

# POSSUM



**Press Contact:**

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## **Description**

<b>Year Completed:</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Length:</b>	<b>00:15:10</b>
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	<b>New Zealand</b>
<b>Language:</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Delivery Formats</b>	<b>DCP</b>
<b>Aspect Ratio:</b>	<b>2.35:1 Cinemascope</b>
<b>Sound Format:</b>	<b>Dolby digital</b>
<b>Colour:</b>	<b>Colour</b>

## **Short Synopsis**

Possum is a tale of two young brothers who accompany their lumberjack father to a forest campsite. At odds with each other, their relationship meets the ultimate test when they venture into the woods, hunting a notorious possum named Scar.

## **Long Synopsis**

Seven-year-old David is sick of being left behind. He convinces his lumberjack Father into taking him into the rugged bush of New Zealand, but his eleven-year-old brother Nathan, doesn't think David's up to the challenge.

That night in the forest hut, Dad's workmate, Toko, tells a tall tale of a notorious possum named Scar, setting David's nerves on edge. After a rough sleep in a tent, terrorised by night creatures, the boys are woken by Dad and the other woodcutters setting off to work. Nathan drags David into the bush to hunt the possum from Toko's story. Nathan hatches a plan to capture the beast, but Scar is not like any other possum. David will need to face his fears to prove himself in his brother's eyes.

## **Director's Statement**

The New Zealand forest was a playground for my brother and I as kids. Possum explores a child's perspective of a camping adventure where the bush and its creatures seem larger than life. Seeking acceptance from his elders, young David braves the unknown. New Zealand's expansive landscape is highlighted by the widescreen format, rendering the boys small against a giant forest. Music, sound and VFX heighten the suspense and fantasy elements of this true story. I hope you enjoy 'Possum'.



## Dave Whitehead Bio

Writer and director Dave Whitehead, has spent over twenty years in the film industry as an award winning sound designer and composer. Possum is his directorial debut and marks a turn in his career towards writing and directing. Dave is developing several of his original feature film scripts and looks forward to bringing those stories to life. Amongst other international awards, he has been nominated for a BAFTA for sound, has two MPSE awards and is an AMPAS member.

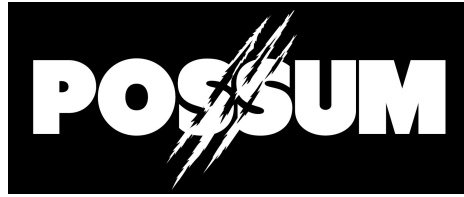
## Director Select Filmography

### [Dave Whitehead IMDB](#)

Possum	Writer/Director/Producer		2016
Arrival	Sound Designer	Denis Villeneuve	2016
The Adventures of Tintin	Sound Designer	Steven Spielberg	2011
District 9	Sound Designer	Neill Blomkamp	2009
Lord of the Rings - The Two Towers	Sound FX Editor	Peter Jackson	2002

## Possum - Festival History

New Zealand International Film Festival 2017	World Premiere - New Zealand Wide	Nga Whanaunga Maori Pasifika Short Films Screening
Wairoa Shorts International Film Festival 2017	Wairoa, New Zealand	Not In Competition
6th Kolkata Shorts International Film Festival 2017	India Premiere	Official Selection
Melbourne International Film Festival 2017	Australian Premiere	Official Selection
San Diego International Kids Film Festival 2017	USA Premiere	Official Selection
Berlin Down Under Festival 2017	Europe Premiere	Official Selection
Siapo Cinema Film Festival 2017	Wellington, New Zealand	Not a Competition
Byron Bay International Film Festival 2017	NSW Australia Premiere	Official Selection
Heart of Gold 2017	Queensland Australia Premiere	Official Selection
ImagineNative 2017	Canada Premiere	Official Selection
Show Me Shorts Film Festival 2017	New Zealand Wide	Official Selection



### **Possum - Festival History Cont.**

Hawaii International Film Festival 2017	Hawaii, USA	Official Selection
Winda Film Festival 2017	Sydney, Australia	Not a Competition
Audi Dublin International Film Festival 2018	Ireland Premiere	Official Selection
Tampere International Film Festival 2018	Finland Premiere	Maoriland Short Film Screening - Not In Competition
Gold Coast Film Festival - Commonwealth Stories On Screen 2018	Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia	Official Selection
Maoriland International Film Festival 2018	Otaki, New Zealand	Official Selection

