



ALTITUDE FILM ENTERTAINMENT AND BFI DOC SOCIETY FUND PRESENT  
A PROJECT 1961 AND GRASP THE NETTLE PRODUCTION  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
PARK PICTURES

A PINNY GRYLLS AND SAM CRANE FILM

# Grand Theft Hamlet



MARK OOSTERVEEN  
SAM CRANE  
PINNY GRYLLS

PRODUCED BY  
JULIA TON  
REBECCA WOLFF

RUNNING TIME: 90 MINS | UK | 2024

## **SYNOPSIS**

January 2021. The UK is in its 3rd lockdown and all entertainment venues remain closed. For theatre actors Sam and Mark, the future looks bleak. As the pandemic drags on, Mark - single and childless - is increasingly socially isolated, while Sam panics about how he is going to support his young family. They spend their days in the online digital world of Grand Theft Auto and when they stumble across a theatre, they suddenly have an idea to stage a full production of Hamlet within the game. This film charts their ridiculous, hilarious and moving adventure as they battle violent grievers and discover surprising truths about life, friendship and the enduring power of Shakespeare.

*Supported by BFI Doc Society Fund, awarding National Lottery funds*

## **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

### *INTRODUCTION*

Theatre has always been about bringing communities together, breaking boundaries between the physical and the emotional, and finding new ways to present classic themes and stories. As technology has provided places for people to gather in new ways and for different purposes, the potential to merge centuries-old texts and the 21st century world of gaming avatars and simulated environments is thrilling.

In GRAND THEFT HAMLET, London-based couple Pinny Grylls, a documentary filmmaker, and Sam Crane, a veteran actor, begin an experiment in creativity they had no roadmap for. In early 2020, Crane was cast in the high-profile starring role in the London production of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child ... when the Covid-19 shutdowns brought the world to a standstill. After months of wondering when friends could get together again, life would get back to normal, and theatres could be attended, Crane was watching his and Grylls' preteen son play the seminal videogame Grand Theft Auto. Soon, Crane contacted his friend and fellow thespian, Mark Oosterveen, and together they set up avatars within the game, eventually deciding to perform a Shakespeare play inside the virtual world of the popular Rockstar Games, Inc., title.

As Grylls set up her own avatar and began recording Crane and Oosterveen's progress using multiple in-game cameras, a documentary narrative took shape: Inside Grand Theft Auto, Crane and Oosterveen's avatars would seek a place inside the game where, in July 2022, they would perform Hamlet. After recruiting other players to join them, they ultimately put on the play — if they can avoid the random virtual killings and carnage that are part of everyday life in the game.

While they seek out like-minded players from around the world whose curiosity and need to connect matched their own, Crane and Oosterveen figure out – in videogame-animated avatar form — what Hamlet's themes mean to them, how its existential explorations take on greater meaning during times of upheaval, how they can learn new things from a text they both know so well, and what the craft of acting can bring to audiences, and to themselves, in a new and confusing era.

The result, with emotional underpinnings and themes and set to a stirring and thoughtful score and edited down from some 300 hours of footage recorded within the game, won the GRAND THEFT HAMLET team the Innovation Award at the 2022 Stage Awards held in London in January 2023 — and is unlike anything audiences have ever experienced, on stage, on a screen, or wireless controller.

## METHOD TO THE MADNESS

"In the early days of the lockdown, we tried as a family keep going out for walks," says Crane. "When you're walking you can talk to children sometimes easier than at a kitchen table or something. And our son, who was 12 at the time, was just talking about games he was playing, and he told us about a popular YouTuber who did these ongoing fictional narratives inside the Minecraft universe, sort of a semi-scripted ongoing story. It made Pinny and I think that this was possible."

"It was live, and watching a livestream that was in a way a piece of improvised theatre was fascinating," adds Grylls.

"I hadn't really appreciated that you could do that," says Crane. "I was thinking about what I do as a professor, and as a performer. That was my professional identity, and I thought, how could I do this?"

