

Beta Cinema  
presents

# 500 MILES

Directed by  
**Morgan Matthews**

Starring  
**Bill Nighy**  
**Roman Griffin Davis,**  
**Dexter Sol Ansell,**  
**Clare Dunne,**  
**Michael Socha**  
and **Maisie Williams**

Written by **Malcolm Campbell**  
Based on the Book 'Charlie and Me' by **Mark Lowery**

A **New Origin, Port Pictures, Minnow Films** production  
Produced by **David M. Thompson, Alexander Gordon, Martina Niland, Keren Misgav**  
**Ristvedt**

International Sales supported by



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## **MAIN CAST LIST**

**John**

**Finn**

**Charlie**

**Julie**

**Dan**

**Kait**

**Molly**

**Mrs Cusack**

**Josh (Passenger)**

**Ben (Coach Driver)**

**Security Guard at Port**

**Liv**

**Ollie (The Groom)**

**Tralee Driver**

Bill Nighy

Roman Griffin Davis

Dexter Sol Ansell

Clare Dunne

Michael Socha

Maisie Williams

Deirdre Monaghan

Eleanor Methven

David Ryan

Eoin Duffy

Steve Hartland

Ivet Corvea

Paddy Stafford

Roksana Nievadis

## MAIN CREW LIST

<b>Directed by</b>	Morgan Matthews
<b>Screenplay by</b>	Malcolm Campbell
<b>Based on “Charlie and Me” by</b>	Mark Lowery
<b>Producers</b>	David Thompson Alexander Gordon Martina Niland Keren Misgav Ristvedt
<b>Co-Producer</b>	Patrick O’Donoghue
<b>Executive Producers</b>	Joanie Blaikie, Morgan Matthews, Clare Voyce, Louise Murray, Malcolm Campbell, Phil Hunt, Compton Ross, Norman Merry, Dirk Schürhoff, Thorsten Ritter, Tassilo Hallbauer, Zygi Kamasa, Nicolas D. Sampson, Arno Hazebroek, Peter Hampden, Greg Martin
<b>Director of Photography</b>	Tom Comerford
<b>Editor</b>	Rebecca Lloyd
<b>Casting Director</b>	Louise Kiely
<b>Production Design</b>	Ferdia Murphy
<b>Costume Design</b>	Leonie Prendergast
<b>Music by</b>	Jamie Duffy and Atli Örvarsson
<b>Music Supervisor</b>	Sarah Bridge
<b>UK Distributor</b>	True Brit
<b>World Sales</b>	Beta Cinema

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

500 Miles is a life-affirming adventure and celebration of the human spirit that follows a broken family who are forced to come together when their two young boys run away from home.

While their fighting parents tear their hair out with worry, the boys embark on an epic road trip from Yorkshire, over land and sea, to the Wild West coast of Ireland. The destination: Dingle, County Kerry, and their beloved Grandfather, who their parents haven't spoken to since the fateful events of the previous summer.

Bill Nighy, Maisie Williams, *Jojo Rabbit's* Roman Griffin Davis, and breakout star of HBO's *The Knight of the Seven Kingdoms* star in BAFTA-award winner Morgan Matthews' road movie that will make you laugh, cry, and hug the people you love.

## SYNOPSIS

At the crack of dawn, FINN (15) and his little brother CHARLIE (10) sneak out of their house in Doncaster. Last night, Finn heard his parents, JULIE and DAN (30s), breaking up, fighting over custody of the kids.

Finn won't let anybody separate him from his brother. Charlie was born very prematurely and his health has always been fragile, but he's a larger-than-life figure, wonderfully imaginative and funny, with a habit for wreaking chaos. Finn is his brother's protector, but shy and introverted, he relies on Charlie just as much.

The boys begin their journey to Dingle, Ireland where their GRANDPA JOHN lives. Dingle holds happy memories: the family spent their last holiday there sailing with John and trying to spot the beloved local dolphin, FUNGIE. But it's a long, treacherous journey of trains, ferries and coaches – 500 miles where a lot could go wrong...

Short on cash, Finn is only able to buy a single 'Rail and Sail' ticket for himself, so that Charlie's forced to evade ticket inspectors every step of the way. En route, Finn meets KAIT (19), a spirited Irish girl busking for her fare. When she's heckled, Finn offers support, and what little change he has. She's charmed, and confides that she's running away from troubles herself.

In Dublin, disaster strikes – the boys get separated when Charlie clambers into the luggage-hold of their next coach before Finn has a chance to board. Finn is beside himself with worry. Having taken a shine to him, Kait steps in, nicking a car from a mate and deciding to drive them to Dingle herself.

Meanwhile, parents Dan and Julie are frantic with worry, searching all over Doncaster for them. They're forced to reunite and try to put the pieces together to find out what's happened to their boys. Seeing a memento from their last summer holiday in Dingle, Julie twigs...

On the final leg of the trip with Finn (made on horseback after their car breaks down), Kait realises something's not right. As they get closer to Dingle, Finn becomes increasingly anxious and withdrawn. When they arrive, Grandpa John is expecting them. Dan and Julie worked out where Finn was going and called ahead. They're not far behind. But John looks dishevelled and sad – an entirely different man from the one in Finn's happy memories of the summer before.

In a beautiful and heart-wrenching denouement, we discover there's more to the rift in the family than meets the eye. Julie and Dan arrive soon after, and Finn's brave actions lead the whole family to a moment of much needed catharsis, and hope.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The film begins as a story about two brothers, Finn (Roman Griffin Davis) and Charlie (Dexter Sol Ansell) who run away from their family home in Sheffield in the North of England. With their parents (Michael Socha & Clare Dunne) in pursuit, the two runaways embark on a mission across land and sea in an effort to reach their beloved Grandad John (Bill Nighy) at his caravan-park home in Dingle on the Southwest coast of Ireland. After a recent, cataclysmic and unspoken event (which will become clear when the brothers reach their destination), John has become a pariah in the eyes of the boys' parents, and the brothers have been prevented from seeing him. But whilst there may be a tragic event at the heart of this story, hopefully, the film is never bleak. The boys' journey is both physical and emotional, but also full of light as well as shade, in the way that real life invariably is.

For me, there is something universal about this story of a family in crisis - fractured and separated, but still bound together by powerful forces that pull them towards each other. I've always been interested in messy, imperfect family units, that have been broken up and put back together in a different form. Or families that are outwardly unconventional but find a way of working together as a unit. Partly as a result of my own experiences, becoming a father when I was very young, I also understand how grandparents can play a vital role in keeping a family together, and how 'together' doesn't necessarily mean physically together – more holding it together - whilst becoming a focal point of warmth and stability – a role that Grandad John has traditionally played at the heart of the family in *500 Miles*.

Whilst developing the script with writer Malcolm Campbell, I was also particularly keen to explore the close sibling relationship between Finn and Charlie. In the film, we see Finn, a teenager on the cusp of adulthood, trying to navigate around the obstacles he encounters with the liability that is Charlie at his side. But with the help of a friend found along the way (Kait, played by Maisie Williams) he eventually succeeds (whether intentionally or not) in drawing his family together in Dingle, the place that has been so special to them over the years.

The dramatic and cathartic final scenes lead to the hope that this damaged unit will be able to rebuild their fractured relationships - because ultimately, the love that binds them together is stronger than the forces that would otherwise pull them apart.

The vast majority of the film is set and shot in Ireland, with an almost entirely Irish crew. Tom Comerford's wonderful cinematography captures both the beauty and reality of the locations, whether the real-world, working environments of Dublin's ferry port & Busáras bus station, or the stunning vistas of the Conor Pass & Inch Beach. Young Irish composer Jamie Duffy has provided a wonderful score, working with co-composer Atli Övarsson, which beautifully complements the boys' journey, being rich with both excitement and emotion.

## THE DIRECTOR – MORGAN MATTHEWS

4 x BAFTA-winning director & executive producer Morgan Matthews initially established a distinctive style directing documentaries, and then later with scripted drama, following his critically acclaimed feature film debut *X+Y* in 2014.

Written by James Graham and starring Asa Butterfield, Rafe Spall, Eddie Marsan and Sally Hawkins, *X+Y* premiered at the Toronto Film Festival and went on to garner many international awards and nominations. The film was loosely based on Morgan's BAFTA, RTS and Grierson nominated documentary *Beautiful Young Minds*, about a team of young mathematics prodigies. Morgan's past directing credits include *The Fallen*, a 3-hour single documentary chronicling every British serviceperson killed in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. *The Fallen* was named best single documentary at the 2008 RTS Awards, also winning two BAFTAs including Best Factual Director. In 2009, Morgan directed *Scenes from a Teenage Killing*, documenting every teenager who died as a result of violence in a single year in the UK. The film premiered at the Sheffield Documentary Festival, winning the audience award, and was also BAFTA-nominated for best single documentary.

In 2012, Morgan teamed up with executive producers Ridley Scott and Kevin Macdonald, directing the ambitious and BAFTA-nominated *Britain in a Day*, representing a single day in the life of people in the UK. In 2017, Morgan directed the BBC Films feature documentary *Williams*, telling the story of the last family run Formula One team. *Williams* was released theatrically after being nominated for two BIFAS including Best Documentary.

In 2023 Morgan directed the feature film *The Railway Children Return*, a sequel to the beloved classic *The Railway Children*, the film was written by Danny Brocklehurst and starred Jenny Agutter, Tom Courtenay and Sheridan Smith. *500 Miles* is Morgan's third scripted feature film.

In his role as founder of independent production company Minnow Films, Morgan has also executive produced numerous documentaries, including the BAFTA, Broadcast and RTS award-winning *7/7: One Day In London*, the BBC RTS winning *War in The Blood*, the BAFTA winning *Grenfell*, the BAFTA and Grierson award-winning *The Last Survivors*, and the BAFTA and double RTS-winning *Atomic People*.

