



OFFICIAL SELECTION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF
'JOHNNY MAD DOG'

JOE COLE

A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN

BASED ON THE INCREDIBLE TRUE STORY

MERIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT AND SYMBOLIC EXCHANGE PRESENT A SENORITA FILMS PRODUCTION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH INDOCHINA PRODUCTIONS AND HANWAY FILMS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF CANAL PLUS
& CINE PLUS A FILM BY JEAN-STEPHANE SAUWAIRE "A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN" STARRING JOE COLE
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID UNGARO, AFC SOUND COORDINATOR & FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER DAVID ISMALONE
PRODUCTION DESIGN CHAIYAN CHUNSUTTIVAT COSTUME DESIGN LUPT UTAMA SOUND CYRIL HOLTZ,
NASSIM EL MOUNABBIH, SEVERIN FAVRIAU EDITOR MARC BOUCROT MUSIC NICOLAS BECKER
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS JEAN-CLAUDE SEYS, CHRISTIAN BAUMARD, ALAIN KAPPALE, FIGO LI, RUY ESCHENASY,
JOE PIRRO, MARIE-CABRIELLE STEVART LINE PRODUCER AIR NA SONGKHA EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JAMES SCHAMUS,
JENNIFER DONG, WOODY MILL, PETER WATSON PRODUCED BY RITA DAGHER PRODUCERS NICHOLAS SIMON PEGA,
ROY BOULTER, SOL PAPADOPOULOS SCREENPLAY BY JONATHAN HIRSCHBEIN, NICK SALTRESE
DIRECTED BY JEAN-STEPHANE SAUWAIRE



Symbolic Exchange

SENORITA
FILMS

HanWay
FILMS

CANAL+

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FESTIVAL DE CANNES

MERIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT and SYMBOLIC EXCHANGE present
A SENORITA FILMS production
In association with INDOCHINA PRODUCTIONS and HANWAY FILMS

A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN

A FILM BY
JEAN-STÉPHANE SAUVAIRE

STARRING
JOE COLE



Running time 117 MN – format 2.35 – sound 5.1
English/Thai with English & French subtitles

CANNES SCREENINGS

MIDNIGHT SCREENING FRIDAY MAY 19 - 00.30 AM – GRAND THEATRE LUMIÈRE
PRESS SCREENING – SAT MAY 20 – 11AM – SALLE BUNUEL
SÉANCE DU LENDEMAIN – SAT MAY 20 – 10PM – SALLE DU SOIXANTIÈME

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SYNOPSIS

A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN is the remarkable true story of Billy Moore, a young English boxer incarcerated for 3 years in one of Thailand's most notorious prisons. He is quickly thrown into a world of drugs and gang violence, but when the prison authorities allow him to take part in the Muay Thai boxing tournaments, Billy realizes that this is his only hope for survival.





DIRECTOR'S Q&A

What attracted you to A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN?

Firstly, the fact that it was a true story, the authenticity, Thailand, boxing, the prison world and above all, Billy Moore's character, fascinating in his contradictions, in his inner conflicts, his addiction and in all his complexity. It was Rita Dagher who first spoke to me about this project and offered me the screenplay that she was producing with Hurricane Films. I then read the book (*A Prayer Before Dawn: A Nightmare in Thailand*) which is Billy's story, from his childhood to his release from prison. After that, I met Billy in Liverpool and was instantly drawn to him. He is extremely sensitive despite the extreme violence that seems to inhabit him.

To what extent was Billy Moore involved in the film?

He was very involved in the script writing, but he also gave us a lot of freedom. He was a point of reference when we were stuck. Johnny Hirschbein (the screenwriter) and I often called Billy while we were writing to ask him how he had reacted in such or such a situation. His input was fascinating as it accentuated the authenticity that I was looking for and allowed me to distance myself from a pure genre film.

Above all, his experience allowed us to tell the story of how a man who finds himself alone, and a foreigner in a Thai prison, an extreme environment in which he doesn't fully understand the codes, rules or even the language, and how boxing helps him to evolve and change.

In one scene, Billy Moore, who is still imprisoned, manages to escape from a hospital room and wander around Bangkok. Did this really happen?

This may seem completely surreal, but it actually happened. I asked myself the same question as I was reading the book. I then talked about this with Billy as it's contrary to what you might write in a film. He did indeed escape with his feet chained, without really knowing where to go, he briefly thought about crossing the border into Cambodia and becoming a fugitive but as he walked, he couldn't stop thinking about how he would manage to remove his chains. Finally, he returned to the hospital. He preferred to serve his sentence than to become a fugitive. Billy was initially sentenced to three years and served his sentence first in Chiang Mia in the north of Thailand where he joined the boxing club, then in Klong Prem in Bangkok. He was incarcerated for two years before finishing his final year's sentence in England, which is a short sentence compared to most convictions in Thailand. Convictions for drug charges are often a lot longer. He was in fact convicted for handling stolen goods and firearms, which is strictly forbidden in Thailand, and suspicion of drug possession. If he had been carrying drugs, those red pills of methamphetamines known in Asia as "Ya ba" the "drug that makes you crazy", he would have been sentenced to twenty years or more.



You never distance yourself from Billy Moore's point of view and you try to convey his emotional states by using simple cinematic techniques. How did you work this subjectivity?

