

# The Boat People

You can bury the past, but you can't kill it off

FIFTH COLUMN FILMS presents NABIL ELOUAHABI RAQUEL CASSIDY music NEIL McARTHUR CHENG YU  
director of photography GAVIN FRY art director EVA HENSCHKOWSKI  
editor MARK TOWNSEND associate producers MATT DENNIS DAVID CASEY  
written by ANTHONY FLETCHER directed by ROB CURRY

# The Boat People



On a visit to his girlfriend's seaside holiday home, a young man is afflicted by dreams of a violent childhood event in Vietnam. When the girlfriend's sister arrives and knows details from his dreams, his paranoia escalates. Will he discover the truth or will the past snare him first?



The Boat People is a psychological thriller. Jared (Nabil Elouahabi) is taken to the coast by his new girlfriend, Alice (Raquel Cassidy). They stay in the seaside cottage she's owed all her life with her sister, Cleo.



As soon as he gets there, Jared begins to have haunting dreams of a distant exotic land. The dreams excite Alice. When Cleo arrives unexpectedly, she somehow seems to know about his dreams. Gradually Jared realises that the sisters are using the dreams to uncover a long-buried secret from their childhood, when they lived in Vietnam and their parents were brutally murdered.

But who was the murderer? And why does Jared begin to feel that his life is now threatened? As the landscape and the house reveal their secrets, Jared becomes more and more drawn into the twisted world of The Boat People. First they take over his dreams, then they take over his mind.



The first feature film by Fifth Column Films, The Boat People is a psychological thriller that draws on a forgotten strand of British cinema. Evoking the golden age of **Accident**, **Performance**, and **Don't Look Now**, it offers an exciting new perspective on life in the British Isles.

Jared Nabil Elouahabi  
Alice Raquel Cassidy  
Cleo Maimie McCoy  
Merrick Russell Mabey  
Dan Tim Plester  
Sian Clara Onyemere  
Chris Simon Land

Director Rob Curry  
Writer Anthony Fletcher  
Art Director Eva Henschkowski  
Costume Design Lisa Curry  
Hair and Make Up Amy Moorcroft  
Props Elizabeth Bruce  
1st AD James Rumsey  
Director of Photography Gavin Fry  
Camera Operator Richard Mitchell  
Camera Assistant Rob Hart  
Best Boy Ferris Ferhat  
Gaffer Ewan Cassidy  
Spark Suzanne Willett  
Spark Annika Holm  
Sound Operator Michael Johns  
Boom operator Daniel Owen  
Casting Advisor Chloe Emmerson  
Film editor Mark Townsend  
Online picture editor Eliot Milbourne  
Re-recording mixer Steve Parker  
Re-recording mixer Johnathan Rush  
Sound designer Fabrice Pougard  
Foley editor Gerard Kelly  
Dialogue Editor Alex Cutts  
Music engineer Graeme Taylor  
Assistant Mixer James Clarke  
Soundtrack Neil McArthur, Cheng Yu  
Offline editing facility Goldcrest  
Online editing facility Baraka Post Production  
Sound post-production Future Post

## Biographies

Rob Curry - Director

The Boat People is Rob Curry's first feature film. While he has directed short films (eg. The Living End, Straight8 Film Festival) and music videos, his main directing career has been in theatre. He has directed over 20 productions, including UK and European and tours of new and classical work. He previously collaborated with writer Anthony Fletcher on a theatre production, 'The Focus Group'. A fascination with storytelling through visual language has led him naturally to cinema, and he is about to start shooting his next feature film, 'The Tempest'.

Nabil Elouahabi - Jared

Nabil is a regular in Michael Winterbottom's films, and gave an acclaimed performance as Yusuf in 'In This World' (2002). He is a household name in the UK through his 3 years as Tariq in 'Eastenders'. He recently completed an ABC drama starring opposite Harvey Keitel, and is currently filming an HBO mini-series in South Africa.

