



Thoughts Become Things

Media Kit

Updated: May 2026

SJD WORLD LTD



Film *Synopsis*

Join a young Bermudian Gombey on a breathtaking journey as he encounters his ancestors in a tale that's as gripping as it is mystical.

This poetic short film captures the essence of the Bermuda Gombey and Bermudian culture in a way never seen before.



Our Story

“Thoughts Become Things” is the second collaboration project between myself; Stephan Johnstone and my good friend Marquedelle (Marq) Rodriguez, one of Bermuda’s top directors, cinematographers, and editors. I’m a spoken word artist, and the founder of SJD World Ltd, a design studio in the heart of Bermuda.

Our first film collaboration, titled “[Bermudian Poet](#),” premiered online on February 18, 2023. This short film is based on one of my original spoken word pieces and brought to life with Marq’s vision. After its premiere we were inspired to collaborate again on a second short film using another one of my poems, titled “Thoughts Become Things.”

This film delves into the rich heritage of the Bermudian Gombey, a vibrant and integral part of our culture. As we began our research and started to develop the storyboard, we reached out to local cultural torchbearers, community leaders, and all six Gombey troupes that were active on the island at the time.

Through many in-depth conversations about Bermudian culture and the evolution of the Bermuda Gombey, every person and organization we met not only encouraged us to tell this story but also guided us along the way. This collaborative spirit has been at the heart of our project, making it a true community endeavor.

SJD World funded the initial costs and we then raised additional funds from the Bermuda Arts Council, the Bermuda Department of Culture, and various individual sponsors to complete the short film (\$12,700). These funds also ensured that each Gombey troupe involved was fairly compensated and included throughout the process. Since then the project has evolved into a full multimedia collaboration. Today we have completed not only the short film but also a 12-track original soundtrack, and a mini-documentary, Decoding Thoughts. Looking ahead we are currently in development on a music video as the fourth and final visual installment of the project, with plans for a coffee table book documenting the complete journey.

We collaborated with top Bermudian talents, including musician/producer Derek G and award-winning photographer Jayde Gibbons, to enhance our storytelling with custom music and captivating visuals. Their contributions have been instrumental in bringing our vision to life.

Our journey has not been easy, but we have been guided by our ancestors every step of the way. I feel honored to present our Bermudian culture through this film, and we hope to include you in our story as we share this piece with the world.

“Thoughts Become Things” is not just a film; it’s a celebration of our heritage, a testament to our community’s spirit, and an artistic collaboration that bridges generations. We believe it has the power to resonate with audiences globally, and we are excited to present it at your festival.

Stephan Johnstone
Founder / Creative Director
SJD World Ltd

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(O) 1-441-295-7539
(E) accounts@sjdworld.com



The Credits

Written By

Stephan Johnstone

Director / Cinematographer / Editor

Marquedelle Philip Rodriguez ([@i.marqr](#))

Executive Producer

SJD WORLD LTD ([@sjdworld](#))

Music Composed By

Derek G. Simmons ([@derekg.bda](#))

Gombey Troupes

Places gombeys ([@placesgombeytroupe](#))

SMS Gombeys ([@sms.gombeys](#))

H&H Gombeys ([@hnh_gombeys](#))

Warwick Gombeys ([@warwickgombeys_bda](#))

Gombey Evolution ([@gombey.evolution.troupe](#))

Gombey Warriors ([@gombey_warriors](#))

African Ancestors

BDA Donquili ([@bermudadonquili](#))

Native American Ancestors

Antione Lugo (Millet)

Chelsea McNorton (Carlington)

St. David's Islander & Native Community

([@stdavidsinc](#))

Photography by

Jayde Gibbons ([@lokqul](#))

Set Design

Sinead Simmons

Mobylette Supplied by

Mikey Dread from the 2 Stroke legends

Kid Voice

Marcelo Johnstone

Adult Voice

Stephan Johnstone

Sponsored By

Bermuda Arts Council ([@bdaartscouncil](#))

Department of Culture ([@bermudaculture](#))

Margaret & Robert Harvey

Margot Kerry Harvey & Travis Cooper

Harvey Cooper Award ([@HarveyCooperAward](#))

