





## SYNOPSIS

From executive producer Angelina Jolie and the creators of the Academy Award®-nominated *The Secret of Kells* and *Song of the Sea*, comes the highly-anticipated new feature based on Deborah Ellis' best-selling novel.

*The Breadwinner* tells the story of Parvana, an 11-year-old girl growing up under the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001. When her father is wrongfully arrested, Parvana disguises herself as a boy in order to support her family. With dauntless perseverance, Parvana draws strength from the stories her father told her, and ultimately risks her life to discover if he is still alive. Equal parts thrilling and enchanting, *The Breadwinner* is a timely and inspiring tale about the transcendent power of stories, and their potential to unite and heal us all.

# CAST & CREW

## A FILM BY

NORA TWOMEY

## PRESENTED BY

AIRCRAFT PICTURES (CANADA)  
CARTOON SALOON (IRELAND)  
MELUSINE PRODUCTIONS (LUXEMBOURG)

## IN ASSOCIATION WITH

JOLIE PAS PRODUCTIONS

## PRODUCED BY

ANTHONY LEO, ANDREW ROSEN,  
PAUL YOUNG, TOMM MOORE,  
STEPHAN ROELANTS

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

ANGELINA JOLIE, GERRY SHIRREN,  
MIMI POLK GITLIN, JON LEVIN,  
REGINA K. SCULLY, ERIC BECKMAN,  
DAVID JESTEADT, MARY BREDIN,  
FRANK FALCONE, KARIM AMER,  
JEHANE NOUJAIM

## DIRECTED BY

NORA TWOMEY

## ART DIRECTORS

REZA RIAHI, CIARAN DUFFY

## SCREENPLAY BY

ANITA DORON

## SCREEN STORY BY

DEBORAH ELLIS

## BASED ON THE BOOK BY

DEBORAH ELLIS

## LINE PRODUCER

KATJA SCHUMANN

## MUSIC BY

MYCHAEL DANNA & JEFF DANNA

## EDITED BY

DARRAGH BYRNE

## PRODUCED WITH THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION OF

FILM FUND LUXEMBOURG, TELEFILM CANADA AND THE TALENT FUND, BORD SCANNÁN NA HÉIREANN /THE IRISH FILM BOARD, GAIA ENTERTAINMENT, SHAW ROCKET FUND, ARTEMIS RISING FOUNDATION, THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY OF IRELAND, ONTARIO MEDIA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, THE HAROLD GREENBERG FUND, RTÉ, THE MOVIE NETWORK, CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

## IN ASSOCIATION WITH

GKIDS

## ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

TOMMASO COLOGNESE,  
FABIEN RENELLI, PHILIP SVOBODA

## SOUND DESIGN BY

J.R. FOUNTAIN

## ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

STUART SHANKLY

## ANIMATION DIRECTOR

FABIAN ERLINGHÄUSER

## TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

MARK MULLERY

## DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

SHELDON LISOY

## STORYWORLD DIRECTOR

JEREMY PURCELL

## STORYWORLD ANIMATION DIRECTOR

LORRAINE LORDAN

## ART DIRECTOR GURU STUDIO

SANATAN SURYAVANSHI

## VOICES

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>PARVANA</b>               | SAARA CHAUDRY  |
| <b>SHAUZIA</b>               | SOMA CHHAYA  |
| <b>FATTEMA</b>               | LAARA SADIQ  |
| <b>SORAYA</b>                | SHAISTA LATIF  |
| <b>NURULLAH</b>              | ALI BADSHAH  |
| <b>ZAKI</b>                  | PATRICK MCGRATH,<br>LILY ERLINGHÄUSER,<br>FINN JACKSON PARLE |
| <b>IDREES /<br/>SULAYMAN</b> | NOORIN GULAMGAUS   |
| <b>RAZAQ</b>                 | KAWA ADA   |

