

# mercy

Directed by Wendy Morgan



Running Time: 1 hr. 22mins (82 MINS)

## SYNOPSIS

In her hidden world those who Mercy encounters, on her journey from Factory Farm to Slaughterhouse, are changed forever. As our world teeters on the precipice of ecological destruction, the heart of Mercy's story is empathy across communities, across all species and the hope to see the dawn of universal change.



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STARRING

Mark Wingett (The Bill)



Annette Badland (Midsomer Murders, Eastenders)



Catherine Shipton (Casualty)



TRAILER

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=NzOWhO\\_9p1M&feature=emb\\_ogo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=NzOWhO_9p1M&feature=emb_ogo)



photo Gaz De Vere

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Mercy is a project fuelled with passion that I was driven to begin and complete having never written, produced or directed a film before. In 2011 I had been shown some undercover investigation footage of factory farms and slaughterhouses and subsequently became vegan after realising the horror involved. I followed a case as it progressed to court. I needed to process all of the terrible things I saw and heard and was compelled to begin writing in 2012 - slowly discovering my own voice. I wanted to let the voices be heard, of those enslaved in this industry, and attempt to show how this industry affects all those who work in it or who are forced to endure existence within those terrifying walls. Somehow I would make this happen. When I began I did not know how but persevered, slowly amassing a team of wonderful people. We shot the film in 2016 and because of lack of funds I had to learn how to edit myself in order to complete the film. I began the edit when we wrapped in 2016, completing it 3 years later in August 2019. So 8 years from Mercy's conception here we are! One step closer to the dream of sharing this story.

Thank you for reading.

Wendy x



Photo Alex Chettur

## Q & A with the Director



***Q: What made you want to make Mercy?***

**A:** I had seen some investigation footage online in 2012 about an abattoir and, following the case and attending the vigils at the abattoir, I learned so much about the horrors of factory farming that I decided that I had to go vegan to keep in line with my ethic of equality, anti speciesism, anti cruelty, anti violence. I subsequently saw other footage of farms and awful practice within this industry and just had to do something about it. The best I could think of was to stop being part of the system, by going vegan despite at the time it not being so widespread as it is now and so easy. As I am an actor I thought maybe having never written before I would write about it and so began the long venture to get this project written and produced. It went through a stage of being called Meat, I had table read it and went back to re-drafting and then did a performance reading of it myself playing all the characters. When I got a good response from my audience I began the process of casting and pre-production.

***Q: What was your budget?***

**A:** At the time the topic was not so hot as it is now so we did some fund raising via the usual platforms and we got about £900. I talked to Sheila Hancock on set of the film Edie we were making and she generously donated. The wonderful Carol Royle came on as Executive Producer and generously donated and gradually by people hearing about the film and getting an interest in it, plus my son and some other friends donating, we finally had enough money to buy some props and clothes. Some friends allowed me to film on their farm and so we had a location and eventually found enough cast members who all donated their time. We had enough money to pay expenses to everyone and feed everyone and had some wonderful vegan catering. Then we were off. I think in total we must have had around £5,000 which is nothing when you think of it but to us it was amazing. The post

production costs are ongoing, festival entries and private screening fees, but we raise the money as we go for what we need.

***Q: Why did you edit the film?***

**A:** Honestly - my wonderful DOP Gemma was going to edit for me and we got together for a couple of sessions but we lived a considerable distance apart so it was very hard and we realised it wasn't going to be possible to continue this way so there was nothing else for it but for me to learn and dive in. I had some great contacts with the media department in a local FE college and they taught me the basics of final cut pro and off I went. 6 months in I lost some of the edit after an upgrade of my computer so had to start all over again which was soul destroying but I couldn't stop now, so many people had given so much to the project. I just had to put my mind to it and learn on the job and so I did. It finally took me three years to complete the edit as I had acting jobs along the way and a tour in the USA but finally in August of 2019, after three years of editing, I was finally finished. Couldn't believe it really but we were there!