## **INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR – MORGAN MATTHEWS**

**Tell us what *500 Miles* is about.**

*500 Miles* is a road movie about two brothers, two boys who run away from home in the north of England to try and find their grandfather who lives on the west coast of Ireland and has become estranged from the family.

**What overall message do you hope audiences will take away from the film?**

In terms of the overall message of the film, or what I'd like people to feel at the end of it or take away from it. So there has been a catastrophic event within this family, this family that were once close have been broken apart, and the result of that is that they are all deeply unhappy, but underneath that, there are still these bonds that bind them together. In the case of Finn and Charlie and their journey across Ireland to find their granddad, those bonds are so strong, there's a pull that's drawing them across there. I think Finn knows subliminally, underneath, that his parents are going to follow them, and that there needs to be some sort of intervention that involves all of them, or in order to try and get through what has happened, they need to be together to do that. Finn's journey across Ireland with Charlie, he knows he doesn't know what's going to happen, but he knows it's going to result in some sort of showdown between the family, and hopefully they can be in a better place afterwards. I suppose for me, the message of the film is the stuff that binds us together and connects us is ultimately stronger than what divides us.

**What appealed to you about this story?**

As a director, the original book that the film is based on is called *Charlie and me, 421 miles from home*, and it's written by Mark Lowry. I read the book, and I was very moved by it, and I found it funny and warm, and it really took us into the world of these two boys making this journey. Then I teamed up with the writer, as in film writer, Malcolm Campbell, and we developed the script over a long period of time together, and we both put, I would say, quite a lot of our own experiences into the film and the script - and expanded on what Mark had written with the original book, and created some new characters and changed the journey that the boys take. It took a fair bit of creative license, but I understand Mark is supportive of the results.

**Do you have a personal connection to the story that resonates with you?**

There's a number of themes within the film that resonate with me, personally, from my own life and from experience I've had working in the real world, making documentaries as well. You know, really, it's a story about a family that has fallen apart after a major and significant event in their lives, a family that were very close, and not always an entirely functional family in the way that not you know, most families aren't, but they

have become very dysfunctional in recent times, and the film is an exploration of what led to that.

**Tell us about your vision for this film, and how you approach those sorts of creative conversations?**

It was always important to me that the film felt very much set in the real world, and the film is largely shot in Ireland, and I wanted to avoid cliché representations of Ireland, but still be able to show the beauty of the country as well. But there are many real world locations, and because it's a road movie, we're filming on pretty much every mode of transport that there is, cars, boats, coaches and a bunch of other trains. Have I missed anything? No planes. Most of the time, we were filming in real working environments. If we're filming in a coach station, it's a working coach station; they don't shut it down for us. If we're filming on a train, it's a moving train. It's not green screen. If we're filming on a boat, it's a real boat out at sea. It's not in a tank. And I think that gave the film a sense of realism. And I think that really contributes towards the very strong performances from the actors. I think we see Ireland in a way that people who live in Ireland will find familiar and some of the kind of key locations, landmark locations, if it's the coach station, its Busáras in Dublin, which everyone in Dublin will know. When we're crossing the Irish Sea on the Ferry it's on the Stena Line Ferry, and a lot of people will be familiar with that journey as well, English and Irish, because of course, there's a long standing love affair between the English and the Irish, despite some complicated history as well. There are lots of English people who have their roots in Ireland and heritage in Ireland, and family who make that journey regularly, and who consider Ireland their spiritual home... as I think Ed Sheeran said recently to some controversy.

**What is the importance of Finn and Charlie's Anglo-Irish heritage?**

Finn and Charlie's family is Anglo-Irish. Their mom is Irish, their granddad is Irish, their dad is a Brit. But they have that strong connection to their Irish heritage, which so many Brits do have, and have that real love affair with Ireland, and also would culturally identify more with being Irish in some cases than being British, which is understandable, particularly in current times. And I think a lot of Brits who have that Irish heritage feel more of a connection to it than their English Heritage.

**Tell us about Finn and Charlie and their bond.**

So Finn and Charlie are two brothers very close. Finn, as the older brother, is actually more introvert than Charlie, who is a loud and as his brother would say, gobby, nine year old. Charlie is not afraid to say what he thinks he loves, a good or bad dad joke, and I think that some of the kind of behaviors and the way that Charlie kind of speaks and his just the way he is generally, is kind of maybe a bit how Finn would like to be. But he's also very happy for his brother to be that character as well and to enjoy it. And I think everyone enjoys that about Charlie, that he's quite a big character. There's also a sense

that Charlie is quite a special boy. He was born very prematurely. He had medical issues when he was young, and it was a bit touch and go at times, and there was obviously a lot of concern around him, and that's just added to this sense that he's quite precious and quite special.

**Tell us about their relationship with their grandfather. What and why is spending time in Dingle so special to them?**

Dingle is where their granddad lives. Granddad John, played by Bill Nighy, and this has become a very special place for the family, because it's where they all go on their you know, every family holiday that they can take, they will go to Ireland, and Bill and Molly. Molly grandma now live in they're retired. They live in a caravan on the coast, and it's just a very beautiful place, and it's tied up with all of those family memories and experiences that the boys have had growing up and for their parents as well. So it's, it's just there, if you like, special place, where they where they go and where they feel happiest, really, and tell us about their relationship with their grandfather. He's a sort of a wild card. And there's probably more similarity in the way that Charlie and John behave, you know, than there is between John and Finn but everybody enjoys granddad John for his slightly kind of against the rules. He enjoys life. He makes the most of life, and he's a charismatic guy, and who wouldn't want Bill Nighy as their grandfather, and he's very loving as well, and he's disarming, and he's not formal, and he's a rule breaker and a risk taker, and they quite like that about him, too. He'll say things that he's not supposed to say in the way that Charlie does, and he's quite spontaneous as well. And you don't necessarily know what's going to happen when you go out with John, but you know you're going to have fun.

**Tell us about how you found the right tone for the film, because you're balancing both funny and emotional resonance. Tell us about how you found that?**

Well, some of the filmmakers I admire the most tell stories that are real world, stories that reflect real life and real life in the way that I see it, the way I've experienced it myself, and the way that I've experienced it being around other people, going through challenging times again, in the real world, in the documentaries I've made in the past. But whenever I've made a documentary about a very challenging subject, there's always light, it's never pure shade. I think also as a nation, and just culturally in Ireland, particularly as well, we kind of deal with difficult situations, sometimes through humor. I think it's really important to have that light as well as shade. So, I think for me, it was always important that we empathise with this family and enjoy them as a family, and see them as they were before the events that that broke them apart as a family. And also, this is a road movie, so it takes place over a period of about 18 hours or something like that, but we do flashback to the times when the family was in a better place as well, and we see what they've lost. And I think that's really important as well. So I think for me, it just having that balance of light and shade is really important in the film, and being

able to care about the people in the film is incredibly important. I mean, it sounds it's a very obvious thing to say, but that doesn't always happen, or I don't always have that experience when I when I watch a film or drama. So I think we really worked on that aspect of it.

**Tell us about casting. What qualities were you looking for?**

You're looking for the people who will inhabit these characters, of course, we were very lucky, and I had such a good working relationship with Malcolm Campbell, the writer, that when we had a particular actor in mind, and even through the process of casting and the bit of time that I had in advance with the actors, that we were able to adjust the script and lines and character traits to kind of fit the version of the character that a particular actor was playing, and to sort of really kind of write it around them. I'm also open to improvisation and small amounts of improvisation around the lines, I think particularly with the young actors, actually with all of the actors; that was something that they embraced as well. I really enjoyed working with actors in that way. That might be in advance of shooting. It might be whilst we're shooting, and something just comes out. And it's often humor that's often the funny stuff. Because funny stuff can just, you know, we've got some very funny actors and also just little naturalistic moments - particularly working with a young actor, Dexter Sol Ansel, who plays Charlie. He was always coming up with stuff, and he has great ideas, and he's such a live wire character himself that felt very fitting. And other actors, Michael Socha, fantastic actor who has worked like that before. You know, improvising in some of the work that he's done with Shane Meadows, and he certainly kind of brought that with him. And I think that kind of encourages other actors as well, and again, because I'm open to that, so that works really well. I think as well as the main roles and Bill, Bill is just a dream, and working with Bill is a real privilege, and it's everything that I hoped it would be, and he's such a committed actor, and he's very generous with how he approaches a role and the commitment that he puts into it, and I think that really sets a tone as well. And he's also really a generous spirit on set, and the way he will chat to everyone and anyone. And he works hard, you know, he works really hard, and as I say, that sets a good tone, with some of the smaller roles, the process of casting, which I really enjoyed, able to see and workshop with a number of actors before settling on the right person for that role. So I think our extended cast is really good, and there are some wonderful cameos from great, mostly Irish actors as well, and some are experienced and some aren't so but it was great to be able to gather that cast together to support the main role actors as well. And then Roman Griffin Davis is probably most well known for playing Jojo in *Jojo Rabbit*, which is obviously a very big film, and he was quite a bit younger at that time, and he's now matured into a wonderful young man. His performance is a very subtle and nuanced performance, and it's quite understated, but then he has some big moments, and without wanting to give too much away, there's an enormous amount of catharsis, ultimately, in the performance that Roman gives.

## MAIN CAST

### BILL NIGHY – GRANDFATHER JOHN

Bill Nighy is a multi-award-winning actor of both the stage and screen, with an expansive career spanning fifty years. Bill has been nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actor (*Living*) and has received a BAFTA for Best Supporting Actor (*Love Actually*), among many other accolades. Recently, Bill was seen as part of the leading cast of *Joy*, a Netflix feature film based on the true story of the world's first in vitro fertilization baby, released globally in October 2024 and in the acclaimed drama *&Sons*, marking director Pablo Trapero's English-language feature debut, scripted by Sarah Polley.

