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The real Tony uncovered ...

Lookalike photographer Alison Jackson plans to mark the Blair era in her inimitable fashion

We don't yet know how Tony Blair will spend his last day in office, but Alison Jackson's scenario would be the most rewarding. 'He'll be ripping out all the hard drives from the Downing Street computers and smashing them up with Alastair in the garden.' Because Jackson is a fantasist who makes things happen, this act - set to the Stranglers' 'No More Heroes' - will be the closing sequence to *Blaired Vision*, her forthcoming Channel 4 film about a decade of malfeasance at Number 10. Her film lasts under an hour, but could have been two. 'Huge amounts we had to leave out,' Jackson says over black coffee at the Charlotte Street Hotel, her final edit just complete. 'So much extraordinary footage, so much scandal.'

Her final choice is cynical and compelling, and includes several items one doesn't regularly see on terrestrial television: the Blairs having sex, the Queen calling her Prime Minister 'a creep', ministers running from the law on Clapham Common, Cherie receiving an enema. Towards the end we see Blair rehearsing his handover speech in front of a mirror. 'I may have been wrong,' he says. 'Speed it up. I-may-have-been-wrong, I-mayhavebeenwrong.'

Jackson has made one previous film on Blair, reinventing his days as a proto-rockstar. But her new work is more elaborate, combining genuine news footage, a selection of talking heads (Boris Johnson, Greg Dyke, Lauren Booth) and her own fantasy recreations in grainy film and low light. With the aid of a casting director she has found a top-notch Queen and John Prescott, a passable Alastair Campbell ('He's got the bullying right'), a pliable Cherie Blair (with what Campbell refers to in the film as her 'clown-mouth'), but her Gordon Brown is a disaster. 'I've been looking for a good Gordon for 10 years,' she sighs, 'but it's almost impossible.'

Her film is carried by the actor John Brolly, with whom she's been working for six years. When she began she remembers six decent Blair impersonators, one of whom was a porn star, and she tried them out from all directions. She saw something in Brolly the others lacked, but it's still quite a process: 'If I shoot him in the wrong way he looks nothing like Blair. He needs a wig and a prosthetic nose and eye pads, and he has to do everything at a particular angle with the right light.'

She claims that her Robin Cook is equally impressive at a distance, but he suffered at the hands of good taste. 'We thought about the scandal with his secretary, and we shot it and it was very rude as he gave her dictation, but in the end we decided that as he was dead it was not appropriate.'

The natural successor to *Spitting Image*, Jackson hit upon the idea of using lookalikes for political ends while a mature photography student at the Royal College of Art in the late 1990s. Her images of Princess Diana and Dodi al-Fayed gloating over their mixed-race child caused useful outrage, but it took a few years for Jane Root at BBC2 and Schweppes to realise her potential. For Jackson had a revealing take on celebrity: at once entranced and repulsed by it, she set out to make real what took place only in our fearful imaginations: a preening Beckham admiring his tattoos, a slutty Camilla flashing her knickers, the Queen using a cash machine, Sven in Union Jack underpants. She calls it 'depicting our suspicions'.

Much of it is convincing, but there are hints that the impact of her work is wearing thin. Confoundingly, her subjects increasingly play out their own private situations in public, not least Jackson's latest photographic subjects, Kate Moss and Paris Hilton. 'The real archive material,' she says, 'often looks like it's fake.' On Wikipedia, the frequently generous online database, her entry reads as if it has been written by someone she has personally humiliated: 'Jackson has sought to establish a reputation in the USA and recently depicted President Bush and Tony Blair lookalikes in a series of unflattering scenes, but this has not been reported to provide a vehicle to revitalise what many now perceive to be a fast fading career.'

On the contrary, business is booming. Jackson is developing a new series for American television, and is finishing a book for Taschen with some 300 magical images. Pressed about the most outrageous, the fantasist is cagey. 'Tom Cruise,' she says finally. 'And Scientology. And his baby.'

• *Blaired Vision* is on C4 on 26 June

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