



COTTON WOOL

SHORT FILM

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ABOUT THE STORY

LOGLINE

A single mother suffers a devastating stroke leaving her teenage daughter and 7-year-old son to care for her, testing the family's strength to hold things together as roles are reversed.

SYNOPSIS

Hardworking single mother, Rachel (Leanne Best) is struggling to keep her family in order. Her stropky teenaged daughter, Jennifer (Katie Quinn) refuses to help around the house and her 7-year-old son, Sam (Max Vento) pesters for attention. However, their world is turned upside down when Rachel suffers a devastating stroke, leaving her wheelchair-bound. With only Sam to take care of her and Jennifer more interested in seeing her friends, roles in the family are reversed. Shop worker, Marion (Kate Rutter), care worker, Liz (Gemma North), and speech therapist, Gerry (Crissy Rock) give the limited help they can; however, Jennifer continues to stand on the sidelines. Cotton Wool is the heartbreaking story of a normal family wracked by unexpected tragedy and how they must attempt to cope when the children are forced to act as the parent.

STATISTIC'S

Inspired by the plight and courage of the 243,000 child-carers under 19 in England and Wales, 9,000 of which are under the age of 9.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT ON THE FILM'S NARRATIVE

'Cotton Wool' is a very personal film, it was inspired in part by my grandmother who suffered a stroke over forty years ago when my mother was a young child. Sadly she passed away within a few short days of having her stroke but I often wondered what would have happened if she had survived, leaving her young family to look after her. How would this event have changed their lives?

SPECIFICATIONS



Genre: Drama

Production Company: Cherwell Productions Ltd

Running time: 38 minutes 18 seconds (Including Credits)

Made with help and advice from: The Stroke Association

Aspect Ratio: 2.35:1

Cameras: Red Epic Dragon (4K) & Arriflex 435 (35mm)

Digital Cinema Package's Available:

CRU, DCP (2K) USB, DCP (2K)

British Board of Film Classification (Theatrical): 12A

Production Budget: £55,000

Film Language: English

Subtitles: N/A

Country of Origin/Production: England, United Kingdom

Shooting Location: West Yorkshire, England



THE CORE TEAM



Writer & Director - Nicholas Connor

Born and raised in Oldham, Manchester, England, Nicholas' film work has screened at over 50 film festivals globally where he has personally won 31 awards with 55 nominations.

In 2016, he wrote & directed hour-long drama 'Northern Lights', which won multiple awards including 'Film of the Year' at UK Monthly Film Festival. The film starred - Rhys Cadman (Shameless, Love, Lies and Records) & Gemma North (Peaky Blinders, Butterfly).

In 2017, Nicholas was awarded the Into Film 'Ones to Watch' Award 2017 Sponsored by EON Productions

(James Bond) presented by Barbara Broccoli and Charles Dance.

For his work on 'Cotton Wool' he has received multiple awards and nominations for Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Film. Including winning Best Director at the 'European Independent Film Awards', Best Picture at the 'Los Angeles Film Awards', Special Jury Prize at the 'London Film Awards' and was nominated for Best Director at the Lift-Off Season Awards 2019. Most recently, Nicholas was awarded the 'UK Inspirational Children and Young Peoples Award' for 'Arts and Culture' and in 2018 was made a BAFTA Mentee.

Nicholas has worked in the production of projects such as Star Wars Episode 9, Pokémon Detective Pikachu, Hitman 2 and Alex Garland's new TV Series DEV's. In 2018, he joined Kay Mellor's Young Writers Scheme, assisting Mrs Mellor (Band of Gold, The Syndicate, Fat Friends) and her company in developing and brainstorming ideas for a new TV Series.

He also recently studied Directing at the renowned 'National Film and Television School BFI Academy', premiering his film 'The Narrator' at the British Film Institute.





Producer - Mark Quinn

Mark is the Producer and Executive Producer of 'Cotton Wool' acting under his production company Cherwell Productions Ltd. Mark attended a Film Producing course at the MET Film School based in Ealing Studios.

He was born and raised in Oldham, Manchester on Cherwell Street, with his family originating from County Galway in Ireland. The Cherwell Street has since been demolished but the location acts as the logo for Cherwell Productions Ltd. In 2016, he produced 'Northern Lights' and opened his first production company.

Mark Quinn's next film is entitled 'Ronnie and Julia' which he has both written and produced. The film is due to be directed by Michael Hines (Still Game) and star Sally Lindsay, Bobby Ball, Tommy Cannon and Judith Barker.

Original Music - Benjamin Squires

Benjamin was born and raised in Sheffield where he works as a freelance film and commercial composer. To date, he has scored over one hundred short films.

