

# FLASHBACKS OF A FOOL

**An Arclight Films, Left Turn Films & Sherezade Films presentation  
A DRS Entertainment, LIPSYNC Productions, Visitor Pictures & Mrs. Rogers Production  
Written and Directed by Baillie Walsh**

A film review by Franco P. Visser

Picture yourself waking up one day, you are in your midlife, and you are desperately trying to lift your throbbing head from the pillow after yet another night of excessive alcohol and substance use. Circumstances force you to face the life you have been leading thus far, and 'take stock' of your turbulent, roller-coaster ride of an existence. This is what the film's protagonist Joe Scott (played by Daniel Craig) is faced with when he gets news of the death of his beloved childhood friend, Boots McKay (young Boots played by Scoutt Lowe / teenage Boots played by Max Deacon).

Shot partly in South Africa, the United Kingdom and America, the film tells the story of a successful and well-known actor, Joe, whose personal and professional life are on a downward spiral as a result of numerous excesses and bad habits. The character of Joe is portrayed in the film as a fading, desperate narcissist trying everything to hold on to the remnants of youth that he still believes he possesses. Ophelia Franklin (played by Eve), Joe's 'house keeper' and personal assistant is the only significant person that Joe has in his adult life. Ophelia witnesses Joe's daily struggle and does her best to help him where she can. After a disastrous meeting with his agent and a new film producer / writer, Joe receives the news that his childhood best friend, Boots, has died. This takes Joe back to his childhood and adolescence in a series of flashbacks that highlight significant events in both his and Boots' lives.

Joe's flashbacks introduce the viewer at first to his childhood in the 70's and his developing friendship with Boots and the fun times that the two of them had together. Both Joe and Boots lived by the sea in a small village in England where everyone knew each others' business. As Joe grows into a beautiful and blossoming teenager (played by Harry Eden) he falls in love with Ruth (young Ruth played by Felicity Jones). One of Joe's mother's married friends, Evelyn (played by Jodhi May) seduces Joe into a steamy sexual affair and as a result of their actions a tragic scene occurs on the



beach one day. Joe's guilt forces him to leave home at a relatively young age and seek his fame and fortune elsewhere away from ghosts haunting him. At the same time Joe falls out with Boots and Joe gravely mistreats his best friend.

Years later, after the news of Boots' death, Joe has to return to England for his friend's funeral and has to face the very ghosts that he ran away from many years back. Boots married Ruth eventually, and after his death he left Ruth a poor widow (adult Ruth played by Claire Forlani). It is here, after the funeral that both Joe and Ruth receive a chance to sort out their respective demons.

What makes this film interesting and unique is the fact that on some level it will resonate with each person who views it. It forces the viewer to also 'think back' on his or her life thus far,

and to realise and see where he or she made improper decisions and committed foolish actions. Viewing Joe's journey also forces one to ask deeper questions about one's life: What have I been doing with my life thus far? In what or whom did I invest that proved to be fruitless? Am I doing what I am supposed to be doing here on earth, that is, am I giving voice to my reason for living? A final very important question of course is: Where am I going to? What is my unique and personal end destination?

A final interesting point to note from this film is the recurring theme of the music being played. Frequently the viewer will hear the well-known tune of Jacques Brel's "Sons of your sons...". Joe and Boots split paths when they were both young, and both their lives ended up rather differently. But the recurring tune played throughout the film reminds us all that "Sons of the thief, or sons of the saint, who is the child with no complaint? Sons of the great or sons unknown, all were children like our own.....". No matter who we are, or where we are from, we all share some similarities and the basic experience of being human. This comes with both good and bad, but with the basic instruction: Live! Watch the film, and go....Live!