Bill also played the leading role in *Lazarus* for Prime Video, created by Harlan Coben and Danny Brocklehurst. The psychological mystery thriller explores themes around loss, redemption, and the enduring bond between parent and child. In addition, Bill has been announced to star in the upcoming six-part BBC series *California Avenue*, set in a nostalgia-soaked 1970s trailer park overlooking the English Channel. Bill will also be seen in Prime Video's upcoming action-adventure series *Ride or Die*.

Bill was seen in *The First Omen*, a prequel to the 1976 classic horror *The Omen*, released in cinemas in April 2024. Bill also starred in Netflix's feature film *The Beautiful Game*; directed by Thea Sharrock which centres around a group of English homeless footballers. In 2022, Bill starred in *Living*, an adaptation from the 1952 Japanese classic *Iriku* by Akira Kurosawa, Shinobu Hashimoto and Hideo Oguni, premiered at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival. For this role Bill was nominated for an Academy Award (Best Actor 2023), BAFTA (Leading Actor 2023), Critics Choice Award (Best Actor 2023), and a SAG Award (Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role 2023).

Bill's extensive list of film credits also includes *Role Play* (2023); *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (2022), *Minamata* (2021), *Emma* (2020), *Hope Gap* (2020), *The Kindness of Strangers* (2019), *Pokémon Detective Pikachu* (2019), *Sometimes, Always, Never* (2019), *The Bookshop* (2018), *By Innocence* (2018), *Limehouse Golem* (2017), *Their Finest* (2017), *Red Nose Day Actually* (2017), *Wild Target* (2010), *Pirate Radio* (2009), *Valkyrie* (2008), *Notes on a Scandal* (2006), *The Constant Gardener* (2005), *Love Actually* (2003), *Lawless Heart* (2001), and *Still Crazy* (1998).

Bill began his career on the stage and has since earned acclaim for his work in numerous plays, including David Hare's *Pravda* (1985), *Skylight* (1995) *A Map Of The World* (1983). He received an Olivier Award nomination in 2001 for Best Actor for his performance in Joe Penhall's *Blue/Orange*.

## **Q&A WITH BILL NIGHY**

### **Can you give us an idea of what the film is about?**

The film is about two young boys, brothers, who travel 500 miles from Doncaster to Ireland to visit their somewhat slightly unusual granddad and their adventures on the way.

### **And what were your first impressions on reading the script? What drew you to it?**

On reading the script, I was very happy, because it's a good script, and I was always well disposed towards the idea of being in it. I liked the fact that my character was Irish and that I would have to act as an Irish person, and I was quite keen to see if I could pull that off. I liked the general sensibility. It's a very well written script.

### **And tell us a bit about your character, John. How would you describe John?**

Well, in the script, he's described as a blow in, which simply means that he doesn't come from where you find him. In other words, he lives in, but like a good number of people in those kinds of beautiful spots, they come from somewhere else, but blow in. Also he's a painter, he's slightly bohemian. I suppose you would say, in as much as he doesn't have a regular job, and he's a kind of.... he's not eccentric, but he's an unexpected sort of grandparent, which is one of the reasons I think the boys love him.

### **What role does he play in the family? What's his relationship like with Finn and Charlie?**

I think he gives them a bit a bit more, like most grandparents do. Their job is to spoil their grandchildren. That's their gig. And in his case, he gives them a degree of freedom that they perhaps don't enjoy at home, and it's just Dingle being a romantic, beautiful place, and him being a part of it, and going to visit granddad means they see a wholly different environment.

### **What is it about John that makes him a rich character for you to play?**

John is a rich character, because he's had to deal with some very difficult things in his life, and he's come out the other side with a positive spin on things he's not undaunted, and he's undefeated by the things that life has thrown at him. You get the sense that he's been places, and he's travelled and he's had all kinds of different experiences and met all kinds of people; in a way that someone who lived in the same place, grew up and worked in the same place might not have done.

### **Can you tell us a little bit about the decisions are made around your costume, hair and makeup on this one, and how that helps you get into character?**

Costumes are really important in the same way as they are in normal life. People choose their clothes for the most part, very carefully, even if they affect a careless look. They

change the way you move, and they alter the way you think about yourself to some degree. So, the first thing I thought of was a denim jacket. I thought 'that might be for someone of my age who hadn't been required to dress differently for work or anything of that kind.' I'm that kind of granddad. So this jacket, incidentally, I saw on a cyclist in the street, and because I wanted one with side pockets so you could put your hands in, I went over to him as he was parking his bike, and I said, "Could you tell me where you got your jacket?" He took it off and gave it to me, and I said, "you can't give me your jacket." He said, "Please take it, you obviously need it." I don't know your name, but I hope you see the film, because this is a major part of my costume.

**What scenes and moments have been particularly enjoyable to film?**

Well, I spent quite a long time on a small boat on reasonably rocky seas, which I haven't done for a long time, I viewed it with trepidation, but actually, we were unseasonably lucky with the weather. It was beautiful on the water, and it was fun to be in the boat and with the boys and with everyone else and with my wife, played by the wonderful Deirdre Monahan. I looked forward to getting on the boat, it was sort of intrepid. I had to drive the boat and driving boats, it turns out, is not nothing. You have to keep driving because they never go in a straight line. So you're forever correcting, so it takes some concentrating.

**What's it been like working with the cast, particularly the young lads Roman and Dexter?**

Roman and Dexter have been absolutely exemplary, not just in their professionalism and their discipline, being charming company and very good fun to be around; but they've been really clever and prepared in terms of the acting, and they've obviously put in some work, and it's very impressive. They've been tip top.

**What's been like working with Morgan?**

I like working with Morgan a lot, and I would love to work with Morgan again. He's endlessly courteous, he's smart, and he has got taste. I don't mind being directed. I like being directed. I try not to resist it; and in his case, I trust him, and I think that he has, as I say, taste. He knows when it's a little bit too much, or a little bit not. He's encouraging and courteous.

**What would you hope audiences would take away from this film?**

I would hope that they would take away the sense that when families work, they are kind of a central fact of our lives, and that if you're fortunate enough to have a family that connects, that it's a powerful engine, and that people can survive all kinds of experiences and remain intact.

**What do you think it is about the family and the story which will connect with people?**

I think because the family are written really well. The characters aren't an idea of a character or an idea of a family. They're a very specific family. They have the kind of difficulties we all have, being married, being somebody's parent, not knowing what to do. They sometimes get it wrong, and yet we don't blame them for that, because you know that everybody's doing their best. It's sophisticated in that way. It's not just thrown together. The family works and they all kind of complement one another, but not all smooth sailing, as I say, which makes it even more kind of authentic.

## ROMAN GRIFFIN DAVIS – FINN

Aside from his leading role in *500 Miles* alongside Bill Nighy/Maisie Williams, Roman is soon to be seen in *Greenland 2* opposite Gerard Butler. Most recently, he also appeared in Stephen King's *The Long Walk* from Lionsgate.

Other film credits include *A Rare Grand Alignment* produced by Spike Lee, directed by Cinque Lee, and *Silent Night* where he starred opposite Keira Knightley, produced by Matthew Vaughn.

Roman made an astounding breakout performance as Jojo Betzler in *Jojo Rabbit* directed by Taika Waititi, starring opposite Scarlett Johansson and Sam Rockwell. His performance was received with tremendous reviews and critical acclaim. He won the Critics' Choice Movie Award for Best Young Performer and was nominated for Best Actor in a Motion Picture Musical or Comedy at the Golden Globes. *Jojo Rabbit* has also garnered great reception, winning best adapted screenplay at the Academy Awards and at the British Academy Film Awards.

## Q&A WITH ROMAN GRIFFIN DAVIS

**Please introduce yourself and your character in *500 Miles*.**

I play Finn. He's an introvert: quiet, reserved, and thoughtful. He has a younger brother who's the opposite—much more confident and outgoing. Finn leans on that energy. In a way, his brother helps bring out a side of him that he finds hard to access on his own.

**Could you tell us what's the film about briefly?**

This story is about two brothers from England who ran off to see their granddad in Ireland, played by Bill Nighy, who has been cut off from the rest of the family and something traumatic has happened.

**What was your impression of the script when you received it for the first time?**

I received the script about three years ago - either just before or just after lockdown - and I loved it. It was an early draft, and at first, I couldn't quite get the point. The boys were running away, and I kept thinking, there has to be something more to this. That curiosity is what pulled me in and made me want to keep reading. My dad actually read it before I did and kept telling me, '*You have to read this.*' So I finally did, and it really stuck with me. Since then, the script has changed a lot. It's developed into something much deeper and more layered than those early drafts. I really loved the script and the writing - it reminded me of the kind of English films I've always been drawn to. I'm drawn to stories about boys who are struggling, who aren't immediately easy to understand,

but who you come to know and care about as the film unfolds; young people facing big, internal challenges. Even in writing, I love those kinds of stories. The great ones, like *Catcher in the Rye* or *Hamlet*, really speak to that experience. I think it's really interesting for me as a 17 year old.

**Tell us about your character, Finn, and how would you describe the relationship with his brother in a bit more detail?**

Charlie is everything Finn wishes he could be in some ways. Finn wants to be confident, to be loud, to stand up for himself - to flip someone off or tell them to back off - but he holds back. Charlie does those things for him, and there's something really endearing about that. It shows their brotherly bond: Finn looks out for Charlie, and Charlie fights for Finn. It's a sweet dynamic.

**Why do you think the boys love spending time with John?**

John is a lot like Charlie, he's outgoing, creative, and unashamed of who he is. He's an artist who lives in a caravan, doesn't take himself too seriously, and isn't afraid to laugh at himself. He loves to play and joke around. He's a fun, warm, slightly eccentric granddad. We also see a very different side of him. At the start of the film and in the present-day scenes, he's no longer the joyful figure we see in the flashbacks. Like all the characters in this story, John has two sides. We see him during happier times, when the family is whole, and then again after a traumatic event has fractured everything. In the present, he's isolated and self-destructive—it's heartbreaking to watch. He implodes emotionally, crumbling under the weight of his grief.

