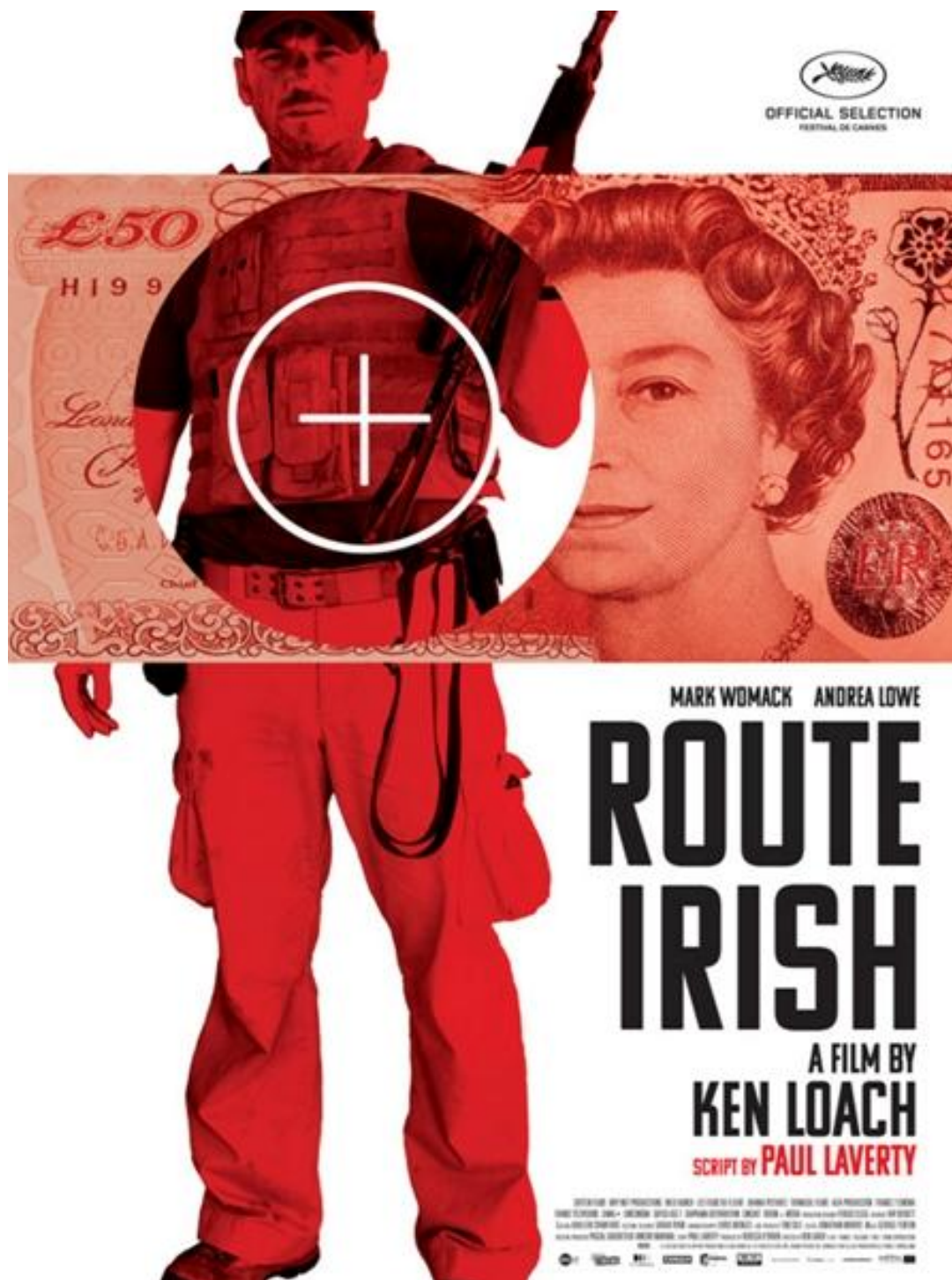


Persmap





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present

ROUTE IRISH

een film van Ken Loach

met Mark Womack en Andrea Lowe

September 2001. De Britse Fergus is veiligheidsondernemer in Irak en haalt zijn boezemvriend Frankie over om voor zijn team in Baghdad te komen werken. Volgens hem de laatste kans om 'groot geld' te verdienen in deze steeds meer geprivatiseerde oorlog.