***Q: How did you get your actors to come on board.?***

**A:** It was a question of approaching people and asking. I had a few refusals before finally finding a complete cast but I am very lucky and very happy with who we have now!! Maria who plays Mercy I had met when we did a Shakespeare marathon the year before at the Old Globe and she was on board very quickly and offering so much support. Mark Wingett was a yes as soon as I asked him! What a great Slaughterman. Mark became vegan not long into making the film because of all the footage I showed him etc. Some of the younger cast were students of mine and this was their first film. (Holly Smith became vegan after watching a screening of the completed Mercy!) I knew Annette Badland as we had made a series called Pictures together in the 80' s and having read the script she was happy to join us as Judge. Catherine joined the cast when her partner Chris (our Exec and one of the musicians) talked to her about the film. So we were very lucky to have so many people believe in the project.

***Q: How did you acquire all the music?***

**A:** Helen, one of our publicists, introduced me to Chris who was very helpful and offered me a lot of his music. I had originally wanted a Queen track early on before I knew much about this process but I soon learned how hard and expensive finding music was going to be. Luckily I also knew some fabulous musicians – Jakko Jakzyk, Jamie Brooks, David Buckingham - who all contributed their wonderful talents, Jakko and Jamie composing to picture!! Jakko introduced me to the wonderful Caroline Lavelle who donated the perfect track and she then who introduced me

to Kirsty who composed a piece to picture! Happy Days. Chris and I composed a couple of tracks when we were unable to get one of the actors to complete their voiceover. I learned that each problem was just something that needed a solution. It was a great way to challenge and develop my problem solving skills. The vegan band Flipside Bride wrote a bespoke rap track for the closing credits and the wonderful duo Lunar Traktors had a perfect track they donated too. I' m so thrilled about all the music in the film! It is such an important element.

***Q: What about the sound?***

**A:** Don't ask!! This was the hardest element to achieve without finance. And we are still working on this!

***Q: Would you make another film?***

**A:** I think I would love to now, being a bit more versed in the process. But I would want to get financing as it was so very hard without and sadly that is not my best forte finding money!! But there was something magical and pure and innocent about setting off into the unknown with just this passion to make this project happen. Eight years in total. What a birthing process. It was unique. I knew once I started that I just had to finish it no matter what. I owed it to the animals. And every time the going got tough for me I thought of them and their awful lives and I thought my hardships were nothing. That kept me going.



Photo Gaz De Vere

## QUOTES



*"Mercy approaches the tragedy of factory farming and barbarity of slaughter from the perspectives of those directly and indirectly responsible whilst always at pains to paint the terrible and cruel reality for the victims. It moves between scenes of people reared for meat to real life footage of pigs to powerfully bring home the awfulness of imprisonment and death for millions of innocent creatures. Mercy is a harrowing and urgent wake up call to see the catastrophic devastation caused by eating animals."*

Juliet Gellatley  
founder & director – Viva!

*"A powerful and deeply emotive film. Watching Mercy gives you an unnervingly immersive insight into the horrors endured by farmed animals and I'm sure will have a profound impact in inspiring people to embrace veganism. Mercy will certainly be a highly effective tool for all those who are advocating on behalf of farmed animals and striving to create a cruelty-free world."*

Isobel Hutchins  
Animal Aid

*"A powerful dramatization of pigs and people caught up in the industrial meat industry. Enlightening, harrowing, essential. It pierced my soul and awoke me anew to the realities."*

Philip Lymbery  
Compassion in World Farming

*"Despite the shocking subject matter the film is very beautiful which actually makes it even more shocking."*

Sheila Hancock

*"Powerful."*  
Peter Egan



Photo Gaz De Vere

UNIQUE SELLING POINT!  
VEGAN CAST AND CREW



Wendy (DIRECTOR) celebrates being vegan since 2008.  
Carol Royle (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER) has been veggie since 1973 and vegan since 2015.

Richard Deboo (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER) vegan.

The owners of the farm LOCATION are vegetarian & vegan.

Gemma Ashford (D.O.P/ SPEAKER) has been vegan for 8 years.

Rod Compton (LIGHTS) vegan.

Ruth Dacres and Byron Higgins (PROTESTORS/VEGAN CATERING) vegan.

Faith and Carmen Higgins (ROSELLA/DANDELION) vegan since birth.

Ali Graves (EDITH) vegan.

Alisha J Adems (PRINCESS/MOVEMENT) vegan.

Lydia Bradford (HUMAN PIG SQUEALS) vegan 6 years.

Dan Keeble (TECHNICAL SUPPORT) vegan.

Flipside Bride (MUSICIANS) vegan.

