

## **AfterAffects – Crossed Wires Synopsis**

### **Background**

We have been approached by an adoptive mother who's adopted children suffer from FASD with a request that we make a film to raise awareness of the condition. FASD is organic brain damage caused by pre-natal exposure to alcohol. It is a lifelong condition and entirely preventable. A treatment and initial screenplay have been written.

The concept is for a film that has a storyline based on actual case histories, in this case following two children from different backgrounds. One is born to an alcoholic mother and the other to a mere social drinking mother. Runtime is anticipated at 40 minutes.

The film will be shot on location in Southport and will have a TV Panorama type format with an in-camera presenter introducing the topic and then linking between sequences. Even so, the overall treatment is fully cinematic with strong emotion and dramatic impact.

As a self funded not-for-profit production we all work for free and with no expenses, our reward being the knowledge that we are helping sufferers and their families and, in this case, contributing to preventing further cases of FASD. Credited cast do receive copies of the completed film on disk as well as seats at the closed doors private screening premiere.

### **Synopsis**

Storyline intertwines three families as they age.  
Each is visited in alternating sequences linked by a presenter.

### **Jessica & Jilly**

Jessica is a young alcoholic.  
Her flat is untidy with empty cans and bottles strewn around.  
She answers her phone and a conversation ensues where it becomes apparent that although as a result of her alcoholism she has lost her job and her daughter has been taken away by Social Services, she will not accept that she is an alcoholic. At the end of the call she agrees to meet the caller in a pub.

In the pub Jessica meets up with her friend Susan and they discuss Jessica's situation. At the time Jessica's daughter Jilly was taken away she was told that she would not be allowed to keep the baby she was expecting either. The news comes as a surprise to Susan and in discussion it becomes apparent that the pregnancy, still in its early stages, must have resulted from Jessica being picked up by an unknown man at a party after which she had taken him back to her flat. None of that could be remembered because she had been drunk at the time.

Jessica leaves hospital without her baby.

### **Chelsea, Joel, Liam**

Jessica's baby is fostered by Chelsea and Joel. They call him Liam. They are not told of his mother's circumstances.

At age three, Chelsea is told by the nursery manager that they think Liam has problems and that they should see their GP. When the GP diagnoses autism, the nursery manager urges them to seek another opinion. A paediatrician correctly diagnoses FASD. Chelsea and Joel are devastated.

Social Services take Liam away and put him with other foster parents. Similarly, they are not told about his condition or his mother.

After a period, Liam is put up for adoption. No details are given about his condition or background. Chelsea and Joel fight to get him back. They are successful.

### **Laura, Nathan, Emma, James**

Nathan and Laura are a young couple with good jobs and a three year old daughter, Emma. Theirs is a happy family. Laura is expecting their second child. Nathan puts Emma to bed and reads her a bedtime story. Laura unwinds watching TV after a hard day at work. Nathan joins her and offers her a glass of wine. Laura feels that she shouldn't but accepts since it's only one glass.

When Laura's baby James is born, Nathan takes Emma with him to collect Laura and James from the hospital.

By age three, James is noticeably developing at a slower rate than had his sister Emma.

James attends the same nursery as Liam and the two mother's discuss their sons. Chelsea outlines Liam's problems noting that James' displays similar traits. Nathan and Laura consult the same paediatrician.

The FASD diagnosis creates stress and tension between Laura and Nathan where each blames the other for Laura having consumed small amounts of alcohol during pregnancy. Tension leads to arguments. Laura and Nathan split.

### **Conclusion**

Emma progresses well and moves to senior school.

Typical of FASD, Liam and James form an attachment. Both are given places at a 'special school.'

Laura and Chelsea are fiercely protective about their sons and join an FASD support group.