September 2007. Frankie wordt gedood op 'Route Irish', de gevaarlijkste weg in de wereld. Fergus keert terug naar Liverpool, verscheurd door verdriet en schuldgevoel. Hij wantrouwt echter de officiële doodsverklaring van zijn vriend, en besluit zelf op onderzoek te gaan. Kan Fergus erachter komen wat er die dag met Frankie is gebeurd op 'Route Irish'? En kan hij de levenslust die hij met hem deelde weer terug vinden?

Een coproductie tussen Groot-Brittannië/Frankrijk/België/Italië/Spanje
1 u 49 - 1.85 – Dolby SRD

Release datum: 16 juni 2011

Distributie: Cinéart

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Marketing en publiciteit: Cinéart

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Persgedeelte: gebruiker: cineart/ wachtwoord: film

Liverpool, August 1976. 5-year-old Fergus met Frankie on his first day at school. They've been in each others' shadow ever since. As teenagers they skipped school and drank cider on the ferry over the River Mersey, dreaming about travelling the world. Little did Fergus realise his dream would come true as a highly trained member of the UK's elite special forces, the SAS.

After resigning in September 2004, Fergus persuaded Frankie (by now an ex-Para) to join his security team in Baghdad. £10,000 a month, tax free. Their last chance to "load up" in this increasingly privatised war. Together they risked their lives in a city steeped in violence, terror and greed, and awash with billions of US dollars. In September 2007, Frankie died on Route Irish, the most dangerous road in the world. Back in Liverpool, a grief-stricken Fergus rejects the official explanation, and begins his own investigation into his soul mate's death.

Only Rachel, Frankie's partner, grasps the depth of Fergus's sorrow, and the lethal possibilities of his fury. As Fergus tries to find out what happened to Frankie on Route Irish, he and Rachel grow closer. As he approaches the truth behind Frankie's death, Fergus struggles to find his old self and the happiness he shared with Frankie twenty years earlier on the Mersey.



ABOUT ROUTE IRISH

PAUL LAVERTY

Script writer

We are all familiar with the ritual of the body of a dead soldier returning from foreign soil: solemn music, the national flag, escorts and salutes recorded in detail by the nation's media. Words of consolation flow from politicians and generals to brokenhearted relatives, many so young they often clutch infants. It wasn't quite that way for Deely, the sister of Robert, an ex-Paratrooper who was ambushed in Iraq. He was flown back from Kuwait and arrived at Glasgow airport. The undertaker told Deely there were ten bodies on the plane that day, two of which were unidentifiable. Robert's coffin looked "like a big orange crate". There was no fanfare, no Union Jack, no journalists and not one question. His death, as far as we know, wasn't added to any list. The reason is simple. Robert was no longer a Paratrooper, but a private contractor. Some call them private soldiers, or Corporate warriors, or security consultants. Iraqis call them mercenaries.

The business of war is being privatised slowly and deliberately before our eyes. Robert's orange crate of a coffin tells us so, as do the statistics. Patrick Cockburn, a well respected commentator on Iraq, estimated that there were around 160,000 foreign contractors in Iraq at the height of the occupation, many of whom - perhaps as many as 50,000 - were heavily armed security personnel. The conduct of the war, and occupation afterwards, would have been impossible without their muscle. Thanks to Paul Bremer, the US appointed head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, each and every one of those contractors was given immunity from Iraqi law in the shape of Order 17 which was imposed on the new Iraqi Parliament. (Order 17 lasted from 2003 till the beginning of 2009.)