Vegan Catering:

CLASSIC CAKES MADE VEGAN

THE GRIZZLY VEGAN

V CRAFTERS

\*\*\*\*Since filming\*\*\*\*

SLAUGHTERMAN (Mark Wingett)

ABBEY (Holly Smith)

the FLY (Ali James)

Sheila Hancock (SUPPORTER & DONATIONS)

have all become  
vegan!!!

## VEGAN CONVERSIONS SINCE FILMING!

Mark Wingett

*“Darling Marky” said Wendy “I’m going to do a show at the Edinburgh Festival, could I send you a script?”*

*Little did I know at the time the effect this phone call would have on me. How often does a life change as the result of a single conversation? This was the start of my journey into veganism.*

*I’ d recently reconnected with my friend of many years, the beautiful and gracious Wendy Morgan. We had recently finished a play “The Royal Duchess Superstore” where we played estranged partners.*

*Wendy had written her own play “Mercy” . She had asked me to play the role of the Slaughterman. Which I accepted gratefully.*

*Wendy had been shocked by the scandal of animal abuse at her local abattoir Cheale Meats. So had written a first person view of a baby pig caught up in factory farming.*

*When the venue fell through in Edinburgh, with her tenacity, determination and conviction Wendy decided she would make her first feature film. Of course I was delighted to be have been asked to take part.*

*During the preparation period for the film Wendy sent me some undercover footage from factory farms. I was a meat eater at this time.*

*The footage shocked me. I hadn’ t seen anything like it. Mankind has to eat meat, right? But why do they have to be so amateurish and cruel. Surely we can dispatch these beasts humanely?*

*We filmed in the early Summer of 2016. There’s no need to say that Wendy did an extraordinary job on a no-string budget. It was a delight. And that great part “The Slaughterman” .*

*I continued in my own carnivorous habits. But every time a piece of flesh arrived on my plate, I’d get nagging doubts and remember that horrific footage. But on I munched. Protein and taste, right?*

*Come Christmas 2016 my wife and daughter announced they were going plant-based. My partner hadn't eaten meat for over 25 years but was still eating fish. Then fish gave up on her and she couldn't face it any more. I filmed a short film "God's Kingdom" in Yorkshire on a dairy farm. The cattle were in sheds. The heifers had given birth to their calves and were penned in at different ends of the same building. They were crying for each other, real tears..*

*My family played a joke on me and said they were going to get a vegan chef to do the Christmas Lunch. I said "I'm not having that" , and bought a small, "organic" turkey which I prepared on Christmas Day. Except I forgot to turn down the oven after the initial 20-minute heat blast and ended up with this dried up wizened lump of flesh.*

*Feeling guilty I forced myself to consume it over the next few days. Munching on a dry old bird...horrible.*

*Then it was (the first I think) Veganuary and I joined them on their plant-based diet.*

*As a present a friend bought us "The Veganomicon" , which is such an excellent guide. Other books followed naturally, but it was a great start.*

*I live in Hackney which is probably ground zero for British Veganism. There were vegan fast-food places springing up (Vegan Burger Joints, Italian Vegan Restaurants and even vegan Fish and Chips). There was a Saturday Vegan Market near us, we had no lack of choice if we didn't want to cook. Veganism was on the rise and I was a grateful convert.*

*In July 2017 I had an accident that incapacitated me for the best part of a year. My wife and daughter were both busy and I couldn't even bathe myself, let alone cook.*

*So instead of getting a carer for me, we had someone come and prepare food for the family for the week.*

*Through watching Gigi, I learnt many vegan recipes and techniques. It kept my mind off the pain. I'm lucky I guess, firstly that we could afford such a luxury but that also I really enjoy cooking. Watching a professional vegan chef was revelatory.*

*In my experience, my personal opinion is that taste-wise, meat on a dish overpowers the flavour of the vegetables. I also realised that meat is*

*addictive, something that has now been backed-up by science.*

*In that first fortnight of veganism my energy levels dropped and I felt weak. Then, as I acclimatised, I felt I had more energy than before. I noticed I wasn't napping in the afternoons when I had some downtime. My pallet changed and my sense of taste sharpened. Who thought a humble carrot could be so delicious? I'm a moody so and so, but I wasn't having the extremes of mood I was having before.*

*You also come to realise how crooked the food industry is. What you're told is "healthy" isn't really at all. When I inadvertently drink cow's milk it tastes sour and greasy.*

