

Southcliffe

Sean Durkin

UNITED KINGDOM, 2013
English
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE
190 minutes | Colour/HDCAM

Production Company: Warp Films
Producer: Peter Carlton, Derrin Schlesinger
Screenplay: Tony Grisoni
Cinematographer: Matyas Erdely
Editor: Victoria Boydell
Production Designer: Tom Bowyer
Sound: Malcolm Hirst
Principal Cast: Rory Kinnear, Sean Harris,
Shirley Henderson, Anatol Yusef, Eddie Marsan

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As television becomes the fulcrum for new ideas in dramatic narrative, ever more interesting collaborations are taking place. *Southcliffe* sees one of the American independent scene's most interesting directors, Sean Durkin (last seen at the Festival in 2011 with *Martha Marcy May Marlene*) and celebrated British television writer Tony Grisoni (famous for his perverse, groundbreaking work on the *Red Riding* trilogy and *Brothers of the Head*) tell the tragic tale of a "sleepy little English market town" turned upside down when one of its little-liked residents turns his guns on his fellow citizens.

While a television reporter's complicity in the story binds this four-part miniseries together, Durkin and Grisoni are far more interested in the mood and ambience of the town, and the ways its particular human chemistry may have contributed to the tragedy. Time is presented as elastic, with scenes revisited from different characters' perspectives. Flashbacks accumulate, memories haunt the bereaved. The past and present intermingle. The structure is initially disorienting, until the puzzle comes together and the larger picture emerges vividly. The filmmakers consistently deploy silence and landscape as instruments of menace,

and the lingering taste of foreign wars becomes an increasingly thunderous metaphor for the rules of life in Southcliffe, a town that contributed heavily to British efforts in Afghanistan.

The performances we expect from television in the United Kingdom are on proud display here, with particularly impressive turns from Shirley Henderson and Eddie Marsan (both cast refreshingly against type). Never does the film settle into the clichés about crime and spree shooting that are rife in American television; death is real, justice is complicated, and redemption is elusive.

Southcliffe is a four-part dramatic series. All four episodes will be shown, with an intermission during the screening.

NOAH COWAN



Sean Durkin was born in Victoria, British Columbia, and raised in the UK and the US. He studied film at New York University. His debut feature *Martha Marcy May Marlene* (11), which played the Festival, received the Prix de Jeune Regard at Cannes and won him the directing award at Sundance. *Southcliffe* (13) is his first television series.

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