Melrindo Caines

Walk Together Bermuda ([@walktogetherbermuda](#))

King Alpha Productions ([@King_Alpha_Way](#))

I.B.A ([@inspiredbda](#))

SPEXX Eyecare – Wannita Smith ([@spexxeyecare](#))

Monica Dunstan

Bermuda Tourism Authority ([@bermuda](#))

The Bermudian Publishing Company ([@TheBermudian](#))

Jubilee Richardson

Rudi Haak & Helen Ponte

The Frith Family

Subtitle Translations

Naomi ([Japanese](#))

Trevor & Maricela ([Spanish](#))

Raquel ([Portuguese](#))

Dino ([French](#))

Production Team



Stephan Johnstone

Writer / Executive Producer (SJD World Ltd)

Stephan Johnstone, founder of SJD World Ltd, graduated from George Brown College – School of Design in 2006. After college he spent 3 years with a design firm/printing house in Toronto. In 2010 he moved back Bermuda and began building SJD World full time.

Stephan's work has been published in numerous local and international publications. He has written and release 3 full Spoken word/Poetry albums and has led SJD World Ltd to become one of Bermuda's top Creative Studios for both creativity and customer support.



Marq Rodriguez

Director / Cinematographer / Editor

Marq is a visual producer, videographer and editor currently based in Bermuda. He has become an international fashion filmmaker gaining appearances in many major publications across all platforms.

An experienced professional with a passion for the art of storytelling to lead the delivery of high-quality, creative output for well-known consumer brands. Skilled in ensuring content is edited to produce attractive finished video in line with client briefs and project specifications. Well-versed in working to fast turnaround deadlines with the ability to articulate ideas clearly and confidently at all levels and a strong appreciation of the need to take into account cultural differences for varying audiences. Strong background in performing to a high standard independently and as part of teams to complete projects within schedule

His highly specialized style of capturing movement adds a unique dimension to the conventional film era of fashion films. With every frame and capture, no two shots/films are the same.



Derek G. Simmons

Music Producer

Derek G. is a prominent figure in the Bermuda music scene, boasting over 20 years of experience as a musician, engineer, and producer. From the age of six, he has been deeply immersed in music, whether working behind the scenes in producing, writing, and recording, or commanding the stage with live performances and musical direction. His extensive career and dedication to the craft have made him an influential and respected name internationally.



The Bermuda Gombey

The earliest public written record of the Gombey's existence in Bermuda is from as far back as the 1800s but the history of the origin of the Bermuda Gombey is shrouded in mystery and surely goes far beyond this date.

Most historians acknowledge that the tradition of the Bermuda Gombey has its origin in the continent of Africa. This is because of the similarity between the dances and costumes of the Bermuda Gombey and those of ancient historical traditions in Africa that can be still seen to this day.

During a period called the trans-Atlantic slave trade (1500s to 1800s), many people of African-descent were transported to the Caribbean and the Americas against their will and forced to undergo slave labour. These proud people had a rich and diverse culture which included a tradition of dance and music what we now know as masquerade, which means 'mask'.

The masquerade dancers of the people of the west coast of Africa bear the most similarity to those of the Bermuda Gombey. This historical and cultural link is reinforced by the presence of similar dance and costumes traditions in many other parts of the Caribbean such as the masquerade of St. Kitts, Belize and Guyana

There are also similarities in the words used in West African traditions and those of Gombey such as 'gumba', 'gombe', 'gumbe' and 'jimbe', which are all phrases related to music, dance and drumming as well as 'Ayo' which are a masquerade tradition in Nigeria.

There are many reasons for the origin of the history of the Bermuda Gombey to be surrounded in mystery. The first reason is that it's history is very ancient and pre-dates it's arrival in Bermuda. The second reason is that the Bermuda Gombey tradition was suppressed and villainized for a long time in Bermuda. This is because people of African descent faced persecution by racist systems of government and racist people who wanted to erase their rich history and culture so as to ensure their continued exploitation.

By Dr. David 'Roots' Chapman PHD.

"Gombey The Way of the Warrior!"



