

TRIBECA  
FILM  
FESTIVAL

PRESENTED BY AT&T

**BBC FILMS & BBC WORLDWIDE  
Present  
A RED BOX FILMS PRODUCTION**

Directed by: John Dower  
Presented by: Louis Theroux  
Written by: John Dower & Louis Theroux  
Produced by: Simon Chinn

## MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE



U.K. production  
R/T: 99 minutes  
Shot on Sony F55 and Canon CS00-PL (Panasonic HE120 and Flip Mino HD)

*TFF 2016- For further publicity information please contact:*

Emma Griffiths  
EMMA GRIFFITHS PR  
emma@eg-pr.com  
www.eg-pr.com

*TIFF 2016:*

*US Sales Contact:*

Josh Braun-Submarine Entertainment-info@submarine.com

*International Sales Contact:*

Mark Lane- HanWay Select- mfl@hanwayfilms.com

## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

Not your typical exposé. BBC doc-maker and journalist Louis Theroux teams up with director John Dower and double Academy Award winning producer Simon Chinn (*Searching for Sugar, Man On Wire*) to explore the self-mythologizing Church of Scientology.

Following a long fascination with the religion and with much experience in dealing with eccentric, unpalatable and unexpected human behavior, the beguilingly unassuming Theroux won't take no for an answer when his request to enter the Church's headquarters is turned down. Inspired by the Church's use of filming techniques, and aided by ex-members of the organization, Theroux uses actors to replay some incidents people claim they experienced as members in an attempt to better understand the way it operates. In a bizarre twist, it becomes clear that the Church is also making a film about Louis Theroux. Suffused with a good dose of humor and moments worthy of a Hollywood script, MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE is as outlandish as it is revealing.

## **DIRECTORS STATEMENT (JOHN DOWER)**

When double Oscar winning producer Simon Chinn approached me to direct Louis Theroux's first feature documentary, on the controversial religion Scientology ... I said no. I had never worked with anyone in front of the camera before. And there was no access. Although ... Louis isn't actually a presenter, he's a journalist with a unique on-screen presence, the Alan Whicker of our generation, who I grew up watching on his *Weird Weekends* television series. And this was a subject he'd been trying to make a film about for over a decade. Here was the last chance.

Once I realised just how dumb my decision had been, the first challenge was how to make the film without any access, the lifeblood of a documentary. Louis had already been in contact with prominent apostates from the Church but we didn't want to make a retrospective history of the religion, not only because it wouldn't suit Louis' style, whereby he's always looking to access the mind-set of those he is filming with, but it also felt like this subject deserved a bolder approach.

Scientology is usually portrayed as strange and weird. There are certainly unusual aspects to its scripture, with spaceships and aliens and we were told about sessions in which believers talk to ashtrays. But part of that unique on-screen presence is Louis' desire to find out how the best human qualities are often put at the service of questionable projects, and so we wanted to go further than merely documenting one of the world's newest religions. We came up with a very simple solution - a group of actors working alongside our key former members to try and gain an insight into what it actually feels like *being* a Scientologist.

This approach was also in keeping with the actual story because Scientology was founded in Los Angeles by a sci-fi writer also desperate to be a film director. L Ron Hubbard wrote screenplays and in the 1950s initiated 'Project Celebrity' to enlist Hollywood actors to spread his gospel, and today several of its most famous disciples are A-List stars. Even their current leader David Miscavige started as a camera operator in the Church's own movie studio. Before I came on board Louis had been in discussions with another director who had been keen to go down the Hollywood route by creating a series of mini-movies in different styles,

ranging from biblical epic to sci-fi, as a way of telling the Scientology backstory. However Louis was less interested in the actual filmmaking process and wanted to try and keep the story in the present tense, even if we didn't have access.

For me there was still merit using actors because they were a part of how Scientology portrayed itself to the outside world. We just needed to simplify the idea – no polished dramatic re-enactments, if anything they had to have an Ed Wood homemade style of filmmaking, more like improvised sessions or psychological experiments. This was more suited to Louis' freewheeling persona, as well as the Church's own style of filmmaking. I was inspired by an obscure Iranian film called *A Moment of Innocence*, while Louis had become obsessed with the documentary *The Act of Killing* and so we decided to start with a behind-the-scenes moment that all movies have to have – the casting. Using the former high-ranking member turned whistleblower Marty Rathbun we attempted to cast an actor to play leader David Miscavige. In what he would actually be playing we weren't quite sure at this point but it seemed to work, and more importantly, this film was now actually happening...