I am interested in immersion in film. Firstly, as a spectator but also as a director. To live a film as an experience. From the start, I imagined a film experienced in the first person. I wanted the audience to share Billy Moore's point of view, to discover this prison through the prism of his eyes, to feel through him what it's like to be in a ring, the sensations you can experience when you have taken drugs, what it means to be alone like him in an initially hostile environment. The entire first part of the film, where information is given to us in a brutal way, tries to recreate Billy's mental chaos, heightened by the use of narcotics. I was interested in visually translating the idea of Billy's internal demons, to experience the film at his own pace. As well as the image and sound which contribute to this mental state and help us to grasp what the character does and doesn't understand. I felt that the documentary dimension which consisted of working with non-professional actors helped this sense of total immersion.

I wanted the « spectator » to become "active" in a sense, to not just view the film with a certain distance, as entertainment, but to feel things from the boxer's, the prisoner's point of view, to live his addiction, in a visceral and organic way. It's this reality that I tried to share and make the audience endure in an intimate way.

Technically, we filmed almost the entire film in sequence-shots even though when editing, we cut within the shots. I wanted to work on the scenes in real time, to find a rhythmic homogeneity between the actor and camera, so that Joe Cole could be in a constant immersion and so that the audience could experience exhaustion, effort and sometimes suffering, through him. As we were filming in HD, and mostly with a hand-held camera, we could shoot ten-minute takes and give the actors real freedom. So they could let themselves go, to "live" or "endure" the situations rather than "act" them. It was also important for me from the start to film all the boxing matches and fights in a realistic way. Instead of cutting, I wanted to choreograph the fights to film them in their entirety. The fight that occurs in the middle of the film was filmed in one sequence-shot, close to Billy, to try and be in his body, his head, to share his adrenaline and his fear. Like something both physical and mental.





With a specific work on sound too...

The work on sound in post-production focused on telling the story in the first person, once again to be as close to Billy as possible, right up to his ever-present breathing, which encouraged a more intimate relationship with the character. I wanted to extend the audio experience of JOHNNY MAD DOG or to approach sound in a sensory way. When at war, the senses are instantly heightened and we hear everything precisely, more intensely, almost in a primal way. This seemed to apply to the prisoners, in constant danger and always alert, or to the way a boxer may perceive sound in the ring, motivated by his fear and adrenaline. I was trying to recreate a sound scale, not necessarily a realistic one but a symbolic and mental one. Hence an important work on sound design while trying to maintain a realistic and raw sound material.

How did the shoot unfold?

We shot the film with a very small European team: cinematographer David Ungaro, sound engineer Nassim El Mounabbih, coach Karine Nuris, Joe Cole's makeup artist Stacey Holman and Bangkok based fight choreographer David Ismalone. The rest of the team were all Thai. I wanted to keep in mind this idea of working with a small and flexible team to allow the actors to work freely.



How did Joe Cole experience the shoot?

Before we began filming, I wanted to introduce him to Billy Moore in Liverpool, for him to meet his family, his friends, to work from the very roots of the character. They really bonded and exchanged views about the character on a regular basis. Then Joe came to Thailand to train in different boxing camps before meeting the actors with whom we had rehearsed beforehand.

I think filming was a powerful experience for him, both physically and emotionally intense. It lasted thirty days and almost every day, Joe had a fight scene. What was impressive for him at first, was to find himself alone alongside non-professional Thai actors who weren't cheating and who were there to share their experience, their past, almost like something therapeutic; this otherness and this interaction challenged his own acting. Joe had to adapt and lay bare too. An actor can tend to hide behind his character. Here he had to give a part of himself emotionally and physically too. The other actors had their prisoner bodies, ready and tattooed or boxers' bodies trained for fights whereas he had to build himself a body to immerse himself in his boxer's character. He had to train for months to make it into an armour, to protect himself. He knew that

from the first day filming in the prison, he would have to be confronted to something tough and physical. Joe had some knowledge of boxing but not Thai boxing. He worked intensively with the help of David Ismalone to be able to fight these champions and to have this bestiality while keeping his vulnerability.



Was Joe Cole the only professional actor?

Yes aside from Vithaya Pansringarm who plays the warden in *ONLY GOD FORGIVES* by Nicolas Winding Refn and who had caught my eye. All the other Thai actors were not only non-professional, but most importantly, they were ex-prisoners and boxing champions. Most of them had been incarcerated for murder or drug possession having served 10 to 20 year sentences and some had just been released. I used their personal experiences to re-write the screenplay. They are the guarantors of the film's authenticity. The casting took me over a year in Bangkok so we saw each other regularly and built a mutual trust. I interviewed the real protagonists, immersed myself in their stories, their lives, their memories, to understand their journeys. I photographed their faces, their scars, their tattoos and listened to their voices. When we were rehearsing before filming, I asked the ex "samurai" prisoners to show us what happens when a new prisoner is brought to a cell; the intimidation, humiliation, rape, the rituals of life in a Thai prison. I wanted to convey truthfully and without judgment this inherent violence of the rite of passage for new prisoners.

Moreover, Thai prisons are mostly renowned for being overcrowded, implying human promiscuity. How can one live decently locked up in a cell with 100 other inmates?