**What was it like filming in Ireland?**

I love Ireland. I was quite shocked about how pretty because I always thought that Ireland would just look a lot like England, and it doesn't. It's very, very pretty - where we are in Wicklow, and I'm sure Dingle will be as well. I like the people, and the food here is very good.

**What's it like working with your fellow cast mates?**

I've been really lucky in my career to work with some incredible actors, and this film is no exception. Michael Socha plays my dad, Clare Dunne plays my mum, and Bill Nighy is my granddad. Maisie Williams plays a woman I meet along the way who helps me out in a big way, and Dexter plays my younger brother. They're all amazing - genuinely kind, generous people who care deeply about their roles and the story we're telling. It makes such a difference to work with a cast like that. The atmosphere on set has been so supportive.

### **What scenes or moments have been the most enjoyable so far?**

I had to do a scene where I jumped into the Irish Sea - which, as you can imagine, wasn't the most fun. I had to run, dive in, and swim out to a boat while dragging my brother through the water. What I didn't realise was how heavy wet clothes get. I was trying to swim with one arm while holding onto him and just thought, *This is brutal*.

When I finally reached the boat, Morgan asked, "Can you lift him up onto the boat now?" I was like, '*Absolutely not - but I'll try.*' So I left my drowning brother floating for a second, climbed onto the boat myself, and then tried to haul him up. I was seriously struggling and thought I was going to drop him. I looked over at Bill and asked, 'Can you help?' He gave me this look like, 'really?' - but he still took him and got him up safely. It was cold, chaotic, and honestly... pretty funny. Also, I'd been told at least eight times to take off my life jacket before diving in. Of course, I forgot, jumped in with it still on, and just floated back up like a complete idiot. It was quite fun to shoot, but we've still got half a shoot left, so that might not be my favourite bit, the cold water.

## DEXTER SOL ANSELL - CHARLIE

Dexter Sol Ansell is a talented young performer who is making waves in the entertainment industry. Dexter stars as "EGG" in the *Game of Thrones* prequel *A Knight Of The Seven Kingdoms* for HBO, written by George R R Martin, to be released worldwide in 2026.

Dexter's acting journey began at the tender age of four after he was cast as Lucas Taylor in ITV's *Emmerdale*. Dexter then played the challenging role of 'David Saunders' in the hit thriller series *The Midwich Cuckoo* for Sky then followed closely with the role of Young Coriolanus Snow in the hugely-anticipated *The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*. Dexter has also played 'Buster' in the comedy feature film *Christmas on the Mistletoe*, directed by Debbie Isitt for Netflix. Further credits include feature films *Here*, Directed by Bob Zemeckis, *Robin and the Hoods* for Sky, horror film *The Moor* and Channel 4's comedy *Hullsraisers*.

## Q&A WITH DEXTER SOL ANSELL

### **Can you tell us a little bit about what the story of the film is about?**

So the story of the film is this: one day, two kids jump out of a window and go on this crazy adventure on busses, and ferries, and train rides and just have so much fun. They keep seeing flashbacks to this one holiday and you don't know what this all this is about, but then you figure out the twist.

### **What were your first impressions on reading the script?**

Well, when I first auditioned for it, I was filming for the last job in six months in Northern Ireland, and after that, I wanted to do a comedy role, and then this script came up, and I was like, this is totally comedy. So, I said I wanted to do it and then I did the auditions, and I got the role, and I loved the script. It was just amazing.

### **Tell us about your character, Charlie. How would you describe Charlie?**

Charlie is a cheeky, a cheeky boy, and he thinks his jokes are funny, but they're not, and he tries to make everyone laugh, he tells really bad jokes.

### **What's special about his bond with his brother? What makes Finn such a good brother?**

So, Charlie was also born prematurely, so he has asthma, and with Finn he's so kind to Charlie and helps him, and he's just amazing to him, plays with him, laughs as his jokes - all amazing.

**Why do the boys love spending time with granddad?**

His dad's a paramedic, so, they never can really do anything much fun. But with the granddad he lets them go on boat trips and lets them do all fun stuff.

**How do they get from Doncaster to Ireland?**

They jump out of this window and they go on busses, they go on a train, they go on a ferry, they go in cars. They go on this whole crazy adventure to get to Ireland.

**What is it about Charlie that makes him so fun to play?**

It's hard and easy to play Charlie, because you have to be fun and jokey and trying to make everyone laugh, but also you have to have that kind of sign that he's born prematurely and that he's got asthma. So it's hard sometimes and easy sometimes. I did scenes where I had to do an asthma attack, and that was that was pretty challenging, but I did it.

**And what's it been like being in Ireland? Have you had fun here?**

Yeah, I love it in Ireland. I was in Northern Ireland for six months on my last job, and I loved it. When I finished there, I was back for three weeks, and it's like being home again because I was there for so long. It's just amazing to be back.

**What has it been your favourite scenes to shoot so far? What have you had the most fun doing?**

My favourite scenes were probably when I was in the water swimming. That was so, so fun. I loved all of the swimming scenes. It was so fun in the water, and when I got to the edge - Roman who plays Finn - had to pick me up. It was really, really fun; but I had so much weight from the water! So, when I got out, all my clothes got really heavy. I could barely move.

**What's it been like shooting with Bill Nighy?**

It was amazing! He's so sweet and nice.

**What was it like working with Roman and Maisie?**

Oh yeah, they're amazing. I love playing with Roman and doing lots of fun stuff with him.

**Were you guys getting up to mischief?**

Yeah, it's really fun! No matter what, every single time, he's always eating something on set. He'll always hide like a cheese platter, or like San Pellegrino or something, he always hides something.

**Do you think that audiences are going to see characters that they love and recognise in this family?**

I think they're going to love this family, because it has so many different characters. The dad's a captain buzz kill kind of guy. He won't let you do anything, but Charlie and Roman want to do some fun stuff, and the mum just doesn't know what to do: 'should I go with my husband, or should I go with my kids?'

**He's such a big character...he's almost like the glue that puts them together. Is he? He's the one that makes them all have a good time, even the Dad.**

Yeah, he tries his best, and he'll get everyone up on their feet dancing or doing stuff like that. Just makes fun for the whole family to have a blast.

**It's got quite a difficult subject matter, doesn't it? But it's a lot about families, and sticking together, and getting through hard times together.**

Yeah, I want them to come on our adventure. Honestly, I want them to cry, but [laughs] I mean, that would be really good, but yeah, I want them to come on me and Finn's adventure. I want them to be literally with us.

**Laugh and cry and be along with the journey for them.**

Oh yeah. Then the one thing I hope they like is Charlie does a lot of jokes, and most of them I made up, and so did my mum. So, I hope they like my jokes.

## CLARE DUNNE – JULIE

Clare is well known for writing and starring in *Herself*, (Element/Amazon), directed by Phyllida Lloyd, which won numerous awards both for her writing and performance. She's also well known to Irish and international audiences as series lead Amanda in both seasons of the award-winning TV drama *Kin* (AMC+/Netflix/BBC), for which she twice won the IFTA for Best Lead Actress.

Clare recently appeared on screen as Sr. Carmel in *Small Things Like These* opposite Cillian Murphy, and as Dee in Eva Birthistle's directorial debut, *Kathleen is Here*. Clare is currently appearing in *The Cut* opposite Orlando Bloom. She most recently wrapped filming on *Miss Pirie and Miss Woods* directed by Sophie Heldman for Heimatfilm.

## Q&A WITH CLARE DUNNE

**Without giving too much away, could you give us any idea of what the film is about?**

*500 Miles* is sort of a chase movie, because it's about Julie and Dan's two sons on a kind of 'run-away moment' in their youth, and they're running away, weirdly, to Julie's father, their granddad in Dingle. Once Dan and Julie cop on that they've gone, they are on the road behind them. We flip back and forth between the lads and then us chasing them. Throughout the story, you start to uncover loads about this family who are like a lot of families, but also along the way, the young lads meet a cool character called 'Cáit' who's a busker, and she helps them finish the journey.

**What were your first impressions when you received the script? What drew you to the project?**

I'd say it's one of the funniest scripts I've read, in loads of ways, like really fun. There's lots of great one liners. There are really lovely moments in it between characters; they feel like very rich, full characters chatting to each other. And so, I'd say it just made my heart burst and it was a real page turner. I didn't see what was coming, and as I read it, I was absolutely blown away by the end of the film.

**There's a lot of banter I've noticed, like between Finn and Charlie – there's so much banter and cracking jokes even amidst these heart stopping and heart breaking moments.**

Yeah there's loads of banter and loads of quick wittiness between all these characters. You can see that in the kind of makeup of that family. That's what I love about it. That's why it's so well written. It's like they all have elements of each other within each other, like they're quite witty, full of banter, but Dan, her husband, has his own sort of Northern English wit. He's so funny, like Michael. I think that's how we all feel about the fact that

Morgan and Malcolm spent so long with these characters and creating this story based on the great book 'Charlie and Me.' They had a long time to marinate the characters together, but then they also cast pretty well. I know Malcolm a long time, and he's from Northern England, but has lived in Ireland a long time, and I just think he has a great handle on the Irish sense of humour.

**And how would you like describe your character, Julie?**

I feel like she's a really good adapter to life. I think she's a bit like, if you were going to pick an element, like water. She just started out with a very artistic heart, and went to study art and was very open and adventurous in her life. She didn't expect certain things to happen. To me, from playing her so far and from what happens in the story, I feel like she has a really big heart, and it's very connected to all the people in her community, her life, and her family. She lets that inform how she responds to the world, she lets that love inform that rather than it feel like a burden, if that makes sense? She appreciates the innate quality of people, her kids and in her dad and her mam. I think that's why she finds it heartbreaking when she misses people - she gets very attached to people. I call her an adapter, because I don't think she got to become the artist she thought she was going to be, but then rediscovers a way of having creativity and art through little things like baking, making cakes, playing with her kids, and just being open to other bits of her life; having a sense of colour, life and vibrancy.

