

VICE



A DAVID MACKENZIE FILM

FILMA PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH CREATIVE SCOTLAND QUICKFIRE FILMS NORTHERN IRELAND SCREEN AND LIPSING PRODUCTIONS A SKEAM FILMS PRODUCTION A DAVID MACKENZIE FILM "STARBUCKED UP JACK O'DONNELL" STARRING BEN MENDELSONSON AND ROBERT FRIEND MUSIC BY SAM SHUEL ANTHONY WELSH DAVE AJALA PETER FERDINAND RAYNAE SOWTLE GILLY GLORISHT GERISVINO EUSTACHE JUNG ASHLEY CHEN TOMMY MCCANNELL FREDERICK SCHMIDT COSTUME DESIGNER SHAHEEN BAKI EDITOR ALEX O'NEAL EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JAMES WALLACE PRODUCED BY NICOLE STAFFORD WRITTEN BY SUSAN SCOTT DIRECTED BY TOM McCULLOUGH CASTING BY JAKE ROBERTS & NICK EMERSON EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MICHAEL McDONOUGH AKK PRODUCTION DESIGNER BRIAN COFFEY EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS PETER RAMPOUN NORMAN MERRY JARPAPE JAMES ATBERTOTT DAVID MACKENZIE SALILA VENNIGER KATHERINE BUTLER PRODUCED BY FILMA

THE TIMES

VARIETY

LOADE

COLLIDER

WE'RE ALL DIFFERENT ON THE INSIDE



STARRED UP

een film van David Mackenzie

Release: 22 mei 2014

2013 | Verenigd Koninkrijk | 106 minuten | Engels gesproken | Nederlandse ondertiteling

Eric is een jonge delinquent die vanwege zijn gewelddadige gedrag wordt overgeplaatst naar een gevangenis voor volwassenen. Daar wordt hij geconfronteerd met zijn eigen vader, die het grootste deel van zijn leven in de gevangenis heeft doorgebracht.

STARRED UP geeft een hartverscheurende en overtuigende blik op het leven achter de tralies vanuit het perspectief van een angstige maar ook kwade jongen.

De film werd in totaal voor acht British Independent Film Awards genomineerd waaronder Beste Film en Beste Regie. De film won de prijs voor Beste Mannelijke Bijrol (Ben Mendelsohn). Op het London Film Festival ontving de film de prijs voor Beste Scenario en werd ook genomineerd voor Beste Film.

Cast

Eric	JACK O' CONNELL
Oliver	RUPERT FRIEND
Neville	BEN MENDELSON
Governor Hayes	SAM SPRUELL
Tyrone	DAVID AJALA
Governor Cardew	SIAN BRECKIN

Crew

Regisseur	DAVID MACKENZIE
Scenario	JONATHAN ASSER
Cinematografie	MICHAEL MCDOUNOUGH
Montage	JAKE ROBERTS, NICK EMERSON
Geluid	JOAKIM SUNDSTRÖM, RONAN HILL
Prod. Design	TOM MCCULLAGH
Uitvoerende producenten	JAMES ATHERTON, JAN PACE, NORMAN MERRY, PETER HAMPDEN, KATHERINE BUTLER, SAM LAVENDER, DAVID MAC KENZIE
Producenten	GILLIAN BERRIE, BRIAN COFFEY
Productiebedrijf	SIGMA FILMS



David Mackenzie

Born and raised in Scotland, David Mackenzie started his film career making short films. He first won an award for **California Sunshine** (1997), a 20-minute film about a pair of small-time drug dealers that starred his younger brother, actor Alastair Mackenzie. In 1999 he won an Audience Award at the Brest European Short Film Festival for **Marcie's Dowry** (1999), then in 2000, he placed second for Best Short Film at the Dresden Film Festival for **Somersault** (1999).

Having completed nine shorts and a documentary, Mackenzie's first feature length film was the small budget **The Last Great Wilderness** (2002), which he co-wrote with his brother and Michael Tait (Alastair also starred). But David didn't gain international attention until he wrote and directed **Young Adam** (2004), based on the 1954 novel by Alexander Trocchi. Starring Ewan McGregor and Tilda Swinton, the film won the Best New British Feature award at the 2003 Edinburgh International Film Festival and David won British Newcomer of the Year from the 2004 London Critics Circle Film Awards. After showings at several international film festivals, **Young Adam** opened in theaters worldwide.

