



LOOK BOTH WAYS

her mum is dead — her dad is reborn — and the girl next door is making life hell

A FILM BY ROSAMUND OWEN

WRITTEN BY R. OWEN

PRODUCER: HELEN duTOIT

LOOK BOTH WAYS

© Roz Owen 2005

Producer: Helen du Toit, somnapix Inc.

Director : Roz Owen

Synopsis

- A feature film for theatrical release
- A drama about childhood for an adult audience

LOOK BOTH WAYS is seen through the eyes of a defiant, eight-year-old mifit, Vivian Cabbage, whose family emigrates from Yorkshire to small-town Ontario. Definitely dark and excruciatingly humorous, it is the story of how Vivian copes with the accidental death of her mother and her father's rebirth as a fundamentalist Christian. Unable to deal with her born-again dad, Vivian fights to get her 'old dad' back again. In the process she finds the courage to be herself while under incredible pressure to conform. Peering into huge life questions through the eyes of an odd-ball child, **LOOK BOTH WAYS** is ultimately a tale of courage.

- Budget: \$6 million US
- Seeking investment financing and pre-sales
- Development investment — Telefilm Canada & The Harold Greenberg Fund.
- Production Summer/Fall 2008

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Despite Grandma's warning about impending disaster, Vivian and Natalie (Mum) leave the row house they've shared with Grandma in England to join Alex (Dad) in their brand new house in Canada.

Clearly there is no love lost between Grandma and 'that daft bugger' — her son-in-law.

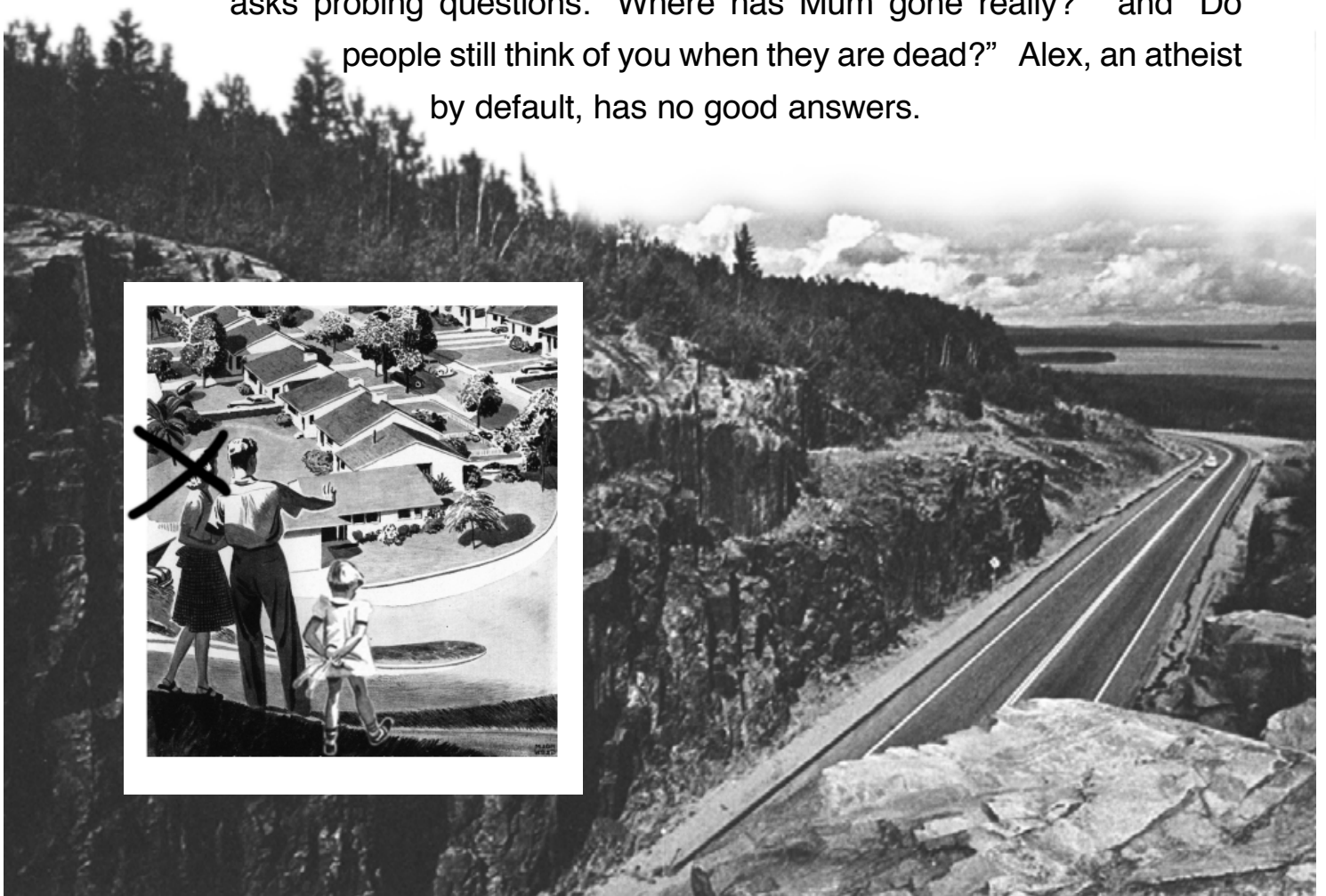
After six months apart, the Cubbages are reunited in Canada. With his great new job, Alex has purchased the house of their dreams, in small-town Ontario. Vivian and Natalie are full of anticipation. But just as they are leaving the airport. . .



. . . Natalie steps off the curb — thinking of British traffic — and forgets to look both ways.