Most notable is his work composing trailer music, for films and video games such as Mary Poppins Returns, Dumbo, Spider-Man: Far From Home, How to Train Your Dragon 3, The Shape of Water Assassin's Creed: Origins, Star Trek Beyond and Crimson Peake.

His skills also extend to composing music for commercial clients such as Bupa, Heineken, Samsonite and HSBC. Most recently, Benjamin has composed additional music for season 2 of The Shannara Chronicles.





Cinematographer - Alan C. McLaughlin

Alan is a BAFTA award-winning Director of Photography born in Aberdeen, Scotland. He won the 'Best Director of Photography' award for the short film 'Lost Serenity' at the BAFTA Scottish New Talent Awards in 2013.

Alan was 2nd-Unit DOP on 'Difret', an Ethiopian drama that was executive produced by Angelina Jolie. 'Difret' premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival and was selected as the Ethiopian entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 2015 Academy Awards.

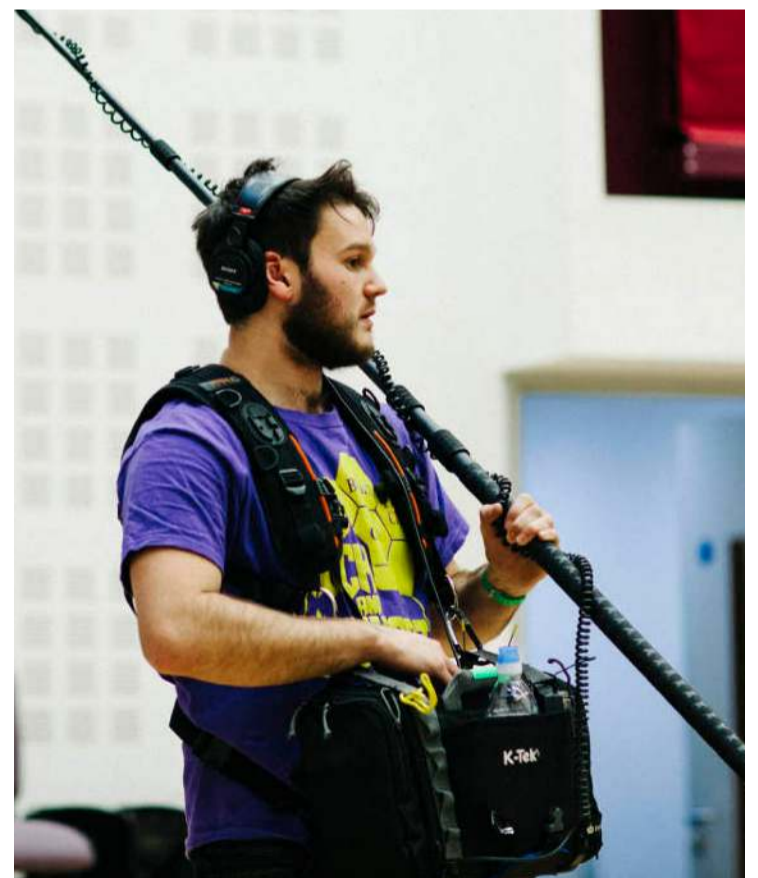
In 2017, Alan shot 'Isolani', a feature film that premiered at Raindance Film Festival. He has recently been nominated for the Cinematographer's Debut Competition at Camerimage International Film Festival 2017 for 'Isolani'. Alan has shot over 40 Films and also recently won 'Best Cinematography Award' at the Orlando Film Festival.

Sound Designer - Joe Nattrass

Joe was educated at the Futureworks School of Media in Manchester where he studied Advanced Audio Engineering and Production.

His credits to date include films such as 'Jurassic Park: Fallen Kingdom', 'Overlord', 'Fleabag', 'Stan and Ollie', 'Paddington 2', 'Maleficent 2', 'Breathe', 'The Girl With All the Gifts', and 'Journeyman'.

Joe was most recently apart of the Oscar winning sound team behind 'Bohemian Rhapsody'.



THE CAST



LEANNE BEST (Star Wars: The Force Awakens, Cold Feet, Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool, Tin Star, Home Fires, Line of Duty, Undercover, Babs, Black Mirror, The Infiltrator, Fortitude; The Woman in Black 2)

Leanne was born in Liverpool in 1980 and went on to study acting at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. Following this, she reluctantly left her home town for London to pursue her career, landing her television debut on Casualty in 2004. Leanne can currently be seen in 'Cold Feet' as series regular Tina opposite James Nesbitt on ITV. She was nominated for 2017's TV Times' 'Best Newcomer' Award for her role as Tina in 'Cold Feet'.

