

A woman with long, vibrant red hair stands with her back to the camera in a dense forest. The scene is bathed in the soft, golden light of a sunset or sunrise, with mist or fog hanging between the trees. The tall, slender trunks of the trees create a vertical rhythm in the composition. The overall mood is mysterious and ethereal.

**“RIPPED FROM
THE HEADLINES...
REAL WORLD HORROR”**

VARIETY

**“TAKES IT TO
AN EERIE
NEXT LEVEL”**

INDIEWIRE

BRIDGEND

YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE

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LOGLINE

Sara and her dad Dave move to a small village, which is haunted by suicides among its young inhabitants. Sara falls dangerously in love with one of the teenagers, Jamie, while Dave, as the town's new police officer, tries to stop the mysterious chain of suicides.

The film is inspired by true events – between December 2007 and January 2012 seventy-nine suicides were officially committed in Bridgend County, a small former coal-mining province in Wales.

SYNOPSIS

"Bridgend" follows Sara and her dad, Dave as they arrive to a small village in Bridgend County. The village is haunted by suicides amongst its young inhabitants, and Sara falls dangerously in love with one of the teenagers, Jamie while Dave as the town's new policeman tries to stop the mysterious chain of suicides. The film is an uncompromising story focused on the relationship between vulnerable teenagers and their parents who are left in the dark.

The story of the film is based on a mysterious suicide cluster that took place in Bridgend County, a small former coal-mining province in Wales. Between December 2007 and January 2012 seventy-nine suicides were officially committed in the area. Most of the victims were teenagers, they hanged themselves and left no suicide notes. Danish documentary filmmaker Jeppe Rønde followed the teenagers from the area for six years and wrote the script based on their life stories. *Bridgend* is Rønde's fiction film debut. It is entirely shot on location in Wales, with many of the local teenagers casted as actors.

FACTS ABOUT BRIDGEND

Bridgend is a tiny county in southern Wales where over a 4-year period, 79 people, many of them teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17, committed suicide without leaving any clue as to why. Although the cases are linked by common circumstances — most were found dead by hanging, with no suicide note left — police investigations have found no concrete evidence of a conspiracy, while reports of cult activity behind the tragedies have been pursued by the media to no avail.

The media became interested because according to official statistics an area the size of Bridgend should expect no more than six suicides per year. The authorities say there is no link between the suicides and the figures are nothing out of the ordinary, but many of the relatives refuse to believe they are not linked.

Unfortunately, suicides still happen in Bridgend.



BIOGRAPHY – DIRECTOR – JEPPE RØNDE

Jeppe Rønne, born in 1973, is one of the most recognized, award-winning Danish filmmakers. Since graduating from the University of Copenhagen in 2002, he has directed short fiction films, feature documentaries and commercials. His debut feature documentary work JERUSALEM MY LOVE won countless international prizes including Nordisk Panorama, Taiwan IFF and Dok Leipzig FF (Golden Dove). His second feature film THE SWENKAS won the Special Jury Prize at Hot Docs 2005, Best Documentary at CPH:DOX and was nominated for European Film Academy Awards (2005).

During last few years he won several 'Roberts' (Danish equivalent of the Oscars) for his TV and feature documentary work.

Rønne has now completed the feature film, BRIDGEND, shot on location in Wales, which world-premiered in the Hivos Tiger Awards Competition at the International Film Festival Rotterdam 2015.



FILMOGRAPHY

- 2015 – BRIDGEND – fiction feature debut
- 2013 – GIRL IN THE WATER – short fiction film
- 2004 – THE SWENKAS – feature documentary
- 2003 – JERUSALEM MY LOVE – feature documentary
- 2001 – SON – short documentary

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR.

THE QUIETUS – YASMEEN KHAN , MARCH 14TH, 2015 10:09 [EXCERPTS]

This is a Welsh story, not a Danish one. How did you become attracted to the idea of making the film, not coming from Bridgend?
I don't believe there's such a thing that you can only film in your own back yard. If there is something that speaks to you, in its own universality, then it's there. And if there is something that is universal, then it's, unfortunately, what's happening in Wales.

It touches a lot of people's lives. Is that one reason why?