Mackenzie's third feature—**Asylum** (2004), starring Natasha Richardson, won an award at the Berlin International Film Festival. He then won several awards from international film festivals, including the Silver Berlin Bear, for his fourth film, **Hallam Foe**, starring Jamie Bell.

Filmografie

2002	THE LAST GREAT WILDERNESS
2004	YOUNG ADAM
2004	ASYLUM
2007	HALLAM FOE
2009	SPREAD
2013	STARRED UP





Jack O'Connell (born 1 August 1990) is a British actor. He is perhaps most recognisable for playing Pukey Nicholls in **This Is England** (2006), Marky in **Harry Brown** (2009), and as James Cook in the E4 teen drama **Skins** (2009-2013). In 2014 O'Connell also stars in **'71** by Yann Demange, **300: Rise of an Empire** and at end of 2014 in **Unbroken** by Angelina Jolie.



Ben Mendelsohn was born on April 3, 1969 in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia as Paul Benjamin Mendelsohn. He is an actor and producer, known for **The Dark Knight Rises** (2012), **Killing Them Softly** (2012) and **The Place Beyond the Pines** (2012)



Rupert Friend (born 1 October 1981) is an English film actor, who is best known for his roles as Mr. Wickham in the 2005 film **Pride and Prejudice**, Lieutenant Kurt Kotler in the 2008 film **The Boy in the Striped Pajamas**, and Prince Albert in the 2009 film **The Young Victoria**. Recently he has been starring as Peter Quinn in Showtime's hit series **Homeland** alongside Claire Danes.



Interview: Director David Mackenzie On The Cast And The Process Behind ‘Starred Up’ Plus Upcoming Projects

INTERVIEWS | BY JESSICA KIANG | FEBRUARI 4, 2014 4:28 PM | BRON: WWW.INDIEWIRE.COM

One of the highlights of the Göteborg International Film Festival, and indeed one of the highlights of our year so far, was catching up with David Mackenzie’s “Starred Up,” which, if you missed our review first time out, you can read all about here. The unflinching but brutally human prison drama is based on a script by first-timer Jonathan Asser, a writer and poet by whose experiences inspired the film and the character of Oliver, the posh but dedicated volunteer inmate counselor. Starring breakout Jack O’Connell as the violent young Eric, Ben Mendelsohn as his also-incarcerated father Nev, and Rupert Friend as Oliver, the film is marked by its astonishingly strong performances, but also by the authenticity and hard-edged sensitivity of what is truly career-best work from the director.

Previously best known for Brit indies “Hallam Foe” and “Young Adam,” Mackenzie himself could be said to be one of the film’s many surprises, defying the expectations of his previous work and working in a grittier mode than we’d seen from him to date. When we spoke, we talked a little about that evolution as well as how it may carry over into his upcoming projects. But first we were curious as to how he came upon “Starred Up” at all.

“People are saying it’s not quite a genre movie, it’s got all these other things. But I’m going, ‘No, it’s a prison movie.’ There’s no way you can say it any other way.”

It doesn't necessarily seem like material someone would have immediately associated you with, so tell me how the script for "Starred Up" came to your attention.

It's quite straightforward really. A writer friend of ours said "there's a great script." So it came to us as a recommendation from a friend basically.

Then we read this piece and it was amazing. It had an amazing sense of authenticity. Like, a lot of the language in the film is a real hit in the face because the very specific context of the prison world is obscure to people. There was lot of power and anger and force in there. It came very well formed as a first draft. So I went and met Jonathan and was really kind of blown away by the disarming honesty that he had about everything, about why he was involved in the prison system. It was essentially because he thought of himself as an institutionalized being. Having been in the world at large he found himself in a prison accidentally, doing some performance poetry, and it immediately came to him that he felt at home for the first time in fifteen years.

So there's a massive personal journey for him, in terms of his engagement with prisoners and the prison system, and the therapy that he's developed, which features in the movie. So meeting with Jonathan and hearing all of this, with the material in the background, it was almost impossible not to want to do the film.