Most recently, her more prominent roles in films and television shows include 'Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool'; BBC's 'Babs' (as Barbara Windsor's mother); and Sky's 'Tin Star' (opposite Tim Roth).

Offscreen, Leanne has made many stage appearances, particularly in her hometown of Liverpool at the Playhouse and Everyman Theatres. She has taken on roles such as Lady Macbeth, Stella in 'A Streetcar Named Desire' and Rita in the 35th-anniversary production of 'Educating Rita'. Leanne was nominated for 'Best Performance' in The Matchbox at the 2012 UK Theatre Awards.

Discussing her busy schedule with Philip Schofield and Holly Willoughby on 'This Morning', Leanne was titled the "Busiest Actress on the Box" for her simultaneous roles in 'Line of Duty', 'Undercover' and 'Home Fires' in 2016.





KATIE QUINN (Northern Lights; Think of Me)

Katie was born in Wales and then moved to County Galway in Ireland before moving to West Yorkshire, England when she was a few years old. She now attends the University of Northumbria in Newcastle.

From a young age, Kate was taught by actress Judith Barker (Scott and Bailey; Miss Potter) at Saddleworth Drama Centre. She has starred in multiple productions with the company, including 'Guys and Dolls' at the Oldham Coliseum in the summer of 2017. She also played the titular role of 'Juliet' in their production of 'Romeo and Juliet'. In 2015 Katie attended The West End Summer School at Her Majesty's Theatre – home to the world famous Phantom of the Opera. She also

achieved 2 Distinctions and a Merit in her LAMDA acting exams at Bronze, Silver and Gold level.

Katie played the lead role of Emma in Nicholas Connor's previous film 'Northern Lights' in 2016 in which she portrayed a character suffering from anxiety disorder. Her performance went on to win her the 'Best Actress' award at the London Film Awards. She was also nominated for 'Best Actress' awards at the Unrestricted View Film Festival and the Ouchy Film Awards.



MAX VENTO (BBC's The A Word)

Max was born and raised in a small town in Leeds, England. At the age of 5, Max landed his first TV role as the lead in the BBC's 'The A Word' in which he plays a young boy diagnosed with autism opposite Christopher Eccleston, Morven Christie and Lee Ingleby. The show has received rave reviews for its portrayal of the effects of autism on a family.

Max was also nominated for the TV Times' 'Best Newcomer' Award in 2016, for his role as Joe in 'The A Word'.



KATE RUTTER (I, Daniel Blake, Peterloo, Oranges and Sunshine, The Railway Man, The Arbor, The Full Monty, Pierpoint)

Kate was born and educated in Leeds where she trained at Rose Bruford College in the 1970s. She has since worked extensively in film, theatre, television and radio. She also writes and directs and is a prize-winning poet.

Recently, Kate played the role of Ann in 'I, Daniel Blake' directed by Ken Loach and written by Paul Laverty. The film won the 2016 Palme D'or at Cannes Film Festival and the BAFTA for 'Outstanding British Film'.

Most recently she appeared in Mike Leigh's 'Peterloo' and has just begun filming 'His Dark Materials' directed by Tom Hooper - starring opposite James McCoy and Ruth Wilson.

CRISSY ROCK (Ladybird Ladybird, Benidorm, I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here, Dockers, Under The Skin)

Crissy was born in Liverpool where in the 1980s she began her career as a stand-up comedian. He is best known as an actress, comedian and author. Crissy is well-known for touring the UK performing her stand-up routine, and as Janey York in 'Benidorm' from 2007-2015.

Her first major film role as lead Maggie Conlan in Ken Loach's award-winning film 'Ladybird Ladybird' in 1994 led her to win the prestigious

Silver Bear award for 'Best Actress' at Berlin International Film Festival. Tom Hanks won the 'Best Actor' Silver Bear in the same year. Roger Ebert stated her performance in 'Ladybird Ladybird' was the strongest of 1994 for playing a mother distraught as her children are repeatedly taken away by social services.

Crissy has also ventured into the reality television world through shows such as 'I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!' in which she came 6th, 'Who's Doing the Dishes?', and 'Celebrity Come Dine With Me'.