Among the Thai actors Vithaya was the only one who spoke English. With the others everything went through a translator which was sometimes frustrating for me and could have been problematic, however this language barrier interested me for the film. I spent a long time asking myself how they would be able to recite dialogues when they didn't speak the language. I finally realised that it would be more compelling if they communicated beyond words. This was in line with the film which is first and foremost physical, depicting the confrontation of bodies rather than verbal jousting. The first day on set with Joe Cole he faced the Thai actors and had to try and communicate with them, to tell a story with only gestures. They had to find a common ground and understand each other without speaking the same language.

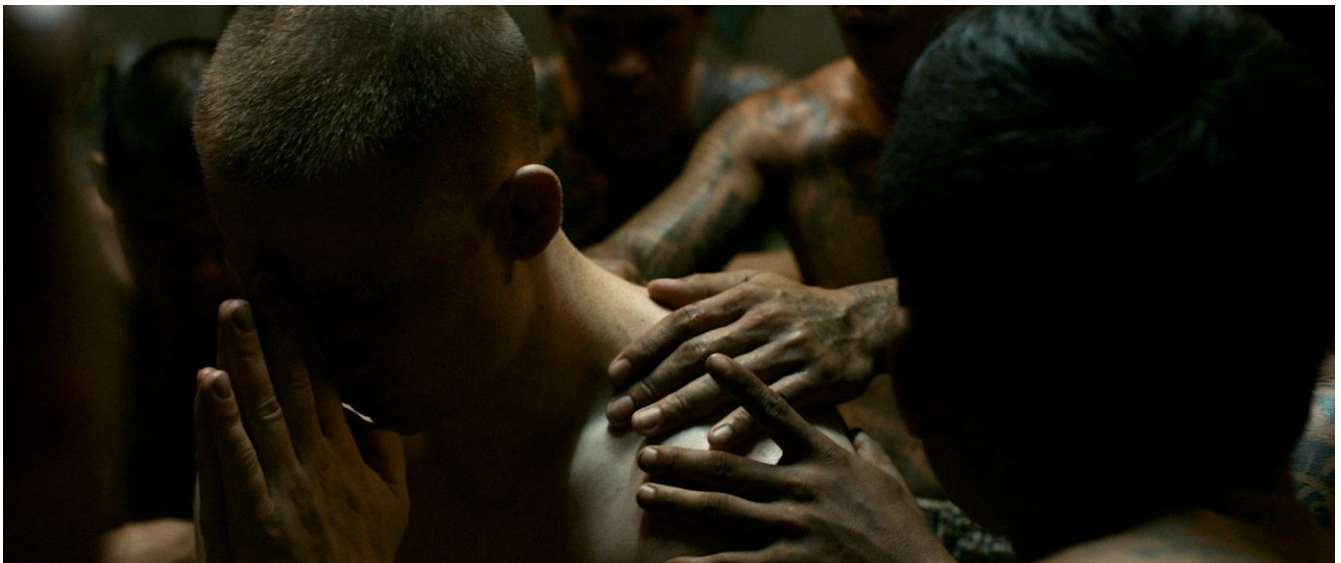


Tell us how you filmed bodies in A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN?

I like to film bodies because they each have their own story. Bodies can't lie. They carry life's blows, the scars, past traumas. The prisoners' tattoos are an explicit expression of their journey. These same bodies are judged by Thai society as they are associated with delinquency and prison, as if culturally, because these men are tattooed, they are denied a second chance.

The majority of these men got tattooed in prison. It's forbidden, but for prisoners with long sentences, the wardens turn a blind eye. Their tattoos reveal something about them, in an obvious yet discreet way. The bodies of the boxers and lady boys also tell a story. Just like the child boxer we see at the beginning of the film, who I chose because he was a boxing champion, but also because of the birth mark on his face.

All these characters, surrounded by men in uniform, are tormented by internal conflicts that they express in their own way with their bodies, like a cry. They have that part of violence in them but they also have an unquestionable sense of humanity. I really didn't want to reduce them to clichés of prisoners or show them as mere criminals or dealers. I wanted to respect these people who despite having lived through difficult moments in their lives, remain human. Hence the scene over lunch in the boxing club where some tell their own story. I was confronted with the same dilemma for JOHNNY MAD DOG: to show the humanity of these child soldiers who shouldn't be judged as mere soldiers.



How did you manage to film A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN in Thailand?

Thanks to Indochina Productions who managed to secure a film permit which was not easy, given the subject of the film. A government official came on set every day to ensure we respected the script and that we were not offending the King in any way. To begin with we had a few options. The first was to find a warehouse, reproduce a prison with wooden bars and hire actors which we would then make up. I wasn't interested in this concept. In the same way that I knew that only the bodies and eyes of ex-prisoners were able to express what they had gone through, I didn't want to film in a studio setting. The walls had to have their own scars, they also had to tell a story; the prison as a character in its own right.



We were lucky to be able to film in a prison near Bangkok, one of the oldest prisons in Thailand because all the prisoners had just been transferred to a new prison. When I came to visit it, there was something ghostly about it and yet it was so real. It was empty; all that was left was the prisoners' clothing on the ground, scattered letters from their families, spoons transformed into knives, photos from magazines stuck on the walls...It was very troubling as if all the prisoners had been told to leave their cells, just for the time of our visit.

