

GENUS

A dystopian sci-fi thriller based on the novel by Jonathan Trigell

PRODUCER'S STATEMENT –

We see the feature film adaptation of GENUS as, above all, a thrilling, character-driven cautionary tale set in a very bleak and dangerous future. We see it as a visionary, gripping and exciting piece of cinema and feel the time is right for this high concept sci-fi thriller to be made.

We were immediately drawn in to the novel through Trigell's captivating vision of the storyworld. Details such as Gretchen's pet spider and the age-varying identical Regan brothers leapt effortlessly off the page. The depiction of the deteriorated Kross and a very different blisteringly hot London within a post religious war UK society where science and commerce have run amuck struck up images we've never seen on-screen before. The stark and visually detailed contrast between the haves and have nots, in this case the *improved* and the *unimproved*, at once distant as they are eerily familiar - particularly in the prophetic nature of the riots.

The second element that made us feel this story needs to be adapted for the screen is character. Holman and Gunt are enormously compelling, deeply flawed yet completely empathetic characters with whom we navigate through this harsh world. Their trajectories are clear and focused yet full of surprise. Holman is tragic and has something of a self-fulfilling prophecy about him. The irony of where he's come from and the life he finds himself condemned to live is truly the stuff of good storytelling. Gunt is our antihero - he is trying to solve the mystery of the killings and ultimately succeeds. The twist in which we learn that he is actually unimproved himself is brilliant in that it feels decisively set-up and inevitable. Likewise, the entire cast of characters - Adele Nicole, Crick, Quigley, Valentine - are so well drawn and their stories intricately yet so seamlessly woven together, that they are crying out to be dramatized.

Lastly, we were drawn to GENUS' elaborate and original story. The murder mystery is set up page one, and though it is a slow-burn up to the point at which all the characters collide and the details of the government plot start to unravel, it is a bold, intense and packs a huge punch.

In our feature film adaptation, we would aim to capture the core of all of the above in as true and honest a way as possible. While these elements work together perfectly in the context of a novel, we would need to make a number of adjustments in adapting the story for the screen in order to retain the fundamental spirit of the original material:

ADAPTATION NOTES –

The first question we asked ourselves after reading the book was - how would one address the murder mystery through-line? Our intention would be to inject the

feature film version with a more relentless pace with the murder plot acting as the ever-persistent engine in each characters' journey. For example, Gunt would be more active in seeking out the answers behind the murders and the urgency and stakes would be heightened early on.

In terms of the tone, we feel the film should veer more firmly into thriller territory. It would retain the depth of the characters' situations and the relevance and complexity of the book's themes concerning the applications and ethics of big business, politics and science, but would at once exude elements of 'fun' in terms of the audience adrenaline that a story such as this demands. Key to any film adaptation would be to retain at its heart the very bleak and ruthless vision of the future while creating a sci-fi world that is in the service of an emotional, human payoff which could take GENUS beyond a high-concept premise into the kind of emotional terrain that too often escapes even the best genre filmmakers and deliver both a thought-provoking and heart-pounding viewing experience.

Lastly, the most important initial question, in our mind, is - who is our protagonist? There are several ways you could tell this story. We would certainly consider retaining the multi-strand aspect of the narrative, though perhaps this isn't the natural fit in terms of the film's genre, it could work extremely well as a six-part television series. As for film, arguments can be made in multiple directions in terms of Holman and Gunt vying for the protagonist role, or sharing it. In order to decide on the best course of action, we will work closely with a writer. It is a challenge that we are immensely excited by.