*I'm now 3 plant-based but I keep my own choice of diet to myself. "Don't you miss bacon", "Where do you get your protein from then" are the two most common questions. Along with the statement "Well, I don't eat much meat myself!" . Bully for you, thinks I...*

*Wendy Morgan's film 'Mercy' is an extraordinary work. Self-financed, directed, produced, acted in, edited and sound mixed it is an extraordinary achievement. This accomplished film is visceral, uncompromising and poignant yet is beautiful and lyrical. Well done Wendy! I hope it can go out to a large audience-it deserves to. Thanks for roping me in.*

*In the meantime, I'll await the next phone call."*

## Holly Smith

*After watching Mercy at the Soho Screening Rooms Holly decided to become vegan. Holly says: "I was a vegetarian for 4 years after being involved in the shooting of the film and realising that I needed to make a change for the planet. However, after seeing the film in its entirety I decided that I needed to do more.*

*The film was powerful, insightful and emotional. I was witness to the cruelty that's happening on a daily basis, and this was brought home by the technique of empathy and catharsis by using humans in the place of animals. I was given the option of a world where the animals can experience the world as we do - they can roam, love and breathe - and I want to be a part of that world. I became vegan after watching Mercy because it gifted me with the knowledge and the passion to do so, and I am very excited for my journey.*

SOCIAL MEDIA



Photo Gaz De Vere



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MERCYmovie2020/>



Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mercymovie1>



Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mercyfilm/?hl=en>

## KEY BIOGRAPHIES

### SLAUGHTERMAN

Mark Wingett



Marks 'career began after being" spotted" in The National Youth Theatres' production of Peter Tersons "England My Own" in 1978. He auditioned for, and won a part in the The Who's cult feature film "Quadrophenia" .

Although he always intended to return to School and later go to Drama School, other roles quickly came his way. He toured with the play "Class Enemy" from the Oxford Playhouse, did his first couple of TV series ( "The Ravelled Thread" , Fox" ) and did his second film role in "Breaking Glass" -all within eighteen months. He never did go back to school.

Over the next few years as a jobbing actor he performed many different roles in TV, Theatre and Film. It was while he was in Tony Marchants Falkland War play "Welcome Home" he auditioned for a character named "Jim Carver" in a one-off TV play "Woodentop" . This would later turn into the long running Cop Drama "The Bill" . The Series proper started in 1984 and Mark left that show 21 years and 787 episodes later in 2005!

Since leaving "The Bill" Mark has done a stint in "EastEnders" , two series of "Missing" , made appearances in "Vera" and "Call The Midwife" has been in the West End Show "Tom, Dick and Harry" , toured nationally in "Run for Your Wife" , played a Geordie in Trevor Wood' s and Ed Waugh' s dark political comedy "Maggie' s End" , and has appeared in the feature films "Snow White and The Huntsman" , "Intruders" , "Dom Hemingway" , "Mr Turner" , "A Reason To Leave" , " King of Crime" and "Beautiful in The Morning" . He is a proud member of the ensemble cast of the Amazon Prime comedy-horror series "Dark Ditties Presents" where he has played an East-End Gangster, a TV Producer and an Irish Priest.

His previous directing experience includes "Lone Star" (which toured Australia), "Good to Firm" and "Raising The Stakes" at The Customs House Theatre in South Shields and "Alf Ramsey Knew My Grandfather" at the Civic Theatre in Darlington.

JUDGE

Annette Badland



Annette Badland is an award-winning actress, nominated for an Olivier for Sadie in the Rise and Fall of Little Voice. She is known for her roles in Eastenders, Dr Who, Outlander, Bergerac and Cutting It. Theatre work includes the Globe, Sir Peter Halls Company, RSC, National Theatre, Royal Court, Cheek by Jowl, The Donmar and The Almeida also The Royal Exchange, Manchester where she won critical acclaim as Madame Arcati in Blithe Spirit. Films include The Man Who Invented Christmas, Terence Davies' A Quiet Passion, Charlie and The Chocolate Factory, Twenty Four Seven, Jabberwocky and Little Voice. On Radio 4 she plays Horrid Hazel in The Archers.

Catherine Shipton

LAWYER



Born and brought up in South London, Catherine trained at Rose Bruford College 1977-80. Early experience includes fringe, rep, West End and touring with the RNT. She successfully toured her One Woman Show Soldiers' Wives having been nominated for Best Solo Performance at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2012. In 1986 she joined the original cast of BBC's Casualty playing Duffy - and after 3 long periods with the show has just said goodbye to the character.