Nobody is interested in counting how many Iraqi civilians have been killed or injured by private contractors, but there is a vast body of evidence to suggest that there has been widespread abuse. Blackwater's massacre of 17 civilians in the middle of Baghdad was the most notorious incident, but there were many more that went unreported. One senior contractor told me, on condition of anonymity, that he spoke to a South African who told him killing an Iraqi was just like "shooting a Kafir". Other bone fide contractors, proud of their professionalism, told me of their disgust at the violence of "the cowboys". If a contractor was involved in an incident which caused a fuss, they were whisked out of the country by their company. Impunity, by order. While lowly contractors gambled with lives and limbs on Route Irish, the Chief executives of those same companies made fortunes. Mr David Lesar, chief executive of Halliburton, (former CEO being Dick Cheney) earned just under 43 million dollars in 2004. Mr Gene Ray of Titan earned over 47 million between 2004 and 2005. Mr JP London of CACI earned 22 million. The devil is always in the detail. Private contractors charged the US army up to 100 dollars to do a single soldier's laundry bag. In an official report dated January 2005, the Special Investigator General for Iraq Reconstruction Stuart Bowen revealed that over 9 billion dollars had disappeared in fraud and corruption, and that was only during a very limited period of the Provisional Authority. Financial impunity too.

As one contractor told me, the “place stank of money”. Little wonder poorly paid soldiers and elite Special Forces left in such numbers to join these private military corporations, as they saw their chance of a lifetime “to load up”. These men “load up” with more than cash.

We are now used to seeing images of carnage and slaughter “over there.” We are accustomed to stories of missing billions, corporate greed, abuse, torture, and secret prisons. The Lancet’s detailed estimate of 654,965 dead as at June 2006 is almost beyond the mind’s capacity to grasp. It all seems now at a safe distance in time and place. Iraq fatigue, we are told, is upon us.

But “over there” is on its way back home. Iraq is inside the heads of “our boys”. I was stunned to learn from the charity Combat Stress that deals with ex-soldiers suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome that on average, it takes approximately 17 years for PTSS to manifest itself. They are bracing themselves (as is the US army) for a massive surge in the years to come.

Norma, a gentle nurse on the point of retiring who had spent years with ex-soldiers, opened the way for this story when she told me “many of these men are in mourning for their former selves.” An ex-soldier showed me a painting he had done of himself. “I just want my old self back.”

Order 17 may have been revoked in Iraq but its spirit still reigns supreme: the stink of impunity, the lies, the contempt for international law, the undermining of the Geneva conventions, the secret prisons, the torture, the murder...the hundreds of thousands of dead. As I imagine the intellectual authors of the above, Bush, Blair, Rumsfeld and co, collecting their millions in after dinner speeches and setting up their interfaith foundations, I cannot help but think of the nurses in Falujah assisting the births of babies born with two heads and deformed faces thanks to the chemical bombs rained on that city. Our gift to the future.

So we wondered about Order 17 back home.

Iraq, in an English country garden.

Paul Laverty – 11th May 2010.



REBECCA O'BRIEN

Producer

After LOOKING FOR ERIC we felt it was important to make something serious and uncompromising and our French partners on that film, Pascal Caucheteux at Why Not and Vincent Maraval at Wild Bunch, were willing to support us fully. It was excellent to be able to work with them again, the financing became simple and straight forward and it gave me the opportunity to concentrate on the production. Our other regular European partners came on board along with North West Vision in the UK. We filmed in Jordan for the Iraq scenes – not only did The Royal Jordanian Film Commission prove very supportive in setting up the production but there are many Iraqi refugees there who were able to work with us as supporting cast. Their truly harrowing stories brought the truth of what we were filming into close perspective. It was a joy to work in Liverpool again – it's a really manageable city full of wily characters and charm.

MARK WOMACK

Fergus

Ken has you do a lot of research. He'll have you meet a lot of people that might be similar to the character. You have a lot of conversations that might be useful and read a lot about the world the character lives in, so when the scenes are thrown at you, you've met contractors and heard all their stories and you can build the character from that. You also spend a lot of time with the characters you're going to work with and you bond with them. I went to army boot camp with John Bishop who plays Frankie and Trevor who plays Nelson, so I got to know them quite well. We were already comfortable with each other by the time it came to filming. I was upset on the first day to be told John was dead, I felt pretty much how I imagine it feels to lose a friend. John was great because he knew all along and he kept it quiet. Fergus is on a path of self-destruction like many of the soldiers I met with combat stress. One of the guys I met said you go in the army and they turn you on, but nobody turns you off. How can you go from seeing what you've seen in Iraq and Afghanistan to shopping in Sainsbury's with the wife and kids. Some guys can adjust, but a lot of them can't.

