

## DVD & Blu-ray press release



BFI Flipside presents

# The Black Panther

A film by Ian Merrick

Starring Donald Sumpter, Debbie Farrington & Marjorie Yates

This intelligent true-crime drama charts the infamous killing spree which Donald Neilson, aka the Black Panther, carried out across England in the mid-70s, culminating in the kidnapping and murder of a 17-year old girl. Newly mastered from original film elements preserved in the BFI National Archive, this impressive and powerful film is at long last being made available for new audiences in a Dual Format Edition by BFI Flipside.

Told with uncommon accuracy and refraining from any measure of sensationalism, director Ian Merrick and screenwriter Michael Armstrong's fascinating and disturbing film fell foul of a media-driven campaign upon its original cinema release in 1977, which resulted in an effective ban.

Established lead actor **Donald Sumpter**, who fearlessly played Donald Neilson, was recently seen in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011). **Marjorie Yates** who played Neilson's wife is perhaps best-known for her role as Carol Fisher in the Channel 4 TV drama *Shameless*. **Debbie Farrington** (who plays the kidnap victim) went on to appear in a variety of TV dramas.

Caught by chance after a random encounter with the police, Neilson was convicted in 1976. With five life sentences he was destined to spend the rest of his life in prison and died there in December 2011.

This Dual Format Edition (DVD and Blu-ray discs together) also includes Bob Bentley's BAFTA Award-winning 1981 short film, *Recluse*, which is based on reports of another real life crime, the death by shotgun of three siblings at a remote farm in Dorset.

Both Ian Merrick and Michael Armstrong have written new contributions for the comprehensive booklet that accompanies the discs. Director Bob Bentley has also contributed a new essay about the making of *Recluse*.

**Flipside DVD programmer Sam Dunn is available for interview.**

### Special features

- Presented in both High Definition and Standard Definition
- Director approved transfer
- Alternative French language soundtrack, with English subtitles
- *Recluse* (Bob Bentley, 1981, 30 mins): arresting short film based on real events, starring Maurice Denham and edited by David Gladwell (editor of *If....* and *O Lucky Man!*)
- *Recluse: recce footage* (1978, 10 mins): recently discovered 16mm location scouting footage shot by director Bob Bentley
- Illustrated booklet with newly commissioned essays and contributions from Ian Merrick, Michael Armstrong, Bob Bentley and James Oliver; original promotional artwork and full credits

**For further information and review copies please contact:**

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Images are available at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) under BFI DVD 2012  
[www.bfi.org.uk/theflipside](http://www.bfi.org.uk/theflipside)  
[www.facebook.com/discovertheflipside](http://www.facebook.com/discovertheflipside)

Available from all DVD retailers & BFI Filmstore Tel: 020 7815 1350 or  
[www.bfi.org.uk/filmstore](http://www.bfi.org.uk/filmstore)

### **Product details**

RRP: £19.99 / cat. no. BFIB1135 / BFI Flipside no. 024 / Cert 18  
UK / 1977 / colour / 98 mins / original aspect ratio 1.85:1  
Disc 1: BD50 / 1080p / 24fps / PCM mono audio (48k/16-bit)  
Disc 2: DVD9 / PAL / Dolby Digital mono audio (320kbps)

### **About BFI Flipside**

Developed from its popular monthly screening slot at BFI Southbank, the BFI's Flipside series is designed to revisit and reappraise British films that have slipped through the cracks of cinema history – films that were overlooked, marginalised, or undervalued at the original time of release, or which sit outside the established canon of recognised classics.

BFI Flipside titles are all newly mastered to High Definition from original film elements, and are presented with rare and fascinating special features, including previously unavailable short films, documentaries and archival interviews, many of which are preserved in the BFI National Archive. Each title comes in collectable numbered packaging and is accompanied by an extensive illustrated booklet with insightful contributions from special guest writers, often including the filmmakers themselves.

### **About the BFI**

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

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