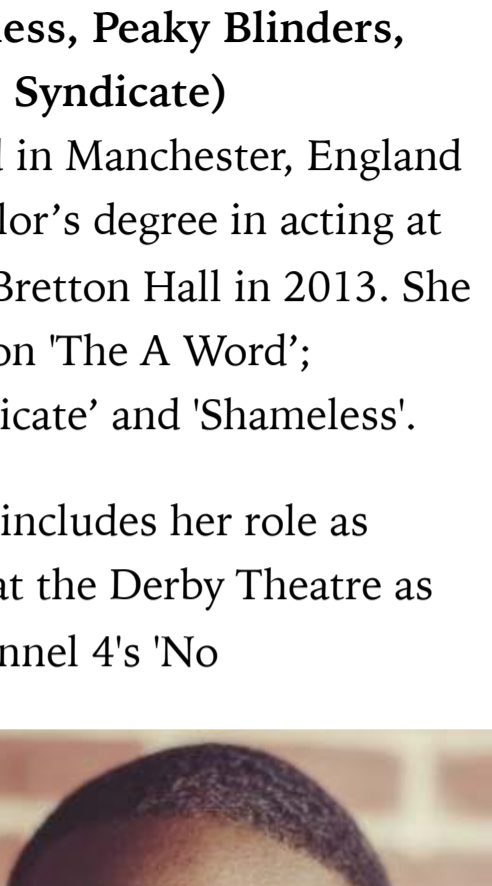




GEMMA NORTH (Shameless, Peaky Blinders, Butterfly, No Offence, The Syndicate)

Gemma was born and raised in Manchester, England and went on to gain a bachelor's degree in acting at the performing arts college Bretton Hall in 2013. She is best known for her work on 'The A Word'; 'Northern Lights'; 'The Syndicate' and 'Shameless'.

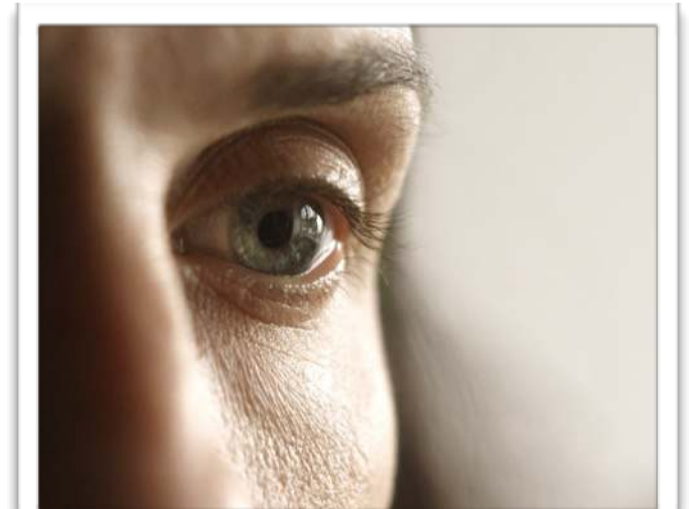
Gemma's most recent work includes her role as Cordelia in 'Lear/ Cordelia' at the Derby Theatre as well as playing Kerry in Channel 4's 'No Offence' (2017).



JASON LAMAR RICKETTS (Peter Kay's Car Share; Hamlet)

Jason was born and raised in Manchester and has been acting since the age of 4. He has attended institutions such as the National Youth Theatre, Manchester School of Acting and Identity Drama School.

He has featured in BBC One's 'Peter Kay's Car Share' as well as performing at The Royal Exchange in 'Hamlet' starring Maxine Peake.



PRESS AND REVIEWS



As Featured on BBC News Nationwide

Mentioned in articles from networks such as What's on TV, Into Film, The Daily Mail, Film and Television Business, and Top10Films.co.uk

UK Film Review

'The Best Short Film of 2018'

'Deeply emotive and humbling'

'Utterly enrapturing'

'Affecting and heartbreaking'

[Leanne Best's] 'showstopper performance as a stroke victim is superb'

Caution Spoilers

'Connor has crafted an absorbing film of wonderful performances that is searingly honest, yet finishes on a note of realistic optimism. '

'Vento had me in tears for vast chunks of the running time.'

ScreenCritix ★★★★★

'A heartwarming and eye-watering short film'

'Guaranteed to make many a viewer shed a tear'

[Leanne] 'Best is a revelation'

[Nicholas Connor] 'is certainly cementing his status as one of the UK's hottest prospects'

The Monthly Film Festival ★★★★★½

'Cotton Wool' is a short film that impresses with the force by which it surprises the deaf.

'A celebration of love and family devotion, an exercise of admiration for the beauty of a world that we ignore in our continuous fleeing for more or less important goals.

