

# hand me the beer nuts

**Beer Nuts Productions is a Gold Coast-based film production company. Founded in 2006, it produces cutting-edge cinema, television, downloads and e-books on a wide range of topics. The company's director, gough, was the first legally blind person to write, produce, direct, edit and star in a feature-length film. He spoke to Anthea Skinner about his work.**



Beer Nuts Productions' first feature film was *I Will Not Go Quietly*, an exploration of gough's life. (gough prefers to write his name with a lower case g.) It discusses the themes of disability, mental health, drug and alcohol abuse and suicide. "I found in my research that a lot of people who have a disability can go on to battle depression and other types of mental illness," explains gough, "mainly due to the fact they have found themselves the victim of discrimination, which is unacceptable and needs to change. The film was predominately made for those without a disability in order to educate them and dispel some of the negative stereotypes that can go along with all disabilities, not just vision impairment." The feature-length documentary



explores these issues through interviews with gough's friends and family as well as experts in their fields, including drug and alcohol counsellors, a neurosurgeon, educators and even comedians.

The son of Australian comedian Ugly Dave Gray, the filmmaker was first given the nickname gough as a teenage fan of the band The Whitlams. When he formed Beer Nuts Productions he decided to make the name change official. Gough's vision impairment means that he must work closely with his cast and crew to achieve the results he wants as a director. "Obviously being legally blind does mean I have to have a crew around me who I can trust," he says, "So if I want a certain shot, I know that my cinematographer will do this and not just go off on his own tangent. I do have very limited vision, so in the editing booth I can make sure the shots are what I'm after, but by then it is too late to change anything as the vision has already been shot and we don't have the budget to reshoot." This level of trust also extends to his actors, "I can't see facial expressions. So I need to trust that they are giving me the looks I am after. This comes down to me being able to



communicate to them what the character is feeling and making sure they understand what it is I want. I do have a sighted guide on set who does tell me that, yes, the actors are giving me the facial expressions I'm after and that the scene looks good and we are good to move on. But making sure you have a cast and crew you can trust and work with is key."

Gough is also quick to point out that his disability also gives him an advantage over other filmmakers. "I do think that being legally blind does help in writing and directing," he says, "Because I can't see things like facial expressions I'm not distracted by the small things and can focus on the delivery of

my lines. At the end of the day, if a line of dialogue isn't delivered by an actor just right, the joke won't be funny or the emotional moment won't be captured. I also think it helps me with my writing in that I have spent a lifetime really listening to people, mainly because I have no choice as I can't see body language. So when you spend so much time listening, you can really pick up on funny ways people say things and the way the tone or inflection of someone's voice can change the meaning of an entire sentence. Because of this most of my scripts are dialogue based and that is where the comedy and drama comes from, which I quite like as I feel it makes my work unique."

Beer Nuts' latest production is a series of seven short comedic films featuring interviews with faux celebrities in a chat show format. "My motivation when writing all seven pieces was to demonstrate the hypocrisy that goes on in the world of celebrity and politics," Gough explains, "Personally I find it frustrating when people pretend to be something they are not. So hopefully people get a real good laugh out of them."

You can download *I Will Not Go Quietly* and all of Beer Nuts' other productions from their website [beernutsproductions.com](http://beernutsproductions.com) ↻

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