I spent six years travelling to and from Bridgend for research, and what I found were people like you and me and an underlying collective unconsciousness that basically runs in us all and makes us follow each other, for good and bad – so yes, for me it is very much a universal subject.



How did the community respond to you being there? Were they welcoming, or were they suspicious? Did you get a range of reactions?

You know, you can't actually go there as a journalist, you will probably get beaten up, especially if you want to go for quotes. I met many people just going out, being open. I told them what I would like to do and that I would like to hear stories. And all the kids, they wanted to talk, but not all the adults. It's like a big taboo over there.

In the end, we stood up at the working men's club to greet people and say what our project was, and ask if it was OK to shoot in the village. We shot in the vicar's house, and the local pub, the local school and police station, and we used people from there and their houses. So it turned out to be something which I also wanted, to have the village be part of it. It went from something that was very difficult, seven years ago when I started, to being actually a strong and fruitful experience when we were shooting a year ago. Because at first, I feared they would come at us and maybe smash our equipment or something, but nothing like that happened – quite the contrary. (...)

It's difficult, with so many unanswered questions. But you didn't try and close down any options, you left it ambiguous.

Because how could I? Then I would know the meaning of life.

But a lesser film would have tried to give us some kind of an answer, perhaps.

Well, yeah, most people would like that. A modern person wants an answer, so we can move on with our normal lives, because it's horrific to maybe come to the conclusion that we all have it in us, in ourselves, that it could happen to us, that it's part of our nature too. But I do know it can happen to anyone.

And as you say, it's hard to accept that we don't know, because we want to know.

Exactly. It's as hard to accept that we have it in us, that it's part of human nature – as well as that we are evil or we can be potentially evil. If something happened and all of a sudden, you had to kill your neighbor before he killed you, it turns out we have it in us, these sides that we don't like to have. For me, this film is so much about the collective unconscious. Of course, Sara is the main character in the film, but the actual driving force beneath it all is that theme.

Did you have a hard time writing the script? Did you completely fictionalize everything?

I met with some of the youngsters that actually died later on and some that survived more than one suicide attempt. So I have a lot of stories, and I'd put several stories together into one character, so it wasn't obviously coming from only one person. Everything is built on what I learned there, even the task force of police and psychologists that was sent to the town to stop it. So of course it's a fictional take on it, but you have to know that I don't distinguish between documentary and fiction. It's all film. If I had done a documentary, what you would call a documentary, I would still call it film. Had I done that, it would still only be my truth. So this is my truth as truthfully as I can say it.



You had to find a way to be true without betraying the people you talked to.

Exactly. That's number one. Secondly, you get beaten up there if you don't follow the rules. While researching, I was drugged, and I woke up with blood everywhere. From my knee down was completely smashed. I don't know what happened – and will probably never know. And I'm still friends with them, they laugh at me when I ask why they did it. I think it was kind of a test. When I do these things, I go all-in. It's not a strategy. I also want to know, because I like to know myself, or at least come closer to understanding that I should let it go and accept what is in me. So when I meet these kids, or the adults, or grandparents, it's not just a strategy for making a film, it's really because it's an investigation for me. It's who I am.

People have often said about Bridgend that media reports encourage further suicides. Is there anything you wanted to say about the media?

Well, it all depends on how you do it. I know for a fact that, if you do a radio show on suicide, a newspaper article, anything, a film, then you have to be ready to bear it if someone might respond to it.

Do you worry about that now, in terms of your film?

Of course, I was warned from the beginning that I would have to bear that cross. But I would also have to realize, which is why I decided to move on, that as long as you do it right, then you will have... If you're unlucky, there may be an increase in suicides just after. But in the long run, the curve will be flatter. Because it really matters to talk about it and to inform.

Can you talk about the design and cinematography? It felt like you had a real sense of that particular place, the Welsh valleys, and it was so evocative.

Well, I was so fascinated by it. For me, it's extremely beautiful, these little matchbook houses, and the nature, the fog, but at the same time, it's also depressing. That it rains, and that it's grey. For me, it's this oxymoron of opposites. The beauty and the ugly. And then, it was obvious that you have this nature that surrounds them, fences them in. It's like when you read Ibsen, he used the fjords in Norway as nature-built prisons that you can't escape from. So I felt it was the same. You can just look at the nature there, they can't escape it. And they can't escape the nature in them. As if the nature outside is only reflecting the prison that is inside.