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Film Review: Ouchy Film Awards

<http://ouchyfilmawards.com/en/possum/>

It takes a sharp eye, especially in short film, to create a film from a child's perspective and have it appeal to all audiences. In a few short minutes, however, POSSUM (Dave Whitehead, 2016) manages to view a first trip to the woods and hunt for a menacing creature through children's eyes, focusing on the joy of the chase and the excitement of the wilds that helps adults reimagine the joys of their youth.

Somewhere in rural New Zealand, two young brothers go with the father (a nice turn by Taungaroa Emile) up the mountain on a camping trip. Nathan (the older child) is somewhat dismissive of his younger brother David, who is— to him— a bit of a whiner and a crybaby, like younger brothers always are. The first night, their dad's friend tells the two boys about a mean possum named Scar, who's old and ornery and a bit dangerous. When something visits their tent at night, they are fairly convinced that it is Scar, stalking and hunting them. As their dad chops wood out in the bush, Nathan and Daniel search out Scar to take him out.

Two elements of this film make it incredibly charming: its child actors and its embrace of the fantastic. Duane Evans Jr. and Te Ahitaewa Hakaraia-Hosking make for two excellent brothers, they bicker and play with each other like pros, and their search for Scar evokes memories of childhood trips of the past. Moreover, we get Scar point of view shots, puppet-like shadows of elk, and most importantly, a charming Scar animatronic that is made of a child's imagination. And of course, the New Zealand woods are beautiful and slightly dangerous, threading that line between awe and fear that usually creates children's worlds. Between the vast, sweeping landscape that makes New Zealand both massively gorgeous and strangely familiar and the sweet brotherly affection of two young boys, POSSUM earns its place a charming coming of age moment that never becomes saccharine or cliché.

<http://ouchyfilmawards.com/en/possum/>



## Credits

Director, Writer                      Dave Whitehead

Producers                              Sadie Wilson  
    Paul Murphy  
    Dave Whitehead

In association with the New Zealand Film Commission

Co Producer                          Marc Tyron

## Cast

David	Te Ahitaewa Hakaraia-Hosking
Nathan	Duane Evans Jnr
Dad	Taungaroa Emile
Toko	Maaka Pohatu
Mum	Gabe MacDonnell
Tree Feller	Pat Hakaraia
Scar	Gary the Gutless Possum
Land Rover	Longsheep

1st AD  
& Directors Mentor                      Paul Murphy

Cinematographer                      Matthew Meikle

Editor                                      Greg Daniels

Composer                                  Tane Upjohn-Beatson

Casting	Dave Whitehead
The Casting Company	Tina Cleary
Gail Cowan Management Ltd	Miranda Rivers
Focus Puller	Niki Winer
	Charles Edwards
2nd Camera Assist	Matt Pancer
	Jordan Beresford
Gaffer	Russell Lloyd
Best Boy	Alex McKenna
Grip	Jan Keinheins
Sound Recordist	Ken Saville
Sound Recordist Pickup Shoot	Joel Anscombe-Smith
Boom Operator	Chris Ward
Script Supervisor	Michelle Child
Costume Design/Key Onset	Sarah Campbell
Make Up Artist	Alysia Denton
Make Up Artist Pickup Shoot	Lisa Foothead
Stills Photographer	Sarah Campbell
Stills Photographer Pickup Shoot	Christopher Moss
Stills Assistant	Bailey Eru
First Aid	Felix Filipo
Production Assistant	Anne van der Pasch
Runner	George Dyer
Set Hands	Louis Littlejohn
	Jordan Keen
	Oliver Keen