## ADDITIONAL VOICES

ALI KAZMI, KANE MAHON, WAMIQ FUROGHUDIN, MRAN VOLKHard, ALI HASSAN, MILLAD HAMIDKOHZAD, SALAMAN HAMIDKOHZAD, KANZA FERIS, ENAYAT MAZARYAR, ABU HASHIM DOSTYAR, SAPEDA HASHIM DOSTYAR, REZA SHOLEH

## US DISTRIBUTION

GKIDS

## CANADA DISTRIBUTION

ELEVATION PICTURES

## INTERNATIONAL SALES

WESTEND FILMS

DCP / 2.35 Scope / Dolby 5.1 /  
Not Yet Rated / 93 min





## PARVANA'S JOURNEY

Eleven-year-old Parvana lives with her family in one room of a tiny apartment building in war-torn Kabul, Afghanistan. Living under Taliban rule, Parvana grows up listening to stories told by her father while helping him in the marketplace where he reads and writes letters for people to earn a living.

One day, her father is arrested, and Parvana's life is changed forever. In a time and place where women are not allowed to leave home without men, her family is left without someone who can earn money or even shop for food. Director Nora Twomey did not necessarily set out to make a film with a political message about women's rights, but sought specifically to pragmatically tell this story through the eyes of a child. "Parvana's father is a storyteller and a teacher," says Twomey. "Parvana resists taking that role on at first, and then feeling that void where her father was, she fills his role in a way."

Parvana starts the film as a child, and emerges as something different: she takes destiny into her own hands when she decides to cut her hair and disguise herself as a boy, turning herself into the breadwinner for the family. "I wanted to make that scene quite matter of fact—a silent understanding between Parvana and her sister," Twomey continues. "There is kind of an existing aggravation in their relationship, but they both understand what needs to be done."

After Parvana resolves to cut her hair and wear her brother's clothes, she's exposed to freedom like she's never experienced before. "It was simple for her to enter this freedom," says screenwriter Anita Doron. "It only meant an exterior change: short hair and boy's clothes." Parvana's disguise allows her to fully come into her own. She wanders the streets of her city without fear of being harassed, purchases supplies that her family needs, and makes new friends.

And although she is in constant danger of being discovered, Parvana is determined to find out where her father was taken, and rescue him.





## ON STARTING PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPING THE SCRIPT

The journey of *The Breadwinner* began when Aircraft Pictures' Anthony Leo and Andrew Rosen discovered the book by Deborah Ellis, and approached Cartoon Saloon's Paul Young and Gerry Shirren with the idea of co-producing an adaptation of the book as an animated film. They brought the book back to Ireland, and *The Breadwinner* director Nora Twomey was instantly drawn to the story. "I read the book, and I just felt a lot for Parvana," says Twomey. "The universality of that character against the matter-of-fact nature of the way that the book is written. It isn't melodramatic, but it's told from a very real perspective, I suppose. It doesn't talk down to young adults. I think that just reading about Parvana was my major inspiration. I could see how it would make a beautiful and thoughtful film, and I knew which people I wanted to work with to do so. I think for me, *The Breadwinner* was one of the only experiences in my professional career where I've had that feeling that I needed to do this project." After Twomey decided that she must make the film, she worked closely with screenwriter Anita Doron on the adaptation.

"When I first read *The Breadwinner*, I was already researching Afghan history and culture so that I had some context for understanding the characters and the setting," says Doron. "I read and studied Afghan folklore, poetry, mythology, art, music, cooking, philosophy, literature and anything else I could get my hands on. For our viewers, and for me, to viscerally understand why the setting of the story is as complex and devastating, I felt it necessary to present the past."

To make sure Afghanistan's complicated and layered past was a part of the context of the film, Doron wove in a secondary narrative, Parvana's story of the Elephant King, into the film's structure. "I decided to create a story within the story that would allow the audience a visceral understanding of Afghanistan's history and unique place," says Doron. "I contacted a friend and fellow TED Fellow, Amanullah Mojadidi, to work with me and help me make sure whatever is created for the film is authentic and truthful. Nora, the producers, Aman and I were very careful that as a writer I entered the perspective of a young Afghan girl, and not a Western screenwriter writing about her."