The Poem

Thoughts Become Things

You ain't catching me.

Even if you was the man sitting off up at speciality

Naturally, we work in the rain

Puddles on your cortex,

Gombeys on your brain

Hatchets to your scalp

Red stain on your wave

And the arrow will go where the bow has been aimed

So the future will move

how the past has been trained

Teach us to build and foundation is laid

Teach us to will and thoughts become things

Speak us your words and the lost become kings

Words become wings

So you ain't catching me

Even if you was the man sitting off up at speciality

Naturally, we work in the rain.

Puddles on your cortex

Gombeys on your brain.

By Stephan Johnstone

Official Selections & Screenings



Film & Folklore Festival
Official Selection
April 2026
Trinidad



DeepCut
Screening
February 2026
Bermuda



Carifesta
Official Selection
August 2025
Barbados



Mosaic International Film Festival of Arts and Culture
Official Selection, Screening
Best Short Film
August 2025
Canada



Saltus Youth Film Festival
Opening Film
Special Feature
June 2025
Bermuda



Kaminari Japanese Film Festival
Official Selection
June 2025
Japan



MUICA
Traveling African Film Festival
Official Selection & Screening
May 10th - 30th, 2025
Colombia



Tokyo Lift Off Film Festival
Official Selection
May 2025
Japan



The International Poetry Film Festival
Official Selection & Screening
Best Native Film
April 19th, 2025
Los Angeles, USA



Milestone International Film Festival
Selection
6 Awards
April 6th, 2025
Mumbai, India



5th Kerala Short Film Festival
Official Selection & Screening
March 29th 2025
Kerala, India



Crime Stoppers Film Experience
Official Selection & Screening
March 1st & 2nd 2025
Bermuda



Barbados Independent Film Festival
Official Selection
February 2nd 2025
Barbados



8th International Folklore Film Festival
Official Selection
January 11th 2025
Kerala, India



Helios Sun Poetry Film Festival
Official Selection
December 2024
Mexico



4th Dimension Independent Film Festival
Official Selection & Screening
December 2024
Bail, Indonesia



Japan Indies Film Festival
Official Selection
November 2024
Japan



Black Harvest Film Festival
Official Selection & Screening
November 13 & 19, 2024
Chicago, USA



AFRIFF
Official Selection & Screening
November 7, 2024
Lagos, Nigeria



Film & Folklore Festival
Official Selection & Screening
October 26, 2024
Trinidad



AFRICUFF
Official Selection
October 25 - 26, 2024
Texas, USA



Nitiin International Film Festival
Official Selection & Screening
Special Jury Award
September 25, 2024
Malaysia

[Click to View Full Festival List](#)



Awards

As of May 2026

**GOLD AWARD / ORIGINAL SCORE,
PEOPLE'S SILVER AWARD**

Telly Awards

USA | May 19th 2026

WEBBY NOMINEE

Creators – Art, Culture & Music

WEBBY HONOREE

Video & Film: Independent Short Film

Webby Awards

USA | April 1st 2026

SPECIAL MENTION AWARD

Film and Folklore Festival

Trinidad | April 1st 2026

BEST SHORT FILM AWARD

**6th Mosaic International Film Festival
of Arts and Culture**

Halifax, Canada | August 20th 2025

BEST NARRATIVE AWARD

International Poetry Film Festival

Los Angeles, USA | April 18th 2025

**BEST CULTURAL SHORT FILM,
BEST EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, BEST DIRECTOR,
BEST ORIGINAL SCORE,
BEST KEY CAST, BEST WRITER**

