

A night scene of a lake with a red cabin and a full moon. The scene is dark, with a full moon in the sky and a red cabin with a green roof on the shore. The water is dark and reflects the moon. The foreground is dark with some foliage.

DEAD SERIOUS

soapbox
PRODUCTIONS

DEAD SERIOUS



DEAD SERIOUS - Feature Film

By Ian Weir | Based on the stage play by Doug Greenall

Blackfly Resort is an isolated West Coast fishing lodge. Sam and Tracy are a brother and sister who share a dark secret and a bond that lies deeper than anyone imagines. Ted Larose is their drug-dependent mother's new boyfriend, a charismatic leader in a possibly sinister New Age religious movement. Donnie McAllister is Sam's best friend. The day after the resort is opened for the season's business, his body is found in the bushes, stabbed in the throat.

Now the questions begin... Was the killer a stranger, or one of the family? Was Donnie's murder random and isolated, or is the murderer poised to strike again? Can the motive be linked to Ted's new "church" and his disciples? Or does the trail lead back to Sam, a compulsive and utterly convincing liar who revels in his ability to deceive?

"As panic rages and paranoia creeps, Sam makes a shocking discovery"

As the police investigation stumbles into a sequence of dead ends, Ted and the Gilbrides resolve to get on with the business of running the lodge. But just under the surface, dark currents are eddying. As assorted flakes and strays from Ted's "flock" begin arriving, Tracy and Sam discover that their mother, Eve, has decided to undergo initiation into the church – over their deepening concerns and bitter protests. Even more unsettlingly, it would appear that the newcomers are planning to stay, leading Sam to the dark conclusion: Ted is trying to take over the lodge, and turn it into a regional base for his operations. And on the night of the Initiation Ceremony itself, matters take another alarming and sinister turn when one of the newcomers is attacked by a bizarre black-robed specter in claw-fingered gloves, brandishing a knife.

As panic rages and paranoia creeps, Sam makes a shocking discovery: a glove, identical to those worn by the assailant, at the bottom of Ted's steamer trunk. But when he produces this evidence, Ted turns the tables, accusing Sam of planting the glove ... a claim that is startlingly substantiated when police discover the "mystery assailant's" knife in Sam's possession.

To the horror of Tracy and Eve, Sam is arrested in connection with the midnight attack and the earlier murder of Donnie McAllister. Lacking the evidence they need to lay charges, the police reluctantly release him after a day of interrogation ... and Sam disappears into the woods he and Tracy used to roam as children.

As tension mounts unbearably, Tracy turns for comfort to Grant, the young handyman who has begun to fall in love with her, and the two of them make plans to leave Blackfly Lodge for good. But murder intervenes. In the midst of a gathering thunderstorm, with Eve and the rest of Ted's group having driven into town, Grant is found dead in the trees. His throat has been cut from ear to ear.

So now there are just two people left with Tracy at the Lodge: Sam and Ted. Both are consummate liars and manipulators. One of them is a murderer. But which is which? As events hurtle toward a climax, Tracy must decide which one to trust – with her life depending on the choice she makes.

Based on the hit Canadian stage play by Doug Greenall, "Dead Serious" is a taut, stylish, sexy psychological thriller that grips and twists. It's white-knuckle storytelling with a shocking gleam in its eye!

SYNOPSIS

It's early summer as 19-year-old Tracy Gilbride and her quicksilver 18-year-old brother Sam arrive at Blackfly Lodge, an isolated Vancouver Island fishing retreat. They're here to open it up for the season, along with their mother, Eve, and her new boyfriend Ted Larose. Ted is putting his best face on the situation, but under the surface much is amiss. Tracy and Sam bitterly resent Ted, a charismatic New Ager who seems to exercise an unhealthy control over their emotionally fragile mother. Tracy herself is bruised and withdrawn, haunted by ghosts that she will not discuss with anyone else. And there are simmering tensions between Tracy and Sam: hints that their relationship extends down into places that are deep, dark and psychologically perilous.

"Sam points out that any one of them could be the killer"

Arriving, Tracy is quietly pleased to reconnect with Grant, the lodge's handsome young handyman. Meanwhile, Sam hooks up with his old pal Donnie, a classic teen-male jackass. The two of them hang out in their childhood tree-fort in the woods, where Donnie infuriates Sam by making a sexual crack about Tracy. In a chameleon-like shift, Sam passes this off as a joke-reaction, but not before Donnie has been considerably unnerved. Later, returning home through the woods, Sam and Donnie get separated. Donnie is attacked by an unseen assailant, and is subsequently found dead. Murdered. His throat has been slit.

The family is horrified and the police investigate, but fail to turn up any leads. Later, in the aftermath of Donnie's funeral, Sam upsets the family by pointing out that any one of them could have been the killer.

As Tracy is struggling to cope with all of this, she wakes up with a nagging cough. An unnerving e-mail and a telephone message from her doctor cause her to start fearing that she could have a serious illness. In trying to reassure her, Sam in fact accomplishes the opposite. Then, just as Tracy is convinced that she really is seriously ill, Sam bursts into malicious laughter and reveals that he has engineered the whole thing. He totally sucked Tracy in!

Tracy is angry and distressed, and not just at having been fooled. What Sam has just done to her is play The Game. And the two of them agreed that they would never do this again. Sam protests that The Game has always been the most exciting thing in their lives, ever since they were children; it is what has bonded them together, in ways other people can't even begin to understand. But Tracy is adamant. After what happened last time, they can never play The Game again. Ever.