Perhaps the poetry background makes sense because the language, the dialogue is in quite an incomprehensible argot at times, but the meaning of the words doesn't matter as much as the sense that it's an arcane and authentic language that the characters all share.

Well I think I totally agree with you there and when I introduce the film I often encourage people not to get hung up on every word and not to feel that they're missing out on something. The reality is there's a lot of language that we cut from the script, just because it was too much and people were saying it was incomprehensible. But we didn't want to compromise it to the point where you lose the flavor. A lot of thought went into where we've gotten, in terms of language in the film. But there's nothing you're really missing if you don't understand every word.



And what was it in the script that made you sure that you were the one to do it?

This is a different film from others I've done, but there are similar things to me. There's the "angry young man" bit there and there's a bit of obscure sensuality as well, which are things that I'm interested in. So those are kind of floating around the surface. But actually, somehow or other, finding in the heart of all of this anger and all this upset and all this violence, something human and something that engages emotionally [was the challenge]. Part of that is the very obvious father/son issue which I'm amazed hasn't happened in a prison narrative before. I mean, it's obvious that these kinds of things must run in families.

But also, some of the elements of other people reaching out to each other, in the group and outside of the group. You have this backdrop of a hard, hostile environment, and an opportunity to find some humanity within it. It felt like something I could do.

But yes, this is my first ever proper genre movie. Though people are saying it's not quite a genre movie, it's got all these other things ... but I'm going, "No, it's a prison movie." There's no way you can say it any other way.

It's just a good one.

I hope so! So I felt it was an appropriate time in my life to hit that, and to somehow or another smuggle into that genre things that I'm maybe more interested in.

It's a genre prison movie but through all this brutality, there's an incredible lack of cynicism. There's actually a very compassionate moral because if this guy deserves his shot at redemption, so does anyone.

I'm rather moved by what you said. Deserving a shot at redemption is a really good way of putting it.

Ben Mendelsohn is amazing, but there's a danger in that he could be seen as typecast in the simmeringly violent role. Did that worry you at all?

Not really, no. I was so pleased to find Ben. In my first conversation with

"We shot the film in a single location, and we shot it sequentially. I had two editors all the time...and then we showed a cut of the film at the wrap party."

him he was so alive and his intelligence was extraordinary. I was astounded by the fact that physically he's not a hard man and he'd have to find other ways of expressing that, which I think he does in bucketloads. I've never worked with another actor who has such good stage craft, I don't think, and yet he would bring massive unpredictability to things. It's quite the combination.

And Rupert Friend as well was a surprise to me here. How did you find him?

To be totally honest I think it's because I'd recently seen him in "Homeland" and was very impressed by the way he came across. I re-evaluated my opinion of him as this slightly sociopathic special ops guy. And then it felt right, because Jonathan is a very posh boy and in Britain we're very uncomfortable about that.



But I thought, [to change that would be] dishonest. Part of the whole point of this was he was traumatized by ten years of boarding school. That is who he is, and also really hard and brave and forthright and damaged and violent.

It is an unusual vocation for his character to have.

And [his vocation has] kind of rescued him too. Why he's doing it is for selfish reasons, but be that as it may, I think something really interesting about the idea of volunteer culture. Somebody who's inherited some money off their grandmother, deciding to do something like [unpaid prison therapy] with the freedom that it affords them. There's something where I think we're a bit embarrassed about in the U.K. The idea of some kind of noblesse oblige, where it might not be too sinful a thing. The motivations behind that are fascinating.

His character, and a great deal of the film, deals with the seductive power of that kind of rage. Was there a particular method you used to understand this violence?

We did some group session work with some of Jonathan's former [inmate] group, some of whom I hired as actors. And the environment very rapidly turned from being a kind of jocular, actors messing around, into something very tangible, very real and pretty scary. Ironically, coming from Jonathan! It was part of this total reality check from the fiction zone. But the most amazing thing about it for me was the power of the de-escalation. At the time we didn't have a scene in the movie that was completely describing that. So that was something that I wanted to put to [Jonathan] to really bring that to the fore.

So, Jack O'Connell. Everyone's already saying "overnight success"...