Despite the off-the-cuff approach we still wanted to make something that might play on the big screen. I had a simple rule of thumb that we didn't want to make *Porridge - the film*, which in being adapted for the cinema just became a longer version of the sitcom. The hope was to take the best of Louis' television persona and add elements that might make it more cinematic.

Again simple things, such as my DoP Will Pugh constructing a car rig that enabled Louis to have these intimate conversations with our contributors, an appropriate style for a film set in LA. Or the fixed robotic cameras that would capture every single moment underwent by all of our actors in the drills sequence. Louis had originally suggested that Will and myself had a "three martini lunch" that day, whereby we popped in and out, grabbing selective moments. But we wanted to give it a look and feel that again fitted in with the story.

This approach generated so much material and I was fortunate to have editor Paul Carlin who was able to keep a clear head and not become enturbulated as to where this film might be actually heading. Likewise producer Simon Chinn and co-producer Vanessa Tovell who backed us, however outlandish the requests from over in California got, a potentially scary feeling for a production team on a film as improvised as ours.

And then of course there was Louis. It was crucial for me that that unique persona remained intact. Many people asked me if it was just a shtick constructed for the camera. It isn't. He really is like that. I likened it to Kaa in the *Jungle Book* with his whirling eyes; there were even times when I felt myself being drawn in ... Thankfully, like Obi Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars*, he only uses his powers for good and he is genuinely interested in discovering what makes normal people do unusual things.

MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE was the most enjoyable and collaborative experience I've had whilst making a film. All of us, however corny it sounds, kept this ambition that we were going to try and make a *movie*. And that's when things got interesting. Somehow the Church discovered what we were doing on the sound stages of LA and, in turn, they started to make a film about us ...

## **STATEMENT (LOUIS THEROUX)**

For years, I've been fascinated by Scientology.

More than ten years ago, I approached the church to see if they might let me in to make a documentary. I thought I might be able to bring a sense of nuance and perspective to people's understanding of a faith that has been much ridiculed. Just as I have done with other non-mainstream stories, I hoped to see it from the inside and make a human connection with its clerics and congregants. But I was repeatedly turned down. About four years ago, the producer Simon Chinn approached me about doing a documentary for theatrical release and mentioned Scientology as an idea. For the first time, I began thinking about whether there might be a way of doing it without traditional access. A prolonged period of development followed. We approached the church again - and were rebuffed again. We also put feelers out with the community of disaffected ex-Scientologists, some of whom still believe in aspects of the Scientology religion, but feel that "Official Scientology" has lost its way under the influence of David Miscavige.

It occurred to us that the "Hollywood" character of Scientology – its recruitment of actors; its use of Tom Cruise as a role model and poster boy; its dissemination through glossy promotional films – might be the key to making our film. L. Ron Hubbard himself had always nurtured a dream of making it as a Hollywood director. And so it felt logical and true to the spirit of Scientology to use Hollywood techniques – casting calls, actors, improv sessions, reenactments – to create a sense of Scientology from the inside, filming it all in and around Los Angeles.

It was clear that the success of the "Hollywood techniques" depended on the help of a handful of ex-Scientologists. Under the influence of a documentary I had seen recently called "The Act of Killing," I began to see re-enactments as a way of creating a vivid picture of the allegations of abuse – and an almost-therapeutic technique for taking the protagonists back into the past and examining their involvement in Scientology.

I was very fortunate in being put together with the director John Dower who saw the value in the re-enactment idea and had the vision to make it work but also the sense of discipline to prevent it from spinning out of control.

Our other great piece of good fortune was in finding Marty Rathbun – who was at one time one of the most senior executives in Scientology, the "Inspector General" - and in his willingness to go on a journey of inquiry – asking questions about faith and apostasy and revolutionary morality – while tolerating the emotional roller coaster of my questions and also the attention of hostile Scientologists, who began taking an interest in what we were doing. In the course of making my film I came to believe I was being tailed by private investigators, someone in Clearwater, Florida (Scientology's spiritual mecca) attempted to hack my emails, we were filmed covertly, I also had the police called on me more than once, not to mention a blizzard of legal letters from Scientology lawyers.

And yet, at every step I remained open to Scientology's good points and tried to see it for what it is: a system of belief that is not so different from other religions, capable of enlarging

the soul as well as crushing the spirit; a tool for wickedness but also of kindness and self-sacrifice.

And so the final and most controversial truth about Scientology may not be about the misdeeds that have been committed in its name, but the potentially life-giving power of its vision. For my part, I still find parts of it oddly seductive.

## **FILMMAKERS BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Writer & Director John Dower**

John Dower's directing career began in the late Nineties with a series of low-budget, cult documentaries for UK broadcaster Channel 4 such as, *Porn in the UK*, *John's Gone to Iceland* and *Sneaker Freaks*.