Crane, a graduate of Oxford and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts, had starring roles at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse at Shakespeare's Globe in London, the Duke of York's Theatre on the West End, as well as on Broadway and in BBC productions. Grylls's documentaries have won several awards, and her work for theatres documenting actors earned acclaim. (Grylls and Crane met while both were at Oxford.) Just prior to the Covid lockdowns of 2020, Crane was cast in the lead role of the adult Harry Potter in the London production of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*.

The family was prepped for a change in their lives ... and then the real world intervened.

"Sam had just gotten the biggest job of his life, and we thought, 'Great, we'll be good for money for a while!' And it was a great honour for Sam —then, suddenly, that was all taken away," says Grylls. "And not just that, but the whole prospect of any kind of professional existence, really. Likewise, my career as a documentary filmmaker. To make my films, of course, it's necessary to be with people, and all of that was gone due to Covid." (Crane subsequently starred in *Cursed Child* starting October 2022.)

As Crane was considering in 2020 what to do next, "Zoom theatre"-type scenarios that were being done elsewhere seemed limiting. Then he learned more about the massive role-playing community online and began playing one of its biggest games for that, Rockstar Games' *Grand Theft Auto*, which at the time was on its fourth iteration. (*Grand Theft Auto V* would arrive a year later.)

"I had just known of it as a game that had a reputation for being ultraviolent but something that mainly kids play," says Crane. "Then I looked at it further and I was like, 'Okay, that's interesting — people are using this as a role-playing environment.' So, I watched some videos and streams that people were doing, and thought, this is really interesting. The game is beautiful, and I was really struck by the sophistication and beauty in it, and the humour in it. And then there was a huge jump in the aesthetic quality when the game went up to 4K. Basically it was cinematic quality. There was nothing like it."

"That's when I knew I could do this — but I also knew I couldn't do it my own," says Crane. "That's when I got in touch with Mark."

Mark Oosterveen's extensive work on stage, TV and in film also came to a halt with the Covid lockdowns in 2020. Based, as Crane and Grylls are, in London, Oosterveen had similar existential worries at the time about how an actor could perform their art when groups of people were being told not to gather.

Oosterveen had been playing videogames since the 1980s, and Grand Theft Auto specifically since around 2013. When Crane explained what he was envisioning, the two friends, who had acted together in projects years earlier, knew they were on the same wavelength.

“When Sam sort of tentatively talked about the idea, I really liked it,” says Oosterveen. “At that time, I think pretty much all my social interactions were digital or calling friends or facetimeing, but Sam and I were specifically working on something creative, so I was enthusiastic from the very start.”

“I just felt that putting on Hamlet inside Grand Theft Auto was clicking into something in a unique way and at a unique time,” adds Oosterveen. “It felt like this very unusual, weird lockdown situation had given us a chance to do something very unusual and weird and special.”

“I was very familiar with the environment that the game exists in, and Sam was sort of a casual gamer but had not played that game specifically,” Oosterveen says. “On a practical level, I showed him how the game works and what you could and can’t do in it. For that first session together, we just had our avatars get into a helicopter in the game and I showed him the sights, the major landmarks, so he got an idea of what the environment would be. It was almost like we were location scouting!”

Crane and Oosterveen were playing GTA on Sony’s PlayStation4; some six months in, Sony released the PS5, and a half a year after that, a next-gen version of the game in High Definition and 4K hit the market. That latest version was an epiphany of how GRAND THEFT HAMLET would look on a big screen.

It also, ironically, reminded Crane of the over 400-year-old roots of the whole project.

“We found a theatre space, an amphitheatre, and that plus the epic vibe of the game made me feel there was something dramatic and Shakespearean to this world,” says Crane. “I don’t mean the way The Royal Shakespeare Company does it, or the way ‘proper Shakespeare’ is supposed to be done. I mean the way it was originally in the rough, kind of dirty way of audiences in the late 1500s and early 1600s saw it. It was chaotic and a bit violent and messy.”

“In Shakespeare’s time, people would throw fruit and vegetables, they sold stuff in the audience, and sex workers would be working in the theatre — as in, working! — and in a way, we caught an essence of that gritty, down-and-dirty aspect to a Shakespeare performance,” adds Oosterveen. “Today of course, Shakespeare is seen as ‘high art’ and attended by respectable people, but in his time that wasn’t the case — he wrote for almost entirely illiterate audiences.”