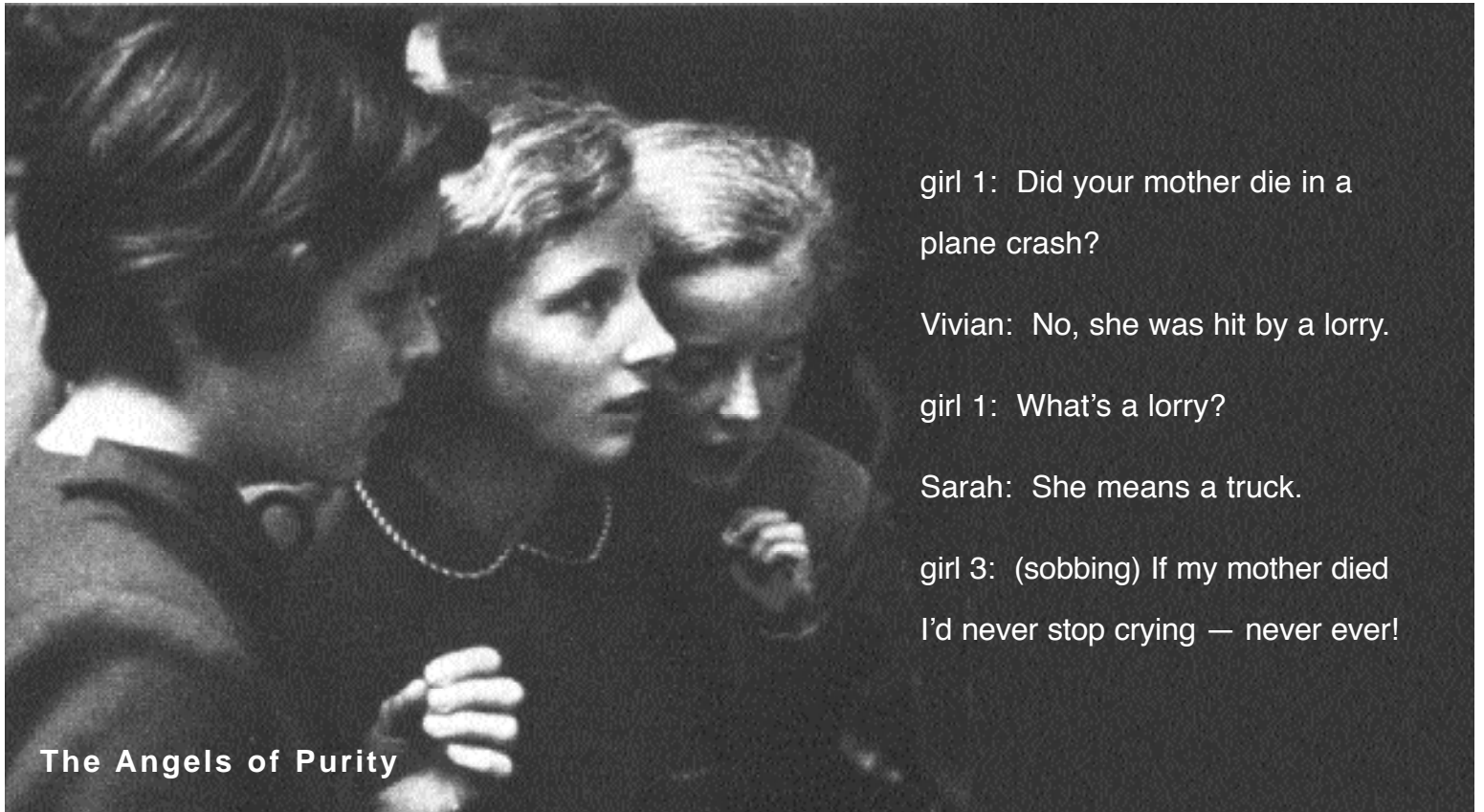


At first in shock, and then denial, Alex can't face going back to England and decides he and Vivian should stay in Canada and attempt to carry on. Devastated by the loss of her mother, Vivian asks probing questions: "Where has Mum gone really?" and "Do people still think of you when they are dead?" Alex, an atheist by default, has no good answers.



Missing her Mum, and frustrated with her Dad's denial, Vivian Cabbage is not adjusting well to her new life in Canada. After being tormented at school yard for talking with a funny accent and looking like a cabbage head, Vivian feels like a total outsider.

... Luckily, Sarah Rustin, Vivian's next door neighbour, comes to her rescue.



girl 1: Did your mother die in a plane crash?

Vivian: No, she was hit by a lorry.

