



TALES OF SOMALI PIRACY

STOLEN SEAS



GOLDCREST FILMS PRESENTS A

SPECIES BEING FILMS IN ASSOCIATION WITH PRODUCTION DIAMOND DOGS AND BRIDGE OF HANDS A FILM BY THYMAYA PAYNE "STOLEN SEAS"

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY GREGG LEHRMAN EDITED BY GARRET PRICE DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANDRE LASCARIS, BOBBY SHORE, ERIC KORETZ

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER NICK QUESTED PRODUCED BY THYMAYA PAYNE, ANDRE LASCARIS, HEATHER PHENIX, ANDREW WALKER

WRITTEN BY MARK MONROE DIRECTED BY THYMAYA PAYNE

STOLEN SEAS

True Stories Of Somali Piracy.

The filmmakers have spent the past several years traveling to some of the world's most violent locales in order to make this documentary on Somali piracy, *Stolen Seas*. Utilizing exclusive interviews and unparalleled access to real pirates, hostages, hostages' relatives, ship-owners, pirate negotiators and experts on piracy and international policy, *Stolen Seas* presents a thrilling exposé on the Somali pirate phenomenon. *Stolen Seas* is a truthful refutation of preconceived ideas on how and why piracy became the world's most frightening multi-million dollar industry.

Thymaya Payne Director/ Producer

Thymaya Payne, Writer/Director A University of Chicago and AFI graduate born in New York and currently residing in Los Angeles, Thymaya Payne has directed a number of films including the short films "Apparent Horizon"(starring Peter Coyote), "Let's Not and Say We Did," and "Coup De Grace", which premiered at the HBO Latino Film festival. In the summer of 2010 he completed his documentary film *Love Limits*, which was later released by Icarus films.

In 2008 Payne began a four-year journey to direct and produce an in-depth documentary about Somali piracy and its root causes called *Stolen Seas*. The film premiered at the Locarno Film festival and was awarded the Boccolino' D'oro. Later, at the Palm Springs Film Festival, *Stolen Seas* won the John Schlesinger award for best Documentary. "A dangerous 90-minute immersion in a world where lawlessness applies to all sides" said Variety. The New York Times called *Stolen Seas* "Magnificent ". *Stolen Seas* was theatrically released in early 2013.

Andre Lascaris Cinematographer/ Producer

Recipient of the Hollywood Foreign Press Award from the American Film Institute, Los Angeles based filmmaker Andre Lascaris began his career as a reportage photographer traveling around the world on assignment. Andre's narrative cinematography ranges from the action packed espionage thriller *CONTRACT KILLERS* to the critically acclaimed *GOOD DICK* - NOMINATED for the GRAND JURY PRIZE at the 2008 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL, to the documentary *STOLEN SEAS* which examines the phenomenon of Piracy off the coast of Somalia. Andre's work has been recognized with two EMMY nominations, one EMMY Award, a TELLY and an ADDY Award for Excellence in Cinematography in his commercial work, and Best Experimental Film Award for his film *Obscura*.

Bridge of Hands Entertainment Producers

Before pairing up with Andrew at Bridge Of Hands Ent, Heather Phenix has worked with Emmy award-winning White Pine Pictures (*Shake Hands with the Devil*, *Genius Within: the Inner Life of Glenn Gould*, *Hugh Hefner: Playboy, Activist, Rebel*) as well as on the drama series, *The Border* (CBC). Andrew has worked as an actor in film and television (*ER*, *CSI Miami*, *CSI NY*, *Without a Trace*, *Big Bang Theory* and most recently *Against the Wall*). In 2008 Andrew won an ACTRA as well as the Philip Borsos award for best performance for his role in the film *'Steel Toes'*.

GoldCrest Films Executive producers

Since establishment in 1977, Goldcrest has financed, produced and/or distributed over 100 titles that have won numerous prizes, including 19 Academy Awards and 28 BAFTAs. Celebrated films include *Gandhi*, *The Killing Fields*, *The Mission*, *Chariots of Fire*, *A Room with a View*, *Local Hero*, *All Dogs Go To Heaven*, and Oscar nominated *Restrepo*.

Mark Monroe Writer

An award-winning documentary filmmaker and freelance producer/writer, Mark has more than 15 years of experience in all facets of production - writing, producing, directing and editing. After more than a decade in television, Mark began writing for the big screen. His on-screen writing credits include, "The Tillman Story", Academy Award Winning "The Cove", and "Amazing Journey: The Story of The Who", produced by Spitfire Pictures and VH1 Films - released in 2007 by Universal Pictures, and nominated for a 2008 Grammy Award. He also wrote and directed "Morning Light", produced by Roy Disney and released theatrically by Disney Pictures in 2008.

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Director's Statement

In late November 2008, I was travelling through Africa trying to make sense of the rapid changes that were occurring throughout our world. What had been the status-quo was changing, morphing into a new sustained emergency that I found both exciting and confusing. In the middle of this was an emerging story about piracy in Somalia. I had long been fascinated with piracy and also Somalia specifically and had been tracking the rise of this phenomenon. How was it the world's poorest were taking hostage the world's richest? How did globalization affect piracy? And most importantly how did these "agents of change" fit into a larger picture of what was going on in the world around us? It was not until the end of my African trip, enjoying a lunch with a friend, when I started talking about the possibility of making a film about piracy. At first I thought it impossible. How could one get a hold of a Somali pirate? This was beyond my expertise. My friend disagreeing with me prophetically handed me an article about piracy he had just read. In it a man named Daniel Howden had gotten himself a pirate. I took it back to the US pondering the possibilities. Could I actually track down pirates and make a film about this? Was I up to the task? I had never tried a project of this scope and risk before. When I shared the article and crazy idea with a colleague, Andreas Lascaris, he took one look at it and smiled. He knew Daniel Howden, the author of the article, well. We contacted Daniel and were on a plane back to Kenya within weeks to meet up and find ourselves our very own pirates. In a short time Daniel helped us get acclimated in the fast paced world of foreign correspondents reporting on Africa and we became hardened documentarians embroiled in questionable and often dangerous situations. We met with the world's poorest people as well the richest. We were seeing the truth about this story and it was both jarring and exhilarating. There is nothing like lifting up the hood and looking into the mechanics of globalization to both depress and excite. The next four years with *Stolen Seas* became an all-encompassing roller coaster ride that would take us all over the world, meeting countless characters you could never even have dreamed up if you tried. The difficult part about making this film was not finding a good story to tell, but choosing which of the many to focus on. It was only after my meeting with the charismatic Ishmael Ali, a pirate negotiator who had participated in two of the hijackings that I had been following, did I decide to focus the film on him. I spent several weeks with him outlining his negotiation process and then returned to get the full story from those who experienced his negotiation skills first hand. The end result is a deep look into specific hijackings and a portrait of the individuals involved. These events work as a key into the heart of Somali piracy, how and why it occurs. I am not sure if I have answered all of my initial questions about Somali piracy – only a fool would claim to really understand Somalia -- but *Stolen Seas* brings me incrementally closer to the truth. Although the world continues to change with astonishing speed around me, I feel for at least this aspect of it I have a greater understanding of why and where we are going. I sit here, at home in Los Angeles, far from Somalia, it's 2013 and all the people I met making this movie continue to haunt me. Africa, it's future, our future, has followed me home. Yet, I am thankful for this opportunity to see.

Thymaya Payne (2013)

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Contacts

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