

BORN OF WATER





Strapline

A young mother must fight to survive in the midst of a brutal raid on her island in order to return to her sick baby.

Synopsis

In 1372, the moralistic, religious and strong-willed Mother and her stoic Husband are concerned for the wellbeing of their ill baby. However, the news suddenly reaches them that their island home of Guernsey by the Welsh bastard prince Owen of the Red Hand, so Mother must hide the family's valuables while Husband goes to fight.

Seemingly exposed and vulnerable, Mother is hiding the chest of valuables when she comes across a Raider: a spiritual man who has hidden his sensitivity and faith after years of fighting for Owen as a trained mercenary. With a desire to increase his wealth and feed his ego, Raider decides to toy with his victim and try to kill Mother. However, he underestimates the strength she gains from her will to fight for her baby and is defeated in a fight on the beach.

Following her victory, Mother takes time to reflect on her violent actions and repent. After another fight leaves Mother in a seemingly hopeless situation, she once again discovers strength in her motherhood and finally kills the now-helpless Raider in a brutal fight. But at what cost?

Background

Born of Water is a medieval action/survival film set in Guernsey, Channel Islands, which, at its core, is about the power of motherhood and the clash between violence and faith. In a time of increasing secularism and religious division, we felt that now was the perfect time to look back on how religion has shaped our culture and made us who we are today.

For millennia, Guernsey has been a stepping stone during most wars involving the English due to its tactical position between the UK and France. However, it has received little recognition for its significance in English history, with attention mostly being drawn to the Nazi occupation of the island during WW2. In 1372, Owen of the Red Hand brought a huge invading force to the island in preparation for his plans to invade England. A huge portion of the island's population were killed in this raid: soldiers and civilians.

The vast majority of medieval films, particularly those which are action-oriented, have a male focus, which is a trope writer/director Alex Bates wanted to break away from. During the 1300s, when *Born of Water* is set, women had a lot more autonomy, power and respect in society than most films would lead us to believe, which is something we were fascinated by and wanted to explore.

Language plays a large role in this film. In 1372, the people of Guernsey spoke an archaic, lost version of their now-dying language Guernésiais. We decided that the best option would be for the characters to speak a blend of Shakespearean English and contemporary English in order to create a feeling of authenticity while making the film accessible for modern audiences. Following the opening of the film, we decided to keep dialogue to a bare minimum and focus on the non-verbal emotional connection between Mother, who is from Guernsey, and her rival, Raider, who is from Spain. We felt that this would be the most powerful way to show that an emotional and spiritual connection between people can transcend cultural barriers; a message which we believe is particularly important today with the increasing tensions and conflict between different nations around the world.

Another major theme of the film is nature. Over the last 100 years, Guernsey has become overpopulated and industrialised, with much of the island's natural beauty being lost. Considering the links between war and industry, we felt that this film would be the perfect vessel to explore our relationship with the natural environment and transport the audience back to a time when we were more symbiotic with our surroundings. We achieved this through a series of reflective moments throughout the film, where Mother takes a moment to slow down and reconnect with her surroundings and her home.

Alex hopes to preserve what is not only a tragic time in Guernsey's past, but also a vital and often overlooked part of British history.

The Main Cast

Considering that this story has such a strong focus on the island of Guernsey, it was vital to us that we respect this by not only shooting the whole film there, but also using a cast and crew who live on the island.



Olivia Ephgrave plays Mother: a stubborn, strong-willed, maternal woman who will go to any lengths to defend her family. Her parents were survivors of The Black Death and the strength they gained from this was passed down to her. Olivia did an incredible job of portraying the nuance of this character and exploring the conflict between Mother's faith and her willingness to resort to violence to return to her family.



Andrew Hislop plays Raider: a spiritual and sensitive man whose more gentle side has been buried under years of fighting as a mercenary. Upon meeting Mother, his sensitivity reignites and he rediscovers the man he used to be. Andrew portrays the journey of a conflicted and complex character all without speaking a word of dialogue in the film.



Ethan Hitchon plays Husband: a stoic and caring but cold man who believes in duty above all else. On a day-to-day basis he is a humble fisherman, but fights for the local militia when necessary. Despite not appearing for long before his character's untimely death, Ethan's strong presence provides the story with an emotional anchor.