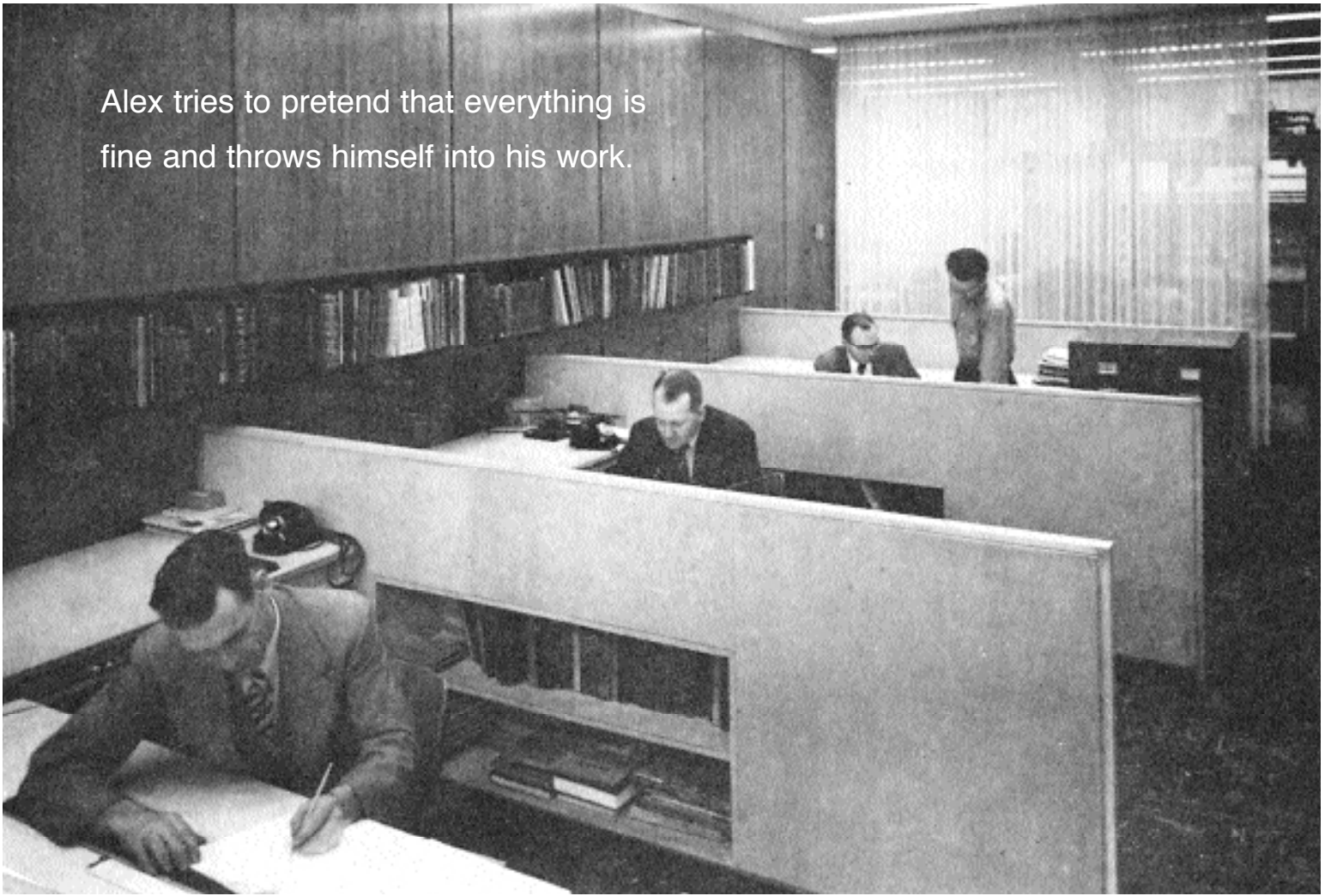
girl 1: What's a lorry?

Sarah: She means a truck.

girl 3: (sobbing) If my mother died I'd never stop crying — never ever!

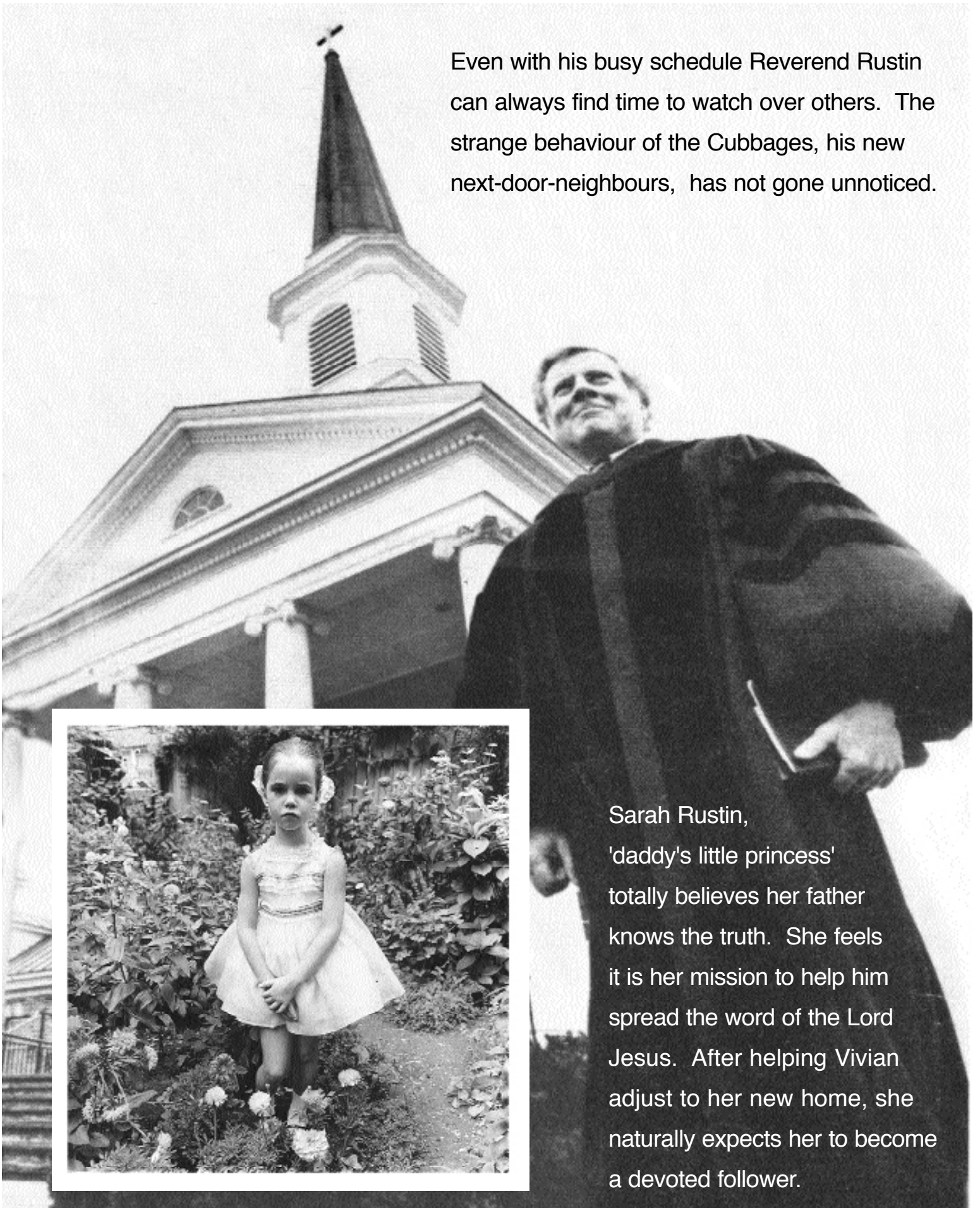
In an outpouring of sympathy, Sarah Rustin and her two friends, induct Vivian (as an honorary member) into their secret group — The Angels of Purity.