“Grand Theft Auto is a violent game about all kinds of transgressions and drama and very melodramatic and over-the-top, and so is Hamlet,” adds Oosterveen. “When we brought new players in that we met in the game, we said, ‘This may seem a little dangerous’ — and that’s without the element I don’t think Shakespeare had to contend with, which is someone possibly shooting at you with automatic weapons.”

(When killed in the game, it would delay the process, the filmmakers say, and their avatars would be reset some ways away from where they were when they were “killed” — and so they often had to implore other avatars not to shoot them.)

“One major planning point was when the guys realized that they could do a promenade performance,” says Grylls. “They didn’t have to stay in the amphitheatre they had found in

the game. In fact, the whole of the game was a potential stage, and they could even utilize different vehicles to move between locations.”

Finding a troupe of “players” — in the Shakespearean sense, not the gaming sense — would be another challenge. As would generating in-game footage for Grylls’s documentary, and, not insignificantly, trying to avoid being repeatedly killed in a game known for its baroque violence and not for its theatrical endeavours.

“As we planned on this performance in Grand Theft Auto 5, we wanted human players to be with us and then to, potentially, interact positively or negatively,” says Oosterveen. Adds Crane, “There is a whole generation interacting within the world of this game. It just made complete sense to develop relationships with people whose avatars exist in the game.”

## MERGING WORLDS

That sense of “anything goes” inside Grand Theft Auto seemed from the start a green light to pursue the creative endeavour that would become GRAND THEFT HAMLET. Of course, GTA is, as the film’s team emphasize, a world designed as a dark satire of the way American cities are portrayed, a comment on the way there can be no limits to certain genres — including the portrayal of over-the-top violence in entertainment. This endeavour would be no different. So, as Crane and Oosterveen traverse the game’s stunning landscapes and find quirky corners not frequented by many players, the freedom of it all hit home.

“You can do what you want in the game — you can drive off and go and look at a sunset, or you could shoot and kill other players,” says Oosterveen. “But because most of the time people do over-the-top things like drive at the car off a skyscraper or fly a helicopter into a bridge, there’s an element of destructive playfulness to it — it’s often called a ‘sandbox environment,’ because when you’re a kid and in the sandbox area, you build things and smash them down. Yet that is actually what drew us to Grand Theft Auto, because in it you have this constant tension in which people can do whatever they want.”

“At the modern Shakespeare’s Globe theatre in London, which is an open-air stage modelled after the one from the 1500s, there are often some 700 people attending in the standing section, and you sometimes have to push past them, and it’s all very alive. GTA also has that kind of chaotic feeling,” explains Crane.

That sense of unpredictability lent even more ballast to Grylls’ plan to document it all — as well as the sense of the film’s emotional component of two actors trying to figure out life; life in the theatre; and what it all means. The emotions and introspection Crane and Oosterveen brought to their in-game conversations, often sparked by Shakespeare’s soliloquys, helped

Grylls and the team note that the 1987 Brit-indie black comedy film *WITHNAIL & I* was a vital touchstone for them.

“For about six months it was just Sam and I looking around the GTA environment, figuring out what would work or could work — we thought, maybe just some weird performance? — until we said, What about Shakespeare? Ok, then, which play?” says Oosterveen. “When we finally settled on Hamlet is when Pinny came in with her expertise and she began to document the whole process.”

To be able to capture the images in every camera angle possible, Grylls joined the game, creating an avatar and figuring out different ways to film the unique visual aesthetic of the GTA world. The project was first a short documentary, but it quickly became clear the story needed a feature-length film to do it justice.

Explains Grylls, “There is a camera basically on your phone that in the game can do close-ups, wide shots, and you can move the shots in the ‘normal way’ of being in the game, which is the classic third-person videogame camera position that people are familiar with. Then you can go into a first-person mode, in which a player doesn’t see their own avatar — and that’s quite useful in terms of filmmaking. And then there’s a third way, which is using your in-game phone, which is also great for close-ups. Through all those, you see how this is a film, not just the recording of someone playing a game.”