The Core Crew



Writer/Producer/Director: A lifelong film addict, Alex Bates started off creating stop motion animations on YouTube at the age of 11. He then discovered his passion for directing live action films in his time at the Northern Film School in Leeds, where he directed the dystopian sci-fi short *Badges*. After graduating, he founded White Rock Productions and turned his attention to the WW2 drama *Occupied*, determined to create the most ambitious short film he could with the very limited resources available on Guernsey during the pandemic. Following this he created the short psychological thriller *Dare to Dream* starring *EastEnders* actor Jonny Labey. Now, he wanted to return to explore more of Guernsey's distant history with the historical action film *Born of Water*.



Director of Photography: Matthew Stockreiter studied Marine and Natural History Photography at Falmouth University, where he created *Grand Cayman*: a 35-minute conservation documentary about the critically endangered blue iguana. He has since worked on all of the short films made by White Rock Productions. He was excited to have the opportunity to link back to his nature documentary roots with *Born of Water*, which is largely shot in natural spaces and uses only natural light, aside from a short interior scene in the family home.



Historical Consultants: Sophie Brehaut and Callum Tostevin-Hall were instrumental in getting this film made and acted as historical consultants, as well as production designers. Sophie wrote her dissertation on Owen of Wales, the man who led the attack on Guernsey during the raid in the film. Her wealth of information allowed us to create an incredible amount of authenticity in the story. Meanwhile, Callum's specialism is in medieval history, so his knowledge on costumes and props helped us to create an immersive world for the audience.



Composer: Joseph Collier composed the soundtracks for all of Alex's previous films with White Rock Productions, as well as his university graduation film *Badges*. He had a strong vision for the music in *Born of Water* and wanted to create a grandiose score which balances a religious tone with a more primal, human atmosphere. He employed church bells, drums and strings to create an immersive score.



Sound Designer: Fin Blackett created an incredible soundscape for Alex's WW2 drama *Occupied*, so it was an easy choice to work with him again to recreate this part of Guernsey's history through sound. For *Born of Water*, he has created a rich and layered soundscape which truly transports you back to the late 1300s. Certain aspects of the sound design, particularly the sounds during the fight sequences, are purposely exaggerated to match Mother's heightened emotional state.

Credits

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Written and Directed by | Alex Bates |
| Director of Photography | Matthew Stockreiter |
| Historical Consultants | Sophie Brehaut Callum Tostevin-Hall |
| Sound Designer | Fin Blackett |
| Composer | Joseph Collier |
| Sound Recordist | Anthony Ford-Marsland |
| Creative Producer & Associate Editor | Nathan J. Allan |
| Production Designer | Abi Darling |
| Costume Designer | Eloise Jones |
| Colourist | Rebecca Chapman |
| Produced and Edited by | Alex Bates |
| Mother | Olivia Ephgrave |
| Raider | Andrew Hislop |
| Husband | Ethan Hitchon |
| Sister | Jade Irish |
| Daughter | Lola Jordan |
| Wear Soldier | Steve Molnar |
| Castle Guards | Dave Hyett Adam Hooper |
| Dead Militia Soldiers | Craig Hart Chris Reeves Alex Bates |
| Gaffer | |

Drone Footage Provided by

BTS Photographer

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Villagers | Heather Dowinton Louise Mitchinson |
| Farmer | Allan Harris |
| Prop Builders | Paul Tostevin Megs Bailey |
| Costume Assistant | Callum Tostevin-Hall |
| Gaffer | Anthony Ford-Marsland |
| Camera Operator | Matthew Stockreiter |
| 1 st Assistant Camera | Sophie Gallienne |
| B Camera Operator | Nathan J. Allan |
| Casting Director | Penny Dawes |
| SFX Makeup Artists | Cat Herod Megan-Anna Burgess |
| Script Supervisors | Kelly Vincent Alisia MacRae |
| Pre-Production Assistant | Penny Dawes |
| VFX Artists | Johannes Markus Magnusson Hilmir Berg Ragnarsson |
| Assistant Sound Recordists | Charlie Sheridan Jaiké Smith Rosie Le Friec |
| BTS Photographers | Kay Martin Charlie Sheridan Matthew Stockreiter |
| In Partnership with | Guernsey Arts Brehon Chartered Accountants |
| | Petit Bot Tea Room Jo-Anne Bates |

Catering Provided by
Petit Bot Tearooms
Jo-Anne Bates

Special Thanks
Guernsey Museums & Galleries
National Trust of Guernsey
Petit Bot Tea Room
States of Guernsey
Agriculture, Countryside and Land Management Services
Forest Constables
Guernsey Fire Safety
Emma Littlewood

