

6 EPISODE MOCKUMENTARY SERIES DIRECTED BY PATRICK WILLIAM SMITH

## GROUNDBREAKING

LOGLINE: On the tail end of a fruitless excavation on a remote Irish isle, a less-than-intrepid team of archaeologists on the brink of unemployment inadvertently discovers an ancient Celtic secret that upends the beloved history of an uber-religious rural hamlet and catalyzes a series of unexplainable – if not supernatural – events that will fundamentally alter them all.

# THE OFFICE MEETS INDIANA JONES



Though tonally akin to the flagship mockumentaries that gave rise to the genre (The Office, Parks & Rec, This Is Spinal Tap), Groundbreaking situates itself in a unique middle ground – embracing the hyper-realism of Verite documentary, yet avoiding the caricaturized qualities common in mockumentary ensembles.

Neither farcical nor absurdist, Groundbreaking treats its characters as real people – highlighting their most raw, earnest, and vulnerable qualities while leveraging the situational comedy that naturally emerges when a colorful group of disillusioned idiosyncratic people live and work together in a profession that's particularly susceptible to romanticism.

A wealth of relatable, quippy, and irreverent comedy waits to be unearthed in the margins between the perception of archaeology as adventure-laden and teeming with discovery, and the soul-crushing monotonous realities of the job. Yet, for the less-cynical and loftier at heart, Groundbreaking also finds a way to deliver the thrill of discovery, the allure of the supernatural, and the soul-nurturing solace that comes from discovering family where you least expect.

## SYNOPSIS

THE BACKDROP: Nestled in the remote Irish countryside sleeps the charming fictional hamlet of St. Quinn – named for its mysterious (and peculiarly unverifiable) patron saint, and home to the ultra-religious community who reveres him.

Six months ago, tragedy struck (literally) the idyllic village when an errant bolt of lightning razed St. Quinn Abbey to the ground. Inside it at the time was the town's beloved reverend - surly Sally O'Malley - who had been acting strangely in the days leading up to the fire, maniacally ranting about voices coming from the walls of the church.

In the sobering months since his passing, the site of the abbey was auctioned off to Mac O'Hurley - a sardonic non-local land developer who plans to build a golf resort on the sacred land. Standing in his way: a standard archaeological survey, as required by Irish law. Hoping to avoid delays, Mac seeks out the least successful archaeologists he can find...

#### ENTER: THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS



Gale - 15 years into a demoralizing career that has shattered her romantic and unrealistic expectations of archaeology - embarks on what she secretly knows will be her final dig.

Accompanied by her colorful crew/vagabond pseudo-family (Goose, Reilly, Finn, and intern Ori), Gale arrives in St. Quinn, encountering a hostile community, a rancorous contractor eager to slow their work, and a series of inexplicable – if not mystical – events that indicate something bizarre is at work in this small town.

On the final day of the excavation, the team inadvertently discovers the lost remains of the venerated Saint Quinn, revealing a shocking truth that will alter the town's history forever: Saint Quinn was neither a Catholic saint nor a man – rather, she was a Celtic pagan witch.

As the town becomes increasingly fractured over the discovery, each episode is peppered with dramatic reveals that seismically shift the direction of the narrative – luring audiences into a compelling mystery that culminates in the reveal of a dark secret lost amongst the annals of revisionist history.

## CAST



## NATALIE CUTLER



GALE - LEAD ARCHAEOLOGIST

Natalie Ann Cutler is an actor, writer & filmmaker known for creating female-driven documentaries and stage productions. Born and raised in the Black Country, England (home of the Peaky Blinders), Natalie has travelled the world as a model, photo-journalist and most recently to perform her one-woman show: "Not Yet Sufferagette".

'Feminist comedy wunderkind Natalie Cutler whose tongue in cheek sarcasm and razor edged delivery could stand up to any late night comedy show if only women were allowed to host them.'
- Fringe Review Edinburgh.



#### STEVEN HE



FINN - EXCAVATION TECHNOLOGIST

Steven He is a Chinese-Irish actor and sketch-comedy creator based in New York. He is the creator of the popular comedy sketch series "Asian Dad" and has over 3.4 million followers across his Youtube and TikTok accounts. Steven graduated from the prestigious Neighborhood Playhouse and holds a BA in Acting and Global Theatre from Regent's University London.