“There are of hours of people recording themselves playing games on YouTube; that’s nothing new, but it’s not filmmaking,” says Grylls. “I was really interested in pushing the boundaries of filmmaking. This is a whole fantasy adventure — this is an adventure story, it’s a bromance, plus there are all the other characters that came into the game. With multicamera footage, plus the time to develop various techniques and set-ups, we could record GRAND THEFT HAMLET in the best way possible.”

“The reason I make documentaries rather than fiction is because there’s an excitement that comes from not knowing what people are going to do,” continues Grylls. “Someone in a documentary could say something or do something you didn’t expect, and you’re on the edge of your seat. Sam and Mark were throwing this curveball into the gaming environment by delivering Shakespeare’s poetry, and then you wouldn’t know who would show up to join in or even just to watch.”

Nearly 20 avatars joined Crane and Oosterveen in the production, players from several countries around the world — all of them unknown to the filmmakers, and a few of whom actually had acting experience. Mostly, though, they were enthusiastic (and not looking to kill the acting troupe via classic GTA ultraviolence) who would portray Hamlet’s characters or act as stage managers for the 4-hour performance.

“We did have to be laser-focused, because if we were on on stage, so to speak, in character wither performing or shepherding the audience to a different area of the game, we had in the back of our minds that Pinny needed footage,” says Oosterveen. “There was a constant threat that something could go wrong, and things did and that’s ok, because honestly, we were expecting that.”

“My thought initially was, you can’t do this in such a crazy, chaotic world because it just won’t work — people will kill you all the time!” says Crane. “I thought, I need to embrace the chaos and the violence of this world and approach people in game and just see what happens that’s what we did then I started actually approaching other random players, saying, ‘Don’t kill me, I just want to do a Shakespeare speech,’ and sometimes you find people who actually want to be part of it, or just engage with it.”

Adds Oosterveen, “As theater actors especially, on at least one night, something will go wrong, and you have to make it work and find a way to bring the audience with you and keep the wheels spinning. We liked that sense of fizz and tension in the game — it kept us on our toes.”

“There’s something about the Grand Theft Auto world that when you’re playing the game, it does become real to a certain extent,” says Grylls. “We wanted to really go with that.”

#### *AUDITIONS AND PERFORMANCE*

Crane and Oosterveen would spend three-hour-long sessions understanding the world of Grand Theft Auto, until the actual, virtual performance of Hamlet in July 2022.

"It was great watching people turn up in the game and audition," says Crane. "I thought, this is fascinating, it's really cool, and the Shakespeare comes across well the way these people are doing it. They were actually good and looked good as well. It was really exciting way to watch it happen."

"There were people who were gamers, and people who were actors," adds Crane. "Many were two or three steps ahead of Pinny, Mark, and myself, as they were amazing at manipulating the 'emotes' on the controller — the selection on the menu in which you can point, or do a particular gesture, or do things like a dance. I was blown away by how agile one player named Gareth was in changing his emotions according to the Shakespeare text. I thought, he's inventing a new way of acting inside a game, but it was almost like ancient Greece when the use of masks was part of performance. It's actually very old and very new at the same time."

"Plus, we found that a repeated gesture by an avatar in the performance could become a sort of symbolic rendition of your character, which is again sort of classic — it's like *Commedia dell'arte* in Italy," says Crane. "It's not a realistic manifestation, but it is symbolic gestural physicality."

Says Oosterveen, "In the audition process, we knew our ideal collaborators were people who knew Shakespeare and knew videogames, but that was hard to find. In the real world, I informally reached out to Shakespearean actors who said, '...What is that?' And I contacted game players who said things like, 'I don't know about Shakespeare.' It was a very small, shared area of a Venn diagram that contained both. We put some feelers out and got some brutal 'No's.' That overlap though is small but intense, and it absolutely works."

"When we pitched the documentary originally to the British Film Institute's Doc Society, from the start we said it's all going to be in the game, and it will be a piece of theatre," notes Grylls. "Like all theatre, one needs to suspend disbelief. We did wonder, can we get away with going inside this world and staying inside this world, and in fact get people immersed in this so they accept it? I didn't want people to think it was an animation film, and I put things in the edit deliberately to shake you out of that."