It's not true! He's a star of [Brit TV show] "Skins" and made quite a few feature films. It sounds sort of bland, but my casting director was looking at a few young guys and finding people who were appropriate. And there were some tapes and I saw a tape of Jack and I thought he was a perfect formulation, and I met him and he was.

He revealed also that he very much connected with the material and felt that had things gone differently for him, he could have been a bit closer to the reality of that. So he had a strong identification with the character. An actor really wanting to go out there... He threw every single bit he could at it. So it's no surprise to me that he's great in it, I saw it coming, but he is great in it and he deserves all of the credit he gets for it.

How did your approach here differ from on previous films?

From the beginning I knew I was going to make a low-budget movie. The first thing, when I saw the script, is I knew that I had to make it, as much as possible, in an uncheated location. I knew I wanted to make a film that played straight down the bat of realism. Even if there were some poetic moments in there I just wanted to be straight and not messing around with other things. Other elements of narrative that I have already done. I also, as a filmmaker, have found myself getting irritated by elements of the filmmaking process to the point of not wanting to do it anymore. So I was determined to create an environment where I could avoid those things as much as possible.



So, we shot the film in a single location, and we shot it sequentially. I had two editors all the time so the idea was to be five hours behind the shoot at all points. So, at the end of each week, because we were shooting sequentially, we could show all of the actors what they had done—those that wanted to. Ben and Rupert didn't but everyone else did. And then we showed a cut of the film at the wrap party.

And I abandoned clapper boards, so someone had to do a lot of extra synching but you had this environment where there's none of the bullshit. So, we were able to get closer to the heart of the thing. Any problems I thought were coming I nipped in the bud. I just brought everyone into the fold, I had a real family and I was in control of my method of making this film. Far more than I've been in any other film and the fact that it's successful makes me hope I can find a way to continue to do that.

Which leads us to your next projects! We reported a while ago that you were attached to “The Stain on the Snow,” the George Simenon adaptation?

In my dream schedule I'd be shooting it now. I got very, very close to doing it but we have, I guess ten, fifteen percent of the financing left to find. As we speak, it's being discussed so I'll find out. So it might well be happening as my next film. I'm also talking to Warner Brothers about a movie called “A Mission.” So I don't know which of those will happen but, if ‘Stain’ does, it will happen later in the year or early next year. I've got a fantastic production designer, I know exactly where I want everything to be, I've done some casting work on it and so it's a ball that's ready to be picked up. I think it could be a really interesting movie.

It's set in Brussels and we want to shoot as much as possible there. That's since I've discovered the joys of making films closer to the reality of what they're describing. If it's set there, let's shoot it there. Even though it's fiction let's try to connect to the reality as much as possible. It feels like, “Why wouldn't you do that?” I've always thought that the realism was bullshit, I've thought that realism was a set of bogus constructs... In a way “Starred Up” was an experiment in realism for me, and it's been a positive experiment so I might be continuing in that vein.

And there was another project of yours we reported on, “Journey into Space.”

I'm writing the script with that. I've got 190-page script, which is too long for a film so it could be a TV thing, but it covers 100 years in the space of four generations. It's an incredibly high concept thing. One of my problems is I'm spending an awful lot of time dealing with passage of time issues. Depending on what's happening in the next few weeks with all the projects, I need to go lock myself away for a month and finish that script and deliver it, and then we'll see what happens.

But it's extremely interesting as a microcosm. I spent some time on this island, and was thinking about making a film there. You know I did think the space film, the prison movie and the island film, all had a kind of microcosmic quality.

Well, yes I can see that in “Starred Up.” The spartan narrative makes it easier to read other things into it, to see it as about more than just what goes on.

That's the amazing thing about giving yourself a limited palette. Rupert said it's the freest film he's ever worked on and how in this world of incarceration and confinement and limitations we sort of found a little core of our process that was incredibly free, sort of protected by those limitations almost. Now that seems weird, but the movie I watched before I began was “A Man Escaped.” I was so moved by it and the limitations of that palette and the building sensuality of it. There are definitely echoes of that in this movie.

The terrific “Starred Up” releases in the U.K. in March and is still awaiting a U.S. date.



STARRED UP wordt gedistribueerd door

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