Vale Castle
Les Caches Farm
Petit Bot Valley
Petit Bot Bay
Pleinmont
Vale Church

This film was shot on location using the following sites

WHITE ROCK
PRODUCTIONS



Technical Specifications

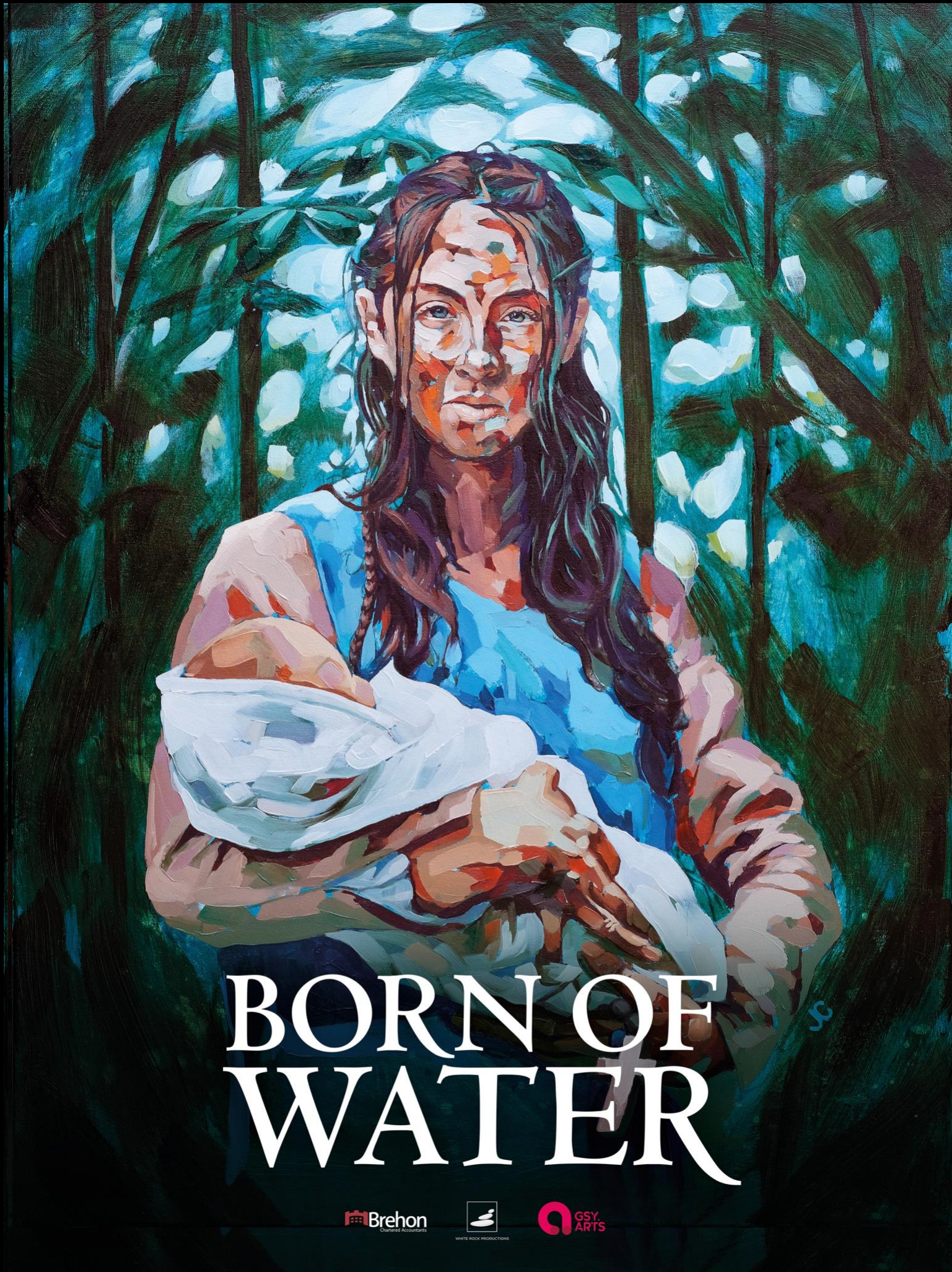
Duration 00:18:51
Aspect Ratio 16:9
Sound Format WAV, 24bit, 48kHz, Stereo

Contact Alex Bates, +447781 116444
whiterockproductions@outlook.com

Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/WhiteRockProductionsGsy/>

Instagram Page <https://www.instagram.com/white.rock.productions/>

Twitter Page <https://twitter.com/WRPGuernsey>



BORN OF WATER

Brehon



GSY ARTS