Alex tries to pretend that everything is fine and throws himself into his work.

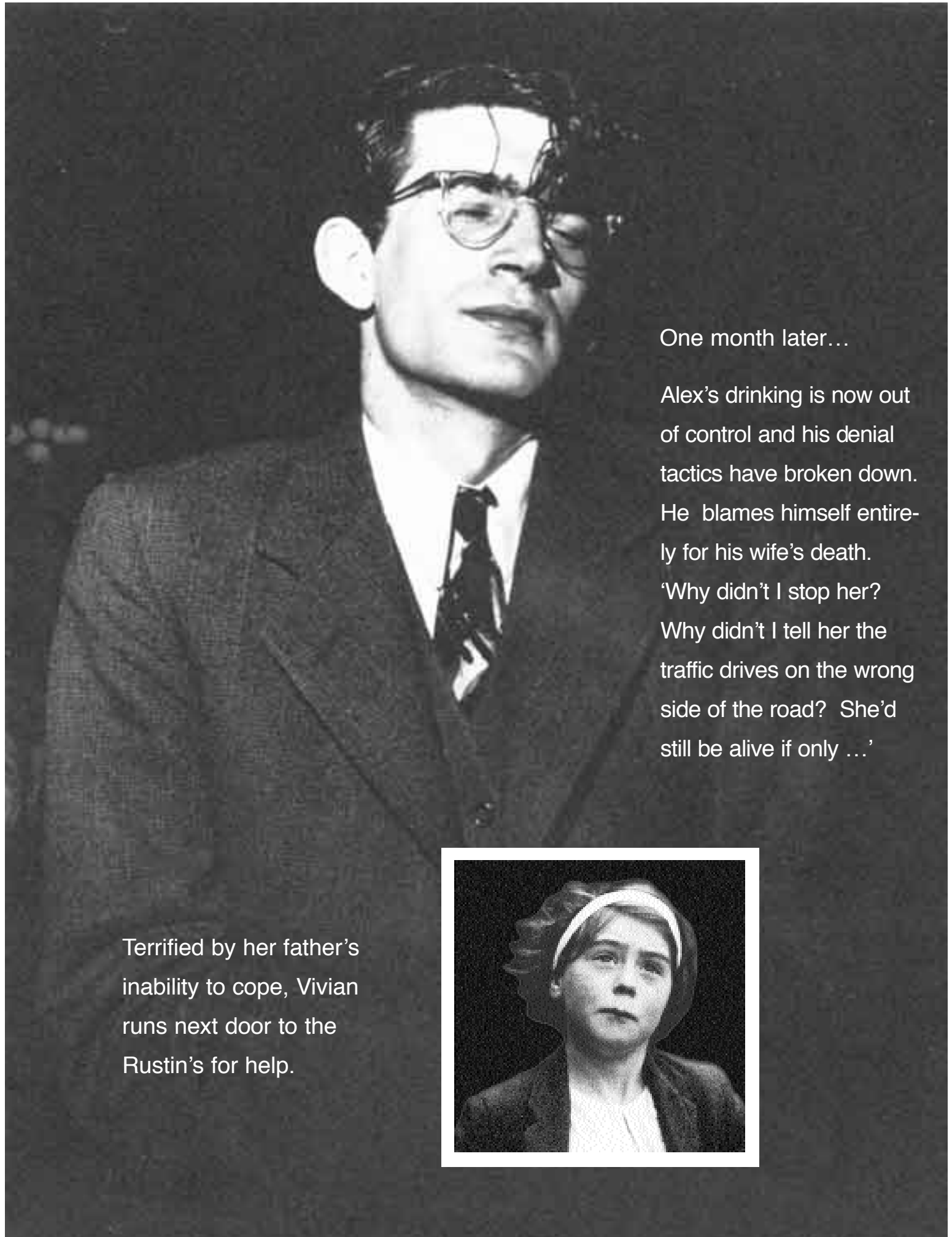


To relax he begins to hit the bottle. Angela, who works in the office, sees an opportunity to help an attractive man-in-need with some of her tender loving care. After a few too many drinks Alex thinks Angela may be a good idea.

Even with his busy schedule Reverend Rustin can always find time to watch over others. The strange behaviour of the Cubbages, his new next-door-neighbours, has not gone unnoticed.



Sarah Rustin, 'daddy's little princess' totally believes her father knows the truth. She feels it is her mission to help him spread the word of the Lord Jesus. After helping Vivian adjust to her new home, she naturally expects her to become a devoted follower.