ANDREA LOWE

Rachel

I'd seen most of Ken's films and I thought, like a lot of people perhaps, that they are improvisation based. But they're not, there's a beautiful script. Where the improvisation comes in is in the development of the character. Sometimes you know parts of the script that the other actors don't, but you don't ask them and they wouldn't tell you because we all really enjoy the process. It ensures that your reactions are natural and keeps things fresh and spontaneous and so as an actor you don't over analyse. The essence of Ken's films is the truth in people and this film is about broken people. When we were working on the back story we established that Rachel had met Fergus first and she's had a bit of a wild past and been into the music scene and travelled around a lot, she's just decided to become a personal trainer and she's into her yoga and they met in a gym. He's dark and moody and she would perhaps have gone for it with him in the past, but she's at a time in her life when that's not what she wants, so there's an unfulfilled attraction between them. Fergus introduces her to Frankie and she falls for him, he's big and light and fun. After Frankie dies, Fergus is in a dark place and can't let her in to save him. They can't rescue each other, it's tragic.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

FERGUS - Mark Womack

British actor Mark Womack is best known for his television roles, starring as DC Mark Callaghan in 'Liverpool 1' (1998), as Jack in 'Sorted' (2006) and also starring in Willy Russell's 'Dancin' Thru the Dark' (1990). Other television credits include 'Hillsborough', 'Moving On', 'Murphy's Law', 'Clocking Off' and 'Playing the Field'. 'Route Irish' is Mark's feature film debut. He will also be seen in the forthcoming thriller 'I Against I'.

RACHEL - Andrea Lowe

Andrea Lowe is a graduate of Goldsmiths College. 'Route Irish' is her first film. She has worked extensively in television, including roles in 'Silent Witness', 'The Unloved' (directed by Samantha Morton for Revolution/Channel 4), 'Shameless' (directed by David Threlfall for Company Pictures/Channel 4), 'The Tudors', 'The Bill', 'Coronation Street', 'Torchwood' and 'Where the Heart Is'.

FRANKIE - John Bishop

John Bishop is a stand-up comedian and Edinburgh Comedy Award (formerly the Perrier) nominee 2009, from Liverpool. He continues his sell out tour throughout the UK performing in large venues and arenas until 2011. His TV appearances include: 'Live at the Apollo' (BBC1), 'Friday Night with Jonathan Ross' (BBC1), 'Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow' (BBC1), '8 out of 10 Cats' (Channel 4), 'Mock The Week' (BBC2) and 'Skins' (E4). More recently John joined sports show 'A League of their Own' as their regular panellist on Sky 1 and Sky HD. In November John's live DVD will be released.

WALKER - Geoff Bell

Bell has appeared in many films including 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' (2003), 'Stardust' (2007), and Guy Ritchie's 'RocknRolla' (2008). One of his best known roles is in 'Green Street', where he appeared as Tommy Hatcher, the main characters rival. Bell's television credits include 'The Long Firm' (2004) and 'Making Waves' (2004). He recently appeared as the sports teacher in 'Tormented' (2009) and he will also appear in the 2010 feature 'Wild Target' alongside Rupert Grint, Bill Nighy and Rupert Everett and also in 'The Heavy.' In spring 2010 Bell appeared in the BBC series 'Five Daughters' as DC Roy Lambert.

NELSON - Trevor Williams

Trevor Williams has worked extensively on television over the past year – starting with appearances in 'Cold Feet', 'Clocking Off', 'The Cops' and more recently appearing in some of the best UK drama productions including 'The Street', 'Shameless', 'Coronation Street', 'Life on Mars' and 'Bradford Riots'. 'Route Irish' is his first feature film role.