In 2003 he completed his first feature length documentary *Live Forever*, a comedy about the rise and fall of Britpop, described by The Guardian as, "Sublime ... finds that the truth is stranger and funnier than the myths".

John's second feature, *Once in a Lifetime - The Extraordinary Story of the New York Cosmos* was followed by another strikingly entertaining documentary, *Thrilla in Manila*. The film was in competition at Sundance in 2009, BAFTA and EMMY nominated, and awarded a PEABODY as well as a GRIERSON. The Sunday Times said - "*When We Were Kings* was a landmark sports documentary. John Dower's film is a kind of sequel to it and almost as good". His recent *Bradley Wiggins – A Year in Yellow* was also BAFTA nominated, this time in the best director category.

MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE is his seventh feature length documentary.

### **Writer & Presenter Louis Theroux**

Louis Theroux is a journalist and BBC television presenter best known for documentaries that take viewers inside controversial or morally challenging worlds.

Over more than fifteen years, using a gentle questioning style and an informal approach, he has shone light on intriguing lifestyles, behaviours, and institutions by getting to know the people at the heart of them – from the officers and inmates at San Quentin prison to the extreme believers of the Westboro Baptist Church; the male porn performers of the San Fernando Valley to the patients and staff at one of America's leading forensic mental facilities.

A graduate of Oxford University, he got his start working with Michael Moore as a correspondent on the satirical magazine show *TV Nation*. He went on to make his own series for BBC2, *Weird Weekends*, about unusual American subcultures, and then embarked on a series of access-driven portraits of intriguing British celebrities, including Jimmy Savile and Max Clifford.

In the past ten years, he's made 25 TV specials, focusing on some of the most intimate and angst-ridden aspects of the human condition: religion, racism, sexuality, criminal justice, and mental health.

By charming his subjects, while resisting easy judgments, Louis is able to offer rounded portraits of people grappling with complex and important issues. Louis has been nominated for an Emmy; he has won two BAFTAs and an RTS award, as well as numerous other accolades.

### **Producer Simon Chinn**

Simon Chinn is a double Academy Award winning producer who, through his company Red Box Films, is responsible for some of the most successful feature documentaries of recent years, known for their high production values, powerful narratives and innovative blending of documentary and fiction techniques.

He conceived and produced *Man On Wire*, which was released around the world in 2008. A commercial and critical hit, its numerous international awards include the Sundance Grand Jury Prize, the Producers Guild of America (PGA) Award, the BAFTA for Outstanding British Film and the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature.

His follow-up film, *Project Nim*, opened the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and was released theatrically around the world to great acclaim, won the DGA Award, was nominated for a BAFTA and shortlisted for an Academy Award.

*Searching For Sugar Man* opened the Sundance Film Festival in 2012, and went on to gross over \$10 million at the international box office, making it one of the most commercially successful documentaries of recent years. Among more than thirty international awards, it won the PGA, DGA and WGA awards, the BAFTA and the Academy Award for Best Documentary.

*The Imposter*, which Simon executive produced, also launched at Sundance in 2012. It became the eighth highest grossing (non-concert) documentary of all time in the UK and went on to win the BAFTA for best debut for its director Bart Layton.

Other recent and forthcoming films include *The Green Prince* (Winner Sundance Audience Award), *Drug Lord: The Legend Of Shorty*, *Garnet's Gold*, *Bolshoi Babylon* and Louis Theroux's first feature documentary MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE which premiered at the London Film Festival in 2015.

Simon launched Lightbox in 2014 in partnership with his cousin, Emmy-winning producer Jonathan Chinn. With offices in London and LA, the company is focused on producing high-end non-fiction content across multiple platforms and was one of the first companies to receive investment from Channel 4's Growth Fund. It has already produced premium documentary series for Xbox Studios and Esquire and is currently in production on projects for Netflix, ESPN, Fusion, FX, Channel 4 and BBC2.

## **Director of Photography Will Pugh**

Director of Photography Will Pugh grew up in Africa, studied painting and is interested in both narrative and non-fiction filmmaking. At the 2015 London Film Festival he had both documentary and fiction films screening: Louis Theroux's MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE and Esther May Campbell's BFI debut, *Light Years*. Other films he has recently shot include *Bradley Wiggins: A Year In Yellow* (BAFTA & Grierson Nominated), C4 'True Stories' feature, 12 Year Old Lifer, National Geographic TV feature Inside The Hunt For The Boston Bombers (2015 Realscreen Winner) and The Sunshine Makers and Slaying The Badger (TriBeCa 2014), both documentary features for Passion Pictures. Based in London, Will also shoots commercials, TV factual and short films.