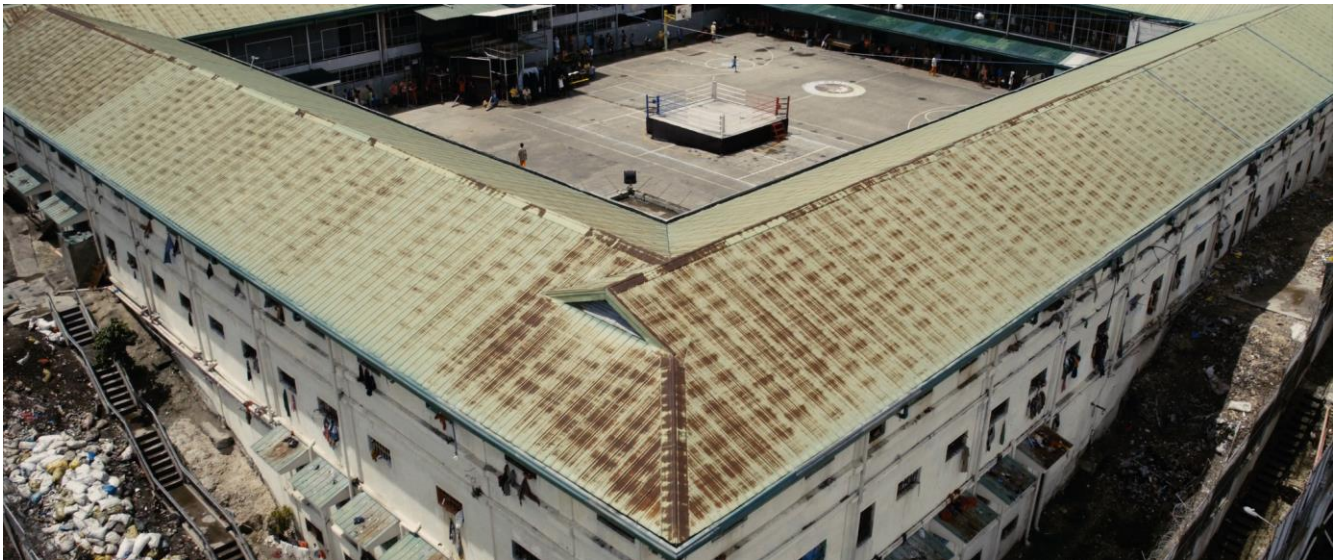


Because we had to postpone filming, when I returned to the prison a year later, it had been wrecked; the metal had been recuperated, plants had grown here and there; so the art department had to recreate the place as it had been. They even hired prisoners during the day to cut back the vegetation. We tend to think of a prison as a dark and bleak place, however we were filming in an open-air prison with a statute of Buddha in the courtyard and large wooden cells. This variety of locations allowed us to represent the evolution of Billy's character, from his arrival in the area for newcomers to the boxers' cell via the samurais' cell.



Some of the actors knew this prison as they had served part of their sentence there and gave us some valuable insight. We had to recreate the boxing gymnasium that had been destroyed. We used the one from the Klong Prem prison, where some of them had served, as a reference. I would have liked to have filmed in this prison and set up an acting workshop there with the prisoners like I had done in a detention centre for young offenders in Guatemala, but we were faced with a foursquare refusal from the Thai authorities.

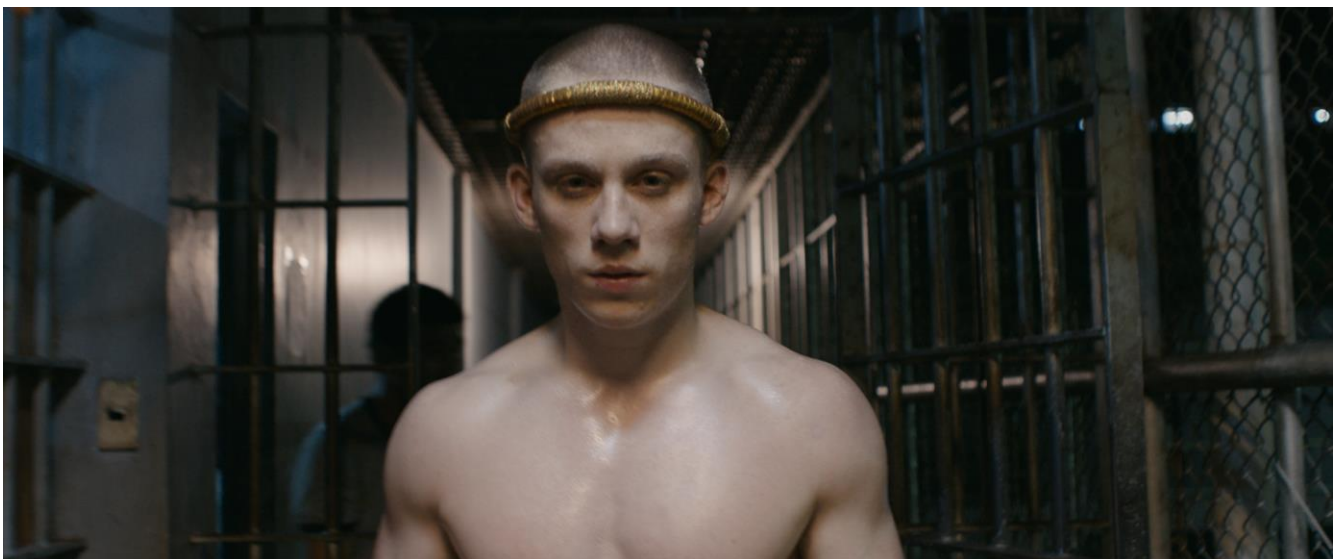
I think boxing is beneficial and gives the prisoners a sense of purpose. M, one of the boxers in the film, is the perfect example of this. He steered away from violence thanks to boxing in prison and became an international champion after serving a 15 year sentence for murder. We came across a YouTube video with millions of views, where Filipino prisoners dance to Michael Jackson - this gave us the idea for the perfect backdrop for the final fight in the Cebu prison with 3000 prisoners as extras.