Is there anything else that you wanted people to know about *Bridgend*? Anything that you'd particularly like to say to people?

When I was shooting there, there was a cluster in Paris, and one in a university in the USA. It spread from Bridgend to Belfast, and in London, a 12-year-old who had a scrapbook full of Bridgend stuff. I can't say that we should change as humans, because can we, really? But that's why I talk about accepting the fact that even though we think "It will never happen to me," maybe if you know you have it inside, that it's part of who you are, then you are more careful to say to your children or to your friends, or whoever it is, that you love them. If you feel that love, it's more difficult, actually, to go and commit suicide, or do atrocities. So that would be the final line, go home and really see each other, and remember to say "I love you."

CAST

HANNAH MURRAY

Talented, up and coming British actress Hannah Murray has garnered critical acclaim for her roles in film, television, and theatre in her short career. In August 2014, Hannah was seen starring in Independent feature *God Help the Girl*, written and directed by Stuart Murdoch (*Belle & Sebastian*) and co-starring Emily Browning and Ollie Alexander. Next, Hannah will be seen playing 'Kat' in Micael Preysler's *Lily & Kat* opposite Jessica Rothe and Scott Evans. Hannah was most recently seen on stage starring as the title role in Jean-Jacques Bernard's seminal 1922 play *Martine* at The Finborough Theatre, which opened on Tuesday, 22 April 2014 for a four-week season. The Stage called her performance 'outstanding... compellingly capturing (Martine's instinctive emotions) and illuminating the stage' while The Guardian reviewed her portrayal as 'stunning'. In April 2015, Hannah will reprise the role of Gilly, one of the Free Folk and Craster's daughter and wife, in the highly anticipated fifth series of international hit HBO/SKY co-produced television series *Game of Thrones*. Hannah first caught the industry's attention in her breakout role as 'Cassie' in the original cast of *Skins*, broadcast on E4 in 2007. Hannah's performance won her a nomination for the Golden Nymph award for 'Outstanding Actress in a Drama Series' at the 2008 Monte-Carlo TV Festival. Hannah's other notable film credits include *Dark Shadows* with Johnny Depp and Helena Bonham Carter, *Chatroom* with Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Imogen Poots, and *Womb* with Eva Green and Matt Smith. Murray studied English at Queens' College, Cambridge.



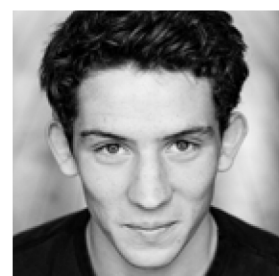
STEVEN WADDINGTON

Steven Waddington was recently seen in the Oscar-nominated film, *The Imitation Game*, directed by Morten Tyldum, alongside Benedict Cumberbatch and Rory Kinnear. Forthcoming features include: *A Little Chaos*, directed by Alan Rickman for Potboiler films, with Kate Winslet and Matthias Schoenaerts, which is due out in April. Among Mr. Waddington's other movies are Christopher Hampton's *Carrington*, starring with Jonathan Pryce and Emma Thompson; Michael Mann's *The Last of the Mohicans*, opposite Daniel Day-Lewis; Ridley Scott's *1492: Conquest of Paradise*, alongside Gerard Depardieu; Derek Jarman's *Edward II*; Antonia Bird's *Face*; Tim Burton's *Sleepy Hollow*; John Duigan's *The Parole Officer*; Neil Jordan's *Breakfast on Pluto*; Jérôme Salle's *Largo Winch*; Nick Love's *The Sweeney*; and Sergio Mimica-Gezzan's *Halo: Nightfall*.



JOSH O'CONNOR

Josh is a young British actor, originally from Cheltenham, England. He trained as an actor at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. He has already notched up some excellent TV, movie and stage performances in both comic and dramatic parts. His film credits include *The Riot Club* by Lone Scherfig and *Bridgend* by Jeppe Rønde. On TV, he appeared in *Doctor Who* and *Law and Order*, among others.





PRESS

This is ripped-from-the-headlines cinema reformulated as real-world horror film, with a shivery stylistic nod to the crime drama of Rønde's homeland.