Milestone International Film Festival

Mumbai, India | April 6th 2025

BEST SHORT FILM AWARD

4th Dimension Independent Film Festival

Bali, Indonesia | December 2024

SPECIAL JURY AWARD

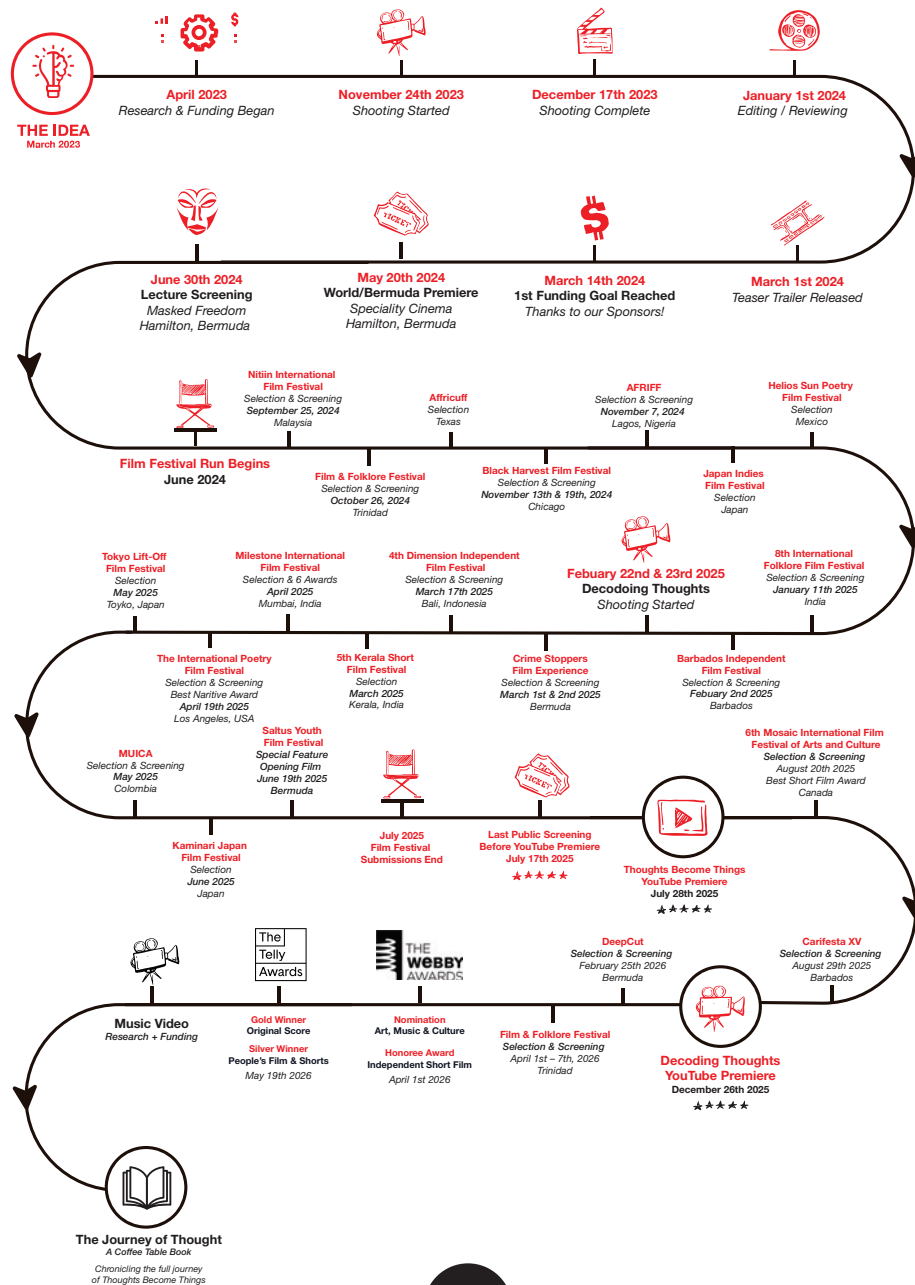
Nitiin International Film Festival

Pulau Pinang, Malaysia | September 25th 2024

[Learn More About Awards](#)