After an early draft of the script was complete, *The Breadwinner*'s executive producers Jon Levin, Mimi Polk Gitlin, Jehane Noujaim and Karim Amer all felt the project was something that Angelina Jolie would see the potential in. So Jehane and Karim met with Angelina in Los Angeles and gave her an early version of the script and some of the artwork that had been developed back in early 2015. Angelina really responded to the material, and Nora flew out to meet her soon afterward to talk about the film and the challenges ahead for the crew.

"The first time I talked to Angelina, it felt like the continuation of a discussion rather than the start of one. She was so in tune with the subtlety and style of storytelling I was using in *The Breadwinner*, she knew what I was trying to do and where to encourage me," says Twomey. "Angelina's own experiences in Afghanistan, helping to provide education for young girls there for many years, meant she had a deep understanding of the problems faced by girls like Parvana. She understands the complex nature of conflict and its effects on children, and as a fellow filmmaker, she was able to articulate subtleties of character and culture that I was then able to sew into the tapestry of the film."

Once Angelina Jolie boarded the film, "she helped in several ways—particularly with contextualizing the ending of the film," says Twomey. "I was really conscious that the book had been published in 2000 and so much had happened in the meantime to change how we, in the West, view other parts of the world. I wanted to nod to that in some way, and she was a great resource when I set out to craft that exact, subtle sentiment for the film. Angelina watched the rough storyboard reels and all the stages along the animation process, helping me from a cultural standpoint define the differences and similarities between children growing up in Afghanistan and children growing up in other places. She helped me understand the specific and the universal. There is a very strong sense in this film that Parvana is not defined by her gender, we as an audience get to experience the world through her eyes, from the inside out. There are a million little things that contribute to this concept, and it was great to have Angelina's guidance on that."



## VISUAL STYLE

After the script was solidified and production began, one of the biggest challenges for the creative team was identifying a clear visual style for the film. “One challenge was the design,” says Cartoon Saloon co-founder and CEO Paul Young, who is also a producer of *The Breadwinner*. “In this film, we’ve gone even more realistic with the look; we’re introducing a perspective that we’ve never had in our films before.”

Parvana’s day-to-day world, set in Kabul, Afghanistan, is heavily rooted in realistic renderings which director Nora Twomey worked closely with art directors Ciaran Duffy and Reza Riahi to polish. “We gathered as much information as we could from our Afghan consultants as to how Kabul looked and felt at the time the film was set in mid to late 2001,” says Twomey. “Animation is such an expressive medium, when phrases like ‘honey light’ are used by Afghans to describe the morning atmosphere in Kabul, we were able to heighten that visual observation in the service of the film. We did the best we could to be both authentic and artistically expressive, to push the medium as far as we could in the service of the heart and drama of the film.”

The style of animation that the creative team landed on for the Elephant King’s world was cut-out animation, which was an extensive process, but gave the story world a distinct identity that Twomey knew was necessary to differentiate the two storylines. “I was looking for a style of animation that would feel good with the story, but would also have a very strong visual cue when we were going from the real world, which was Parvana’s experience in Kabul, to the story world, which was her imagination,” says Twomey. “We brought on a cut-out animator, Janis Aussel, and she would cut out every single element, and work with Reza to design the characters. Reza would draw them, Janis would cut them out, then she would give him her cut-outs, and he would redraw again. So it was trial and error to get the perfect look for the story world.”