**What's her relationship like with Dan, with the boys and her father, John?**

I think her relationship with Dan is so lovely, I think because they've had to grow up together, and they probably weren't together that long before they became pregnant. I think they became bonded in their journey, through that and then onwards to trying to get a house and get things together so that they could raise that first child. Then they probably went, 'let's have another one.' That to me, speaks of two people that maybe hoped they were doing okay at first, and then realised, "*Oh, God, I really do love you and I really want to do this with you.*" Then committed and had another child, then ended up on a whole other adventure with that child, and became closer and closer in that process. I think they're so close and so bonded with their kids as well that like when certain things happen, it means it's really, really hard for them, and they have to learn how to grow on a whole new level as we watch them through the film. She's really, really, *really* mad about her mother and father, and my feeling is that there seems to be a lot of dancing and singing and sort of wild banter between all of these family members all the time. Even though Julie is an only child, I feel like the house was full of craic. I feel like they played a lot of music. I feel like there were lots of random sessions. I'd say John and Molly had loads of great friends with their kids around a lot, and I just see them as a very spirited and maybe not a lot of money, but a lot of determined creativity and sort of d.i.y-ness in their life. I found that really easy to connect to. And yeah, as their life goes

on, I feel like Julie's so excited about the fact that her kids and her mom and dad connect great - like and they all get on. They're just very close, and it's really cute.

**It sounds like they have a precise, artistic side that kind of connects all as well.**

There's a warmth and tenderness. I do sometimes, what did John and Molly do before they retired to Dingle? I often sit there and just love imagining Julie when she was in school and coming into the house and her mom and dad being so expressive and innovative in how they did things. I feel like that's part of them.

**What do you think makes Charlie and Finn run away from home, and how does Julie react to that?**

I think what makes Finn and Charlie run away is that, clearly, things aren't great between Dan and Julie. The fact that they are so reactive to that spoke to me. I was like, okay, they're obviously a very tight family, and this actually shocks the kids that Dan and Julie could even possibly stay in separate houses for a few nights and it makes me feel worried for them when I'm reading it just as a reader. I think they're very bonded together. Initially, I think that's definitely what makes Finn and Charlie run away. They see the solution as 'okay, if we just get to John, granddad, he'll just cop everybody on - he'll bring everyone together.' John has this amazing innate talent for reminding everyone what it means to be alive and what really matters. He's the expert on how to seize the day; that's what it is. I think the lads know that he has this kind of superpower, and that it might remind Dan and Julie of what they have, or what they had, and that they can rekindle it.

**What makes Dingle so special to Julie and her family?**

There's just something about the small towns scattered along the west coast of Ireland, places like Galway or Dingle, that hold a kind of quiet magic. You could be from Dublin, or anywhere in Ireland, or even anywhere in the world, and find yourself in one of these towns on some random holiday. And somehow, almost inexplicably, you'll run into someone you haven't seen in ten years. They're strange, almost mystical places, where these unexpected crossroads seem to happen. Moments that make you pause, reflect on your life, and think, "*God that was kind of magical.*" There's this odd synchronicity there. And beyond that, they're just phenomenally beautiful - breathtaking really - especially at dawn or dusk. The landscape feels expansive, maybe because it looks out across the Atlantic Ocean. It's the kind of place steeped in fairy tales and folklore, where you can almost feel the presence of all the writers and artists who've ever come from or been drawn to Ireland. That's where someone like John might disappear to - off to finally become the artist he never had the chance to be. Dingle feels like a holiday town, sure, but there's more to it. There's this lingering sense of wonder, like the legend of Fungi the Dolphin - still alive at the time - which feels so whimsical and sweet, like something out of a schoolbook memory. It's funny how one animal became such a

beloved myth. But again, it's all part of the magic. This idea of chasing something elusive, something just out of reach. That's the feeling these places give you.

**What was it about the level of craft that went into making this from the costume design, makeup, and production design that may have helped you to get into the character?**

Well, the costume really helps you get into character. It's possibly a cliché that most actors say that, but I think when you have somebody like Leonie designing, I mean, she thinks about the colour of your sock like the woman is unreal. She is thinking through everything very deeply, and especially with a lot of timeline jumps, you are looking at incredibly detailed journeys of characters. I found it really amazing working with her as the first port of call when I came in. And then the hair girls - Orla has an incredibly gentle touch. She has this way of working with hair that makes you think, '*Oh, she's truly an artist.*' She's really something. And every day I come in, she'll find all these other little details to do in each day, in each moment, and in each timeline.

She's always looking for different textures, different little moments of storytelling. She wants you involved and collaborating. I find that really helpful. Then there's Sharon - she's amazing in makeup. She's really looked after the no makeup look when you're just in bits. As well as all those timelines and helping you look like you're 23 now, and then 29, and now you're 33. Managing and doing all this detailed stuff that I don't even understand, to be honest, on my face.

They're all very collaborative and really, really detailed, and I feel very lucky to be part of this team. There's also definitely things I wish I could take with me, but I can't. I can't take a hairstylist round with me forever, but I would if I could [*laughs*] Leonie did promise me the odd item including this jacket... which I want.

**What was it like for you to work with Morgan, the director?**

Yeah, really nice! I got to meet him briefly before we started filming, and I just chatted to him about his previous work. I watched some of his previous films and only a bit of one of his documentaries, but I'm going to be watching more over the next week. I was very moved by his work, because the script is very moving, and it's very much from the heart. I'd say his first 'tool' is his emotional intelligence. I think Morgan's very open and very in touch with what matters in life. If you consider any of his documentary work, I think you can see he's not afraid of facing things like death, your connection to people and family - even when it's difficult. These are similar things that I really care about; community and connection and keeping things alive. I think there's something about that in his stories. He's always gentle of touch with how he says things to you when working on a scene. I like that. It's really nice.

### **What have been the most memorable or the most enjoyable moments on the set?**

So far, the first thing that comes to mind is that I just laugh so much with Michael, like, the two of us just have the craic all the time on set. I think its because we had to do our first day together and suddenly be a married couple in our married years, and do a lot of talking. I just felt so at ease with him straight away. I just think he's a really, really great actor, and he's just cares about the work, and so do I. We're both looking for the same thing. We're looking for resonance and truth and connection as characters together.

So, I feel like one of my most prevailing memories of the start of this shoot is just dying laughing with Michael. I don't know why that's one of my most prevailing memories... but then there's dancing with Bill Nighy. He's a legend and he's been so amazing to work with. I remember him asking me to teach him how to do some traditional Irish dancing but I can't dance. I did a bit of Irish dancing when I was younger. I was teaching him very basic bits – but look, we improvised. It was grand. So I would say those two: Michael, making me laugh and dancing with Bill Nighy.

### **What was it like for you working with Bill, and the boys, Dexter and Roman?**

Bill Nighy is probably one of the most incredibly kind, humble and funniest person I've ever met. He just knows how to tell a good story - he's incredibly charming. I also thought he was very in tune with what you're giving him in a scene. He's very generous. With Dex and Rome, I think they have had more filming experience than me, so I feel like I'm trying to learn from them. Dex is a very special, open, beautiful child - he gives so much energy to a room, and he's a proper star. Then with Roman I was really excited to work because obviously very prolifically famous for his role and *'JoJo Rabbit'*. I think he's absolutely brilliant. One of my first moments on set when I was actually with him in a scene was one of the more intense moments. I just kept thinking *'Okay, this guy is the real deal.'* He's generous with his time, and off camera just so kind and full of chats - he's just really interested in people. I'm excited to see both of them as they keep going with their careers. I feel as though I've learned a lot by being around them.

And Maisie, oh my god that girl - she's so real, you know, she's so cool. It's really interesting getting to work with people who started working very young, it's the opposite to me and my experience, like me and Bill were talking about it – we wouldn't have been able to handle that when we 10, or when I was a teenager so working with, I feel like I can learn a lot from them. They're incredible, really special.

### **And what do you hope audiences will take away from this film?**

I hope they just feel like they've been on as big a journey as we all have in the journey of the film. I hope they really go with it, is what I hope. I hope by the end, they feel rinsed. I hope they laugh and cry loads.

## MICHAEL SOCHA - DAN

Michael Socha is an acclaimed English actor known for his raw charisma and versatility across film and television. Born in Derby in 1987, he trained at the Burton College performing arts course and quickly made an impression with early stage and screen work. He first gained widespread recognition with Shane Meadows' cult film *This is England* (2006), later reprising his role in the award-winning Channel 4 spin-off series *This is England '86, '88, and '90*. Socha has since built a reputation as one of Britain's most distinctive screen talents, starring in the supernatural drama *Being Human* as werewolf Tom McNair, and leading ABC's *Once Upon A Time In Wonderland* as the Knave of Hearts.

His career spans gritty independent cinema, major TV dramas, and international projects, consistently marked by authenticity and emotional depth. Socha remains a sought-after actor, balancing British independent film with high-profile television roles.

## Q&A WITH MICHAEL SOCHA

### **Give us an idea of what the film is about without giving anything away?**

*500 Miles* is about quite a dysfunctional family, especially with my own character. There's not all that much communication in the way of dealing with a tragedy. I suppose one of the children has got an idea and a calling to a spot where the family were a bit more functional and communicative; and then it turns into a bit of a road movie of catch and chase.

### **What were your first impressions when you read the script, what drew you to the project?**

I remember reading the script and just being heartbroken. My agent sent it me, and when I read it I said to my agent, 'Are they sure that I'm going to be alright to play this?'