Raquel Cassidy - Alice

One of the most talented young UK screen actresses, Raquel has played lead roles in high profile TV series such as 'Teachers', 'Red Cap' and 'Lead Balloon'. She also co-starred in the recent UK cinema hit 'Festival'.



## Contacts

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See the trailer and more at:  
<http://www.boatpeoplemovie.com>

## Festivals - Official selection

LA HD Film Festival  
Fargo Film Festival  
Salento Film Festival  
Indie Gathering  
Independent Features Film Festival

Running time: 88 mins





## Boat People synopses

### Tag line

You can bury the past but you can't kill it off

### Short synopsis

The Boat People is a film about boats. About England. About Vietnam. About the inescapability of history. Alice (Raquel Cassidy), the elder of two sisters, brings her boyfriend Jared (Nabil Elouahabi) to a cottage by the sea. In this isolated place, Jared begins to dream. His dreams are of terrifying events in a distant, far eastern place. A rice man walks across a riverfront where two young girls are playing. Jared realises that the dreams are trying to tell him something...

### Long Synopsis

Boat People is a psychological thriller. Jared is taken to the coast by his new girlfriend, Alice. They stay in the seaside cottage she's owed all her life with her sister, Cleo. As soon as he gets there, Jared begins to have haunting dreams of a distant exotic land. The dreams excite Alice. When Cleo arrives unexpectedly, she somehow seems to know about his dreams. Gradually Jared realises that the sisters are using the dreams to uncover a long-buried secret from their childhood, when they lived in Vietnam and their parents were brutally murdered.

But who was the murderer? And why does Jared begin to feel that his life is now threatened? As the landscape and the house reveal their secrets, Jared becomes more and more drawn into the twisted world of The Boat People. First they take over his dreams, then they take over his mind.

The events of twenty years ago refuse to release their grip on the present, and as the film unravels the multiform layers of the past, it drags the viewer further and further into its vortex. The Boat People is a gripping, unorthodox piece of work from an exciting new production team.

### Director's statement

There are so many British films being made that have nothing to do with the Britain we know. I wanted to make a film that looked at both the beauty of Britain and the scars which lie beneath that beauty. This is why I chose to film in Devon, one of the most stunning parts of the country, but tell a story of people from the city, and the issues and fears they bring with them. I was influenced by Teshigahara's *Woman of The Dunes*, a film that explored its environment in precise detail. I wanted to build up a specific, claustrophobic world which is haunted by the dreams of the past as much as it is by the characters of the present. I also wanted to refer to a lost strand of British cinema tradition – Joseph Losey and Nick Roeg, who created dense psychological examinations of character; and bring the same rigour to the edit as the story slowly burns towards the devastating conclusion which is lurking in the rocks and pastoral beauty of this land. The Boat People examines the way in which the mistakes of history are destined to recur until they are confronted. Britain is a country which is rapidly changing, but it is still caught in the web of its history, a history which has more often than not been violent. The Boat People explores this: it is therefore a quintessentially British film, but one that is steering away from the feelgood narratives of Blairite Britain, and exploring the deeper insecurities which continue to haunt this island race.



## Boat People biogs

### Director's biog

The Boat People is Rob Curry's first feature film. While he has directed short films and music videos, his main directing career has been in theatre. He has directed over 20 productions, including UK and European and tours of new and classical work. He previously collaborated with writer Anthony Fletcher on a theatre production, 'The Focus Group'. A fascination with storytelling through visual language has led him naturally to cinema, and he is currently in pre-production for his next feature film, 'Truck'.

### Cast

Jared – Nabil Elouahabi

Nabil is a regular in Michael Winterbottom's films, and gave an acclaimed performance as Yusuf in *In This World* (2002). He is a household name in the UK through his 3 years as Tariq in *Eastenders*. He recently completed an ABC drama starring opposite Harvey Keitel, and is currently filming an HBO mini-series in South Africa.

Alice – Raquel Cassidy

One of the most talented actresses of her generation, Raquel has starred in numerous UK TV series such as *Teachers*, *Red Cap* and *Lead Balloon*. She also co-starred in recent UK cinema success 'Festival'.