'A great artistic and human sensibility combined with special directorial precision'

Mentioned or Written about by -



The Mancunion ★★★★★

‘Nicholas Connor’s latest short film is his most evocative yet’

‘Connor could rise up to take the place of the ageing Ken Loach’

[Leanne] ‘Best is sublime’

100 Films in a Year ★★★★★

‘Heartbreaking’

‘It’s hard not to make comparisons to another recent British short film about a child coping with disability-related adversity [...] The Silent Child. That, of course, won an Oscar, and I’d say Cotton Wool is at least its equal.’



AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS

37 Wins

60 Nominations

25 Festival Selections

London Film Awards

Winner - Special Jury Award

European Independent Film Awards

Winner - Best Director, Best Drama, Best Actress (Leanne Best)

UK Film Review Awards

Winner - Best Short Film of 2018

Nominated - UK Film Review Awards - Best Director

British Independent Film Festival

Winner - Best Supporting Actor (Max Vento), Best Supporting Actress (Katie Quinn)

Nominated - Best Short Film, Best Music

Los Angeles Film Awards

Winner - Best Picture, Best Drama, Best Actress (Leanne Best), Best Supporting Actress (Crissy Rock), Best Young Actress (Katie Quinn)

New York Film Awards

Winner - Best Picture, Best Young Filmmaker, Best Ensemble, Best Editing, Best Supporting Actress (Crissy Rock), Best Young Actress (Katie Quinn)

New Renaissance Film Festival

Winner - Humanity Award for Film (Previously won by Oscar Winner 'The Silent Child')

Nominated - Best Actress (Leanne Best), Best Young Talent Narrative Short

Global Independent Film Awards

Winner - Best Drama, Best Featurette, Best Actor Under 18, Best Actress Under 18



IndieFlicks Short Film Festival

Winner - Director's Choice Award

Lift-Off Season Awards 2019

Nominated - Best Director

Gold Movie Awards

Winner - Best Featurette of the Year, Film of the Month, Feature of the Month

Nominated - Film of the Year

Unrestricted View Film Festival

Winner - Best Actress (Leanne Best)

Nominated - Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Short Film

Out of the Can Film Festival

Winner - Judge's Choice Award 2018, Best Drama

Nominated - Best Screenplay, Best Lifestyle Project, Best Supporting Actress (Crissy Rock)

Little Wing Film Festival

Winner - Best Director

Nominated - Best UK Film, Best Screenplay, Best Actress (Katie Quinn)

Manchester Screenplays and Shorts Film Festival

Winner - Best Actress (Leanne Best)

Manchester Lift-Off Film Festival

Winner - Special Mention

The Monthly Film Festival

Winner - Best Short Film, Best Cinematography, Best Score, Best Actress (Leanne Best)

Nominated - Film of the Year, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Editing

Birmingham Film Festival

Nominated - Best Young Director

Southampton International Film Festival

Nominated - Best British Short Film, Best Director

FESTIVAL OFFICIAL SELECTIONS

OFFICIAL SELECTION - British Independent Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Los Angeles Lift-Off Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - New York Film Awards

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Newcastle International Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Scottish Mental Health Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Derby Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Los Angeles Film Awards

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Birmingham Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - European Independent Film Awards

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Global Independent Film Awards

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Newark International Film Festival (NJ)

OFFICIAL SELECTION - New Renaissance Film Festival (London)

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Manchester Lift-Off Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Bristol Independent Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Unrestricted View Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Manchester Screenplays and Shorts Film Fest

OFFICIAL SELECTION - MancMade 53Two Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - The Monthly Film Festival (Glasgow)

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Southampton International Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - IndieFlicks Short Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Little Wing Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Out of the Can Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION - Gold Movie Awards

OFFICIAL SELECTION - London Film Awards

OFFICIAL SELECTION - UK Film Review Awards

HOT LIST - Cleveland International Film Festival (Oscar Qualifying)



FULL CREDITS

PRIMARY CREW

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Written and Directed by | Nicholas Connor |
| Producer | Mark Quinn |
| Executive Producer | Mark Quinn |
| Assistant Producer | Amy Pfeil |
| Director of Photography | Alan C. McLaughlin |
| Production Designer | Rhiannon Clifford |
| Editors | Amy Pfeil & Nicholas Connor |
| Costume Designer | Robyn Morell |
| Original Score | Benjamin Squires |
| Sound Designer | Joe Natrass |
| Prosthetics and Makeup | Pip Howarth |
| Colourist | David Diley |

PRIMARY CAST

| | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Rachel | Leanne Best |
| Sam | Max Vento |
| Jennifer | Katie Quinn |
| Marion | Kate Rutter |
| Gerry | Crissy Rock |
| Liz | Gemma North |
| David | Jason Lamar Ricketts |
| Young Jennifer | Megan Grady |

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