But then sort of looking into it deeper, I see a lot of similarities with Dan. I mean, I've got children and thankfully I've never had to go through what Dan has – but I can sort of half imagine and delve into the imagination of a scenario where one of my children is not very well for. I thought it might be beautiful to play. Some scenes have been incredibly tough. I've had to put myself in a difficult headspace, walking off set imagining certain realities that are just...very painful. And I suppose that's part of the job. The script in itself is really funny and the connections between the families are intricate and complicated; but then its foundation is so loving and caring. Who else gets to process emotions like this as part of their job? We've all had those 'what if' thoughts, nightmares

we push away — but to sit in them, to fully feel them, and then to keep digging deeper... it's powerful. It's incredible.

**What was it like for you to play Dan? How would you describe Dan?**

I think Dan is a really caring and loving father to his kids. I think he utterly loves his kids, like many fathers do; but to have a kid that's from the off got quite a few health complications, he's always been sort of on top of it. He's got to make sure that his kids are alright, so he might be a little bit overprotective. As for his relationship with Julie, after reading the script both Claire and I came up with this idea that we probably met quite young. We decided to settle young. It's not that there's no love, but we may have been victims of circumstance, and we've just probably put a lot of care and attention into raising our kids, and one of the kids in particular- who's not very well- probably got most of the attention growing up. I think it's also a thing for Dan to deal with. At a certain point in the story he realises he needs to accept a few things.

**What's Dan's relationship with John?**

I think Dan is quite by the book - so I'm playing him like Dan maybe was a bit of a wild card back in the day. Since he's become a father, he's sort of a little bit overprotective due to the fact he understood where he went in life. Maybe he did - like we all do, or a few of us have done - live a certain life and understands the damage that those sort of things might have caused. As a result, he is a little bit overprotective and maybe overbearing- just ultra safe. Whereas John is just not. He's quite free flowing, so the characters are almost definitely opposites. I think there are a couple of clashes, not heavy clashes, but definitely differences of opinion and ways of doing things. By the end of the film, I think you're given both sides of their perspective.

**What do you think makes Finn and Charlie run away? How does Dan react to that?**

So, I think Finn hears an argument between Dan and Jules, and he's probably very aware of the fact that no one's really dealing with a certain event very well. Perhaps Finn in the back of his mind understands that he might have a way of bringing two warring parties together and breaking a silence. He's probably the most mature out of the family - he just took it upon himself to go and have a trip to Ireland, maybe knowing what the consequences will be if he does that, what's going to follow - and what does follow is something of a blessing.

**You mentioned Ireland, have you enjoyed filming there? What, do you think, makes the setting of Dingle so special?**

Yeah, I love filming in Ireland. I've never spent so much time in Dublin, which I'm happy about – I got to see it properly. I've done the Temple Bar thing, but my family are from Kerry - so when I first read the script actually- I was telling my Mum '*guess where I'm filming?*' because I originally thought I was going to be filming over in Kerry, but as it

turned out I was filming in Dublin. However, Dingle is really special to the family; they went on holiday there every year, and they had a beautiful relationship with granddad and grandma, and Charlie especially loved Fungi. I've heard it's a very beautiful place. The family go there a few times a year. It's the family setting. Everybody wants to go there.

### **What was it like for you to work with the director Morgan Matthews?**

Working with Morgan has been incredible. I remember talking to him before we started filming, and he actually reassured me a bit. I said something like, "I think Dan might be a bit of a div," and Morgan just said, "I don't agree." That's something I really admire about Morgan, he listens. Whether it's one of the adults or one of the kids, if you've got an idea, he'll take it on board and often say, "Yeah, let's give it a go." That kind of openness on a set makes a massive difference.

I explained why I felt that way, and Morgan sort of hit me with things that, at the time, I didn't fully understand. Then, once I properly read through the script, it started to click. Sometimes you get involved in a project and think; *'I need to do this because this story needs to be told.'* And sometimes you're prepared to play a certain type of character a certain way because of a story. Eventually we landed on a word we both felt worked — "flappy?" I think that was the word. We agreed Dan might be a bit 'flappy' now and then.

What really struck me, though, was how clear Morgan's vision was from the beginning. He already understood the emotional core of the story - that understanding really guided the whole process. It made me want to learn more about him, so I started watching his documentaries. And honestly, I thought if anyone truly understands what this kind of family might be going through, even just partially, it's Morgan.

The way he immerses himself in such heavy, dark topics in his work... he just gets it. I saw his documentary about his dad — that one really hit me. And then the one about soldiers who died in war and the families left behind... that absolutely floored me. That's when I thought, *'Yeah, if anyone knows how to handle a story like this, it's probably him.'* Unless you've lived through that kind of loss yourself, Morgan's probably as close as it gets.

### **Have there been any scenes you've found the most enjoyable to shoot? What would be your most memorable?**

I've always enjoyed the days at sea. Even though some of the scenes we shoot out there are pretty tough, emotionally heavy stuff; they're also some of the most memorable. On those days, there's always a specific scene to get through, often a really sad one. We all know where our heads need to be, both leading up to it and during it. But at the same time, there's room for a good laugh.

The cast I'm working with are not just incredibly good at what they do, they're also great fun to be around. And I need that. Personally, when I'm tapping into certain emotions or doing really intense scenes, I find that having a bit of levity around helps me. Too much pressure can actually get in the way of a good performance. So being able to laugh in between takes — that's really important to me.

Working with someone like Bill Nighy, who I've been a massive fan of for years, I had this expectation of who he might be, and then he turns out to be just a brilliant laugh. He's exceptional at what he does, but he's also genuinely funny. I keep telling him he's got this mischievous glint in his eye; it's like a little spark, this childlike twinkle when he clocks something or when we both notice something at the same time. Honestly, I love watching his face — he's got this wonderful, playful sense of humour that's such a relief in the middle of what can be a really emotionally intense job.

### **And what was it like working with other fellow cast mates?**

Honestly, I've been so impressed. Roman is incredibly mature for his age, like 17 going on 45. He's sharp, funny, and has this kind of worldly wisdom that really stands out. And Dex just knows his way around a set. He's throwing out suggestions that show a real understanding of the work, like someone who's been doing this for years. The amazing thing is, he feels confident enough to speak up, which is brilliant. I can't imagine myself at 10 years old asking, "*Can we try it like this?*" Fair play to him; he feels something, and he goes for it, asks the director, and thankfully, Morgan is the kind of director who welcomes that

And Clare, she's a master of her craft. Just incredible to watch and work with. Everyone on this job brings something special, and they're all a real laugh too. It's made the whole experience something to genuinely look forward to each day. There's a saying that goes, if you can't spot the dick on set, it's probably you. So... maybe I'm the dick? We'll see what the others say. But honestly, it's been an absolute joy working with every single one of them.

### **What do you hope audiences will take away from this film?**

I think the audience will find something in the story that feels real; something they can connect to. Each character has a truth to them, something that I reckon most people will be able to relate to, even if it's in a small way. Maybe they've felt the same emotions or been through a similar situation. At its heart, it's a story about a family that's disconnected, and maybe trying to find their way back to each other. I think that's something a lot of families have experienced. I know mine has. There've been times when I haven't spoken to certain family members for a while, and when we finally did reconnect, it was like, 'Thank God we got there in the end.' Sure, there might have been turbulence before, but eventually, we all end up in the same room, talking the same old nonsense and feeling glad we made it through. So yeah, I think people will relate to that.

The sense of distance, the pain that can come with that, and the hope of finding your way back. As cliché as it might sound, I think it'll resonate. It taps into something very human.

## MAISIE WILLIAMS

Maisie Williams received critical acclaim and two Emmy nominations for her role as Arya Stark in the smash hit *Game Of Thrones* on HBO, which released its eighth and final season in April 2019.

She most recently starred as *Catherine Dior* in the Apple TV+ series *The New Look* alongside Ben Mendelsohn and Juliette Binoche, in Samir Oliveros' feature *The Luckiest Man in America* opposite Walton Goggins and Paul Walter Hauser, as well as Danny Boyle's FX limited series *Pistol* portraying the punk icon Jordan. Williams next stars opposite Nicole Kidman and Sandra Bullock in *Practical Magic 2*.

## Q&A WITH MAISIE WILLIAMS

**Can you please introduce yourself and your character? Please give us an idea of what the film is about?**

500 Miles is the story of two brothers, Finn and Charlie, who run away from home after overhearing that their parents are getting divorced - and worse, that they're going to be separated. They're determined to stay together, so they set off on an adventure to reach their grandfather's house in Dingle. Along the way, they meet my character, Cáit Brady, who helps them out of a tough situation and plays a key role in getting Finn out of a spot of bother.

**And could you tell us about is it Cáit? After her first encounter with Finn and Charlie what made her decide to help them?**

Cáit meets Finn and Charlie while they're on the train, and she's busking her way back over the Irish Sea. And the two boys are very, very sweet and don't have a lot on them. I think she decides to help Finn perhaps she's been doing this journey quite a lot throughout her teenage years; I think that she sees a lot of herself in him, and sees him like a little brother that she wants to help out.

**What were your first impressions of the script? What drew you to the project?**

It's such an interesting project, because I think a lot of the draw was landing kind of in the final few pages. But I think what drew me to it was how brilliantly the characters were written, I found it to be really humorous and well thought out people. It's the kind of movie that as a young adult I would have watched, or even as a kid, and it just kind of really brought back a lot of nostalgia, of summer holidays with extended family and so on. It's a beautiful, heart warming story.