(...) It's a subjectively sensory interpretation of events, adopting the perspective of a well-adjusted new girl in town who finds herself inexorably enveloped by the communal depression of her peers.

VARIETY

Bridgend avoids sensationalism and instead has a more deliberate pace in its storytelling, not trying to be a traditional thriller.

SCREEN DAILY

Bridgend is (...) indulgently moody, and sits alongside productions like Jamie Dead or the Twilight franchise. (...) Rønde adds a distinctly Nordic noir feel.

(...) Rønde definitely brings something only a Scandinavian could. He restores Wales' Celtic paganism brilliantly.

The juveniles repeatedly float their ashen bodies in a lake, surrounded by fires, thus beautifully recreating the River Styx. In fact, Rønde's use of this sylvan scene is a masterstroke. Let's hope he shoots in Wales again soon.

CINEUROPA

FESTIVALS

2015 / Rotterdam International Film Festival – Hivos Tiger Awards Competition / World Premiere

2015 / Tribeca FF – Best Cinematography / Best Actress / Best Editing – World Narrative Competition / North American premiere

2015 / Göteborg Film Festival – Debut Competition

2015 / CPH PIX – Opening Film and Competition

2015 / Krakow Off Camera IFF – Main Competition

2015 / Brussels FF – Main Competition

2015 / Karlovy Vary IFF – Another View

2015 / Fantasia IFF - Prix AQCC

2015 / Duhok IFF - Competition

2015 / Athens FF



BLENKOV & SCHÖNNEMANN PICTURES – PRODUCER

Blenkov & Schønnemann Pictures is a Copenhagen-based independent production company making feature films, documentaries and television drama. Michel Schønnemann graduated from the National Film School in Denmark (as Producer) in 1999 and started his own Production company in Copenhagen (Blenkov & Schønnemann Pictures) in 2003 with a sister company in the UK since 2013. He was employed at the Zentropa-owned company Elektropain 1999-2000, and at Thura Film in 2000-2003 – both places as developing producer. His credits include Bridgend by Jeppe Rønne, 2 Girls 1 Cake by Jens Dahl (Sundance-nominated short), Player by Tomas Villum Jensen and Sover Dolly på Ryggen by Hella Joof.

NEW EUROPE FILM SALES – SALES AGENT

Boutique world sales company based in Warsaw, Poland working with international content across the world. Founded in 2010 by Jan Naszewski, EAVE expert and industry manager for the T-Mobile New Horizons IFF. Company has a leading position in the short film market, where it works with directors such as Ruben Östlund, and Tomek Baginski and represents 6 Oscar® shortlisters. Since 2012, it opened the catalogue to carefully picked feature films as well. Out of the 17 feature films from the catalogue, 7 had their world or international premiere at the Berlinale (Including Generation winners VIOLET and MOTHER I LOVE YOU), 3 at Rotterdam IFF, and 3 in Karlovy Vary FF (Including Latvia's Oscar candidate ROCKS IN MY POCKETS).



CREW

DIRECTOR JEPPE RØNDE

SCREENPLAY JEPPE RØNDE, TORBEN BECH,
PETER ASMUSSEN

CINEMATOGRAPHY MAGNUS NORDENHOF JØNCK

SOUND RUNE PALVING

EDITING OLIVIER BUGGECOUTTÉ

MUSIC MONDKOPF

PRODUCTION DESIGN TOM PEARCE

CAST HANNAH MURRAY, STEVEN WADDINGTON,
JOSH O'CONNOR, ADRIAN RAWLINS,
PATRICIA POTTER, NIA ROBERTS,
ALED THOMAS

PRODUCERS MICHEL SCHØNNEMANN, MALENE BLENKOV

PRODUCTION COMPANY BLENKOV & SCHØNNEMANN PICTURES

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FILM INFO

TITLE BRIDGEND

ENGLISH TITLE BRIDGEND

GENRE THRILLER / DRAMA

LANGUAGE ENGLISH

COMPLETION 2015

WORLD PREMIERE ROTTERDAM IFF (TIGER COMPETITION)

DURATION 104 MIN

PICTURE COLOR

SCREEN RATIO SCOPE

SOUND SYSTEM 5.1

CAMERA ARRI ALEXA

AVAILABLE FORMATS DCP, BLU-RAY