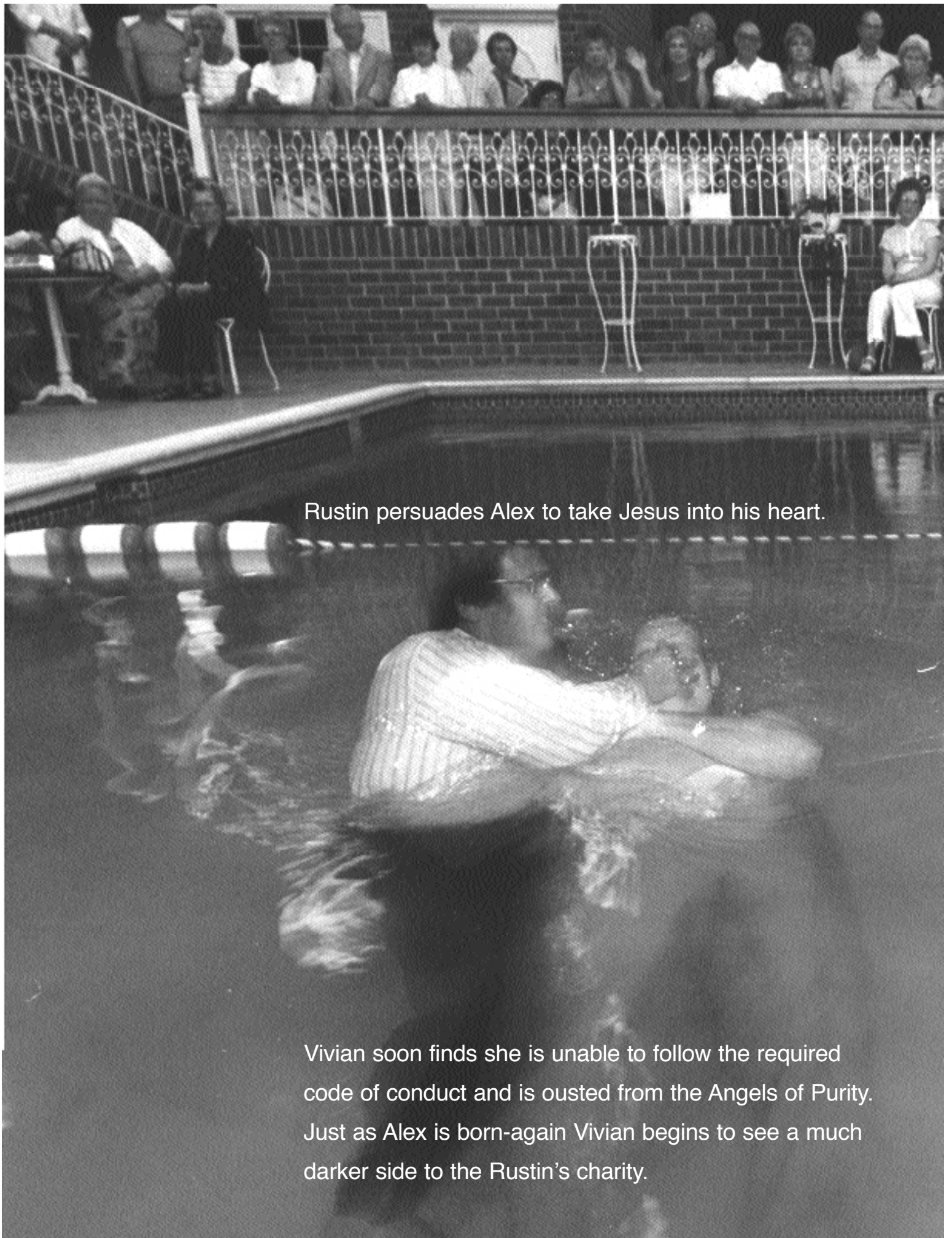


One month later...

Alex's drinking is now out of control and his denial tactics have broken down. He blames himself entirely for his wife's death. 'Why didn't I stop her? Why didn't I tell her the traffic drives on the wrong side of the road? She'd still be alive if only ...'

Terrified by her father's inability to cope, Vivian runs next door to the Rustin's for help.





Rustin persuades Alex to take Jesus into his heart.

Vivian soon finds she is unable to follow the required code of conduct and is ousted from the Angels of Purity. Just as Alex is born-again Vivian begins to see a much darker side to the Rustin's charity.

Alex is now extremely reliant on Reverend Rustin. Despite numerous attempts, Vivian is unable to connect with her new born-again Dad. She begins to rebel and her 'bad behaviour' gets her into more and more trouble. Finally, she creates her own private sanctuary in the woods where she can talk to her dead Mother. Sarah makes it her mission to keep the adults up to date on Vivian's increasingly rebellious behaviour. Vivian, pushed to fight for her own beliefs, crosses a frightening line and puts Sarah's life in great danger — an act she has no remorse for. Alex is forced to make a terrible choice.



In the end it is Vivian's defiant spirit that becomes the source of her greatest strength and resistance. Definitely dark and excruciatingly humorous LOOK BOTH WAYS is the story of a high spirited individual's fight to be herself under incredible pressure to conform.

LOOK BOTH WAYSDIRECTOR'S VISION



LOOK BOTH WAYS is a dramatic and emotionally powerful story. It also is filled with off beat and humorous moments that I have every intention of fully exploiting. It is black and ironic. Black humour invariably has something to do with death and not dealing with it very well. Understandably, most of us try not to think about death until somebody drops dead at our feet. Denial in the face of huge emotional crisis can be very funny. My aim is to make the audience cringe, laugh and brush away tears.

The main characters are 3-dimensional and complex — well intentioned, but also flawed. Nobody is wearing white hats or black hats. I want the audience to be caught up in the excruciating, but believable drama so they cannot remain outside in judgment. I love to build drama so the audience is thinking they want a character to do something, while at the same time they are pleading with them not to. Like Cement Garden, when one finds oneself actually rooting for the brother and sister to have sex. In LOOK BOTH WAYS the audience will find themselves hoping Vivian will punish Sarah and then be terrified of the consequences of her bloody-mindedness. At the same time we will have competing compassion for Rustin who may lose his daughter and for Alex whose daughter appears to have no remorse. There are no heroes. We may admire Vivian's courage and defiance, but she is no angel.

LOOK BOTH WAYS is a film about childhood for an adult audience. It is emotional, but not sentimental. After making my Genie nominated short film YOU LOVE ME I HATE YOU, I discovered what seems to me a universal truth — most of us felt we were misfits as children. I want this feature to call on that unsettling memory in the audience.



LOOK BOTH WAYS deals with huge universal themes: death, spirituality and fighting to be an individual while under incredible pressure to conform. I have set the film in 1966 because it was a time when the assumed innocence of North American life was about to be questioned.

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LOOK BOTH WAYSDIRECTOR'S VISION.....CONT'D



I believe we are very much products of our time, however much of an individual we are within it. My parents trusted authority, (*it got them through the war*) while I and my generation, have been fighting against authority for decades. Alex thinks he needs to give himself over to an authority figure to help him through his terrible loss while in the end it's Vivian who finds that core strength comes from within. I feel organized religion's greatest downfall is that in order to get to God you have to first go through a human authority figure. It gives the gatekeeper extraordinary power.