You seem to be very interested in the way in which a character reacts in an extreme environment...

Yes that's true and especially how a character manages to steer away from violence when it has dictated his or her life since childhood. There is a sort of connection for me between the protagonists of *JOHNNY MAD DOG* and *A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN*, as if one were an extension of the other, a transition from adolescence to adulthood, from brutality to spirituality. A character who has had a very traumatic experience in the past, who we discover in the present and we don't know whether he will make it in the future. As a young child, Billy Moore was beaten by his father and as a teenager took refuge in drugs. He then left for Thailand to try and make it through, to try and build a new life for himself but he fell into the same trap. Ironically, it is in a prison environment that he found his own freedom once again. As the film goes on, those around Billy become kinder, more human, they share a fraternal bond with him, his own family. Billy's strength lies in his curiosity towards the Thai people with whom he shared this experience. With their help, he managed to fight his addiction and change his ways. He used boxing as an outlet, as a therapy. Billy Moore ends his book with: *"Above all, I just wanted to be me."* The film tries to pay tribute to him and all the film's actors who have also lived through this in their own way.









PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

RITA DAGHER

When Roy Boulter approached me to produce the screen adaptation of the book *A Prayer Before Dawn: A Nightmare in Thailand*, the true story of Billy Moore's incarceration in a Thai prison, I was initially reluctant as I felt the theme, as well as the genre had been overdone. I really wanted to avoid the easy option of a sensationalist film with "shock value", which could also harbour offensive clichés about a country like Thailand. I had in mind films which dealt with similar themes and that suffered from a somewhat simplistic treatment.

But as I read Billy Moore's book, I was so moved by this poignant story of an ordinary hero who, after years of self-destruction managed to overcome his demons and take control of his life again, that I decided to take on the project. I was also touched by this man's deep affection and fondness for Thailand and its people.

That's when I became aware of the depth of this project, which provides a unique perspective for this strong and sincere human story, while borrowing the codes of a cinematographic genre which needed to be renewed.

I discussed the project with Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire who at first was intrigued. We travelled to Liverpool to meet with Billy. We were both overwhelmed by our meeting and decided there and then to embark on this adventure. Jean-Stéphane's approach and unique vision appealed to me. I liked his commitment to relate Billy's experience as viscerally and authentically as possibly.

Jean-Stéphane travelled to Thailand to immerse himself into the local culture. He stayed there for almost a year and met with former prisoners who were also Muay Thai boxers and whose lives mirrored Billy's own story. By doing that, he brought a naturalistic and gritty depiction of the story. His treatment was nuanced and gave depth and intensity to Billy's story, while avoiding the use of emphatic dramatic effects.

Funding for the film proved to be somewhat complex and after a few casting setbacks, we were able to confirm our main actor: Joe Cole. Joe gave himself body and soul. His performance turned out very powerful both physically and psychologically.

HanWay's involvement was key from the start and helped position the film as a quality auteur driven film which helped it veer away from the straightforward genre flick. We were extremely lucky when James Schamus came on board the project along with Meridian Entertainment. Canal + followed suit and my company Senorita covered the gap. Indochina's role in securing the wonderful prison location was instrumental.

After over three years of work, we are proud of such a powerful and unique film.



JOE COLE
ACTOR



Since his training with the National Youth Theatre, Screen International Star of Tomorrow Joe Cole has gone on to earn critical acclaim across the board for his work in television, theatre and film. Joe is best known for his recurring role of 'John Sheldon', younger brother to Cillian Murphy's 'Tommy' in the BBC's acclaimed **PEAKY BLINDERS**, the hugely popular television crime drama based upon the exploits of the Peaky Blinders gang, operating in Birmingham, England during the aftermath of the First World War. Filming is about to begin for the fifth series.

Joe takes on the lead role in **A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN** which will premiere at Cannes later this month. The film, which has been picked up for US distribution by A24 and UK distribution by Altitude Films, is based on the true life experience of Billy Moore, who survived his Thai prison ordeal by becoming a Muay Thai boxing champion. Based on the book by David Finkel, Joe will also take on a key role in **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE** alongside Amy Schumer due for release on the 27th of October. Joe has two additional films for release; **EYE ON JULIET** by Kim Nguyen, the story of a drone operator who falls in love with a young Middle Eastern woman, and independent feature **WOODSHOCK**, with Kirsten Dunst, created and directed by the Rodarte sisters Kate and Laura Mulleavy.

For television, Joe has recently finished filming 'Hang The DJ', an episode of the next series of **BLACK MIRROR** for Netflix alongside Georgina Campbell.