He recently appeared in Awkwafina Is Nora from Queens (2020) and starred in Dinosaur World (2020) which reached #1 on the trending board of China's biggest streaming platform, QIY (380 million users). Steven's theatre experiences include 61 stage performances across London, Edinburgh, Limerick, New York and ShenZhen.



#### BRIAN VILLALOBOS



GOOSE - HISTORIAN

Brian Villalobos is an award-winning actor, writer, and filmmaker who has appeared in more than 100 films, commercials, and stage productions. He has played such varied roles as Macbeth, Gotham City Police Commissioner James Gordon, and (very briefly) Raphael, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle.

"Brian Villalobos is outstanding. By the end of show you pay to see him read his grocery list." -NowPlayingAustin.com



## CLARA GUZIEWICZ



**REILLY - PALEOBOTANIST** 

Clara is an award-winning actress based in Paris, France. She is best known known for her incredible peformance in Désir Pastel (2018) for which she won the Best Actress award at Fatastic Film Festival, Paragon Film Festival and several other film festivals. Most recently Clara appeared in Hannya (2020) and played the title role of Juliet in a stage production of Romeo and Juliet.

## CAST



## THEO HOLT-BAILEY



ORI - INTERN

Theo is a recent graduate of The Oxford School of Drama and Groundbreaking is his first appearance on screen. Previously, Theo starred in a number of stage productions including international tours of Much Ado About Nothing and A Midsummers Night's Dream.

Theo is also the narrator for the upcoming audiobook series 'The Trinity Prophecy'.



#### BAR REDDIN



MAC - SITE DEVELOPER

Barry Reddin is an Irish Actor, Writer, Producer and Director currently living and working in Dublin, Ireland. Barry has been lauded in a number of writing competitions including the Topophilia Writing Competition and the Venice Short Film Festival.

Barry is also a founding member of the Team Reddin film production company which is currently developing a slate of projects.



## JEAN LAW



POPPY - NEO-PAGAN

Dr. Jean van Sinderen-Law is an actress and writer, known for her roles in The South Westerlies (2020), The Eclipse (2009), and the long-running TV series, Fair City.

Jean has a PhD in Microbiology and in 2018 Jean was appointed Associate Vice President/Director of European Relations and Public Affairs at Cork University.

Her "otherness" - she likes to say - is as an actress for which she has trained and has considerable experience in film, television and theatre.



## NIGEL MERCIER



REVEREND SALLY O'MALLEY

Nigel is best known for his reccuring role as Detective Steve Yates on the long-running Irish soap opera, Fair City. He is a recognized and beloved actor across Ireland -- though he is regularly cast as a gangster or villain.

Nigel founded The Limerick School of Acting in 1992 and has a passion for helping young actors harness their talent and connect with their inner-selves through performance.

## CAST



#### LENA TOKUHIRO



NIKKO - CAMERA OP

Lena is based in Tyrol, Austria and is currently pursuing a degree in Physics alongside her work as an actress.

Groundbreaking is her first appearance on screen, with the bulk of her experience taking place on the stage.



#### HARUKA SAITO



KIKO - DOCUMENTARIAN

Haruka was a member of the innovative Seinendan Theater Company in Tokyo in 1983 for many years before moving to Newcastle, UK where she lives and works as an actress.

She has experience on both the stage and the screen and is best known for her performance in the feature film, Hospitalité (also known as "Kantai").



#### MAI NAKANO



AKI - CAMERA OP

Mai is a Japanese actress living and working in London. She was named Best Actress at the Cinema London Film Festival (2017) in the UK and ReelHeART International Film & Screenplay Festival (2015) in Toronto, Canada for her role in SUMMER TIME (Dir. Kota Fudauchi).

Her recent appearances include "Real Horror Story" (CX, drama), "Miss Sherlock" (Hulu original drama) and "Eerie" (WOWOW TV, drama).