Is it possible to accept that we just rot in the ground and that there is nothing else? Since time began man has grappled with spirituality. We have no concrete answers. We may never. LOOK BOTH WAYS questions whether a young girl's need to believe her dead mother is watching over her is any more absurd than the fundamentalist belief that the bible is the true word of God.

Vision

My style of shooting, the way I block, compose and light my shots, is always rooted in the emotion of the story. LOOK BOTH WAYS is seen through the eyes of an outsider, Vivian Cabbage — a stranger in a strange land. We will see this new world as if for the first time from her own peculiar point of view which will give the film both an intimate and eccentric quality. I will make the ordinary strange. My short film, YOU LOVE ME I HATE YOU indicates my sensibility as it is also seen through the eyes of a misfit girl. However the vision for LOOK BOTH WAYS is darker and more extreme. I have been greatly inspired by films like, *An Angel at My Table*, *This is England*, *The Ice Storm*, *Ratcatcher*, *Cement Garden*, *Magnolia*, *The Piano*, *Taste of Honey*, and *Secrets and Lies*.

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LOOK BOTH WAYSDIRECTOR'S VISION.....CONT'D

As the film opens we find Vivian amidst the smog-filled industrial landscape of South Yorkshire. She lives with her Mum and Grandma in the wonderful crammed disorder of a Victorian back-to-back row house with a tiny postage stamp back yard. In contrast to the claustrophobia of home, Canada seems enormous in comparison, with its broad streets, huge cars and immense landscape. The Cabbage's new house is on a large plot of land with the woods behind them. Next door is the Rustin's house, a little larger and grander. In town Rustin's church is an imposing brick building. There, everything will be shot and lit to accentuate that there is nothing more important than Rustin, the man behind the altar.

At first Alex and Vivian will appear to be lost, suffocated by the expanse of space. But Vivian is resourceful and it is not long before she creates her own magic refuge in the woods — a place where she can spend time conjuring and communing with her dead mother. However it is Billy, her misfit friend from school, who introduces her to the rugged, majestic Georgian Bay landscape. And it is here that we finally begin to feel that Vivian belongs.



The time period of LOOK BOTH WAYS is 1966. But because it is set in a small town, the art direction will draw on a mix of eras leading up to that time. This is not a sentimental journey through the mid 60's kitsch. However, I am not above exploiting certain products of the time where it can help me make a scene; such as the JOY dish soap used in Vivian's troubling bubble bath, or Dippity Doo in the scene where Sarah attempts to make Vivian's thick unmanageable hair straight like everybody else's.

It was the Third Man that first inspired me to make films. More recently Jane Campion, P.T. Anderson, Ang Lee and Andrea Arnold have been filmmakers whose work I admire. Like Campion, I was also a painter in my previous life and that experience has given me a distinctive take on composition. My aim in LOOK BOTH WAYS is to create an expressionistic cinematic style that explores camera angles and lighting to capture the characters' psychological depth and the story's emotional power.

These paintings depict the rugged, majestic Georgian Bay landscape that Billy introduces Vivian to.



The Jack Pine, Tom Thomson (1916)



Stormy Weather, Georgian Bay, F.H. Varley (1920)



Northern Lights, Tom Thomson (1916)

LOOK BOTH WAYSDESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS



VIVIAN CABBAGE

Vivian Cabbage is a fresh new face, not a character we are used to seeing on the screen — a gangly girl with thick bushy hair and horn rimmed glasses. She is very much an outsider, yet she possesses a curious self-containedness. She is also proud and fights not to show her vulnerability, but in spite of this we sense an emotional honesty about her. Because she comes from a family who believes emotions should be kept under control, her reactions often come out in wonky, eccentric ways: which is why she can be very funny, without knowing it. At eight Vivian is old enough to begin sensing what she wants from life, but still too young to have much direct impact on it. She is resourceful and still just young enough to take refuge in her imaginary world.

When Vivian first moves to Canada, she and her Dad are reeling from the tragedy of Mum's death. Vivian misses her Mum horribly and needs to talk about her all the time. Alex on the other hand is overwhelmed with guilt and despair and can't bear to talk about his wife. Vivian misinterprets her father's inability to talk about her mother as not loving her anymore. The more Vivian talks about her Mum the more Alex shuts down.

Feeling horribly alone and craving comfort and security, Vivian turns to her neighbour, Sarah Rustin (the undisputed leader of the Angels of Purity), for support. At first Vivian is desperate to fit, and in fact betrays her father in order to do so. But what Vivian doesn't realize — and what is obvious to us all — is that there is no chance Vivian Cabbage will ever be a full member of the Angels of Purity.

By the time Alex is 'born again' in the local swimming pool, Vivian has already seen a very dark side to fitting in. At first she tries desperately

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LOOK BOTH WAYSDESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS.....CONT'D

to get her old Dad back. Unable to reach him she becomes more and more defiant. But to Alex and the Rustins, Vivian's defiance is seen as 'bad behavior'.

As an outsider, Vivian's magic sanctuary becomes more and more important to her. Then Sarah discovers it and in a fit of righteous indignation, destroys the one thing left that means the world to Vivian. Pushed to the limit Vivian retaliates and in a moment of fury she puts Sarah's life in danger. Though she didn't intend to kill her, she won't back down from her action. Vivian has crossed a frightening line. Her lack of remorse ignites Rustin's wrath. Although we understand his anger, in the end it is Vivian's defiant character in the face of daunting authority that we cannot help but admire.

When I made my short film YOU LOVE ME I HATE YOU, I discovered what seems to me a universal truth, that most of us felt like misfits as children. Vivian Cabbage will connect to the misfit in all of us.



ALEX CABBAGE

Alex Cabbage is an unusual looking, slightly awkward man in his early to mid thirties who women find irresistible. He and Natalie grew up in a heavy industrial union town, but they had big dreams of leaving that life and moving to Canada where they could escape the constraints of the English class system. Alex made a lot of sacrifices for this dream. During a long strike he crossed the line in order to continue saving for their dream house in North America. Many of his old friends turned against him.