Some of his most notable roles in film include the lead role of 'Tommy' in **OFFENDER**, 'Reece' in **GREEN ROOM** opposite Sir Patrick Stewart, Imogen Poots and the late Anton Yelchin, Independent film **THE FALLING** with Maisie Williams and Maxine Peake, the role of 'Marzin'/'Beckwith' in **THE SECRET IN THEIR EYES** alongside Chiwetel Ejiofor, Julia Roberts and Nicole Kidman, **NOW IS GOOD** alongside Dakota Fanning and Jeremy Irvine, **A LONG WAY DOWN** with Imogen Poots, Pierce Brosnan, and Aaron Paul, and Ron Scalpello thriller **PRESSURE**. He also took on the role of a cross-dressing boxer in the 2015 BAFTA nominated short film, **SLAP** that also won the award for 'Best Short Film' at the 2014 Edinburgh Film Festival and was also nominated at the 2014 BIFA Awards. He also starred in **VOLUME** that won Best Short at the British Independent Film Awards and played the lead role in Mark Gutteridge's short film **ASSESSMENT**, winner of the jury prize at Film London Best of Boroughs Awards at BAFTA and the role of 'Benno' in **HAND**.

For television, Joe was seen in series 2 of BBC Two and BBC America's multi-award-winning **THE HOUR** with Dominic West, Ben Whishaw and Romola Garai. In 2011, he was seen on our television screens in the BAFTA award winning British teen drama **SKINS**, taking on the role of 'Luke', a rebellious yet somewhat charming gang leader. Joe was commended for being "*brilliant at unpacking the complexities of the character*". Joe's other television credits include the BBC's successful series **COME FLY WITH ME**, five-part ITV drama **INJUSTICE**, BBC Three's **STANLEY PARK** alongside Holliday Grainger. Joe also took a leading role in **CARGESE**, directed by Matt Smith, one of a series of one-off dramas for the Sky Arts series **PLAYHOUSE PRESENTS**. Joe co-starred alongside Craig Roberts with Joe singled out as "*terrific as Stephen, by turns charming, enigmatic and brutally odd*".

Joe's career also expands to the theatre world. He was seen in the Bush Theatre's highly praised productions of **THE KNOWLEDGE/LITTLE PLATOONS**, two new plays which formed part of the Schools Season. His other credits include **POLLING BOOTH** (Theatre 503), **RELISH** (National Youth Theatre), **BRIXTON ROCK** (Young Vic Theatre), **BUS** (Cockpit Theatre), **TALKING TO BYRON** (National Youth Theatre/Roundhouse Camden), **TITS AND TEETH** (national Youth Theatre/Soho Hotel), **LATERS** (Team Angelica/Drill Hall theatre), **BIRDBOOT**, **TWELFTH NIGHT, OUR COUNTRY'S GOOD** (Ilex Theatre), **ACCTINGTON PALS**, **OUR BAD MAGNET**, **HELMET** (Kingston Youth Theatre).



Joe Cole and Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire on set – Nakorn Pathom Prison in Thailand

JEAN- STÉPHANE SAUVAIRE

Director

Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire started out as assistant director in 1992 on **LES NUITS FAUVES** by Cyril Collard. He worked on feature films with directors such as Gaspar Noé, Bernie Bonvoisin, Karim Dridi, Siegfried and Laetitia Masson.

In 2000, Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire began his career as a director. Following three short films, Jean-Stéphane directed **CARLITOS MEDELLIN** in 2004 which is a feature length documentary filmed in Columbia. It told the story of a young Columbian man who sets out to save his neighbourhood from war and violence. The film garnered critical acclaim and was selected to screen in a number of international film festivals.

Four years later, he wrote and directed **JOHNNY MAD DOG**, his first feature film which he co-produced with Mathieu Kassovitz. The film was an adaptation of the eponymous novel by Congolese writer Emmanuel Dongola, which follows the journey of a small militia of boy soldiers during a civil war in Africa. It was presented in Un Certain Regard at the Cannes Film Festival and it was awarded the Prix de l'Espoir. **JOHNNY MAD DOG** went on to screen in approximately fifty festivals throughout the world.

In 2012, he directed **PUNK**, a television movie for ARTE. Based on Boris Bergmann's best-seller, with Béatrice Dalle, Paul Bartel and Marie-Ange Casta, **PUNK** was selected to screen in the international film festivals of London, Montréal, Zurich and La Rochelle where Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire received the Best Director Award.

In 2017 Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire directed **A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN** based on Billy Moore's eponymous memoir. Joe Cole plays the lead character, fighting for his life in one of Thailand's most ruthless prisons. The film has been chosen for the Official Selection at the 70th Cannes Film Festival.

Filmography - Director

2017 - A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN, Feature film - fiction
Official Selection, Cannes Film Festival 2017

2012 - PUNK, TV movie - fiction (Arte)
Best Director Award at the La Rochelle Film Festival

2008 - JOHNNY MAD DOG, Feature film - fiction
Prix de l'Espoir, Cannes Film Festival (Un Certain Regard)
Michel d'Ornano Award, Deauville Film Festival
Best Director Award, Skip City Film Festival
Best Directorial Debut, Hamburg, Moscow and Stockholm Film Festivals

2004 - CARLITOS MEDELLIN, Feature length documentary
Best Film for Children's Rights

2005 - MATALO!, Short film - fiction

2001 - A Dios, Short film - fiction

2000 - LA MULE, Short film - fiction

BILLY MOORE

Billy Moore spiralled into addiction from an early age. It was his only escape from the endless beatings he was subjected to. This led to many years incarcerated in prisons, until his heart broke and finally surrendered. The war was over when he sought help and treatment via rehabilitation. After a period of abstinence, he later learned his demons were always waiting for that moment to pounce at his most vulnerable and wreak havoc within his life again, only this time in Thailand.