CREW FILMOGRAPHIES

KEN LOACH – Director

ROUTE IRISH (2011), LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), IT'S A FREE WORLD (2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006), TICKETS (2004), AE FOND KISS (2003), 11'09'01 (2002), SWEET SIXTEEN (2002), THE NAVIGATORS (2001), BREAD AND ROSES (2000), MY NAME IS JOE (1998), CARLA'S SONG (1996), LAND AND FREEDOM (1995), LADYBIRD (1994), RAINING STONES (1993), RIFF-RAFF (1991), HIDDEN AGENDA (1990), FATHERLAND (1986), REGARDS ET SOURIRES (1981), BLACK JACK (1979), THE GAMEKEEPER (1979), FAMILY LIFE (1971), KES (1969), POOR COW (1967).

REBECCA O'BRIEN – Producer

ROUTE IRISH (2011), LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), IT'S A FREE WORLD...(2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006), TICKETS (2005), JUST A KISS (2004), 11'09'01 (2002), SWEET SIXTEEN (2002), THE NAVIGATORS (2001), BREAD AND ROSES (2000), PRINCESA (2000), MY NAME IS JOE (1998), BEAN (1997), LAND AND FREEDOM (1995), HIDDEN AGENDA (1990), FRIENDSHIP'S DEATH (1987).

PAUL LAVERTY – Writer

ROUTE IRISH (2011), MÊME LA PLUIE (2011), LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), IT'S A FREE WORLD...(2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006), CARGO (2006), TICKETS (2005), AE FOND KISS(2004), 11'09'01 (2002), SWEET SIXTEEN (2002), BREAD AND ROSES (2000), MY NAME IS JOE (1998), CARLA'S SONG (1996).

GEORGE FENTON – Composer

ROUTE IRISH (2011), BOUNTY HUNTER (2010), LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), FOOL'S GOLD (2008), IT'S A FREE WORLD... (2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006), MRS HENDERSON PRESENTE (2005), JUST A KISS (2004), SWEET HOME ALABAMA (2002), SWEET SIXTEEN (2002), MY NAME IS JOE (1998), LES SORCIERES DE SALEM (1996), LADYBIRD (1994), LAND AND FREEDOM (1994), UN JOUR SANS FIN (1992), FISHER KING (1991), LES LIAISONS DANGEREUSES (1988), LA COMPAGNIE DES LOUPS (1984).

CHRIS MENGES – Cinematography

ROUTE IRISH (2011), LONDON BOULEVARD (2010), THE READER (2008), CHRONIQUE D'UN SCANDALE (2006), LES TROIS ENTERREMENTS DE MELQUIADES ESTRADA (2005), THE GOOD THIEF (2002), DIRTY PRETTY THINGS (2002), THE BOXER (2007), MICHAEL COLLINS (1996), THE MISSION (1986), THE KILLING FIELDS (1984), LOCAL HERO (1983), KES (1970).

FERGUS CLEGG – Production Designer

LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), IT'S A FREE WORLD... (2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006).

JONATHAN MORRIS – Editor

ROUTE IRISH (2011), LOOKING FOR ERIC (2009), IT'S A FREE WORLD (2007), THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY (2006), TICKETS (2004), AE FOND KISS (2003),11'09'01 (2002), SWEET SIXTEEN (2002), THE NAVIGATORS (2001), BREAD AND ROSES (2000), MY NAME IS JOE (1998), CARLA'S SONG (1996), LAND AND FREEDOM (1995), LADYBIRD(1994), RAINING STONES (1993), RIFF-RAFF (1991), HIDDEN AGENDA (1990), FATHERLAND (1986).

CAST

Fergus	Mark Womack
Rachel	Andrea Lowe
Frankie	John Bishop
Nelson	Trevor Williams
Walker	Geoff Bell
Haynes	Jack Fortune
Harim	Talib Rasool
Tommy	Russell Anderson
Craig	Craig Lundberg
Jamie	Jamie Michie

CREW

Director	Ken Loach
Writer	Paul Laverty
Producer	Rebecca O'Brien
Executive producers	Vincent Maraval, Pascal Caucheteux
Line producer	Tim Cole
Editor	Jonathan Morris
Chef opérateur	Chris Menges
Production designer	Fergus Clegg
Costumes	Sarah Ryan
Sound editor	Kevin Brazier
Music	George Fenton
Casting	Kahleen Crawford



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MMX