

WHEN THE SMOKE SETTLES

Presented by Silvermont Pictures, with support from CineCircle

When a woman finally confronts the man who murdered her father, she finds not the monster she imagined, but a broken veteran forced to face the consequences of his own choices.

Set two years after the end of World War I, *When The Smoke Settles* follows a woman who tracks down the man responsible for her father's death.

Both men came from the same working-class world, shaped by industrial hardship and limited opportunity, but war changed them differently. One returned home and rebuilt his life. The other came back fractured. Drinking, paranoid, and unable to adjust, he became involved in a violent pub dispute that left an innocent man dead. He disappeared soon after.

Years later, the consequences of that night still echo through the woman's life. Driven by grief and quiet anger, she finds him living in isolation on the outskirts of an abandoned rail yard, surviving by routine and distance from the world.

She arrives armed, prepared to end the story herself. The confrontation is immediate but restrained, a slow unraveling shaped by confession, silence, and uneasy recognition. He remembers enough to understand what he did. Enough to know there is no forgiveness waiting for him.

She leaves without pulling the trigger. But the reckoning does not end with her departure. Alone with the fire and the weight of his past, the man must face his final choice.





TONE

When The Smoke Settles is a minimalist post-war psychological drama told through silence, stillness, and memory. It explores the ripple effect of a single act of violence, rejecting spectacle in favour of quiet tension, where conflict lives not in action, but in what remains unsaid.

The visual palette leans toward monochrome, with warmth emerging primarily through practical firelight. The visual style is grounded and naturalistic, shaped by muted light, smoke-filled air, and restrained compositions that emphasise isolation and emotional distance. Industrial landscapes and abandoned spaces reflect the inner lives of the characters, suspended between past and present.

Pacing is deliberate, allowing pauses and small gestures to carry emotional weight. Sound design mirrors the characters' internal states: the crackle of fire, distant rail echoes, shifting metal, and the quiet persistence of the wind.

Rather than focusing on revenge, the film examines the hollow space left behind, what happens when justice arrives too late, and time has already done the damage.

KEY CHARACTERS



The Woman - A working-class woman hardened by loss. Years after her father's death, she tracks down the man responsible, believing revenge will finally bring peace. Beneath her resolve lies uncertainty, the fear that confronting him may only deepen the emptiness she carries.



The Fugitive - A former soldier unable to rebuild after the war. Haunted by a single act of violence, he has retreated into isolation, living quietly on the margins of society. Once volatile and dangerous, he now survives through routine and avoidance, waiting, knowingly or not for the past to catch up with him.

WHAT SETS WTSS APART?

When *The Smoke Settles* takes the moral structure of classic confrontation stories and grounds it within a distinctly British post-war reality. Rather than focusing on spectacle or action, the film explores the quiet aftermath of violence, how a single moment can ripple through lives long after the event itself has passed.

The project is shaped by personal research and conversations with veterans, including members of my own family. Through these conversations, I was struck by the different ways people carry the weight of conflict, some finding a path forward, others unable to move beyond what they experienced. That contrast became central to the film's two characters: men shaped by the same world but altered by it in different ways.

The result is a restrained, performance-driven film that examines trauma, accountability, and the human cost of survival, not through spectacle, but through silence, memory, and confrontation.





CINECIRCLE PARTNERSHIP



CineCircle has come onboard to support the crowdfunding and distribution of *When The Smoke Settles*.

Their backing provides access to an established network of industry professionals, film funders, and festival strategists, ensuring the project receives the exposure and strategic guidance it deserves.

CineCircle will help with the support of:

- Support in promoting our crowdfunding campaign across their socials and newsletter.
- Distribution Support – Assisting with festival placement, online release strategy, and potential short film showcases.
- Industry Promotion – Featuring the project through CineCircle's channels, newsletters, and partner networks.
- Advisory Role – Providing development guidance and mentorship during pre-production and post-production.

