



# WILBUR FORCE

Director: J.Ollie Lucks Producer: Veronica Stevenson

Wilbur Force, the former king of NZ pro-wrestling, is provoked to break out of the cage of his worst self and reconnect with his glory days of battle.

**PREMIERING AT NZIFF 23 JULY 2015  
AVAILABLE ONLINE FROM 24 JULY 2015**

## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

For Wilbur Force, winning isn't everything: it's the only thing. But after moving back to his hometown, the former king of NZ pro-wrestling has no one to fight with, and nothing left to fight for. Friend and filmmaker J.Ollie Lucks steps up and dares Will to reconnect with his glory days of battle. During production, though, Will starts to doubt his friend's intentions.

## **LONG SYNOPSIS**

Possessed of great girth and even greater wit, "Wilbur Force" strides into the ring to face his nemesis. After a sweaty battle, Wilbur finishes his opponent with his signature move, the 'big man body slam'. To the crowd it is obvious that for Wilbur, winning isn't everything: it's the only thing.

Two years later, Will has moved back to his hometown, quit wrestling, and become a recluse. Friend and filmmaker J.Ollie Lucks challenges Will to recreate his memories of battle and teach him the art of wrestling. However, as production begins, Ollie takes the creation of his own wrestling character too far, and Wilbur starts to doubt Ollie's good intentions. The conflict between them escalates into an epic showdown in the hills of Central Otago.

## **Director: J.Ollie Lucks**

J.Ollie Lucks was born in Germany but found his home in Dunedin after moving to New Zealand to study film in 2005. As a director, he has a striking visual aesthetic, and a strong belief that the filmmaking process can be transformative. His work often plays with documentary conventions, challenging the line between fact and fiction. His documentary short *The Characteristics of C-Minor*, made for the BBC in 2014, has been screened and won awards at 20 international film festivals. He has made short films for Meridian Energy, AJ Hackett, and the Vodafone Foundation, and edited the TV3 documentary *Wild Man*.

## **Producer: Veronica Stevenson**

Veronica has worked in the film industry for over six years: as a production assistant for *Sticky Pictures* on the TV7 series *The Gravy*; on the documentaries *The Blackfriars* and *Blue Water, Black Magic*; as a tour promoter for New Zealand On Screen (REAL New Zealand Festival, 2012); as director and producer for *Bloom* (Reel Earth Festival, 2013); and as director, camera op and editor for *Gelber Luftbalon*, an observational documentary (Blue Oyster Gallery, 2013 and Substation contemporary art prize, 2014). Veronica is currently working as the story strategist for the commercialisation hub, workSpace at Otago Polytechnic.



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I met Will, the star of *Wilbur Force*, more than a decade ago in Theatre 101. He was the guy in the back, yelling inappropriate remarks with comic timing and disrupting the class. This greatly annoyed the diligent German sitting in the front row: me. However, we became fast friends, and we've always talked about making films together.

When Will started wrestling in 2009, he knew he'd found his calling. I had never seen him happier than when he was strutting into the ring, insulting the audience of young fan-boys, tearing up their signs, and punishing his opponents. That was until 2012, Will moved cities, stopped wrestling, and sunk into the unhappiest time of his life.

*Wilbur Force* puts Will's talents on display for the world to see. He is more than a wrestler, he is a born entertainer. I'm very excited about what could be in store for him and the rest of the crew in the near future.

## PRESS RELEASE

A handful of years ago, if you were a fan of New Zealand pro-wrestling, you probably would have been familiar with Wilbur Force – the wrestling commentator who stepped out of the commentating booth and took to the ring. Wearing elaborate garb including an array of cloaks, waistcoats and crowns, Wilbur Force's signature move was the 'Big Man Body Slam'.

But life is quite different now for the man behind Wilbur Force, William McDougall. He has left pro-wrestling, returned to his hometown, is unemployed and out of shape. And so friend and filmmaker J.Ollie Lucks has made him the subject of a 3-minute documentary which is being launched online as part of Loading Docs 2015.

The mini-doc follows Lucks as he challenges 'Wilbur' to get his life back on track. *Wilbur Force*'s producer Veronica Stevenson says that the documentary is a lighthearted look at a fallen man and they hope that audiences will find *Wilbur Force* funny and entertaining, while also motivating people to know that they too can conquer their own demons.

The Loading Docs initiative that *Wilbur Force* is a part of supports 10 filmmaking teams to experiment with the confines of a 3-minute timeframe to make innovative and creative documentaries that tell New Zealand stories, this year based around the theme of connection. *Wilbur Force* has been selected to premiere at the NZ International Film Festival on the 23rd July, screening before the feature *I Am Thor*, after which it will be available to view online at [www.loadingdocs.net](http://www.loadingdocs.net) and [TVNZ OnDemand](#).

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