## MUSIC & SOUND DESIGN

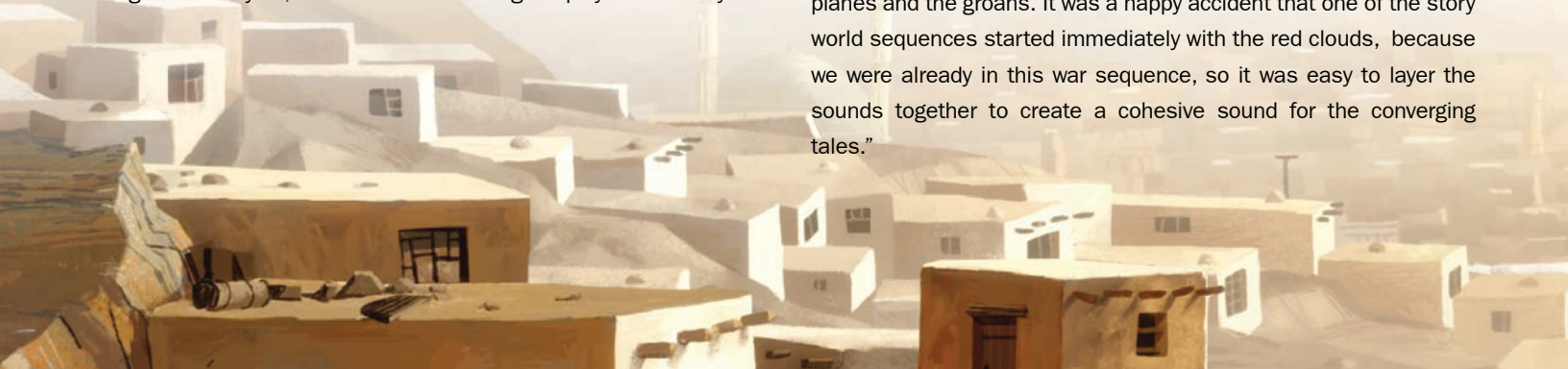
The original music in the film, written and produced by composers Mychael Danna and Jeff Danna, helped to reinforce the cultural context and contrasting aesthetics of the real- and story-worlds. “This idea of the two parallel stories was one of the first things we considered when we were conceptualizing the approach to the score,” said Jeff Danna. “The cold, starker, spare world of the present day setting was immediately clear to us, but it took some thought to figure out what the story world was going to sound like. By the manner in which it was animated, it looked to us like this beautiful folk art that moves. We chose to make the story world a very heightened, colorful musical expression, compared to the more stark sound of the real world.”

To create these different styles of music, the Dannas started with finding Afghan musicians and learning about Afghan instruments. “One of the things that is really important to us in any kind of filmic storytelling is to give musical respect to the culture that the story is springing from,” said Mychael Danna. “So what that means for us is that it was very important to include Afghan musicians and Afghan instruments, and to educate ourselves in that world. We reached out to the Afghan National Institute of Music, which is this amazing school that was founded during a time when Taliban rule banned instrumental music. This school has the courage to not only teach music but teach music to young boys and girls. The director of the institute, Dr. Ahmad Sarmast, put us in touch with Afghan musicians and a girls choir there. We considered travelling to Kabul and recording in person, but the security situation became very dangerous this year, so we recorded the Afghan players remotely.”

Once their musicians were found, the next step was to couple the Afghan cultural influences with more traditional Western orchestras. Afghan instruments, the rabab and the tula, were layered into the orchestral base to create an auditory marriage of the Eastern and Western worlds.

In addition to the contrasting visual styles between the real and story worlds, the design elements impact the way those two worlds sound as well. Sound designer J.R. Fountain was tasked with the job of creating an auditory distinction between the two worlds. The directive was to give the world of Kabul a noisy, vibrant, and active sound, and the story world a more colorful, fantastical palette. “In the real world, you’ve got this little girl sandwiched in between a lot of men,” says Fountain. “That was a big thing—picking crowd noises with only men in them—as it gave Parvana’s situation extra gravity. Then in the story world, it sounds a little different in that it’s kind of like this fantasy world for Parvana, and so we had a lot more liberty in terms of color and even some more fun and comedic kinds of sounds, without getting too cartoony.”