## **Composer Dan Jones**

Dan's credits to date include Carnival's *The Lost Honour* and Ecosse Film's *The Great Fire* (both for ITV) as well as a long list of award-winning films, notably, *Shadow of the Vampire* which received two Oscar nominations, the critically acclaimed *The Fear*, starring Peter Mullan for C4, and *The Town* for ITV, as well as *The Tonto Woman* which gained an Oscar nod in the short films category. Dan himself was also long listed by Variety as an Oscar contender for his score for *Shadow of the Vampire*. In 2011 the scores for Channel Four/Carnival's *Any Human Heart* won Dan both BAFTA and Ivor Novello awards as well as gaining double Emmy nominations. Dan received his first Ivor Novello award for his score to the feature film *Max*, starring John Cusack and Noah Taylor. In 2012 he received the Special Jury Prize for Excellence in Sound design for his work on the highly acclaimed, *Kursk*. Most recently, Dan scored the second series of the BBC's hugely successful Shakespeare play adaptations, *The Hollow Crown*, and Louis Theroux's feature documentary MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE.

Equally comfortable in the throwing away of the rule book and experimenting with new forms in sound, music, words and narrative as he is nurturing beautiful luxuriant melodies, Dan's music ranges from the minimal ambient layering as heard in the BBC's *Criminal Justice*, to the sumptuous orchestral openness of *The Matador's Mistress*, a tragic tale telling the story of one of Spain's greatest bullfighters, starring Adrian Brody and Penelope Cruz. Dan has continued to make a very big splash in the realms of Film and Television score with his compelling, rich, exciting and sensitive works for such projects as ITV's *Appropriate Adult*, which told the story of the serial murderer Fred West (Dominic West) as told through the eyes of their lawyer played by Emily Watson, and Charlie Brooker's Big Brother based zombie slasher for C4, *Dead Set*. As well as this Dan received notable further acclaim for his wonderfully dynamic and intelligent scores for a number of much lauded documentaries including David Attenborough's *Charles Darwin and the Tree of Life* and *The Life of Mammals*.

**Film Editor Paul Carlin**

Paul Carlin has been as an editor for over twenty years, working in all genres, from high budget feature films, feature docs, television, commercials, music videos and art installations. For the past five years Paul has worked exclusively on feature documentaries for cinema release, his latest *Being AP* for BBC films, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival 2015 and MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE, also for BBC Films, which premiered at the London Film Festival 2015.

**MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE- FILM CREDITS**

**FEATURING**

MARTY RATHBUN

STEVE MANGO

MARC HEADLEY

TOM DE VOCHT

JEFF HAWKINS

**CREDITS**

MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE  
CREDITS

[animated logo BBC Films – with  
sound]

**OPENING CREDITS (cards)**

BBC FILMS & BBC  
WORLDWIDE present

A RED BOX FILMS production

‘MY SCIENTOLOGY MOVIE’

**CLOSING CREDITS**  
**(cards)**

Directed by  
JOHN DOWER

Presented by  
LOUIS THEROUX

Written by  
JOHN DOWER  
LOUIS THEROUX

Produced by  
SIMON CHINN

Executive Producers  
CHRISTINE LANGAN  
CHARLOTTE MOORE  
JOE OPPENHEIMER

Executive Producers  
STEPHEN MCDONOGH  
MARK REYNOLDS

Co-Producer  
VANESSA TOVELL

Film Editor  
PAUL CARLIN

Director of Photography  
WILL PUGH

Composer  
DAN JONES

**FEATURING**

ANDREW PEREZ as David  
Miscavige

ROB ALTER as Tom Cruise

Consultant Producer    LOUIS THEROUX

Field Producer        SHANE MICHAEL BLACK

Production Sound Mixer    STEVE HOPKINS

Additional Sound        ERIC THOMAS

Assistant Camera        ADAM WHEELER  
   MELVINA RAPOZO

Production Co-Ordinator    SOPHIE HARMER

Casting Director	RON BLAIR
Development Producer	TILLY COWAN
Archive Research	HELENA LEWIS
Research	HANNAH HORAN
Production Assistants	SKYE MCCANN JOSIE BLAND
US Production Services	LIGHTBOX ENTERTAINMENT, INC
US Line Producer	STUART SCHWARTZ
US Production Coordinators	JAY ROSS BARWICK AL NOWICKI
Location Manager	BRAD HILL
Gaffer	JOE TURRENTINE
Key Grip	VINCENT KELLY
Set Designer	ALESSANDRO MARVELLI
Set Decorator	TERESSA TUNNEY
Construction Co-Ordinator	CHRIS SHEID
Carpenter	THOMAS MCILWEE
Art Department Assistants	JOSEF FRANDEN RYAN D HENNEMAN
Hair & Makeup	RACHEL PAGAN
Stage Managers	LEE GOFFIN-BONENFANT, MACK SENNET STUDIOS JOHN PIENTA, BEN KITAY STUDIOS
Tech Supervisor	THOMAS FRY
Camera Tech	MATT FURMAN
Stills Photographer	NICK KOKOTAKIS