As the team created viral notices about the play, used WhatsApp and PlayStation messenger, and posted in GTA chatrooms to alert players around the world to the July 2022

performance and livestream, the anticipation built up. "I loved that people were excited to be there for the event, and there were different layers of audience," says Grylls. "There was the audience in the game — that's like live theatre, like going to the Globe or something — and then there was people watching the livestream, so it's like you're there at the same time without being in the same physical space, like a simulcast. And people could also watch it afterwards as well."

"Everyone involved in the production were coming up with different places we could use," says Crane. "When we found the blimp and realized it's big enough that we could do a scene on top of it, and we were up there and saw the level of detail and the curvature of the earth, I thought, this is mind-blowing. It was a time when because of Covid we weren't really allowed to travel, so it was quite exciting to be able to travel in the game to different locations. I marvelled at the technical and artistic sophistication of this world."

"We did two full run-throughs before we did the performance, but some people were only available for the first one and some people weren't able to do it ultimately, so it was flying-by-the-seat-of-your-pants stuff," says Oosterveen. "We had live people in the game with us as audience members, other people who could kill us, people watching live, and we had to be prepared for anything."

When the Hamlet performance was done, Grylls edited the footage as the team brought in Jamie Perera to write the extraordinary music and do sound design. The result is both classic and revolutionary.

"GRAND THEFT HAMLET is a testament to Shakespeare in that his work can be in any environment, and a testament to video games, in that they can be played in different ways," says Oosterveen. "Both worlds are versatile."

"Sam and I are both into traditional storytelling structure," says Grylls, "and while this film is something very different, we worked hard to give it a strong story that takes the audience along with us."

## **ABOUT THE CAST AND CREW**

### **PINNY GRYLLS – Co-Director**

After founding Birds Eye View Film Festival, Grylls became an award-winning documentary and commercials director. Her first short documentary, PETER AND BEN, won awards at Aspen, London Short Film Festival, and SXSW. Since then she has specialized in making documentaries about theatre, opera and dance. Films include THE HOUR (National Theatre/BBC), BECOMING ZERLINA (The Royal Opera House), WHO DO YOU THINK YOU WERE (Channel 4), VOYTEK THE SOLDIER BEAR (BBC), THANKYOU WOMEN (The Guardian), and SKIN HUNGER (Arts Council/ Dante or Die). She was a contributing filmmaker to Grierson-nominated THE STREET bought by AMAZON and is currently developing her first fiction feature HEAR MY VOICE with BFI funding. Commercials include DOVE, ALDI 'Like series' and BRITISH GAS. GRAND THEFT HAMLET will be her debut documentary feature.

Pinny studied Archaeology and Anthropology at Oxford University and has worked for over a decade as a senior ethnographic researcher for Ipsos Mori and the UK government through Policy Lab. She was also an Associate Lecturer in ethnographic filmmaking in the Anthropology department at University College London. Other teaching work includes the Poplar Film School, Central Film School, University of the Creative Arts London, Creative Futures, and HERE ON EARTH – an International collaborative environmental documentary project made online in lock down by teenagers in Taiwan, London and New York. She is a proud member of the hard of hearing/deaf community and is learning British Sign Language. <https://vimeo.com/pinnygrylls> [www.pinnygrylls.co.uk](http://www.pinnygrylls.co.uk)

### **SAM CRANE, Co-Director**

Crane is an award-winning machinima video artist and actor. He is currently playing Harry Potter in the West End production of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child and can soon be seen as Jacques-Louis David in Ridley Scott's forthcoming film NAPOLEON for Sony Pictures and Apple TV. In a theatre career spanning 20 years, he has been critically acclaimed for his performances at the National Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe, in the West End and on Broadway. He starred as Farinelli in Farinelli And The King alongside Mark Rylance, and Winston Smith in Robert Icke's multi-award-winning 1984.

His machinima film WE ARE SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE ON won the Critics' Choice award at Milan Machinima Festival, First Prize for Video Art at The Athens Digital Arts Festival, was shortlisted for the Lumen Prize and long-listed for the Aesthetica Art Prize.