**What has it been like, for you to play an Irish character - do you have any special connection to Ireland?**

Everywhere we've shot has been incredibly beautiful, and the crew has been amazing - especially with helping me with the accent. It can be a lot of pressure to do an accent in front of people who naturally speak that way, but everyone's been so supportive and encouraging. I've really enjoyed playing an Irish character in this film. I've spent a lot of time in Ireland and even worked on a film here before with an Irish accent, so it's something I find fun and rewarding. What I love most about playing an Irish character isn't just the accent, but the warmth it brings to the character as a whole. Being here, surrounded by such a caring and considerate culture, I find those qualities coming out more in my performance - and even in myself. This has definitely been a tough shoot. Every day involved some kind of travel - by boat, train, car, or even on horseback - so it's been physically demanding and full of logistical challenges. It's not like shooting a simple dinner table scene. But I've really admired everyone's determination and energy to just get on with it and keep moving. It's been incredibly inspiring, and overall, I've loved the experience - being here, being part of this story, and bringing this character to life.

**Tell us a bit about your makeup, hair and design. How do you think that helped you getting into the character?**

I've enjoyed working with the hair, makeup, and costume team. Building a character often starts there. With Cáit's look, all the departments worked in harmony to create someone who feels real and lived in. Once I was fully ready from head to toe, I felt like I truly found the character - sometimes that takes longer. The work everyone has done is impressive.

**What has it like for you to work with Morgan? What makes him so suited to tell this story?**

I loved working with Morgan on this movie. He has a keen eye for making films that build you up and break you down. I was familiar with his work before, and in practice, he's very specific about what he wants - but also open to discovery until you show him something. It's a very collaborative process. You can offer an idea, and it helps shape his vision. Then he'll guide you—this is closer, or that's further away—and I really like that. Everyone has a different process, but with Morgan, I've had a lot of freedom to contribute, whether it's improvised lines or just the energy of a scene. I've felt like I was in safe, capable hands, and that he makes sure everyone's aligned and everything comes together. You feel like an individual, but also part of a larger vision—which is a great feeling, especially in *'Half Winter'*. There's a lot of jumping back and forward in time, but I didn't have to stay too aware of all that. Watching his focus and how he manages it all gives me complete confidence that the film is in very safe hands.

**And how did you find working with the cast so far?**

I've really loved working with Roman Griffin Davis. He's an incredible talent and so much fun to be around. This has been a pretty demanding shoot, and Roman's character has a deeply emotional journey, but every day he shows up with such good humour - it really helps lighten the tougher moments on set. I've also had the chance to work with the wonderful Bill Nighy, who's been an idol of mine for as long as I can remember - even before I ever thought about becoming an actor. He has this incredible presence, and being around him has been uplifting for both me and Roman. He's so generous with his time, doing such beautiful work - and also tackling an Irish accent, which has been fun to share and talk about, since neither of us is from here. Everyone is bringing something special to this project, and I honestly can't wait to see it all come together. Watching it unfold in real life has already been amazing.

**What has been your most memorable or enjoyable scene/moment?**

My favourite day on this film happened kind of by happy accident. It was raining sideways, and this scene was supposed to be shot outside. It's the moment where they've put diesel in the petrol car, and it's broken down. Since the weather was so bad, we had to shoot the scene inside the car instead. That change brought a whole new energy. We had to break the scene into smaller chunks, which added a humour I really enjoyed playing. I haven't done a lot of lighter, more comical moments before, but these on-the-fly adjustments ended up making this one of my favourite scenes I've ever shot—I still think about it now. Sometimes, changes in weather or plans can completely transform a scene and bring out something unexpected. It's a detail that wouldn't be written in the script — like how awkward hopping in and out of the car can be—but those moments of silence and pause build a beautiful energy in the film. It can be heartbreaking, but also very touching.

**What do you hope audiences will enjoy the most when watching this story?**

I really hope that people enjoy all of the different dynamics between the characters in this film. I think that it's such an important movie about families, and families at their best, but families at their absolute worst too. And I think that regardless of how the themes of the story will impact people, I hope overall audiences come away from this film feeling joy.

## THE SCREENWRITER - MALCOLM CAMPBELL

Malcolm Campbell is an award-winning screenwriter, whose credits include the acclaimed feature films, *What Richard Did* and *Herself*. He created and wrote C4's hit TV drama series *Ackley Bridge*, now in its fifth season, and he has written for some of the UK's most popular dramas, including *Shameless* and *Skins*.

### Q&A WITH MALCOLM CAMPBELL

#### **Could you give us an idea of what this film is about?**

So, the film is about two brothers who run away from home. Home is a tricky place at the moment, and they run to the west of Ireland, where their granddad lives. It's a place of tragic memories for the family, and they hope that by running to granddad, he's going to solve all the problems, and it turns out, he has caused some of the problems.

#### **How did you become involved in the production, and what was it about the story that appealed to you?**

It kind of resonated on a really emotional level for me, because David Thompson, the producer, sent me the book on which it's based [Charlie and Me]. It features this kind of live wire character, Charlie, who was born very prematurely. David had remembered that I'd recently had a child who was born very prematurely, and I'd written about it. So he said, you know, you might connect with this. I remember sitting on a plane reading the book in manuscript form, and I was just completely floored. The idea of finding a way of getting this story on screen was interesting to me, I felt it could be very moving and that was five years ago. So, it's taken a while and we've changed a lot. The original story was about two boys running away from home in the north of England and heading down to Cornwall – it didn't have a grandfather character. We decided to scale it up and relocate it to Ireland, where I live and know well. That allowed us to re-imagine the scenes, many of which we created from scratch. We turned it into more of a road movie and really went all out - planes, trains, bikes, automobiles - you name it. Part of my role was to bring that new vision to life.

#### **What were the key creative conversations about this project that went into bringing this story in life?**

I think when we decided to relocate it, it just gave us a bit more freedom. It felt more like a movie. It introduced more jeopardy for the two brothers. He has to kind of find help from somebody along the way, and he is fortunate that he connects with Kate, who's the busker that he meets. He loses his brother, Charlie, and so she helps him find him. So he has a companion that helps him over the mid to later point of the story. I think this

makes it become more emotional for him. The closer they get to Dingle, he becomes more traumatised, and the memories come flooding back. Over the course of the story we discover what they're running from is something that he's running to as well. On some kind of subconscious level, he's trying to resolve something and trying to unite his family, yet, runs to the place where the family imploded.

### **Tell us about Finn and Charlie – what makes their bond so special?**

I think the bond between Finn and Charlie is really special. Finn was there when Charlie was born, and he's always been very protective of him. He loves him deeply. The two of them are complete opposites - Charlie is a livewire, full of energy and chaos, while Finn is more introspective and emotionally grounded. Finn has this rich inner life, which we explore through his artwork, his sense of humour, and his deep connection to both the landscape and his family. Charlie, on the other hand, is funny, creative, and a total handful. Charlie is completely celebrated in their family. Finn doesn't seek the spotlight - he's content letting Charlie shine. I think a big part of that comes from knowing what Charlie went through when he was born, and the struggles the whole family faced during that time. Charlie is like a light - he burns brightly in Finn's life. That's why losing Charlie during their journey hits Finn so hard. It becomes a turning point for him: what is he going to do about it? How does he resolve that loss? Finn overhears his parents breaking up at the start, and the idea that the boys could be separated, mum will take Finn, and dad will take Charlie. There's no way Finn's going to let that happen. So he runs away to try and find a solution. That's the heart of it: this is Finn's quest to keep his family together.

### **What would you say is the relationship like with Grandfather John?**

John's a character that we've created, we wanted to make John larger than life so you can see the creative part of Finn and that kind of interior world that goes on. But also, you know, he's an ebullient character who's effervescent, and you see Charlie there. So you can kind of see the two boys have descended from this man who burns very brightly, and who they love deeply.

### **Why Dingle? What makes that place so special for the boys?**

Well, it's where they have been visiting. The granddad has retired there with Grandma Molly, and they've visited on numerous family holidays, and it's just a place where they have treasured memories, where family times were warm and lovely and golden, and it was the best version of their family before everything went wrong.

### **And what was the process of location scouting like?**

Ireland has been my home for 16 years, and I love it here. When I was writing the story, I had a clear vision of where the characters would go and how they'd get there. I put that down on the page, and the team has been incredibly respectful in trying to find those

exact locations - or ones very close to them. We've been fortunate. The locations team has found some truly stunning places, including spots that aren't usually accessible for filming. It's been a privilege to shoot in those areas. Special credit goes to Conor, our head of locations, who's done outstanding work.

**Following on from that - could you tell us a little bit about the casting process?**

When it came to casting, we were very fortunate in that Bill Nighy read the script and really responded to it, and we were delighted with that. Obviously we're all big fans of him, so we were thrilled that he really connected with the character and the story. Also he has Irish heritage, and recently got an Irish passport, so I think this that lent itself to his intrigue about the film and whether he could play as Irish as well. I think having someone like Bill attached helps, because that attracts other talent as well. I wasn't personally involved in these conversations, but Morgan - the director - was the one leading, and he had very clear ideas about the kind of people he wanted around; who the boys would be, and crucially, who mom and dad were going to be as well.

**Where there any creative challenges that came along with the casting?**

I think the main challenge was finding Charlie and we went wide with that. We were very fortunate in that we had Louise Kiely casting from Ireland here who I've worked with a couple of times before. She saw hundreds of kids. It was interesting because Dexter, who we cast as Charlie, was in the first group that we saw, and he's an incredible young actor and you just want to watch him. You don't care what he's saying. You just want to watch him. I think its counter to what I do as a script writer, because you're so careful about what you write, but actually, it's really important you just want to spend time with these young people. Finn doesn't actually say that much but both Roman and Dexter have faces that you just want to look at and spend time with. We've been very lucky to get them.

**And regarding Cáit's character, what was it like to find her character?**

I'm very fond of the character Cáit. We spent a lot of time discussing who she is, how she feels, and how she should look. When Maisie Williams' name came up, we knew from her previous work that she had the right energy and intelligence. She's an unselfconscious actor, which was exactly what we wanted. Kate is in her early twenties and a bit lost, and we felt Maisie could capture that while still bringing a protective quality. She's like an older sister to Finn at a pivotal moment in his life. Maisie naturally radiates that kind of energy - it just feels like her.

