yet pivotal moment in their lives and that of Al's as of yet unborn child.

Set within the confines of the car, they cannot escape each other and the particular and complex relationship between the awkward Bambi and the quick-witted and irresponsible Al, is explored. During this 10 minute journey, Al and Bambi say very little but reveal a lot. Al is jokey and irresponsible. Bambi has a strong sense of duty. Fatalism and rebellion collide during their journey. We see a window into a singular friendship as Al and Bambi struggle not to be defined by their choices and to establish their identities and trajectories as women of the twenty first century.

The film explores serious issues such as pregnancy, motherhood and what it is to be a responsible adult are channelled through humour and comedic situations. Their raw, crude banter, as well as the absurd situations they get themselves into, are unapologetic and the platonic yet intense and important kind of love between best- friends, is studied. How far will Bambi go to support her friend at this difficult time? Would Al do the same for Bambi? I want to play with all the fun happening on the outside, and the drama almost completely developing on the inside.



# Film Credits

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<b>Writer:</b>	Gorana Jovanovic
<b>Director:</b>	Kyla Simone Bruce
<b>Producers:</b>	Ohna Falby and Lily Ashton
<b>Exec Producers:</b>	F Carter Pilcher, Mike Samir and Mahdi Yahya Jed Falby, Billy, Clark, Neil Walwer and Sonia David Walwer
<b>Director of Photography:</b>	Simon Si-Shen
<b>Costume and Production Design:</b>	Celestine Healy
<b>Editor:</b>	Reza Jouze
<b>Digital Grader and Colourist:</b>	Tom Balkwill
<b>Sound Design:</b>	Martin Pavey
<b>Subtitles by:</b>	Clare McAllister
<b>Casting Director:</b>	Shakyrá Dowling
<b>Main Cast:</b>	Harriet Cains Isabella Laughland Corin Silva
<b>Supporting Cast:</b>	Aidan and Bud Brennan Williams Ozonna Soludo Azi Brown Gloria Price
<b>Film Crew:</b>	
<b>Line Producer:</b>	Françoise Gouliardon
<b>First AD:</b>	Pratyusha Gupta
<b>First Assistant Camera:</b>	Samuel Bignell
<b>Second Assistant Camera:</b>	Beau Pritchard
<b>Key Grip:</b>	Giovanni Mattei
<b>Grip:</b>	Helio Ribeiro
<b>DIT:</b>	Peter Lewis Beighton
<b>Sound Recordist:</b>	John Thorpe
<b>Prop Buyer:</b>	Julia Dias
<b>Make up Artists:</b>	Bex Palmer and Laureen Walsh
<b>Illustrator and Tattoo Artist:</b>	Esme Davies
<b>DIT:</b>	Peter Lewis Beighton
<b>Behind the Scenes and Kickstarter:</b>	Maya McAllister Demangeat

**MUSIC:**

**TRACKS USED: (rights all media, worldwide until May 2023)**

**Music Title:** NOTHING'S GONNA STOP US NOW  
**Written and Composed by:** DIANE WARREN / ALBERT HAMMOND  
**Performed by:** HARRIET CAINS AND ISABELLA  
LAUGHLAND  
**Music Publisher and producer:** UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING LTD AND  
SONY BMG LTD

**Music Title:** MOVE YOUR FEET  
**Written and Produced by:** JESPER MORTENSEN  
**Performed by:** JUNIOR SENIOR  
**Music Publisher:** CRUNCHY TUNES PUBLISHING

**Music Title:** FINALLY  
**Written by:** CECE PENNISTON/FELIPE DELGADO  
/RODNEY JACKSON/E.L. LINNEAR  
**Performed by:** HARRIET CAINS AND ISABELLA  
LAUGHLAND  
**Music Publisher:** UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING LTD

**Music Title:** BAMBOO  
**Written by:** HINDS  
**Performed by:** HINDS  
**Music Publisher:** DOWNTOWN MUSIC PUBLISHING LTD

**Music Title:** END CREDIT SONG  
**Written by:** MARRIK SHEARER  
**Performed by:** MARRIK SHEARER  
**Music Publisher:** MARRIK MLD MUSIC SHEARER

**Contact Details:** Ohna Falby +44 7768 512 689  
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## COMPANY INFORMATION

**Production Company:** LIFE TO LIVE FILMS  
61 OAKFIELD ROAD  
LONDON N4 4LD

**Exec Producers:** SHORTS TV  
ROOM ONE

### Suppliers

<b>Camera</b>	Decode and Central Image
<b>Motorolas</b>	Peter Cowasji
<b>Transport</b>	Tiger Tours
<b>Insurance</b>	Essex Insurance
<b>Post-production House:</b>	Dirty Looks

LIFE TO LIVE FILMS PRESENTS

## MERCURY



A FILM BY KYLA SIMONE BRUCE WRITTEN BY GORANA JOVANOVIC

STARRING HARRIET CAINS AND ISABELLA LAUGHLAND

[www.lifetolivefilms.com/films.html](http://www.lifetolivefilms.com/films.html)

ROOM ONE



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