Another one of the main sound challenges was creating crossover between the two worlds when the storylines converge toward the end of the film. “Nora had asked that we keep the story world and real world very separate, but then towards the end of the film we wanted to start integrating them more,” says Fountain. “The storylines cut back and forth between Parvana’s story and reality, and they’re all kind of climaxing at the same time. So, one of the things that we used to bridge those different storylines were the planes and the groans. It was a happy accident that one of the story world sequences started immediately with the red clouds, because we were already in this war sequence, so it was easy to layer the sounds together to create a cohesive sound for the converging tales.”





## NORA TWOMEY, DIRECTOR



As a co-founder and Creative Director at Cartoon Saloon, Nora Twomey oversees the development of the company's slate of productions, such as *Puffin Rock*, the preschool series narrated by Chris O'Dowd and acquired by Netflix. Nora directed the multiple-award-winning short films *From Darkness*- and *Cúilín Dualach (Backwards Boy)*, and was co-director of Cartoon Saloon's Academy Award® -nominated animated feature *The Secret of Kells*. She then served as Head of Story on the company's second feature, *Song of the Sea*, which was also nominated for an Academy Award® for Best Animated Feature.

*The Breadwinner*, a feature adaptation of Deborah Ellis' best-selling young adult novel, is her debut as a solo feature director. The screenplay is written by Anita Doron and Angelina Jolie is among the film's executive producers. The animated film will be premiering at Toronto International Film Festival in September 2017, before opening in the US and Canada in Fall 2017.

### FILMOGRAPHY

- 2017**      ***The Breadwinner (Director, Feature)***
- 2015**      ***Puffin Rock (Producer, TV Series)***
- 2014**      ***Song of the Sea (Head of Story, Feature)***
- 2009**      ***The Secret of Kells (Co-Director, Feature)***
- 2004**      ***Cúilín Dualach (Backwards Boy) (Director, Short Film)***
- 2002**      ***From Darkness (Director, Short Film)***





## ABOUT CARTOON SALOON

Kilkenny-based Cartoon Saloon is a twice Academy Award® - and BAFTA-nominated animation studio formed by Paul Young, Tomm Moore and Nora Twomey in 1999. From award-winning shorts to feature films and TV series, Cartoon Saloon has carved a special place in the international animation industry. In 2010 the studio's first feature film, *The Secret of Kells*, was nominated for an Academy Award®, and in 2015 Tomm Moore's follow-up feature, *Song of the Sea*, garnered him a second Oscar® nomination and a first nomination for producer Paul Young. Season 2 of Cartoon Saloon's multi-award-winning *Puffin Rock* preschool series is currently being broadcast around the world. Co-produced with Penguin Random House Childrens Books and Dog Ears, the show currently airs around the world. Cartoon Saloon, along with Canada's Aircraft Pictures, Luxembourg's Melusine Productions and in association with Jolie Pas Productions, have finished production on the animated feature film *The Breadwinner*. Based on the internationally acclaimed young adult novel of the same name by Canadian author Deborah Ellis, the film is set for its world premiere at the 2017 Toronto Int'l Film Festival.

## ABOUT AIRCRAFT PICTURES

Based in Toronto, Canada with offices in Los Angeles, Aircraft Pictures was founded by Anthony Leo and Andrew Rosen to create premium scripted content for kids, families and young adults. Aircraft develops, finances and produces content for a variety of platforms ranging from independent feature films to high-end television series to digital first productions. Current projects include three television movies based on the *Bruno & Boots* book series by Canadian young adult fiction icon Gordon Korman (now airing on Netflix, Universal Kids, YTV and Nickelodeon EMEA); the animated supernatural comedy feature film *Todd & The Book of Pure Evil: The End of the End*; and the Kidscreen Award-winning single-camera comedy *Raising Expectations* created by Tom Saunders (*Arrested Development*) and starring Jason Priestley and Molly Ringwald. Past credits include *Dark Matter* - the NBC Universal web series prequel to the *Heroes: Reborn* television reboot; a series of shorts for *Sesame Street*; the internet motion picture *Cybergeddon* by C.S.I. creator Anthony E. Zuiker; the 26-episode Canadian Screen Award-winning live action comedy *Todd & The Book of Pure Evil*; and 40 episodes of the tween sitcom *What's Up, Warthogs!*