**Could we talk about working with the director, and how did you bring the film to life with Morgan?**

We were very lucky to have Morgan involved from the very beginning—before I started writing or we even discussed adapting the novel. He connected with the material right

away. He has two young children, and I have slightly older ones, so as fathers, the story resonated with both of us. We got on well from the start and still do—he's a good friend and an exceptional collaborator. Morgan is respectful of my creative choices but also clear and confident about what he wants. Watching him on set has been amazing. He's fantastic with the cast, works well with the crew, and stays focused, even under pressure. His background in documentary filmmaking really shows — he thinks on his feet, works quickly, and makes smart decisions. That mindset has been invaluable, especially given the scale of what we've attempted on a relatively low budget: boats, horses, kids, water, stunts, multiple locations. He never once asked to scale anything back. His commitment has been unwavering. As a writer, you imagine the film in your head — it feels like a dream. Seeing that dream come to life has been an incredible experience.

**Tell us about your experience working with the director of photography, Tom Comerford?**

I know Tom's work well—he was the DP on *Herself*, the last film I worked on, which was also an Irish production. Like Morgan, Tom is very light on his feet. He's quiet but has a clear, singular vision for what he wants to achieve. His images are beautiful. *Herself* was an emotional story, and Tom's cinematography allowed us to get close to the characters while still giving them space. There's sensitivity in the way he frames shots—he knows when to pull the camera in and when to let the moment breathe. He's incredibly talented.

**Were there any kind of particular scenes or moments that were particularly challenging for you during the writing process?**

Without giving too much away, there's a scene where the parents - who are on the verge of splitting up - begin to realize what they've lost. Their son has run away, and they're in a car, quietly reflecting. It's a simple scene, but powerful. Memories of how things used to be come flooding back as they recount what the boys were like before everything went wrong. I had a specific tone in mind - something that carried a touch of lightness, but also allowed space for emotional breakdown and the recognition of loss. I knew the scene was working when it made me cry, and that doesn't happen often. There was one line in particular that hit me, and it's stayed in every draft since.

**What do you think audiences are going to enjoy most of this film?**

I hope that the audience will enjoy spending time with this family. Obviously, at the start of the film, the family is breaking up, but we know in the flashback scenes that this family has so much promise and potential. There's so much love there. So, it's obviously taken something huge to have kind of dismantled them. I hope that finding out what that is will keep them interested, and they'll be rooting for the characters. They'll be rooting

for Finn and Charlie to find granddad, and they'll be rooting for the family to possibly reunited.

## PRODCUTION COMPANY – NEW ORIGIN

New Origin is the new entity established by producers David Thompson, Alex Gordon and Keren Misgav Ristvedt, to take the legacy of Origin Pictures into the future. Origin was founded by multiple BAFTA, Golden Globe and Emmy-winning producer David Thompson, having run BBC Films for over 10 years. David has produced and exec-produced over 100 films and TV dramas, many of which have garnered Academy Awards, Golden Globes and numerous international prizes, including *Billy Elliot*, *Dirty Pretty Things*, *Notes on a Scandal*, *Revolutionary Road*, *Eastern Promises* and *An Education*. Origin Pictures have produced a wide range of critically and commercially successful films and TV dramas. From major motion pictures *Mandela*, starring Idris Elba, and *Woman in Gold*, starring Helen Mirren and Ryan Reynolds (which was the highest-grossing independent film in the US of its year) – to much-loved British indies like *What we did on our Holiday*, starring Billy Connolly, David Tennant and Rosamund Pike, and *X + Y*, starring Asa Butterfield and Sally Hawkins. On the TV side Origin has produced several BBC dramas including Bafta nominated shows *Death Comes to Pemberley* and *The Crimson Petal and the White*, and *Catherine the Great* starring Helen Mirren for HBO and Sky. *500 Miles* is New Origin's first production, and they have a wide slate of ambitious projects in development with a range of broadcasters and studios.

## PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

We believe, above all, movie-goers want to be made to feel something when going to the cinema. A good film should move you, offering a reflection of the human experience to chew on, whatever form or genre it comes in.

When we came across Mark Lowery's prize winning novel, we felt the story had the special quality to do so in spades. The book and its deft adaptation by Malcolm Campbell, have had any who has read them moved from laughter to tears. A road trip following a down-to-earth family facing up to life's great challenges, it's full of heart, humour and thrills, and packs an enormous emotional punch. We were excited by the opportunity to do that all too rare thing - offer a movie a family can watch, enjoy and bond over all together. And share a meaningful experience. Whether you're a parent, grandparent or child, in there's something in it for everyone.

With the talents of Morgan Matthews a dream cast lead by Bill Nighy, Roman Griffin Davis, Maisie Williams, and a huge performance from young Dexter Sol Ansell, we hope to deliver an unforgettable movie experience. One that will have audiences leaving the cinema hugging their loved ones and thinking about what's really important to them in life.

## **PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY – DAVID THOMPSON**

Producer David Thompson has received multiple awards including three BAFTAs, three Golden Globes and two Emmys. As Head of BBC Films, David produced and executive-produced over 150 films and TV dramas, many of which have garnered Academy Awards, Golden Globes and numerous other international prizes. These include *Billy Elliot*, *Iris*, *My Summer of Love*, *Dirty Pretty Things*, *Notes on a Scandal*, *Revolutionary Road*, *Eastern Promises* and *An Education*. In 2008 Thompson left BBC to set up film and television production company Origin Pictures, where he has produced films including *Mandela*, *Woman in Gold*, *The Crimson Petal and the White*, *Catherine The Great* and *Hope Gap*.

## **PRODCUTION COMPANY – PORT PICTURES**

Founded by acclaimed producer Martina Niland, Port Pictures is an exciting and innovative production company based in Ireland. Martina is a well-established producer with over twenty years' experience in the industry and has produced a vast and impressive number of critically acclaimed film & television projects.

Among Martina's most successful productions are Academy Award winning *Once* (2007) and Golden Globe nominated *Sing Street* (2016), both by award-winning Writer/Director John Carney.

Other producing titles include *Pavee Lackeen*, which premiered at The Venice Film Festival, *Wild Mountain Thyme*, starring Jamie Dornan and Emily Blunt, the television adaptation of Graham Norton's best-selling novel,  *Holding*, for ITV Studios, *Four Mothers*, the Audience Award winner at the 2024 London Film Festival, *Four Letters Of Love*, a film based on the best-selling novel by Niall Williams and starring Pierce Brosnan, Helena Bonham Carter and Gabriel Byrne.

Currently in development are *The Good People* with award-winning Australian company Aquarius Films and based on the acclaimed novel of the same name by Hannah Kent, the inspiring feature film, *Ethel*, helmed by acclaimed Irish director Aisling Walsh (*Maudie*) and the comedy/drama *The Blue Girl* to be directed by Gurinder Chadha (*Bend It Like Beckham*).

## **PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY – MARTINA NILAND**

Martina Niland is an Irish producer with over twenty years' experience in the industry. As the founder of Port Pictures, she has produced projects including the Academy Award-winner *Once*, directed by John Carney, the Golden Globe-nominated *Sing Street*, and the acclaimed TV adaptation of Graham Norton's novel  *Holding* for ITV.

## PRODCUTION COMPANY – MINNOW FILMS

Founded in 2006 by BAFTA-winning film maker Morgan Matthews, Minnow Films is a London-based independent production company, internationally recognised for producing bold, thought-provoking, and sensitively told films. Over nearly two decades, the company has become one of the UK's leading independent producers, with Minnow productions winning 14 BAFTAs, 12 Royal Television Society Awards, and numerous other international prizes.

Minnow creates landmark work across both scripted and non-scripted filmmaking, consistently tackling difficult and deeply human subjects with care and originality. Minnow's 2008 film *The Fallen* — a double BAFTA-winning three-hour epic commemorating every British serviceman who died in Iraq and Afghanistan — was described by the BBC as the most ambitious single documentary it had ever commissioned. Following this in 2010, Minnow produced *Scenes from a Teenage Killing*, which examined a year of youth violence in the UK, filming with grieving families affected by sudden and violent loss. Other critically acclaimed and award-winning films include: *Damilola, Our Loved Boy* (BBC) — a four-time BAFTA-winning scripted drama about the murder of London schoolboy Damilola Taylor; *Grenfell* (BBC) — winner of the 2017 BAFTA for Best Factual Director; BAFTA-winning BBC series *The Detectives* (BBC) - following high-profile police investigations in Manchester: *The Last Survivors* (BBC/PBS) — a double BAFTA-winning feature documentary about the final generation of Holocaust survivors; *War in the Blood* (BBC) — an RTS-winning feature documentary on pioneering cancer treatment; *How To Die: Simon's Choice* (BBC) — BAFTA-nominated for its sensitive portrayal of assisted dying; *Williams* — a double BIFA-nominated theatrically released feature documentary about the Williams Formula 1 team; *Little Richard: The King and Queen of Rock 'N Roll* (BBC/PBS), and *The Mystery of DB Cooper* (HBO), a docu-drama exploring America's most infamous unsolved hijacking case. Minnow's feature documentary *Atomic People* (BBC) — exploring the lives of survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — won a BAFTA in 2025, adding to the company's growing legacy of powerful, globally resonant storytelling.

Minnow is also a global producer in premium factual entertainment, producing some of Netflix's most successful documentaries. *Ashley Madison: Sex, Lies & Scandal* reached number one in both the US and UK and charted in the top ten across 54 countries. Other Netflix successes include *Jerry Springer: Fights, Camera, Action*; *Trust No One: The Hunt For The Crypto King*; the award-winning *Bad Boy Billionaires*, and *Crime Stories: India detective* (a revealing look inside homicide investigations in Bangalore).

# **CONTACT**

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