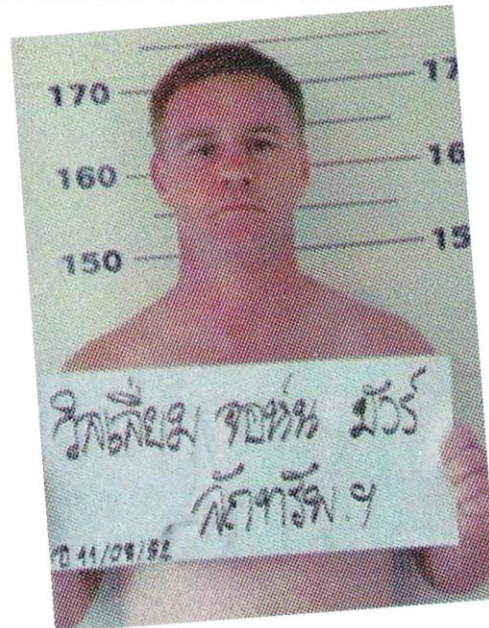
He ultimately ended up spending 3 years fighting for both his life and sanity in a Thai prison, and the fight became a literal fight as a Thai boxer. Billy was released on a King's amnesty in 2010 after being transferred to the UK and was victorious in his fight with addiction. No longer afraid of anything, he tackled his own demons with the same courage and determination.

He wrote his memoirs and eventually had it published. One day he was standing on Hope Street outside a small production company in Liverpool when he decided to take a risk and knock. He found hope via a film production company who wanted to share his life story with the world on screen.

Billy is now employed with a Liverpool based drug and rehabilitation service providing support to people still suffering, aiming to improve their quality of life, and inspire them to have a brighter future. He still applies the mental discipline of a Thai boxer to all areas of his life.

A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN

A NIGHTMARE IN THAILAND



Billy Moore

SENORITA FILMS



BILLY MOORE AND JOE COLE ON SET – CEBU PRISON PHILIPPINES

Rita Dagher established Senorita Films with the mission to produce director-driven, bold and unique feature length and documentary films that strike an international chord whilst engaging with contemporary global issues and placing importance upon an independent vision.

Films produced by Senorita include **MISS JULIE** directed by Liv Ullmann with Jessica Chastain and Colin Farrell, as well as the documentary film **THE YES MEN ARE REVOLTING** co-directed by Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno (awarded at the 2015 Berlinale in the Panorama category). Both films premiered at the 2014 Toronto International Film Festival. Rita Dagher also produced Rafi Pitts' latest feature film **SOY NERO**, which was in competition at the 2016 Berlin Film Festival.

Senorita Films' latest production, **A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN** is a feature film directed by Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire, based on Billy Moore's autobiography. The film has been chosen for the Official Selection of the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival.

Prior to this, Rita Dagher produced **L'AVOCAT DE LA TERREUR**, a feature documentary about the enigmatic and controversial lawyer Jacques Vergès, directed by Barbet Schroeder (Un Certain Regard, Cannes Film Festival 2007, César for best documentary film 2008).

She also produced **MY ENEMY'S ENEMY**, a documentary directed by Kevin MacDonalld which tells the life and trial of Nazi commander Klaus Barbie.

Rita Dagher was Executive Producer on Chris Morris' **FOUR LIONS** and James Marsh's **SHADOW DANCER**. She coproduced **PERSONA NON GRATA** directed by Oliver Stone (Official Selection at the Venice Film Festival) and **FAHRENHEIT 9/11** directed by Michael Moore (Palme d'Or at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival).



INDOCHINA PRODUCTIONS

Indochina Productions is an Asian based film production company, founded by Nicholas Simon in 2010. Indochina and its principals, Nicholas Simon, Air Mutita Na Songkla and Lylie Almeida have produced and serviced numerous award winning films and box office hits from **THE ROCKET** to **KONG: Skull Island** that have filmed from Vietnam to Thailand, Cambodia, The Philippines, Laos, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. **A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN** is Indochina's first feature as a production company to be followed by Les Films Worso's, **LES CONFINS DU MONDE** starring Gerard Depardieu and Gaspard Ulliel in 2018.

SYMBOLIC EXCHANGE

Symbolic Exchange is a New York-based film production company, founded by James Schamus in 2015. Schamus is an award-winning screenwriter (**THE ICE STORM**), producer (**BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN**), and former CEO of Focus Features. His feature directorial debut, an adaptation of Philip Roth's **INDIGNATION**, stars Logan Lerman, Sarah Gadon, and Tracy Letts; it premiered at Sundance and was distributed by Summit/Roadside Attractions in 2016.