Ye Olde Builder of Sheds

Gregg Fletcher

Story Board Artist

Christian Rivers

Vehicle Wrangler

Richard Paterson  
Trudy Burgess

VFX Producer

James Cunningham

VFX Supervisor

Oliver Herbert

On Set Supervisor

Brian C Samuels

**VFX and Animation Provided by Media Design School  
Bachelor of Art and Design - Class 16073**

Ananta Shesh Desai

Anine Samuelsen

Katrine Elnes

Arjun Sharma

Rafael Laffitte

Alesana Inivale

Kathrine Paulsen

Emil de Lange

Douglas Grönborg

Abby Nath

Luke Thynne

Jimmy Trinh

Vilde Skjellestad

Magnus Aaby

**Jilin Animation Institute**

**Possum Animation**

Animation Supervisors

Weiqi Wang

Fei Peng

Animators

Junying Zhai

Fengxue Li

Jingying Sui

Yufeng Wu

Yuanhong Zhu

Zhiguang Zhao



Peng Wang  
Xiaoyun Mao  
Jinhua Qi  
Fengjiao Liu  
Guo Chong

Sound Designer	Michelle Child
Dialogue Supervisor	Matthew Stutter
ADR Recordist and Editor	Chris Ward
ADR Studio	TheADRoom

### **Foley Services provided by Bespoke Post**

Foley Mixer	Amy Barber
Foley Artist	Jonathan Bruce

Score Recording Engineer & Mixer	John Neill
Recorded and Mixed at	Park Road Post

1st Violin	Yuka Eguchi
2nd Violin	Kristina Zelinska
Viola	Andrew Thomson
Cello	Andrew Joyce
Flute	Erin Upjohn-Beatson
Clarinet	Patrick Barry
Bass	Simon Eastwood
Drums	Thomas Friggens
Mandolin	Tane Upjohn-Beatson
Guitar	Adrian Jensen, Tane Upjohn-Beatson

### **Weta Workshop**

Workshop Supervisor	Rob Gillies
Possum Puppet Construction	Kelly Marie
Mold Dept	Rob Skene
Casting Dept	Emmet Davey
Cleanup Dept	Guy Mulligan
Paint Dept	Dordi Moen

Cameras and Lighting Hire	Portsmouth Rentals
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Camera Department	Claude Dasan
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David Russell
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Lighting Department	Leonne Kassler
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Louise Kassler
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Craig Macintosh
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## **Post Production at Park Road Post Production, Wellington, New Zealand**

Re-recording Mixers	Tim Chaproniere
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Alexis Feodoroff
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Sound Recordist	Toby Lloyd
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On-line Editor	Tim Willis
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Colourist	Damian McDonnell
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Chief Executive	Cameron Harland
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Head of Marketing	Vicki Jackways
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Head of Production	Dean Watkins
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Director of Engineering - Picture	Ian Bidgood
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Director of Engineering - Sound	John Neill
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Sound Manager	Nigel Scott
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Picture Manager	Daniel Eady
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Producer	Jenna Udy
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Workflow Architect	Anthony S. Pratt
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Media Operations Supervisor	Victoria Chu
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Media Operator	Michael Harris
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Wrangling Manager	Joyce Kamille Cristal
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Data Wrangler	Wattana Moeung
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Projectionist	Paul Harris
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New Zealand Film Commision
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Talent Pathways Managers	Jude McLaren
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Whetu Fala
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Graphic Design	Chris Bleackley
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Artwork	Geoff Francis
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Logo Animation	Jason Bowden
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Accommodation	Waihoanga Centre For Well-Being
Catering	Elements Baxters Catering
Coffee	Cafe Laffarre
Special Thanks	The Amazing - Pat and Tania Hakaraia Peter & Ann Marie Housiaux Lyn & Don Wallace Katera Rikihana-Tukerangi, Lance Tukerangi & Whanau The Wichman-Evans Whanau The Hakaraia-Hosking Whanau Libby Hakaraia & Tainui Stevens Fran Walsh and Peter Jackson Richard Taylor and Tania Rodger David Paul Michael de Young Rachel Keen Amanda Walker Vicki O'hagan Angela Littlejohn Bonnie Philp Juliet Dreaver Elliott Traverse Sue Mcpherson Illumin The Whitehead Whanau and Clan Cosgrove

Dedicated to Dad, Wallace Whitehead,  
my brothers John Whitehead & Evan Hughes  
and my sisters Wikitoria Whitehead and Josephine Tumanako

Filmed in Otaki and Battle Hill, Paekakariki, New Zealand

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