"Saffron escapes with her life, but cannot identify her attacker"

Meanwhile, Eve has decided that they should all leave the lodge. It's impossible to stay, with the shadow of Donnie's brutal murder hanging over them. But Ted doesn't want to go, and it's soon apparent why. Members of his New Age group arrive: calling themselves followers of Regenon, they're an unnerving assortment of flakes and marginals. The charismatic Ted is the acknowledged leader, especially in the eyes of impressionable young women like Saffron and Lark.

An increasingly spooked Sam tells Tracy it's clear what Ted is up to: he is setting out to establish Blackfly Lodge as home base for some banana-bar cult. Tracy doesn't want to believe Ted's motives are sinister, although she can't help being increasingly dismayed at the control Ted exerts over Eve. She reacts sharply when Sam tries to tell her that he saw Ted sacrificing a small animal, accusing Sam of playing The Game.

In the midst of this, Tracy has an unnerving encounter with a drifter named Quentin. When it turns out that the creepy Quentin has a record of violent crime, he becomes a prime suspect in the murder, and eventually is arrested. Ted, meanwhile, makes a crude attempt to seduce Saffron, and is sharply rejected. Resentment simmers as still more "culties" show up at the lodge, and Ted presides over a midnight ceremony to induct Eve into the Followers of Regenon. The ceremony is a bizarre pagan bacchanal with heavy sexual overtones. In the aftermath, Saffron is attacked in the woods.

Saffron escapes with her life, but cannot identify her attacker. All she can say is that it was a figure wearing a mask, and wielding a huge knife. The creepy drifter Quentin is clearly not a suspect, since he was in police custody at the time the attack occurred. The police intensify

the investigation, and suspicion begins to fall on Sam himself. Sam protests that he had nothing to do with either attack. In private with Tracy, he confides his own growing suspicion that the killer is Ted.

Subsequently Sam breaks into Ted's cabin in search of evidence, and sure enough he finds the glove that was worn by Saffron's attacker. Catching him in the act, Ted counters by accusing Sam of planting the glove himself. And when the police arrive, they discover a knife under Sam's bed.

Tracy and Eve are left reeling. Sam is arrested and taken in for questioning. Ultimately the police don't have enough evidence to lay charges, and he is released. The next day, while Eve and the rest of the culties are in town, Sam and Tracy meet in the old tree-fort. A desperate Sam tries to convince her that he is innocent and Ted is guilty. Tracy no longer knows who or what to believe. Subsequently she finds herself alone with Ted. Under the guise of offering reassurance, Ted makes a pass at her. Tracy lashes out at him, and runs to Grant, the young handyman.

In the midst of all of this, a strained awkward romance has been blossoming between Tracy and Grant. Now, learning what Ted has done, Grant's first impulse is to go and confront him. But Tracy dissuades him, and as a thunderstorm rages outside they find themselves in one another's arms, making love.

Post-coital, a haunted Tracy begins to open up to Grant about her distress and confusion. She also tells him about the terrible shadow that has been hanging over her for more than a year, since the last time she and Sam played The Game. They played it on someone else, a man named Forbes who lived a few miles away. One night, Forbes had too much to drink, and drove his car over a child's bicycle that had been left on the side of the road. But Tracy and Sam – in the most elaborate and ingenious piece of manipulation they had ever attempted – managed to convince Mr. Forbes that he had killed a child in the accident. Tracy assumed that the distraught Forbes would learn the truth the minute he contacted the police, but instead matters took a tragic twist. Forbes committed suicide. The shock precipitated Tracy into a near-breakdown from which she is only just now recovering. And she never will be the same, not with an innocent man's blood on her hands.

“When the police arrive they discover a knife under Sam's bed”

As Tracy bares her soul to Grant, the storm intensifies, washing out a bridge and trapping Eve and the others in town. At a gas station, Eve tries unsuccessfully to make a telephone call to the lodge. That's when she's recognized and confronted by a man she vaguely knows, a former neighbour ... named Forbes. Forbes moved away a year ago, but not before an unspeakable trick had been played on him by Eve's children. And now he wants her to know all about it.

Back at the lodge, Ted is hurrying along a wooded trail when he finds a body. It's Grant. His throat has been slit.

Ted barges into the main lodge, where he discovers Sam with Tracy. Sam is making one last desperate attempt to convince Tracy that Ted is the killer. But now Ted is equally desperate to convince Tracy that the killer is in fact Sam. Both Sam and Ted are carrying knives, but Tracy manages to persuade each of them to put the weapons down on the floor, and kick them towards her. But at the height of a climactic three-way confrontation, Tracy makes her decision. She kicks one of the knives back to her brother, who scoops it up and plunges it into Ted's heart as Ted lunges at him.

Ted lies dead, at Sam's feet. Now police sirens are heard. And Tracy begins to laugh.

It turns out that Tracy discovered two weeks ago that Mr. Forbes was still alive. Discovered that Sam had merely been playing The Game by convincing her that Forbes had committed suicide in the first place. Sam let her go through hell all winter, convinced that she had caused a man's death. So Tracy made a decision. If Sam wanted The Game, then Sam would get The Game. The Game to end all Games.

Tracy killed Donnie. She attacked Saffron, and she killed Grant. But who will believe any of this? Because Sam killed Ted, as sure as he is standing there, with the knife in his hands and Ted's blood all over his hands. Sam will be convicted of all three murders, and go to jail for the rest of his life.

Game over. Tracy wins.