Symbolic Exchange currently has a first-look and financing deal with Meridian Entertainment. Their first two projects together are Kitty Green's feature documentary **CASTING JONBENET** which recently had its world premiere at Sundance and sold to Netflix for an April 28, 2017 launch as well as Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire's **A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN**. Symbolic Exchange is also executive producing, with backing from Meridian, Amman Abbasi's feature debut **DAYVEON** which premiered in the *Next* section at Sundance this year. The company is

currently in post-production on **FURLOUGH** directed by Laurie Collyer and starring Melissa Leo, Tessa Thompson, and Whoopi Goldberg.

MERIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT

Meridian was founded in 2013 by journalist and film industry veteran Jennifer Dong. To date, Meridian has made investments in select Chinese films, including box office hits **RUNNING MAN** and **MOJIN: THE LOST LEGEND**; and forthcoming English language films such as Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire's **A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN**, Kitty Green's **CASTING JONBENET**, Amman Abbasi's **DAYVEON** and Brandon Camp's **BENJI**; **CASTING JONBENET** and **DAYVEON** had their world premieres at this year's Sundance Film Festival and international premieres at the Berlin International Film Festival; **A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN** is premiering at this year's Cannes International Film Festival Official Selection.

Meridian has a first look and strategic partnership with James Schamus through his company, Symbolic Exchange; Meridian partners with FremantleMedia North America and oversees the film business of Random House Studios; Meridian also has a multi-year, multi-picture co-financing deal with Blumhouse Productions. Meridian develops and finances television and film projects in various genres and has in-house marketing and distribution teams for both domestic and foreign films in the China market.

Meridian is the majority owner of one of China's most successful distribution companies, United Entertainment Partners (UEP). The films UEP marketed and distributed including Chinese domestic animation film historical champion **MONKEY KING: HERO IS BACK** (140 MM USD\$), and 2014 Chinese box office champion **BREAKUP BUDDIES** (170 MM USD\$). UEP has marketed and distributed many English-language hits in China, including **THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2**, **THE SMURFS 2** and recent box office hit **HACKSAW RIDGE** (62 MM USD\$).



END CREDITS

MERIDIAN ENTERTAINMENT AND SYMBOLIC EXCHANGE

PRESENT

A SENORITA FILMS PRODUCTION

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

INDOCHINA PRODUCTIONS

AND

HANWAY FILMS

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF

CANAL +

CINE +

A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN

Starring

JOE COLE

A film by

JEAN-STÉPHANE SAUVAIRE

Based on the memoir

“A PRAYER BEFORE DAWN”

by BILLY MOORE

Screenplay by

JONATHAN HIRSCHBEIN

NICK SALTRESE

Produced by

RITA DAGHER

Producers

NICHOLAS SIMON, P.G.A.

ROY BOULTER

SOL PAPADOPOULOS

Executive Producers

JAMES SCHAMUS

JENNIFER DONG

WOODY MU

PETER WATSON

Associate Producers

JEAN-CLAUDE SEYS

CHRISTIAN BAUMARD

ALAIN KAPPAUF

JEAN-STÉPHANE SAUVAIRE

Associate Producers

FIGO LI
AVY ESCHENASY
JOE PIRRO
GABRIELLE STEWART

Director of Photography

DAVID UNGARO, AFC

Editor

MARC BOUCROT

Stunt Coordinator & Fight Choreographer

DAVID ISMALONE

Production designer

CHAIYAN CHUNSUTTIWAT

Acting coach

KARINE NURIS

Make-up design

STACEY HOLMAN

Composer

NICOLAS BECKER

Supervising Sound editor

SÉVERIN FAVRIAU

Sound engineer

NASSIM EL MOUNABBIH

Re-recording mixer

CYRIL HOLTZ

Line Producer

AIR NA SONGKLA

Production Manager

SYLVIE BALLAND

Production and postproduction supervisor

CAROLINE BERNIÈRE GAILLAC

CAST

BILLY MOORE
FATHER
OFFICER PREECHA

JOE COLE
BILLY MOORE
VITHAYA PANSRINGARM

FAME
KENG
SUTHIN
M
PATUMSUK
SAIYOK
CHANACHOL
YIEOW DANG

PORNCHANOK MABKLANG
PANYA YIMMUMPHAI
SOMLUCK KAMSING
CHALOEMPORN SAWATSUK
KOMSAN POLSAN
SAKDA NIAMHOM
SURA SRIMALAI
PATSAPON KAYSORNMALEETHANACHOK

SAMURAI

JOKE
ART
LEK
AE
TA
TON
BOY
TOON
TAN
KLUAY

SARAWUT SAE HAN
ARPISIT CHOMJIT
TANIPOL KAMJUN
ATSADAWUT NUCHIT
SADJA YUEKYENPAIBOON
PRAPHON SUWANNAKHOT
PARADORN AREEPAK
ANIRUT POKLIN
CHALIT PANYUDOD
ANUCHA SRIYAEM

BOXING TEAM

CHUI
TIGER
BUM
BOWIE

KAIJAE
KIE
BIRD
TOM

THANATORN NUIAIAD
VACHAYAN KHAMON
PRAPHAN PLOYSUWAN
OAKKHARAKITTIKHACHOK
CHOKWATCHARAKONKUN
ONGARD SITTHIPATEE
SIRIPHONG DILUAN
YINGYUT AUDOMRIT
PRECHA WATHANAMONGKHON