

first session

A Ningen Manga Production

synopsis

How long can you keep emotions bottled up before they finally spill over? A troubled young man visits a new therapist, but has no idea how much they have in common. The similarities they recognize in one another complicate what should be a strictly professional relationship. And the line between discovery and danger gets blurred by raw emotion--the one thing they both fear.

directors statement

First Session is a wonderful secret I'm dying to tell. It's a film about secrets and how well we may or may not keep them. And how sometimes they have a way of revealing themselves whether we desire it or not.

The script was written on a lark in the spring of 2004. One day I was thinking about psychiatrists and wondering how far doctor/patient confidentiality really stretched. Eventually those musings evolved into the strange game of cat and mouse Josie and Smith play.

That autumn, I began assembling my crew. Aaron Shirley came on first and his expertise and advice proved invaluable, as this was the first film I was helming myself. My wife Cindy and I spent the next three months working out the finest of fine details of the production. Everything from casting to costumes to catering was analyzed as if under a microscope. We were working with a small budget and a tight shooting schedule and needed to maximize every asset.

For casting, I was lucky enough to have the amazing talents of Scot McKenzie, Helen Marie Bunch, and of course Cindy to call on. Their enthusiasm and skill were a driving force in the production. Joy was a rare find. From the moment she first read the lines in the audition, I knew no one else could embody Josie.

I designed the set. In order to save money, we decided to use our basement as a sound stage and alter it to our specific needs. The week before the shoot, Scot almost single handedly transformed our basement into Josie's interior office in only six days. It was a mind-boggling construction feat.

The shoot itself was an intense, exciting time. We blazed through two weekends, collecting over nine hours of footage in a whirlwind of activity. I don't believe it would have been possible without the professionalism and teamwork of the fantastic cast and crew I assembled. They understood my vision and worked to the best of their ability to help me achieve it.

Part of me likes to think they responded to *First Session's* theme which I believe is a universal one: The struggle between the strong controlled exterior we are forced (or think we are forced) to show the world...and the pain and darkness we may truly feel inside. Because we all have secrets we're dying to tell...