

RED ANTS

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JUSTIN STAPLE
PRODUCED BY BRAXTON POPE (*THE CARD COUNTER*),
RAY MAIELLO (*MY DEAD FRIEND ZOE*)

SYNOPSIS

Red Ants is a true crime thriller inspired by recent parricides that have occurred in otherwise unremarkable American suburbs.

The film chronicles the outwardly conventional life of 17 year old high schooler Everett, a victim of constant bullying at school and on the varsity tennis team, as well as suffering physical and mental abuse at the hands of his strict, angry father Paul.

The mistreatment ramps up when he cannot stay out of trouble and maintain good grades at school.

After not being allowed to take his girlfriend Ava to junior prom she threatens to dump him and in a series of escalating emotional tensions he ultimately snaps and resorts to murder, using his father's gun on both of his parents.

Red Ants takes us inside the unpredictable, violent week of these murders in which Everett attends his Junior Prom with Ava and even hosts an after-party while his parent's bodies lay hidden upstairs.

Red Ants explores a harrowing story that investigates the emotional landscape of teens, gun violence terror and the nature of generational trauma in a quintessential American town.

STYLE & TONE

Red Ants will vividly capture the compelling teenage world of Everett, offering a hyper-realistic and emotional account of his crimes and the days that follow, in the tradition of films like David Fincher's *Gone Girl*, Gus Van Sant's *Elephant* and A24's smash hit *Talk To Me*.

Our visual style will be influenced by drama/horror films *Hereditary* and *The Sixth Sense* as well as the provocative sensibilities of HBO sensation *Euphoria* which launched the careers of stars Zendaya, Sydney Sweeney and Jacob Elordi.



THE STORY

From the outside Everett scans as your average, typical high school teenager, struggling with school as he prepares for college admissions and AP tests.

Neither a member of the popular clique nor a total outcast/loner, he spends time with his girlfriend and unwinds with his buddies drinking illicit 40 oz. beers at the golf course. But he's hiding a dark secret: the physical abuse his father inflicts as his grades slip and his underage drinking begins to spiral out of control.

When Everett finally breaks, he shockingly murders his parents with his father's shotgun. For the two weeks that follow, Everett shuttles between his house and a nearby motel, disassociating and pretending nothing is wrong.

Everett attends school, witnesses his popularity rise, and throws a party with his friends, seemingly without a care in the world. When local police open an investigation Detective Harlan, assigned to the case, is forced to reflect on his own past, confronting the trauma of generational violence plaguing his community.

As Everett's alibi begins to unravel, he becomes haunted by the memories of what he has done.

LOCATION

Our story takes place in Oregon, where Everett attends a conventional high school filled with recognizable archetypes, jocks and hardworking students striving to attend the colleges of their parent's dreams.

The tennis courts and natural environment and hidden haunts serve as the backdrop for the intense and fragile love story between Ava and Everett, embodying the paradox of beauty and darkness in their world.

CINEMATOGRAPHY



DIRECTOR

Justin Staple is an American filmmaker known for his ability to spotlight social issues through an authentic pop culture lens.

Staple began his career at VICE Media Group, where he spent a decade honing his storytelling and producing visual content, developing a unique perspective on contemporary culture.

His directorial debut, *American Rapstar*, premiered at SXSW, DOC NYC, and CPH:DOX before being released on Hulu via Utopia Distribution.

In 2024 he directed ESPN Film's 30 for 30: *No Scope; The Story of FaZe Clan*, a deep dive into the world of esports.

Staple serves as the executive producer of the SXSW premiered crypto heist thriller *Cold Wallet* presented by Steven Soderbergh and is the producer of the syndicated VICE TV show *The Therapist*, where he explores the intersection of mental health and celebrity.