

# JONATHAN HARDEN

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## Personal Statement

I've been in and around the theatre, film and television industries for about fifteen years, and even though I came (back) to directing relatively recently, I've been working up to it for a very long time.

On the way, I've developed new writing for the stage (including commissioning and directing **Lisa McGee's** early work), produced the Irish premiere of **The 24hr Plays**, taught acting at **University of Ulster**, lectured in theatre at **Queen's University Belfast**, and was Artistic Director of the **Lytic Theatre Drama Studio** - a professional actor training program for 18-26 year olds - in Belfast. Add to that my experiences as an actor in everything from **BBC period dramas** to **Ridley Scott produced Sci-Fi**, from the **National Theatre** to the **The Bond Stage**, and you'll see why I feel like I have something different to offer. Unlike most directors, who rarely get to see how their heroes do the same job, I've been lucky enough to be directed by some of the best, including **Stephen Frears, Ralph Fiennes, Dominic Cooke, David Farr, Rian Johnson, Oliver Hirschbiegel, Howard Davies, and Nick Murphy.**

Most recently, I returned to directing for the stage, in a critically acclaimed production of Joseph Grilly's *On McQuillan's Hill* at the **Finborough Theatre, London.**

## Awards & Festival Selections

**Awards:** *GUARD* - European Independent Film Awards 2017 - Best Short Film; Northern Ireland Short Film Awards 2018: Best Drama; Brighton Rocks Film Festival: Best Short Drama

**Official Selections:** *GUARD* - Galway Film Fleadh, Rhode Island International Film Festival, Short Film Festival in Drama, Dublin International Film Festival, Manchester International Film Festival, Belfast Film Festival, Atlanta Independent Film Festival, Door County Film Festival (Finalist), Beeston Film Festival, Short & Sweet Film Festival (Nominee), Rebel Film Festival, St Patrick's Film Festival, Sioux Empire Film Festival, 20MinMax International Film Festival, Pune Short Film Festival, Myrtle Beach International Film Festival, Mexico City Independent Film Fest, Northern Ireland Short Film Awards (5 Nominations), Oil Valley Film Festival (Best Editing - Brian Philip Davis; Special Jury Prize - Bronagh Taggart), Kerry Film Festival, Carlow International Film Festival, Richard Harris International Film Festival (Best Director Nominee), Still Voices Film Festival, Brighton Film Festival, Out of the Can Film Festival.

**Awards:** *TROUBLES* - Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival - Best Short Drama.

**Official Selections:** *TROUBLES* - Galway Film Fleadh, Cork Film Festival, Irish Screen America, Belfast Film Festival, Dublin Film Festival, Toronto Irish Film Festival, Richard Harris International Film Festival, Clones Film Festival, Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival.

## Press Response to *On McQuillan's Hill*

"directed with a sensitive ear for snatching comedy from the jaws of conflict by Jonathan Harden" \*\*\*\* *The Stage*

"A production that's enhanced by an exceptionally strong cast. Under Jonathan Harden's direction, they deliver a real gem." \*\*\*\*\* *Morning Star*

"Harden... knows instinctively when to let the play breathe, and when to push it on" \*\*\*\*\* *London Theatre 1*

"Jonathan Harden and an exemplary cast explore even greater depths to the always three dimensional roles. Behind the near mythical ambience there lie utterly credible characters. These are never less than real people with genuine lives and backgrounds" \*\*\*\* *The Spy in the Stalls*

"Jonathan Harden's direction gets the pacing just right and manages to unfold this complex and twisting story in a way that makes it both comprehensible and completely gripping" \*\*\*\*\* *London Living Live*

"Harden's direction leans into the bleakness... infusing the play something of a melancholic anger" - \*\*\*\* *A Younger Theatre*

"the emotional truth of the performances that [Harden] encourages starts to burn through, and by the second half of the evening, we feel the full heat of each revelation" - *The Arts Desk*

"The acting is stellar, as the anger, resentment and bottled up guilt of the play's characters explodes until there's nothing left to give" - *SW Londoner*

## Reels

5 minute: <https://vimeo.com/honestyinc/jh5min>

90 second: <https://vimeo.com/honestyinc/jh90sec>

## Recent Credits as Director

### **2021: Self-shooting Producer / Director / Editor - *STUMBLING* (45 mins)**

- *Currently in pre-production*

- Casting
- Rehearsing four monologues ahead of filming
- Collaborating with cinematographer, and composer on original music.