When Natalie is killed, Alex's dreams are shattered. Natalie was the love of his life. He is lost without her and though he is trying not to think about it, he blames himself entirely for her death. Unfortunately for him, Vivian not only looks like and reminds him of Natalie, but will not stop asking questions, making it almost impossible to remain in denial. Alex loves Vivian, but is ill-equipped to raise her on his own.

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LOOK BOTH WAYSDESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS.....CONT'D

He felt much closer to his daughter when she was smaller, which is why he flies her from the bath tub when she is too big for the game anymore. In Canada, without Natalie to take the lead, Alex's attempts to be a good Dad are both tragic and comic.

Alex is a man who has always kept his emotions to himself and can't cope with his despair. He believes a stiff upper lip is the solution to emotional troubles. When he breaks down he can't forgive himself and has no one to turn to. He hits the bottle. When Robert Rustin walks into his life, Alex at first pushes him away. But it is Rustin who gives Alex a way to forgive himself and enables him to connect to a community.

Alex is naive about people: he is a bit of an innocent, an equally endearing and irritating quality. In contrast to Vivian, who is gaining a sense of who she is and what she needs, Alex doesn't know or trust himself very much. Alex admires Robert Rustin. He sees him as a self-made man who lives by his own rules. Before long he becomes like a father figure and Alex constantly seeks his advice. But Alex doesn't see that Rustin can only accept and love those who follow his rules. When Vivian puts Sarah's life in danger, an act for which she has no remorse, Alex is forced to make a terrible choice with grave consequences. This finally awakens the emotional core of Alex and changes his life profoundly.



NATALIE CUBBAGE

Natalie Cubbage is not classically beautiful, but she has a fantastic spark within her. In her early thirties, she is a vivacious and attractive woman with an irrepressible sense of play. She is quick to laugh. Her mother sees her as too emotional. She tries, with mixed results, to control her emotions and conform to family and societal expectations. In contrast to Alex she is somebody who has her feet on the ground and a sound sense of who she is.

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LOOK BOTH WAYSDESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS.....CONT'D

Natalie thinks of herself as worldly but until now she has never really seen the world beyond Sheffield. She is very excited about the move to Canada which she imagines as a land of opportunity, not just for her husband and family, but also for herself. She can't wait to leave the heavy industry of South Yorkshire behind her. Natalie adores her husband and is a great mother to Vivian, but she also has a wonderful independent spirit.



GRANDMA

Grandma is quite a wrinkly old lady for sixty-nine, and she smokes like a chimney. She is a strong willed and extremely proud woman who has never left Sheffield and doesn't understand why anybody would. Grandma speaks her mind and is quick to be judgmental, but her bark is worse than her bite. Her gruffness is frequently tempered by her sparkly eyes and a cheeky, teasing nature. Her family means the world to her, though she doesn't think much of her "daft bugger" son-in-law. She comes from a long line of trade union supporters. When Alex crosses the line she cannot forgive him. However her real reason for her rage with Alex is that she can't forgive him for taking her family away from her. Natalie, Vivian and Alex have been living with Grandma ever since Vivian can remember. It has not been easy.



**REVEREND
ROBERT RUSTIN**

Reverend Robert Rustin, his young wife, Marlene (31) and daughter, Sarah, live next door to the Cubbages. They are highly respected in the community. As a younger man Rustin led a wild life. His own recklessness (and alcoholism) led him to the church. Though he attributes it to God, Rustin is a self-made man, full of confidence. In the past year Rustin has broken away from the Anglicans to form his new born-again ministry. Drawn by his charisma, a devoted following has gathered around him. Rustin believes that God talks directly to him and that he can help others reach God if they put their trust in

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LOOK BOTH WAYSDESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS.....CONT'D

him. He always has time to give. However, behind those sparkly eyes and incredible charm is a man who believes his Christian beliefs give him complete authority in his actions — herein lies the problem. He is delusional. He never questions his own appetite for power. When Vivian puts Sarah's life in danger he uses his power for revenge, but because he is not introspective, he will never see it that way. He is a complex and fascinating character who is ultimately terrifying. Because of his charisma we somehow can't wait to see him again. He is a very attractive, sexy older man.



SARAH RUSTIN

Sarah Rustin is her father's "little princess". She totally believes his pronouncements about God and Jesus are the truth and feels it is her mission to help him. But like her father, her convictions are confused with cravings for power and in Sarah's case, acceptance from her father. Sarah has grown up with a father who has given and taken away love. She is on an emotional roller coaster, always seeking her father's approval. As she is clever enough to invoke her father's power tactics over others, she is the undisputed leader of the Angels of Purity. No one challenges her authority (*she is clearly the prettiest*). But as the story unfolds Vivian begins to disobey Sarah. Sarah believes this is a huge betrayal of the help and kindness she has bestowed on Vivian. But in fact, what Sarah cannot bear is Vivian's courage to be an individual instead of her follower.

The preceding pictures are found images of character types. I have borrowed a number of Diane Arbus pictures as she photographed people with a defiant vulnerability better than anyone. Thanks to many of my favourite photographers: D Corrance, Diane Arbus, Weegee, Robert Doisneau, Nick Heges, Esther Bubley and the anonymous makers other found images.

LOOK BOTH WAYSMARKETING PLAN



LOOK BOTH WAYS' primary target audience is 20-45, predominantly female with a huge cross over for male audiences. Set in 1966, it takes place in a period of assumed innocence. It is a film about childhood created for an adult audience as were *The Ice Storm*, *Butcher Boy*, *Heavenly Creatures* and *An Angel at My Table*. It is neither sentimental nor nostalgic. Seen through the eyes of our defiant misfit, Vivian Cabbage, it is a powerful emotional story exploring universal themes — death, spirituality and resisting authority. The film's inherent black, ironic humour is accentuated by Director Rosamund Owen's eccentric and striking visual style, very much rooted in the emotion of the story. This combination of story and style will create a very contemporary film.

