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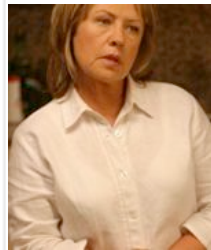
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16 September 2008

Not Bitter & Twisted

Aussie Filmmaker Finds Success



Christopher Weekes is living the dream of many young Aussie filmmakers. His debut film as writer, director and actor, **Bitter & Twisted**, this week unspools on Australian screens – after having already wowed the Tribeca and Montreal film festivals.

"I've wanted to be a filmmaker most of my life," he says. "I still have some of the scripts I tried to write on an old electric typewriter in the mid-'90s."

Weekes matured quickly, writing the first draft of **Bitter & Twisted** when he was 19 and trying to make sense of the loneliness of living in suburban

Sydney. "Then when I was 24, my mum died rather suddenly... and my world bottomed out from under me. I felt such a strong sense of time passing me by that when life started to move on again, I tried to reinvent that concept of grief into the story as a fifth character. That's when people really started responding to the script."

Noni Hazlehurst was the first, after one of Weekes's friends, who was working on Better Homes And Gardens, left the screenplay in her dressing room. Hazlehurst's interest inspired other names to sign on.

Shooting began when he was 24. "I really had no idea making films could take this long," the now 28-year-old laughs. Just as he'd been unable to get into film schools, or into NIDA, Weekes was unable to get government funding.

"All the money for the film came either from inheritance I received after my mum died or from working sometimes two or three jobs at once keep production going."

Now in New York City, Weekes is developing a US TV series based on **Bitter & Twisted** and another feature he hopes to be shooting by year's end.

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