### **2020: Director - *ON MCQUILLAN'S HILL* (full-length play) - Finborough Theatre**

- *Cast of six, 4 week run. Total budget: £65k*

- Casting
- Rehearsing and teching show ready for performance
- Collaborating with composer on original music, plus lighting designer, and scenic & costume designer.

### **2020: Self-shooting Producer / Director / Editor - *THE EMPTY CHAIR* (short doc)**

- *Currently in production*

- Developing idea, casting
- Raising £3k budget via NI Screen/ BFI Network (70%), charity sponsorship (30%),
- Running production budget

### **2018: Producer / Director - *TROUBLES* (11 mins) - Honesty Inc, Belfast**

- *Shot over 2 nights. Total budget: £15k. Post-production completed in 5 weeks.*

- *Selected for BFI Network / Northern Ireland Screen showcase at BAFTA (April 2018).*

- Developing script through multiple drafts
- Raising £15k budget via NI Screen/ BFI Network (50%), production partnerships (30%), and crowdfunding (20%)
- Running production budget
- Negotiating crew, equipment and location hire
- Negotiating with production partners, insurers etc
- Issuing contracts and managing payments
- Festival strategy

### **2017: Producer / Director - *GUARD* (13 mins) - Honesty Inc, Belfast**

- *Shot over 3 days. Total budget: £27k. Cast including: Ian McElhinney, Michael McElhatton.*

- *Selected for over 30 festivals to date, including Galway Film Fleadh and Rhode Island International Film Festival.*

- *European Independent Film Awards 2017 Best Short Film*

- Developing script through multiple drafts
- Raising £27k budget via crowdfunding (60%), private investment (20%), and production partnerships (20%)
- Establishing limited company for production purposes
- Running production budget
- Negotiating crew, equipment and location hire
- Negotiating with production partners, insurers etc
- Issuing contracts and managing payments
- Festival strategy

## Credits as Assistant Director

### **First Assistant Director - *Clean* (short film) - Hatch Pictures, London**

May 2018

- Shooting on 35mm

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- First time director

## **First Assistant Director - *RAF Reserves* (commercial) - Oath Media, London**

Apr 2018

- Scheduling 2 day shoot at Brize Norton RAF base, coordinating with military supervisors and air traffic control
- Managing/directing over 100 military SAs

## **Third Assistant Director - *Here's Lookin' At You Kid* (short film) - Pesky Films, Belfast**

Aug 2017

- Supporting First AD (Ciaran Colton) on the floor of 3 day shoot (c. £30k budget)
- Managing/directing over 30 SAs, including over 20 x 12-14 year olds in a classroom scene
- Supervising 2 Trainee ADs
- Directed by Michael Lennox (*Derry Girls*, *Endeavour*)

## **First Assistant Director - *Spilt* (short film) - London Film Studios**

Apr 2017

- Scheduling 3 day shoot (across 3 locations plus exteriors)
- Supervising crew of 12, including 2 further ADs.
- First time director

## **Assistant Director - *The Memory of Water* (play) - Lyric Theatre Belfast**

2002

- Assisting Mark Lambert

## **Related Employment**

### **Artistic Director - Lyric Theatre Drama Studio**

Sep 2008 - June 2009

### **Co-Creative Producer - *The 24hr Plays* - Lyric Theatre Belfast (with Des Kennedy)**

Oct 2008

### **Co-Creative Producer - twentyfivebelfast (new writing theatre company with Des Kennedy)**

March 2007 - Sep 2008

### **Lecturer in Drama - Queen's University Belfast**

Oct 2006 - June 2009

### **Artistic Director - Sneaky Productions (new writing theatre company, with Lisa McGee, Declan Feenan & Bronagh Taggart)**

Jan 2003 - Sep 2007

### **Lecturer in Drama - University of Ulster**

Jan 2005 - Sep 2006

### **Reader - Hothouse New Writing Panel - Tinderbox Theatre Company**

Sep 2001 - Dec 2004

## **Training**

NFTS: Documentary Shooting

May 2018

BAFTA & British Council: Short Sighted

Nov 2016

## **Skills**

Self-shooter with own equipment (FS5)

Photography to a professional standard (former member of The Society of International Press Photographers) with own equipment.

Languages: good French (written and conversational), basic Spanish

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**Education**

Queen's University Belfast - BA (Hons) Drama Studies - 1st

Queen's University Belfast - MA European Literature & Culture - Distinction

**Memberships**

IFTA (Irish Film and Television Academy), Royal Television Society, Directors UK, Equity UK.

**Referees**

*On request*