While the plethora of Hollywood big budget films and their marketing machine have dominated the theatrical market for years with high tech melodramas, the success of films like *The Full Monty*, *Billie Elliot* and *Calendar Girls* show that there is a significant demand for character driven stories full of emotion and passion - and real people. LOOK BOTH WAYS will strike an emotional chord with audiences, and aim for inspiration rather than escapism.

The timing of the film could not be more apropos. We are witnessing an unprecedented rise in fundamentalist religions worldwide. Look Both Ways is a story about a child who will do anything to try and get her old dad back from the charismatic control of a fundamentalist preacher. Alex Cabbage's confused struggle for meaning and comfort in the face of his wife's death will touch those of us still grappling with their own faith. But it is through Vivian that we are reminded of the child within us all and that core strength comes from within.

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LOOK BOTH WAYSMARKETING PLAN.....CONT'D



International Sales

The fact that the Cabbage family are immigrants to "the new world" will render the film highly accessible to international markets. After all, how many people have not been effected by the immigrant experience, either first hand or through their relatives or friends who have packed their bags with high hopes for a new life full of happiness and great riches in the Land of Opportunity?

If one considers *Rat Catcher*, *Welcome to the Doll's House*, *Cement Garden*, *Distant Voices Still Lives*, and *Life is Sweet*, the most obvious markets are Britain and the USA. Yet the huge success of Jane Campion's *Sweetie* and *The Piano* have paved the way in Australia and New Zealand as well as in other English-speaking markets. The child protagonists of *The Ice Storm*, *Butcher Boy* and *Hope and Glory* defied the language barrier of non-English speaking markets in both Europe and Asia. Equally, foreign language films such as *Central Station*, *Ponette*, *Children of Heaven* and *My Life as a Dog*, despite language barriers have achieved success in English speaking markets as well. *LOOK BOTH WAYS* will build on this fine tradition of capturing the minds and hearts of international audiences through powerful universal stories.

Ancillary Markets

The universality of its themes, its strong visuals and the complexity and depth of its emotion make *LOOK BOTH WAYS* a theatrical film. As a result its theatrical sales will drive its sales in the ancillary markets of broadcast, video sales and soundtrack. The period in which the film is set renders it ripe for a great 60's soundtrack release as part of an aggressive marketing plan.



Casting

Vivian will be a magical child. In Owen's Genie nominated short film, YOU LOVE ME I HATE YOU, the 8 year old lead embodies a similar spirit. Vivian is out there and we will find her. We will surround her with seasoned actors. I was thinking of Daniel Craig (before BOND) and Emily Watson. I'm now thinking of Tony Curran (Red Road) for Dad. The script is such that the role of Reverend Rustin may be a real draw for a known star such as Stellan Skarsgard or Kevin Spacey.

Clearly LOOK BOTH WAYS has potential for broad appeal. It's fresh and contemporary treatment will lure in the 20-30 audience, and its period setting will appeal to older audiences. Yet its primary audience will be 30-45 similarly to Ang Lee's The Ice Storm and the Academy Award winner, Kolya and The Piano. These films also held great cross-over appeal to the family audience because of their strong child protagonists. Our heroine is a feisty nine year old and will doubtless charm the young and the old alike.

At the Academy Awards, Norman Jewison encouraged filmmakers to, "Just tell stories that move us to laughter and tears and perhaps reveal a little truth about ourselves." That statement encapsulates our intentions in making this film. Vivian Cabbage is a small hero with an immense sense of curiosity and enormous courage. One cannot help but be moved by this odd-ball's struggle to retain her core while those around her try to rob her of it. LOOK BOTH WAYS explores universal themes through the eyes of a child. It is a triumph of the spirit.

LOOK BOTH WAYSBRIEF BIOGRAPHIES

Helen du Toit
Producer

Helen du Toit recently served as Program Director of the Vancouver Film and Television Forum. She has over 15 years experience in independent film and TV production, international festival programming and consulting. Du Toit has programmed for the Toronto and Palm Springs International Film Festivals, held the position of Artistic Director for the Palm Springs International Short Film Festival, has created and hosted panels of international experts and taught Independent Producing for the Canadian Screen Training Centre. As a producer, she has developed original ideas with writers and directors, worked closely with distributors and sales agents and pitched projects at international film financing conferences. Du Toit produced Treed Murray, a Genie award-winning feature film distributed internationally by Alliance Atlantis. <http://www.helendutoit.com>

Rosamund Owen
Director / writer

Roz began her career as a painter. She made her first award-winning short film, A Precaution Against the Inevitable on an old wind-up Bolex camera and has been hooked to filmmaking ever since. Her first dramatic half-hour film, A Love of Contradiction, premiered at the Toronto International Festival and went on to many festivals around the world. In 1994 she completed a yearlong Director Residency at the Canadian Film Centre. Her Genie nominated short film YOU LOVE ME I HATE YOU had its world premiere at The Locarno International Festival in Switzerland and its Canadian premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival, before traveling to numerous other international festivals and purchased by many television networks.

Roz has also worked as a director in Canadian and US television, including JETT JACKSON, for Disney & Alliance, the award-winning series READY OR NOT, for Insight & Disney and REAL KIDS REAL ADVENTURES for Discovery Network. Most recently Roz directed JOURNEY TO FREEDOM, a one-hour fundraising documentary with dramatic re-enactments for Interval House, the first women's shelter in Canada. Currently she is developing a new kids show called Can I Try?

Roz is also an accomplished screenwriter. All four feature scripts have received development funding and all have been optioned. In Sept. 2006 Roz was awarded the Kodak New Vision Fellowship for two scripts she has written and is about to direct. Open & Shut is slated for production in 2007. Following that, in 2008, she will direct Look Both Ways, a six million dollar co production with the UK.



*The Ladies Auxilliary of Reverend Robert Rustin's
Church of Christ
cordially invite you to attend our first
Annual Spring Tea
following the Baptism of Alex Cabbage
3 pm Sunday, May 11th*

For further information on LOOK BOTH WAYS contact:
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LOOK BOTH WAYS package concept and design by Jim Miller & Rosamund Owen