

Esildis

In English

Title	<i>Duty</i>
Author(s)	Lauri Lippmaa
Format	A 90-minute full feature
Genre	Personal drama
Tagline	“Two minds... in the same room. Trapped in different eras. How do you connect the dots?”
Target audience	18-35 males
Logline	After dropping out of college, a rebellious young man finds himself back in his coastal home town, forced by his strict but loving mother to work with her in a nursing home, where his duty is to care for a complicated patient – a blind, deaf and mute man.
Synopsis	<p>After dropping out of college, a 29-year old Chris finds himself back in his home town, forced to work in a nursing home, where his duty is to care for a complicated patient – a blind, deaf and mute William Sterling (79).</p> <p>Mr. Sterling hasn’t been able to communicate with anyone, because his mind is stuck on the day half a century ago. On the day when a tragedy on board of the Soviet submarine off the coast of Great Britain confined this then 29-year old skilled secret agent into a physical and emotional prison. On the day his mission remained incomplete. On the day that never ended. But neither did his sense of duty to carry on.</p> <p>Now, 50 years later, Chris discovers the way of how to communicate with him, through tapping of Morse code. What he learns, is that Sterling really wants to go home. Would Chris be able to break Mr Sterling’s psychological and tragic state in order to learn how to knock down his own prison walls?</p>
Stage of Project	Treatment
Author’s Notes	<p>Emotional core: <i>“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us...”</i> – (Romans 5:3-5 NIV)</p> <p>Duty is a personal drama taking place today in the precinct of Scotland (equally between exteriors and interiors), and at the height of Cold War (mostly interiors, such as inside of a leaking submarine).</p> <p>There are several similar films that can be cited. There are elements and parts of film that resemble “Notebook”, such as the care home interiors. Also, there is a hint of institutionalisation and strictness that</p>

can be mildly lent from “Girl, Interrupted” and “One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest”.

But since this drama reminds a bit the model of “The English Patient”, the tonality of nowadays and the height of Cold War is somewhat switched. Nowadays seems much cooler, bleaker, and even sinister with grey and blue dominating the colour palette. However, stepping back into the world of Mr Sterling as a young man, we meet bright colours, sunny weather which represents hope that we have in our youth. And even the leaking submarine that has surfaced has the air of awkward sunniness in the face of rather probable death.

Tonality-wise, the film seeks refuge from Nordic landscapes and the way these locations are depicted in Danish or Swedish hit-series, such as “The Killing”, detective Wallander series, and “The Millennium Trilogy” films.

There are three plus one main characters whose story we follow. From nowadays, active perspective, we have CHRIS, a young man who has returned to home after quitting his studies; ANNE, his strict but loving and caring mother, who tries to make the final effort to raise a man out of her son; and KATIE, a somewhat mature young lady, who is content with her life, but needs a change as well in finding love.

This entire relationship triangle is tied together against the backdrop of the most curious patient the world has never seen – a triple agent who has become deaf, blind, and mute, and who still, half a century later, holds a secret that would make difference.

Aesthetic of shots and visual style would follow natural flow and mise-en-scenes that would not be tightly cut in the final edit. The action takes place mostly in as wide angle shots as would feel natural, giving it the necessary depth and scope as film – the trait the Nordic hit TV series mentioned above have managed to capture.

Sound design plays very important part for I’m a believer in sound’s importance as a vehicle for helping to enhance the storytelling – be it ambient sound, atmospheric effects, score, snippets of music within the scene, or simply using man as a vocal instrument.

General feeling of the film should not come off as pretentious and philosophical, but more like a vibrant mix between calm yet active small town life, a treasure hunt, and a social commentary.

Shooting the submarine and choppers would be the most expensive articles production-wise. However, there are possibilities to use the interior of the submarine and re-create the scenes at the sea with Special Effects. The same applies to the helicopter scenes, which are few, just for one day’s of shooting time, but which might need additional layer of coat from SFX. There’s a visual element that should be noted under this paragraph – the plan to use many aerial

shots with the help of hovering drone camera technology, which is considerably cheaper than using even the cheapest helicopters, and it would give much more manoeuvrability, yet will not compromise on the quality.

- Sterling has not one but four disabilities. He's deaf, blind, mute, and his mind is locked

- the young protagonist is of the same age as Sterling was at the eventful day. Chris's choices will put him on the brink of decision – whether to choose a similar walk of life

- through the theme of one's duty comes the growth of the protagonist. Chris's growing sense of duty and taking responsibility is the dramatic motor of the story

- main themes explored: duty, miscommunication, and homecoming