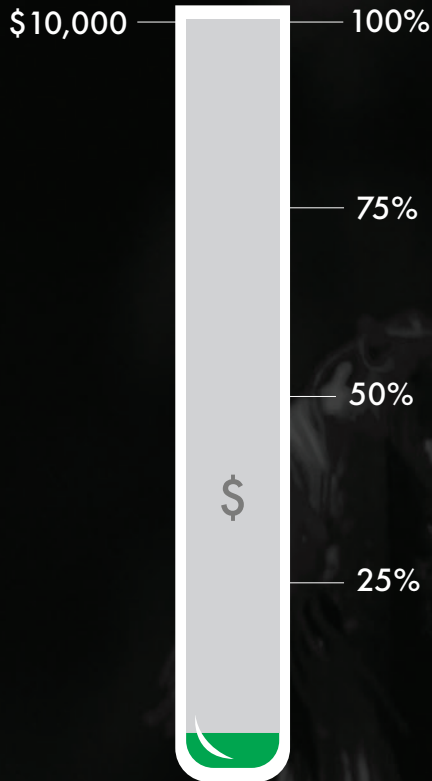
Film Map



Financial Dashboard *Projections*

as of May 2026

FUNDING GOALS



Music Video Production – \$2,500

This budget will fund the production of a new music video featuring a track from the Thoughts Become Things soundtrack. Serving as the fourth visual installment in the project, the video will extend the film's themes through music and poetry while supporting continued audience engagement.

Film Festival Travel – \$6,000

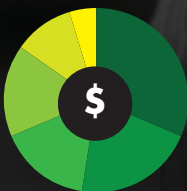
This budget supports travel and accommodation for the film team to attend an invited international film festival in person, allowing us to represent Bermuda, participate in screenings, panels, and cultural exchanges, and strengthen global visibility for the project.

Marketing Budget – \$1,500

This budget supports targeted promotion of the film and related projects across online and offline channels, helping us reach new audiences, share Bermudian culture more widely, and sustain visibility following both film's release.

FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSES

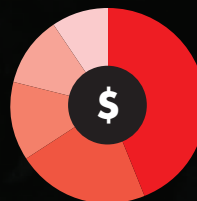
October 2023 – May 2026



FUNDING SOURCES:

\$30,957

- 32% Individuals
- 21% Local Companies
- 16% Bermuda Arts Council
- 16% Bermuda Tourism Authority
- 10% Bermuda Department of Culture
- 5% Other Income



EXPENSES:

\$32,458

- 44% Short & Mini-Doc Production
- 22% Screening Events
- 13% Gombey & Ancestors
- 12% Marketing & Travel
- 9% Film Festivals

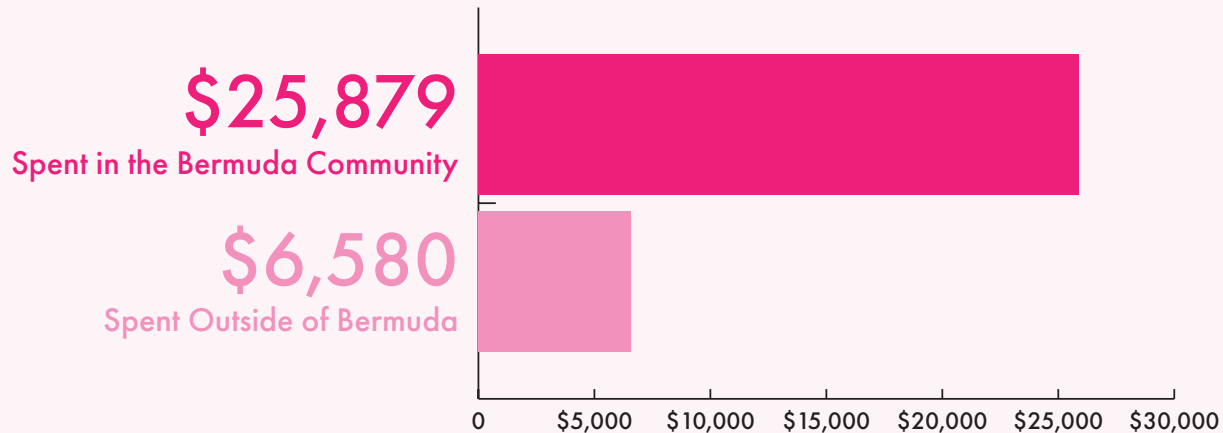


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accounts@sjdworld.com

Social Impact Report



79% of funds stayed in Bermuda

Thoughts Become Things was never just a film. It was a deliberate act of cultural investment.