SPOILERS: Oft-neglected in the mockumentary format, Groundbreaking's camera crew plays a critical role in the narrative. The stunning, mid-season reveal of the identity and intentions of the camera crew unfurls new layers in a developing mystery, and introduces three new characters that propel Groundbreaking's labyrinthine plot.

## NORMAN THE OLD IRISH GOAT

Norman is one of only 100 Old Irish Goats left in the world. This rare, indigenous species was thought to be extinct until 10 years ago.

For more information about conservation efforts to revive this unique species, we encourage you to visit www.oldirishgoatsociety.com.



## PRODUCER'S NOTE



When Patrick pitched the idea of *Groundbreaking* to me back in 2017, I knew it was special. I mean -- The Office meets Indiana Jones? What more could you want in a series? But Groundbreaking is so much more than a comedy. And it's so much more than an adventure flick. It's full of warmth, heart, and complexity that's rare to see on screen these days... I've been fortunate to work alongside Patrick for the past 4 years as he's worked tirelessly to make Groundbreaking a truly unique work of art. From the scripts to the locations to our incredibly talented cast and crew -- every piece of this production was brought meticulously together through love, sweat and tears. Every person who helped bring Groundbreaking to life took a chance on an idea they thought was special... and that faith comes through in a series that I believe lives up to its name.

-Wendy

## FAQs

## WHERE WAS GROUNDBREAKING FILMED?

Groundbreaking was shot entirely on the west coast of Ireland in a region called Connemara. As an American production company, shooting an independent series in Ireland was definitely an undertaking. It would have been much simpler to film somewhere more central to our US crew. But the mythos and history of Ireland was central to the story we wanted to tell.

The landscape in Ireland - and particularly in Connemara - is so unique. Dramatic yet soft. Rugged yet whimsical. It became its own character in the story. The decision to film in Ireland also opened the door to an additional pool of talent from nearby European countries.



## ABOUT KIYO FILMS

KIYO FILMS is a full-service video production company and creative agency specializing in high-end film & television production, as well as national broadcast commercials, branded content, and digital spots. It was founded by award-winning narrative and commercial director/cinematographer, Patrick Smith and has head-quarters in Los Angeles, Seattle, and Austin.



## CREW

#### PATRICK WILLIAM SMITH

WRITER / DIRECTOR / CINEMATOGRAPHER / EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Patrick is an award-winning director/cinematographer .whose work includes national content for **Disney, Johnson & Johnson, Quicken Loans, Anheuser-Busch, Gillette, BANDAID, Penny Arcade, Microsoft, & Crest** - among others.

As a cinematographer, Patrick has lensed narrative features, 3D films, television pilots and web-series. As the 3D cinematographer on the sci-fi series Hard Reset, Patrick led the camera team that received the Lumiere Award for visual achievement for Best Live Action Short at the 2016 Advanced Imaging Society's Creative Arts Awards at Warner Brothers Studios (alongside notables like Star Wars: The Force Awakens).

As a director, his narrative piece The Longest Sun - a community-based non-profit film told entirely in the endangered Tewa language - was acquired for archival and exhibition by the Smithsonian Institute and distributed nationally through PBS. Patrick's short documentary Shades of the Border, which addressed the heightened racial disparity between Haitians and Dominicans after the devastating Hispaniola earthquake, won the Media That Matters Racial Dialogue Award and was distributed nationally as teaching material at Yale University and New York University.

His work has been exhibited at renowned international festivals such as SXSW, Slamdance, Austin Film Festival, etc - and distributed on major broadcast platforms such as DirectTV, Amazon Prime Video, iTunes, Microsoft Steam & Vudu.

Prior to working in Hollywood, Patrick lived and taught at a school in Nagasaki, Japan, and has also been a professor of film for the last six years. He is currently directing a university film program in St. George, Utah.

## CREW

#### WENDY BIRD WOMACK

#### WRITER / PRODUCER

Wendy Bird Womack is a commercial and narrative producer who has produced content for multi-national brands such as Quicken Loans, McCormick Spices, and Jack Link's. She graduated from the University of Texas (Austin) with a bachelor's in Radio-TV-Film and has since worked as a producer, video editor, and copywriter to create digital content for companies around the globe. She got her start working on the sets of independent features, short films, and television hits like America's Got Talent (NBC) and American Crime (ABC), and later worked for CBS Austin. Wendy also serves as the Creative Director for Kindtype — a boutique marketing agency that specializes in creating video and web content, design, and campaigns for philanthropic organizations, including major clients such as The Ministry for the Environment in New Zealand. As an avid traveler, Wendy draws her creativity from the new experiences, fascinating characters, and unique locations she's encountered along the way.