## ABOUT MELUSINE PRODUCTIONS

Formed in 1998 by Stéphan Roelants, Melusine Productions is a Luxembourg-based production company focused on developing and producing animated movies and TV shows, documentaries and live action movies. Melusine's focus is on original, well-conceived and unusual productions which it produces with its partner studio, Studio 352, whose crew consists of renowned artists. To date, Melusine has been involved in, amongst others, the production of *Aunt Hilda*, selected in the Berlinale; *My Mommy is in America*, nominated for a 2014 Cesar Award; and *Extraordinary Tales*. But the highlights have been *Ernest and Celestine* and *Song of the Sea* which are destined to be animation classics and have earned a long list of prizes with selections in Cannes, Sundance, Toronto and New York including numerous Cesar Awards and two Oscar® nominations. Melusine continues producing with an editorial line up focusing on script value and high graphic concepts including *Ethel and Ernest*, *The Breadwinner* and *The Summit of the Gods*.



## ABOUT GKIDS

GKIDS is a producer and distributor of award-winning feature animation for both adult and family audiences. Since 2010, the company has scored an astounding nine Best Animated Feature Oscar nominations – with *The Secret of Kells* in 2010, *A Cat in Paris* and *Chico & Rita* in 2012, *Ernest & Celestine* in 2014, *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* and *Song of the Sea* in 2015, *Boy and the World* and *When Marnie Was There* in 2016, and *My Life as a Zucchini* in 2017. GKIDS also handles North American distribution for the famed Studio Ghibli library of films, one of the world's most coveted animation collections with titles *Spirited Away*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Princess Mononoke*, and others. This fall, GKIDS is launching ANIMATION IS FILM, an annual LA-based film festival produced in partnership with Annecy International Animation Film Festival and Variety Magazine. The first edition unspools October 20-22 at the TCL Chinese Theater in Hollywood.

## ABOUT ELEVATION PICTURES

Founded in 2013, with finance partner Teddy Schwarzman of Black Bear Pictures, Elevation Pictures has established itself as one of Canada's leading film and television companies. Elevation's team of seasoned production and distribution executives are committed to bringing an elevated and robust film and television slate to audiences.

## ABOUT WESTEND FILMS

WestEnd Films is a dynamic international sales and feature film financing company, co-founded by Eve Schoukroun, Maya Amsellem and renowned producer and Capitol Films founder Sharon Harel-Cohen. WestEnd launched at Cannes 2008 and offers filmmakers finance, production and sales expertise as well as an extensive network of contacts across all sectors of the industry. WestEnd continues to build a highly selective slate including the talent of directors Stephen Frears, Rodrigo Garcia, Neil Jordan, Ralph Fiennes, David Gordon Green, Tomm Moore, Hideo Nakata, Michael Winterbottom, Isabel Coixet, Fernando Leon de Aranoa and A-list cast including Benicio Del Toro, Rooney Mara, Al Pacino, Ralph Fiennes, Kristin Scott Thomas, Mia Wasikowska, Nicolas Cage, Steve Coogan, Tim Robbins, Cara Delevingne, Christopher Walken, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Glenn Close, Woody Harrelson, Imogen Poots and Liam Hemsworth. WestEnd's library include Oscar-nominated titles such ALBERT NOBBS, SONG OF THE SEA, THE INVISIBLE WOMAN and FOOTNOTE. A library of prestige films from legendary director Woody Allen complements a steadily growing line-up of quality films.

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