From the very beginning every dollar raised went back into the community that made it possible. Six active Gombey troupes. African ancestral performers from BDA Donquili. The St. David's Islander and Native Community. Bermudian filmmakers, musicians, photographers, set designers, writers and translators. Every creative decision was made by someone from this island and every payment made went back to this island.

Of the \$32,458 spent on this project, nearly 80% went directly back into Bermuda.

- **\$16,505** paid to Bermudian artists across film, music, photography, set design, writing, production and translation
- **\$3,823** spent with local Bermudian businesses throughout the project
- **\$3,350** paid directly to Bermuda's active Gombey troupes
- **\$2,200** paid to African and Native ancestral performers and cultural communities

\$25,878.55 total back into the Bermudian community

Only \$6,580 of the entire project budget left the island, covering international festival submissions, travel, and marketing outreach that brought Bermudian culture to 11 countries, 22 film festivals, and 12 awards.

Subtitled in 5 languages, and recognized with 12 awards including two Telly Awards, two Webby Award recognitions, and festival wins from Malaysia to Canada to Los Angeles.

Bermudian culture. Paid for by Bermuda. Seen by the world.

Bermuda Shooting Locations



Opening Dream Scene

Location: Railway Trail Tunnel
Parish: Southampton

The Bermuda Railway was a 21.7-mile (34.9 km) common carrier line that operated between 1931 and 1948. Today, what remains are trails and tunnels from this period.



Street Scene

Location: Court Street
Parish: Pembroke

Court Street is a historic location for the Bermuda Gombey. It has a rich history of being home to Black-owned businesses.



Native Ancestor Scene

Location: St. David's Island
Parish: St. Georges

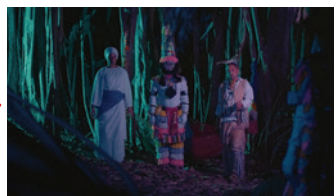
St. David's is home to Bermuda's Native American community, dating back to the seventeenth century.



Garage Scene

Location: Devil's Hole
Parish: Smiths

This garage is Stephan's family home. The neighborhood, Devil's Hole, got its name after the roof collapsed of a nearby cave. The resulting hole produced an eerie sound as tides changed and the wind blew over the top. Early settlers thought this sound to be the Devil moaning.



All Ancestors Scene

Location: Southlands Park
Parish: Warwick

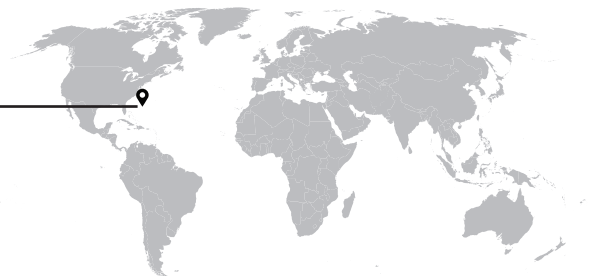
Southlands is 37 acres of natural wonder with 300 years of island history embedded in its roots. It boasts the biggest Banyan grove in Bermuda, which remarkably is only made up of just three trees.



African Ancestors

Location: Horseshoe Beach
Parish: Southampton

Horseshoe Bay is a well-known beach and tourist attraction in Bermuda. It lies on the main island's south coast and is a perfect place for conversations with the moon.



[View Map of Bermuda](#)

Download *Poster*



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Download *Trailers*



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[Download Trailer 2](#)

High Resolution Photos



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Behind *The Scenes*

November 24th 2023 | Devils Hole, Bermuda



Behind *The Scenes*

November 25th 2023 | Railway Trail Tunnel, Southampton, Bermuda



Behind *The Scenes*

November 26th 2023 | Horseshoe Beach, Bermuda



Behind *The Scenes*

December 9th 2023 | St. David's, Bermuda



Behind *The Scenes*

December 10th 2023 | Southlands, Bermuda



Bermuda Film Premiere

May 20th 2024 | Speciality Cinema



[Click to View More Photos](#)

Youtube Premiere Event

July 25th 2025 | BUEI, Bermuda



[Click to View More Photos](#)

