



A FILM BY  
REBECCA KING

# CONTENDERS

TITANA  
MUTHUI

PETRE  
DOBRE

ALI  
ARIAIE

NEBLI  
BASANI

JORDAN  
KOUAME

LAURIE  
DUFFY

RAGHAD  
CHAAR

STEPHEN  
OUTHWAITE

A THOUGHTS IN SMOKE PRODUCTION PRESENTS 'CONTENDERS'

STARRING PETRE DOBRE TITANA MUTHUI ALI ARIAIE NEBLI BASANI JORDAN KOUAME LAURIE DUFFY RAGHAD CHAAR STEPHEN OUTHWAITE

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREW RODGER COSTUME DESIGN HELENA GOLDBERG PRODUCTION DESIGNER LUCY BOWER EDITOR CHRIS WILSON MUSIC BY BEN STANBRIDGE

CO PRODUCERS CATE BARR AND TIAN BOYCE WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY REBECCA KING

THOUGHTS IN SMOKE PRESENT

**AESTHETICA**  
SHORT FILM FESTIVAL



**LEEDS**  
INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL

Winner 'Best Sci-Fi Short'

# CONTENDERS

A FILM BY REBECCA KING

English | 2.35:1 | 5.1 | 00:15:16 run time

Press kit and photos available on  
[www.contendersthefilm.com](http://www.contendersthefilm.com)

# SYNOPSIS

A series of gateways have appeared across the globe, all leading to a place people call 'Point B'.

Farm workers, Lewis and Andrei, are guarding one of the gateways in the North of England where six young people have arrived, ready to cross over into an uncertain future.

Contenders explores the nature of anonymous heroic acts from the younger generation and how they are, despite often criticised, the first to respond to a calling.

# WRITER & DIRECTOR

REBECCA KING

Rebecca King is a director based in London, originally from North Yorkshire. Her ambition is to create unique and large concept stories told on British soil that reflect the experiences of her generation. *Contenders* was birthed after King's imagination caught the attention from Lisa Joy (*Westworld*) and Scott Myers (*K9*). Currently she is developing her next film titled *Where Iron Gathers*. King is part of the BFI Network x BAFTA Crew 2019.

As a Script Supervisor she has worked on feature films and high end dramas in Britain including Rebellion Developments Ltd feature film *Schools Out Forever* and BBC/BFI film *Sweetheart*.

## IN CONVERSATION WITH WRITER AND DIRECTOR REBECCA KING BY CATE BARR

It's fair to say *Contenders* has been through quite the journey that has led you to where you are now. How did the project come about?

*Contenders* was birthed around a similar time that the Mars One project was in the forefront of the media. Witnessing interviews from members of the public ready to leave everything behind was incredibly interesting to me, and their reasons for it.

At the time, it made me think of my brother and certain friends who fiercely wanted to join the British army years ago and the campaigns which fuelled that desire. It's all linked to that certain period in a human life, often between the ages of 18-30 where you are ready to respond to a calling, whatever that is - the scary side of it is how often it can be misused by others.

The film naturally evolved from the script to working with the actors in a small caravan in Yorkshire. We then began filming on a tight schedule before moving on to the editing stages. Naturally, tweaks and changes come because often you are creatively tackling and overcoming hundreds of obstacles together, and you welcome them, whilst still trying to keep true to the tone you set out to create.

Each character has a story of their own - a past we are wanting to discover. Is there a specific character that you relate to or feel the strongest towards?

During the casting process, we had each actor trying a monologue I had written that was not too dissimilar from the Youtube interviews for the Mars Missions.

Andrei, played by my good friend Petre Dobre, an extremely skilled deaf Romanian born/British based actor, has a deep sensitivity as does Frank the dog, who's real name is Sonny. I feel like they are wired into a type of listening we forget to access above all the noise which includes the sound of our own voices or those around us.

What is the significance of the title?

In one way, the title represents the characters themselves and how they volunteer as worthy contenders for another life. Or, it could also describe how our feelings and thoughts will contend with each other, sometimes clouding our decision making. Finally, it could represent the youth in general - having to contend with the pre-made judgements made of them as useless, or reactionary, or too sensitive. An example of that is those in the millennial bracket that had to contend with slogans like 'generation snowflake'.

A lengthy and hard working process it has been, but undoubtedly worth it. Have you been overwhelmed by any specific elements of creating the film? And similarly, have there been moments of pure joy when things simply fell into place?

Sound design and composition are definitely my happy place when world building. Adam Jones (sound designer) and Ben Stanbridge (composer) are both extremely talented individuals, but between the long conversations, swapping strange vowels and all the unintelligible dialogue, it is hard to recount how we got from A to B. We all felt comfortable enough and open enough to twist each other's hard work which was a good feeling.

On the final mix we came together and pulled an all nighter - where delirium perhaps kicked in - but more happy discoveries were made. It was our first time working in one room together, but it was paramount to ride the trust that was established early on.

The DOP Andrew Rodger, editor Chris Wilson and colourist Liz Glennard brought their own creativity and artistry to the elements of mystery. I was moved by their heart's investment to *Contenders* and by having the privilege to work with their unique brains on this film.

What's next for *Contenders*? And what are the next plans for Rebecca King...another film in the pipeline?

Currently I'm developing a film called *Where Iron Gathers* which is to go into production in 2020. This story connects to the experiences of my friends and some of my own, with slight hallucinatory/magical elements. This will also be set in the North.

As a script supervisor, there are a few TV shows/films here in Britain I'll be helping the directors and editors on.

Other than that, maintaining friendships and collaborations I care about growing and nurturing is the large and on-going plan.

# CAST

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Theo

Alex

Jordan

Moses

River

Andrei

Yara

Lewis

Frank

Titana Muthui

Ali Ariaie

Nebli Basani

Jordan Kouame

Raghad Char

Petre Dobre

Laurie Duffy

Steve Outhwaite

Sonny

# CREW

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Writer & Director Cinematographer Producers	Rebecca King Andrew Rodger Cate Barr Tian Boyce Chris Wilson Ben Stanbridge Aline Leduc Jeroen Cocquyt Sarah Agha Matthew Gundel Dahlia Aljanabi Matthew Gundel Maria Estabannell Lucy Bower Ayesha Breithaupt Oliver Norgate Adam Jones Adam Cheong Bob Chen Adam Shuttleworth Tian Boyce Liz Glennard Helena Goldberg Ella Fickling Amber Roe Maria Estabanell Georgia Raymond Georgie England Chess Tomlinson Jill King Andrew Briggs Jane Bell Mel Simcoe Chris Whitmore
Editor Composer 1st AD 2nd AD Script Supervisor Gaffer Camera Assistant Gaffer Stills Photographer Production Designer Sound Recordists	
Sound Designer Assistant Sound Designer Post Assistant Sound Recordist Foley Mixer DIT Colourist Costume Hair & Make Up Artist Art Assistant Stills BSL Interpreter Dog Wrangler Floor Runners	

# SUPPORTING ARTISTS

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Lora Moss  
Virginia Ebdappas  
Gregg Huber  
Dom Shanahan  
Belinda Whittington-Huber  
Angela Smith  
Lloyd Hunter  
Schereeya Reed  
Emily Beal  
James George Thomson  
Mike Redley  
James Hall  
Jill Outhwaite

For further information, please contact:

Cate Barr  
[cateannebarr@gmail.com](mailto:cateannebarr@gmail.com)

Tian Boyce  
[tianboyce@gmail.com](mailto:tianboyce@gmail.com)