## NEW GUY

John Pickering

When filming John was in the final year of completing his Degree in Drama and Performing Arts at South Essex College and he is now continuing his studies at a top drama school in London. Mercy marks John's film debut.



## MERCY

Maria Austin



Maria is a London-based actress who trained at the Lee Strasburg Institute in New York. Since graduating her theatre work includes Puppy and Tennessee Williams' Mr Paradise. For TV, Le Badmilk and an array of films, 2020 bringing the release of feature film The Reverend and Mrs Simpson and the short Second Skin.

DIRECTOR/WRITER/  
PRODUCER/EDITOR/  
JEANNIE

Wendy Morgan



Wendy is an award winning actor in the 44th year of her career, nominated for an Olivier and Evening Standard Best Actress for her NT title role as Martine and winning The Evening Standard Most Promising Newcomer Award for the role of Mollie in the John Schlesinger movie YANKS. Theatre includes eight years with The Peter Hall Company at The NT and Theatre Royal Bath. Her many TV appearances includes the Granada series The Jewel in The Crown. Recent theatre includes a USA tour of Hamlet, Hatched and Dispatched at The Park Theatre (Offie Best Supporting Actress Nomination). Most recent screen appearances are in Edie and Mrs Lowry and Son, both currently on Netflix UK, and this summer will be shooting in the new Charles Dance movie 'Inn at the Edge of the Water'. Mercy marks Wendy's directorial debut.

EXECUTIVE  
PRODUCER

Carol Royle



Carol Royle has played many roles for the RSC including Ophelia in Hamlet and Cressida in Troilus and Cressida. She is patron of Animal Aid, Animal Free Research UK, Safer Medicines Campaign, Friends of The Animals and supports Compassion in World Farming amongst many other charities. She has appeared in many West End plays most recently in Beautiful, the Carole King musical, and Orpheus Descending. Her various TV appearances include the series Life Without George, Heartbeat and a storyline in Casualty playing a Huntington's Disease sufferer. She is currently filming Endeavour for ITV.

EXECUTIVE  
PRODUCER/EXPERT  
WITNESS

Christopher Guard



Christopher was born into a family of actors, writers and musicians and educated at Latymer Upper School in the same era as Hugh Grant. He became a child star when he played David Copperfield on BBC TV and went on to play leading roles at the National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company. He has starred in Dr Who, Lord of the Rings and I Claudius and worked alongside Elizabeth Taylor, Sir Ian McKellen, Stephen Sondheim and Sir Peter Hall. As a singer/songwriter he won Best Rock Song award from the Society of Composers and Musicians and wrote the score for the award-winning C4 series 'Pond Life'. His latest band What the Fox debuted in London in 2019. Christopher is also an artist and an ornithologist

DOP/SPEAKER

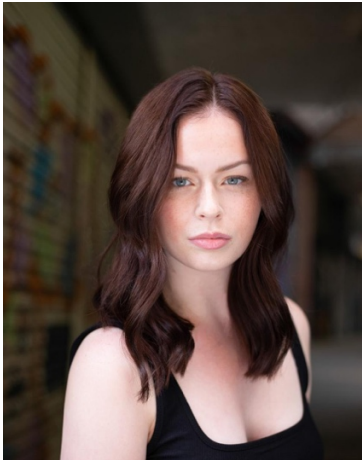
Gemma Ashford



Gemma trained as an actress whilst also showing great talent as a photographer and videographer specialising in weddings. Gemma also founded and ran the Baan Unraak sanctuary in Thailand for many years until returning in the last few years. Soon she will be off on her travels again to live in Italy. Ciao for now Bella!

## ABBEY

Holly Smith



Holly is a London based actress training at the London Meisner Company in Richmond. She has featured as the Lily in a new opera by Rolando Macrini and Natella Abashwili in a production of the Caucasian Chalk Circle. She has extensive experience with immersive theatre. Holly is a strong soprano singer and plays the classical guitar.”

## SPIRIT

Francesca Simons



Francesca is very excited to be a part of her first ever film. She has completed an HND Acting qualification at SEC and is now training for a BA (Hons ) Inclusive Performance with world-renowned Chickenshed Theatre Company.

To be continued...

CAST  
CREW  
MUSICIANS  
THANKS