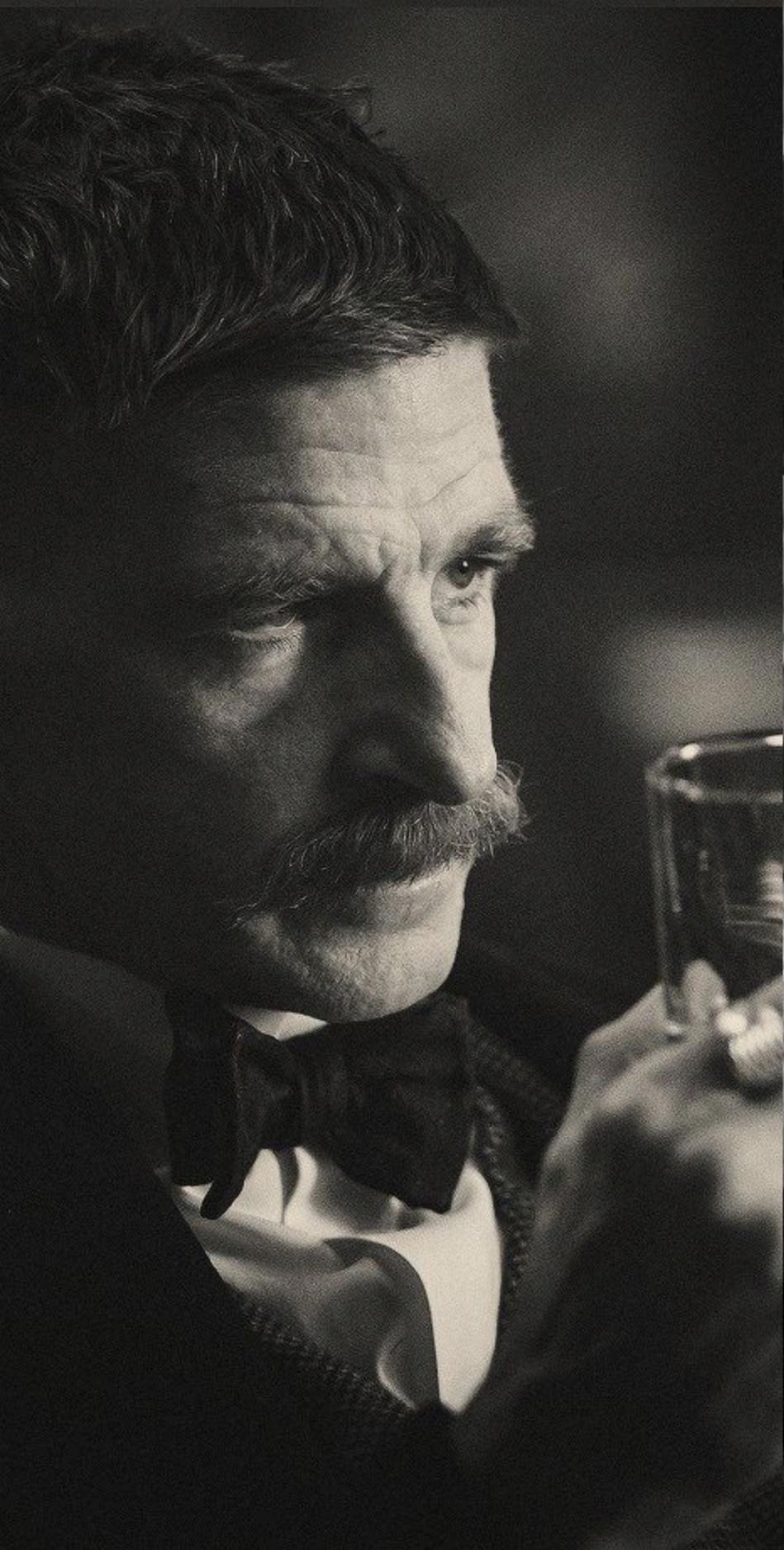
PIONEERING PEOPLE

When The Smoke Settles is partnered with **Pioneering People**, a UK-based platform rethinking how flexible work is organised and paid. Built as a modern alternative to traditional staffing agencies, Pioneering People connects productions and businesses with verified workers in real time, prioritising transparency, fair pay, and ethical working practices. Operating across multiple UK cities, the platform is focused on creating a more efficient, human-centred future of work, values that align directly with this production.

Silvermont Pictures is committed to being a crew-first production company, and this partnership reflects that in practice, not just principle. Through Pioneering People, *When The Smoke Settles* is structured to ensure:

- Crew are paid promptly, with same-day payment on shoot days where possible
- Clear, transparent terms for all collaborators
- Respect for working hours, rest, and wellbeing
- A professional environment where smaller crews are properly resourced and valued

This approach allows the film to remain lean without compromising fairness, ensuring that everyone involved is treated with the same care and respect as the work itself.



LOCATION

When *The Smoke Settles* is set within the industrial outskirts of post-WWI Britain, primarily centred around a remote, abandoned rail yard where the fugitive has isolated himself from society.

The location reflects the emotional state of the characters, rusted tracks, broken structures, and lingering smoke echoing lives suspended between past and present. Rather than vast open landscapes, the environment feels enclosed and heavy, shaped by industrial decline and quiet neglect.

The setting allows for a contained, intimate production while maintaining strong visual identity. Practical firelight, damp textures, and natural atmospheric conditions will ground the film in realism, reinforcing themes of isolation, consequence, and emotional distance.

The rail yard becomes more than a backdrop, it is a physical manifestation of a life that has stalled, mirroring a man unable to move forward.



MUSIC & SOUND



Sound plays a central narrative role in *When The Smoke Settles*. The film favours naturalistic audio over traditional scoring, allowing silence and environmental texture to shape emotional tension.

The soundscape will be built around subtle industrial elements, the crackle of fire, distant rail echoes, shifting metal, wind moving through broken structures, creating an atmosphere that feels both grounded and psychologically charged.

Music will be minimal and used sparingly, appearing only when it enhances emotional transition rather than guiding audience response. The goal is restraint: allowing performances, pauses, and small gestures to carry weight.

Rather than emphasising violence itself, sound design focuses on aftermath, the quiet space left behind once action has already passed.



FESTIVAL STRATEGY & DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

With support from CineCircle, the film will follow a focused festival strategy targeting character-driven, atmospheric shorts that explore morality, memory, and psychological consequence. The aim is to premiere at internationally recognised festivals such as Clermont-Ferrand, Leeds, or Encounters, before expanding to UK and European festivals that champion historical drama, auteur-led filmmaking, and performance-focused storytelling. Following its festival run, CineCircle will support a curated online distribution strategy, targeting platforms such as Short of the Week and Directors Notes to extend the film's reach beyond the festival circuit and connect with wider audiences.

ETHICAL & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

When *The Smoke Settles* approaches themes of trauma, violence, and post-war psychological impact with sensitivity and restraint. The film avoids sensationalising violence, instead focusing on emotional consequence and human complexity. Research and conversations with veterans have informed the project's portrayal of trauma, helping to ensure authenticity while maintaining respect for lived experiences. The film does not seek to represent any single experience as definitive, but rather explores the broader emotional aftermath of conflict.

Production safety will prioritise:

- Controlled use of period props and firearms under professional supervision
- Safe fire management and environmental precautions on location
- Clear communication with cast regarding emotionally intense material
- Risk assessments tailored to remote or industrial environments

The aim is to create a respectful, safe working environment while maintaining authenticity within the film's world.



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