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Before gough became gough with a lower case g, he was David Gray, the son of a famous Australian comedian of the same name. Now, he's the only legally blind person to have written, edited, directed and starred in a feature film unassisted. The feature, 'I Will Not Go Quietly', is gough's autobiographical documentary depicting a life of fame, fortune, drugs, alcohol, disability and suicide. This 90-minute feature uses interviews with gough's friends, family and a range of health professionals to educate and inform viewers of gough's life, lived as a visually impaired man, and all the discrimination, woes and success experienced.

But this remarkable journey began long before the release of gough's feature film, and it began with words, not moving images. He could never put the pen down as a kid, always writing little plays and stories at school. "It was just a passion for storytelling more than anything else," gough says. "The best way to tell a story, I think, is in script form. Because I can't see, I don't read very often. I listen to audiobooks occasionally but I find novels too slow. Film scripts are such a concentrated narrative form and I found the best way to tell my stories was in this way."

All gough's work takes seed in a script, but if the funds to make it into a film aren't available, he'll develop them into novella form — again, another concentrated narrative form. His latest novella, 'Vincent — Memoire of a Mad Man' is loosely based on Vincent Van Gogh's life but reimagined for a 21st century context. For example, instead of missing an ear, Van Gogh is deaf. Here we get to see how all gough's work is imbued with highly intelligent and satirical interpretations of disability. This dark humour is evident in gough's entire oeuvre. And it's no wonder, as he takes great inspiration from the likes of Shaun Micallef, Mick Molloy, Kevin Bloody Wilson, and even Frank Oz of The Muppets. One of his greatest influences is American musical-comedian, Stephen Lynch.

"Lynch is so brilliant," gough says. "He considers himself a singer-songwriter, not a comedian. The music comes first, then the funny lyrics come later, almost as an afterthought."

"I'm actually surprised more writers don't direct their own work. No one knows the writer's character better than the writer. The visual takes care of itself to a point, but the language and audio is the most important."



Images by Aaron Chapman

gough's story is anything to go by, it's clear there's no difference between eyesight and insight. gough's life and work proclaim that visual mediums are not solely dictated by the capacity to see. As it stands, gough and his Gold Coast-based production company, Beernuts Productions has produced 17 films (one feature and 16 shorts), nine audio downloads and five books (four novellas and one picture book). This kind of output counters any notion of disability.

Aaron Chapman

Check out gough and Beernuts Productions at beernutsproductions.com, where all gough's work is available for download.