He is a PhD candidate at York University's School of Arts and Creative Technologies and a member of the PEERS programme of artistic researchers at Zurich University of the Arts. He read Classics as an Undergraduate at Oxford University and trained as an actor at LAMDA where he won the Nicholas Hytner scholarship. [www.rusticmascara.com](http://www.rusticmascara.com)

### **MARK OSTERVEEN - Cast**

Mark is a London-based actor and voice over artist. His theatre work in the UK includes productions at the Crucible Theatre (Sheffield), the Royal Exchange (Manchester), and the Lyric, Arcola, Soho, and Orange Tree Theatres (all London), as well as various performances at Shakespeare's Globe. He has also performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Off-Broadway at 59E59.

His film and TV work includes the soap operas EASTENDERS, DOCTORS and CASUALTY (all BBC), the third season of THE GIRLFRIEND EXPERIENCE (Prime Video), the Terence Davies feature film BENEDICTION (Netflix), the fifth season of UNFORGOTTEN (PBS), the recent DJANGO TV series (Netflix), and the latest season of SILENT WITNESS (BBC).

He will shortly be seen in the new Guy Ritchie feature film THE MINISTRY OF UNGENLEMANLY WARFARE, as well as the new ITV miniseries SUSPECT: THE SHOOTING OF JEAN CHARLES DE MENEZES, and has just finished filming the new Nia DaCosta feature film HEDDA.

### **REBECCA WOLFF – Producer**

Wolff became an independent producer after working as Head of Development at a BAFTA-award winning production company. She has produced many shorts and documentaries which have received international acclaim on the festival circuit, screening at Sundance London, SXSW, BFI London Film Festival, and others.. She runs Grasp The Nettle Films, a CE50 company (Creative England's award to the top 50 creative companies in the UK) specializing in genre films and documentaries. With strong talent and financier relationships, she is working on a slate of feature and documentary projects. She is currently producing three feature documentaries which have received the support of BFI Doc Society including one, SUPER NATURE with award-winning director Asif Kapadia and Nikki Parrott attached as executive producers. She just produced her debut fiction feature and is developing a slate of horror films with BAFTA and BIFA award-winning producers Early Day Films and has just signed a first look deal for the slate with sales and distribution company Blue Finch International.

### **JULIA TON – Producer**

London-based production company Project 1961 is run by Julia Ton and specializes in community-led, socially-conscious filmmaking that aims to give communities ownership of the stories being told about them on screen. Julia is a producer with over 15 years of experience in fiction, creative documentaries and animation. Over the years, she has set up over a dozen European co-productions: from Peter Greenaway's art house films, to the Emmy award-winning documentary about Bellingcat, and the high-end animation film BENJAMIN BAT. Currently, she and filmmaker Pinny Grylls are developing the fiction feature HEAR MY VOICE, supported by the British Film Institute, Foundation for Future London, and many Kickstarter backers. The story has been written, and the music is developed by the young people the film is about. In 2022, Mari Soppela's documentary IT'S RAINING WOMEN, which she also produced, premiered in Helsinki, Finland, and sold to ARTE France, YLE, among others.

### **BETH LEVISON - Executive Producer**

Beth Levison is a New York City based producer/director who, following a career in nonfiction television, has been in the independent documentary filmmaking trenches for the last 15 years. Her most recently-completed producing effort, THE MARTHA MITCHELL EFFECT (dirs. Anne Alvergue/Debra McClutchy, producing partner Judith Mizrachy), about Arkansas-born Watergate whistleblower and Republican cabinet wife Martha Mitchell, premiered at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival, launched on Netflix, and was nominated for a 2023 Academy Award (Best Documentary Short category). Her previous film, STORM LAKE, which she directed alongside DP Jerry Risius and also produced, premiered at the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, broadcast on PBS's Independent Lens in 2022, and was nominated for a Peabody and an Emmy Award. In addition to her film credits, Levison is the founder of Hazel Pictures, a production company that emphasizes mind-opening stories about women, artists, and those who challenge the status quo; a co-founder of the Documentary Producers Alliance; faculty with the department of Film and Moving Image Arts at Sarah Lawrence College; a member of the Academy; and a proud mom to her two boys, Ben and Gabe.