#### CORY HENDERSON

#### ASSISTANT DIRECTOR / CO - PRODUCER

A producer/director of award-winning short films and documentaries, Cory Henderson brings a wealth of keen experience to Groundbreaking. After graduating with degrees in both Film Production and Business from Central Washington University, Cory got his start working on horror features in Seattle, WA - where he served in various technical and support roles. In his spare time, Cory devotes himself to philanthropic challenges, and in 2018, he cycled 4000 miles across the country in support of young adults affected by cancer.

## BEN BRATEN

#### CAMERA

Ben Braten has been working behind the camera for the past 12 years, directing and lensing commercials, documentaries, short films and the occasional narrative. He satisfies his obsessive compulsive urges by locking himself away in dark edit suites for days at a time and running post on everything he shoots. He is well versed in a variety of NLE systems as well as sound finishing and color correction processes. He teaches production and post-production courses at Utah Tech University.

## CHELSEA RICHARDS

#### ART DIRECTOR

Chelsea Richards has spent more than a decade designing sets for stage productions across the US. She is best known for her innovative and futuristic set design of Shakespeare's "The Tempest". Originally from Stamford, Nebraska, Chelsea holds the MFA in Scenic Design and Painting from Utah State University. In addition to scenic design, she also acts, sings, stitches costumes, and can hold her own on a basketball court. Chelsea is currently the Director of the Theatre Program/Associate Professor of Theatre in Scenic Design at Utah Tech University.

## FAQs

#### WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST HURDLES ON SET?

Rain. And midges. The first half of filming was particularly wet -- rain and clouds almost every day. We were so excited to finally have a sunny week in the forecast... until the sun brought out the midges. If you haven't experienced them, midges are like tiny mosquitoes that travel in swarms. Almost every dry evening, the set was invaded by thousands of midges flying into our eyes and mouths and noses. We'd douse ourselves in bug spray to avoid bites, but even then the midge swarms would show up on camera and ruin takes. The camera team and the actors developed an incredible talent for mindfully ignoring the midges during a scene and then erupting into "the midge dance" as soon as Patrick called cut.



## WHAT WAS THE CASTING PROCESS LIKE?

During the writing stage, we were intentionally open-ended when it came to the characters' nationality. So when it came time to cast we were able to open up the roles to people all over the globe. We received more than 15,000 submissions to our casting call, and were lucky enough to connect with our incredibly talented actors who represent 9 different countries (US, Ireland, UK, France, Austria, Japan, Costa Rica, China, Madagascar). We love how many languages were spoken on set, and feel this cast really reflects the global age we live in.

As an American production company, we hadn't anticipated that only one of our 11 cast members would be from the US, but Groundbreaking is ultimately a story about deep connections that can blossom despite distance, culture or language barriers, so the casts' varried backgrounds really fit the theme. This sentiment played out on screen and off. From our very first table read over Zoom, there was a unique chemistry between the cast that blossomed even more when everyone finally arrived on set.

## IS THERE A PLAN FOR SEASON TWO?

Absolutely. Season one of Groundbreaking is just the beginning of a much larger story (and a more expansive mythology). We currently have plans to make six seasons of Groundbreaking -- each taking place in a different country.

## SPECIFICATIONS

Series	6 Episodes
Episode Run Time	40 min*
Genre	Mockumentary Dramedy/Mystery
Year	2022
Language	English
Country of Origin	United States
Format	4K, 24fps, 2:1, Sound 5.1

## LINKS

Official website: www.kiyofilms.com/groundbreaking

Official Facebook: www.facebook.com/groundbreakingseries

IMDB: www.imdb.com/title/Groundbreaking

Instagram: @groundbreaking\_series

Hashtag: #groundbreakingseries

Kickstarter:

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