

**Mark
Strong**

**Ian
McDiarmid**

DIRECTED BY
Paloma Baeza



The

ODDS



The ODDS

PRESS PACK

For further information please contact Producer
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The ODDS



SYNOPSIS

Alone in a stark, empty room, a nervous gambler awaits his unknown fate. The arrival of his interrogator brings a surprising accusation which the gambler denies. But as strange questions continue, the truth about each man becomes less clear, twisting and turning until the real answer is finally revealed.





DIRECTORS NOTES

The Odds came straight out of my first meeting with producer Dan McCulloch. We discussed various ideas in that hour, and one of them was the concept of a short film set in one room. I went away with this in mind and a week later, was lucky enough to get hold of Richard Fisher's script. I felt a huge sense of excitement on reading it and sent it on to Dan.

Two people in one room for ten minutes is a cinematic challenge and I knew that casting would be crucial. I thought of Mark Strong the moment I read the script, and was lucky enough to have worked with him in the past. Ian McDiarmid was my second bit of dream casting. When he read the script and said yes, there was only a two week time slot in which both he and Mark were available before disappearing into long work commitments. We still had no funding, but knew we had to go for it.

When my low-budget location hunting led me to a huge white basement, I could see both the potential and the challenges.

The starkness of the space was alarming, and yet had the sense of displacement I'd been looking for. The absence of colour beneath fluorescent lights inspired the aquamarine palate of the film, allowing the contrast of the characters' faces to draw you in further.

While watching editor Chris Gill cutting our bold images together, I felt that the score should be distinctive. Clint Mansell was my wish-list composer - I had long admired his music for *Requiem For a Dream* and *The Fountain*. We had no direct link to him, so his agreeing to help on the basis of a rough cut was a huge vote of confidence. Clint's bold, percussive music shrewdly captures the simplicity and strangeness of the film.

At the heart of *The Odds* lies a shifting power balance - each man focused on what the other is hiding. It's how the layers of deception are revealed that makes this conversation in a room so charged with tension and a sense of the unexpected.

Paloma Baeza.

CAST



Mark Strong

Born in 1963 to an Italian father and an Austrian mother in London, Mark initially pursued a career as a lawyer before deciding after a year at university in Munich, Germany, to return to London and study English and Drama. He later attended the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School before making his UK TV debut in the popular drama series *Prime Suspect* in 1993.

In film, one of Mark's most prominent roles was as Steve in the 1997 adaptation of Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch*, where he co-starred opposite Colin Firth, whilst his other credits include *Syriana* (2005), *Revolver* (2005), *Body of Lies* (2008), *Tristan + Isolde* (2006), *RocknRolla* (2008) and *Sherlock Holmes* (2009). In his theatre career, he was nominated in 2003 for the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Performance in a Supporting Role for his part in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* at London's Donmar Warehouse.

Ian McDiarmid

Perhaps best known for his role as Emperor Palpatine in both the original and prequel *Star Wars* trilogies, Ian is a Scottish-born theatre actor and director who has also made numerous film and TV appearances. The 65-year-old credits his love of the stage to a Dundee theatre trip when he was just five, but took an MA in psychology at the University of St Andrews before pursuing acting lessons at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow.

Beyond *Star Wars*, his film credits include *The Likely Lads* (1976), *The Awakening* (1980), *Gorky Park* (1983), *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (1988) and *Sleepy Hollow* (1999), whilst in the theatre he is renowned for his starring roles in a variety of Shakespearean plays. From 1990 until 2001 he served as the artistic director of the Almeida Theatre in London, and he won the Almeida Theatre's Critics Circle Award for Best Actor in 2001 for his role as Teddy in Brian Friel's *Faith Healer*. In 2006 he was given a Tony Award for Best Actor when he performed the same role in his Broadway debut.



THE DIRECTOR



Paloma Baeza

Coming from an acting background, Paloma started directing while her day-job was still in front of the camera. She co-wrote her first short film, WATCHMEN, with Cillian Murphy who also starred in the film. It was selected for the TCM prize at the NFT, festivals such as Edinburgh, and screened on Film Four, CH4 and Sky Shorts. Paloma was then selected for CH4's Coming Up scheme, when she directed THE WINDOW, a half-hour drama which was screened on CH4. Having completed THE ODDS, starring Mark Strong and Ian McDiarmid she is currently writing and developing her first feature film.





CAST & CREW CREDITS

CAST

Man

IAN McDIARMID

Suited Man

MARK STRONG

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Writer

RICHARD FISHER

Director

PALOMA BAEZA

Producer

DAN MCCULLOCH

Producers

PAUL COE

KELLIE STEVENSON

Director of Photography

THEO GARLAND

Editor

CHRIS GILL

Composer

CLINT MANSELL

Costume Designer

JACKY LEVY

Makeup and Hair Designer

ANNE "NOSH" OLDHAM

Production Designer

SIMON GODFREY

Sound Recordist

SIMON OKIN

Re-Recording Mixer

STUART HILLIKER

Casting Director

FIONA WEIR

First Assistant Director

PETER STENNING

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