### **SAM BISBEE - Executive Producer**

Sam Bisbee is an Emmy Award-winning and Independent Spirit and Peabody Award-nominated producer and founding partner of Park Pictures Features. Over the last decade, Sam and Park Pictures have produced the Sundance Sloan Award winner ROBOT AND FRANK, the Golden Globe-nominated INFINITELY POLAR BEAR (Sony Pictures Classics), the Independent Spirit Award winner OTHER PEOPLE (Netflix), the Sundance Audience Award winner THE SENTENCE (HBO), which went on to win a Primetime Emmy for Exceptional Merit in Documentary Filmmaking, the Criterion Collection film FAREWELL AMOR (IFC), the BAFTA award winner EARTH MAMA (A24/Film4) and, most recently, Daughters, the winner of the 2024 Sundance "Festival Favorite" award.

### **About BFI DOC SOCIETY FUND**

The BFI Doc Society Fund was launched in 2018, as Doc Society became the BFI's delegate partner for independent UK documentary filmmaking. To date, it has distributed over £5.3 million to UK independent documentary films, thanks to National Lottery funding. The Fund supports creative and hybrid feature documentaries with bold cultural and social ambitions, and short films by diverse, emerging voices from all over the UK.

In 2023 Doc Society was reaffirmed as the BFI's delegate partner for another three years with a further £6m commitment.

The fund has supported 63 independent documentary features since 2018, including A BUNCH OF AMATEURS, NOTHING COMPARES, FASHIONED REIMAGINED, KANAVAL: A HISTORY OF HAITI IN SIX CHAPTERS, REBELLION, NASCONDINO MAYA, AFRICAN APOCALYPSE, LOCKED IN, BANK JOB, MEN WHO SING, POLYSTYRENE: I AM A CLICHÉ. The films have screened internationally and secured a number of award nominations, winning at The Grierson Awards, BIFAs, BAFTA, and RTS.

Key partners include BBC Films, Doc Society's Climate Story Fund, Screen Scotland, Ffilm Cymru, Field of Vision and Northern Ireland Screen.

63 short films, including BAFTA, Grierson and Emmy award winners, have been funded through the BFI Doc Society Made of Truth fund, in partnership with BFI NETWORK. They have screened at international festivals including Sundance, London, IDFA, Sheffield, TIFF amongst

others and been distributed and exhibited by Guardian Docs, Nat Geo, POV, Al Jazeera & the V&A.

The BFI Doc Society Fund supports and enables independent non-fiction film by British filmmakers, prioritising expansive, director-led storytelling. It also facilitates a dedicated support programme aimed at building connections with documentary filmmakers across all corners of the UK and provides professional development opportunities for grantee filmmakers.

### **About DOC SOCIETY**

Founded in 2005, Doc Society is a global non-profit with teams based in Europe, East Africa, the Americas and Australia. For 18 years the organisation has opened up new resources for independent documentary filmmakers and over that period, granted a total of \$22 million in production and impact funds. To date we have helped to fund more than 500 award winning documentary films including: CITIZENFOUR, AN INSIGNIFICANT MAN, HALE COUNTY THIS MORNING, THIS EVENING, EDGE OF DEMOCRACY, THE LOOK OF SILENCE, THE WHITE HELMETS, WHOSE STREETS, VIRUNGA SOFTIE, ROLL RED ROLL and THE SILENCE OF OTHERS.

In 2023, we re-granted over \$2.7 million USD to global storytellers. Doc Society has sharpened its global operations with two major narrative strategy initiatives: the [Climate Story Unit](#) and the [Democracy Story Unit](#), focused on “unleashing transformative storytelling to advance a just future.”

### **SOCIAL HANDLES**

Film:

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X @granthefthamlet (no d)

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IG @samuelrcrane

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## **CREDITS**

Writer/directors	Pinny Grylls Sam Crane
Associate writer/director	Mark Oosterveen
Composer	Jamie Perera
Producers	Julia Ton Rebecca Wolff
Executive producers	Beth Levison Sam Bisbee Jackie Kelman Bisbee Cody Ryder Will Clarke Andy Mayson Mike Runagall Sam Crane Harlene Freezer Eric Kuhn Hannah Bush Bailey Shanida Scotland
Production companies	Project 1961 Grasp the Nettle Films
In association with	Park Pictures
International sales	Altitude Film Sales

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