Cleo – Maimie McCoy

Merrick – Russell Mabey

Dan – Tim Plester

Sian – Clara Onyemere

### Crew

Art Director: Eva Henschkowski

Costume Design: Lisa Curry

Hair and Make Up: Amy Moorcroft

Props: Elizabeth Bruce

1st Assistant Director: James Rumsey

Director of Photography: Gavin Fry

Camera Operator: Richard Mitchell

Camera Assistant: Rob Hart

Best Boy: Ferris Ferhat

Gaffer: Ewan Cassidy

Spark: Suzanne Willett

Spark: Annika Holm

Sound Operator: Michael Johns

Boom operator: Daniel Owen

Casting Advisor: Chloe Emmerson

Film editor: Mark Townsend

Online picture editor: Eliot Milbourne

Re-recording mixers: Steve Parker, Johnathan Rush

Sound designer: Fabrice Pognard



## Boat People biogs

### **Crew (cont)**

Foley editor: Gerard Kelly

Dialogue Editor: Alex Cutts

Music engineer: Graeme Taylor

Assistant Re-recording Mixer: James Clark

Soundtrack: Neil McArthur, Cheng Yu

Produced by: Rob Curry, Anthony Fletcher

Written by: Anthony Fletcher



## Boat People FAQs

### How long did it take?

We decided to make a film in August 2004. By June 2005 we'd written it, found our locations, cast it, and shot the entire film. Then the hard bit started. With no money left we somehow had to get editing, sound mixing, grading facilities, not to mention personnel to work for next to nothing. We got through three editors, five sound designers, three conforms and two grades before we were happy with the final product. That took an extra one and a half years!

### How much did it cost?

This is a hard one for low-budget filmmakers to answer. The official final budget is £210,000, but on the day we started filming we'd raised £10,000, and got through the entire shoot on that. Somehow.

### How did you raise the money?

Coming from theatre backgrounds, where private investment is a fantasy, it was amazing to us that if you were making a film people with money would listen to you and were interested in what you had to say. We tried every avenue open, but were determined not to get into debt ourselves. Making a film consumes enough of your life without being saddled with bankruptcy at the end of the process. Many of the avenues we pursued came to nothing, but we managed to convince a few individuals with money that our film would be sellable. All the tax breaks that the government provide to investors in films certainly helped persuade people, though many of these are sadly being cut.

### How did you get such strong performances on such a tight schedule?

One word: rehearsals. We were helped by the fact that we come from theatre backgrounds. Most film directors have come up through film school, music promos, corporate videos, etc, and have little idea what an actor looks like no matter what to do with one. It also helped to have such quality, experienced screen actors of course.

### Why did you make the film in Devon?

One of the joys of low budget filmmaking is that you get to do every job yourself. Under the guise of location scouts we scoured the country from Scotland to the tip of Cornwall (even visiting a small island off Ibiza), to find the perfect location. The main leg of our voyage took us the entire length of the south coast. As we travelled west through Devon, the countryside became increasingly rugged, while maintaining a vivid variety of colours and a psychedelic beauty. When we arrived at Carswell Farm we knew it was everything we were looking for. We pushed on into Cornwall for another 2 days, and on the way home the car died (forever) on a steep hill 10 miles outside of Truro. We had to sleep in a field, but our mission was accomplished.

### How do you make a Digital project look so like 35mm?

Virtually every film made nowadays goes through a digital post production process. It's shot on 35mm, scanned into a digital format, messed around with and then printed back to film. The theory is that the colour range of 35mm is still better than most digital formats, and you also get a higher pixel range. However. We couldn't afford to shoot on 35mm, so we did extensive testing of the various HD cameras out there, and determined that the Varicam captured virtually the same colour range as 35mm, and with HD resolution, the pixel issue was virtually irrelevant. You do have to light more carefully and have brilliant graders though, and we were lucky enough to have both.