Titles & Motion GFX	BLUE SPILL
Design Director	ALLISON BROWNMOORE
Lead Artist	ANTHONY BROWNMOORE
Artist	JOE NOWACKI
Post Production Facility	MOLINARE
DI Colourists	GARETH SPENSLEY ANDREW DANIEL
DI Online Editors	GARETH PARRY DES MURRAY
DI Manager	MATT JAMES
DI Co-Ordinator	FRANCOIS KAMFFER
Online Edit Assistant	BEREN SOWTER-CROLL
DI Conform Editors	MICHELLE CORT STEVE OWEN TOM CAIRNS JOHNATHAN DICKINSON LIZZIE NEWSHAM
Data Co-Ordinator	MIKE ANDREWS
Sound Re-Recording Mixer	GEORGE FOULGHAM
Assistant Re-Recording Mixer	NAS PARKASH
Post Production Manager	SEAN MCMORRIS
Sales Executive	TOM ROGERS
Supervising Sound Editor	MAX BYGRAVE
Dialogue Editor	JONNY CREW

Foley Recordist BEN PEACE

Foley Artist PAUL ACKERMAN

Foley Editor LAURIE OWENS

Archive CORBIS UK LTD  
REX SHUTTERSTOCK  
NEW SYNDICATION  
DREAMS TIME LLC

For BBC:

Senior Business Manager MICHAEL WOOD  
Head of Legal & Business Affairs ZOE BROWN  
Legal & Business Affairs Manager LIVY SANDLER  
Business Affairs Manager JANE BENTHAM  
Executive Producers AYSHA RAFAELE  
SAM BAGNALL

For BBC Worldwide:

Legal & Business Affairs Manager SARAH MICCICHE

Production Accountant NIGEL WOOD, 101 MEDIA  
ACCOUNTING

UK Production Legal Services NIGEL ABBAS, 5RB

US Counsel RUSSELL SMITH, SMITHDEHN LLP

Legal & Business Affairs MILES KETLEY, WIGGIN LLP

Tax Accountants KEN DIAS, NYMAN LIPSON & PAUL

Production Insurance PETER SUDDLELL, MEDIA INSURANCE  
BROKER

North American Distribution Advisor JOSH BRAUN, SUBMARINE  
ENTERTAINMENT

Music performed by BBC NATIONAL ORCHESTRA OF WALES

Conducted by DAN JONES

Orchestrated by BEN FOSKETT

Music Preparation VIC FRASER

Recording Engineer HUW THOMAS

Assistant Engineer MIKE COX

Orchestra Director MICHAEL GARVEY

Leader LESLEY HATFIELD

Orchestra Music Recorded at HODDINOTT HALL, CARDIFF

Additional Composition & Music Production STEW JACKSON, ROBOT CLUB

Keyboard Soloist DAN MOORE

Percussion Soloist RUPERT COLE

Percussion Session Engineer JONATHON SCOTT

Music Production Assistant HANNAH THOMAS

Music Mix Assistant SIMON BIRCH

Additional Music Production LEE COLE  
ROBERTO MORLÁN GÓMEZ

#### Tannhäuser Overture

Composed by Wilhelm Richard Wagner

Performed by BBC National Orchestra of Wales

Conducted by Dan Jones

#### Waxing the Ship

Composed by Stew Jackson and Dan Jones

Performed by Stew Jackson and BBC National  
Orchestra of Wales

Conducted by Dan Jones

Keyboard soloist Dan Moore

Produced by Stew Jackson

With thanks to:

JOHN BATTSEK, GEORGE CHIGNELL,  
JONATHAN CHINN, DANNY COHEN, ANITA  
LAND,

KAREN DE LA CARRIERE, TONY ORTEGA,

WILLIAM MILLER, HIGHLAND GARDENS HOTEL

[LOGOS]  
BBC FILMS  
BBC WORLDWIDE  
{RED BOX}

© British Broadcasting Corporation/BBC Worldwide  
2015