

BREAKING INFINITY

A FILM BY MARIANNA DEAN

Written by David Trotti

**Starring Neil Bishop, Jonny Phillips, Zoe Cunningham,
Martin Bishop & Zed Jozef**

Run Time: 86 minutes

Rating: 12 (VOD)

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SYNOPSIS

Breaking Infinity is a time-bending thriller about a research scientist named Liam, who has become unstuck in time. The only people Liam can count on for help are the doctor treating him, Emma, who's convinced he's suffering from delusions and his lab assistant Garret.

As Liam's episodes become more intense, and his jumps through time more extreme, Liam travels from the distant past where he's guided by a mysterious Old Man, to the future where he witnesses the end of the world – an apocalypse he may have caused.

Liam must convince the reluctant Emma to help him solve the mystery behind his time traveling quantum state, but complicating this is the fact Liam is experiencing time out of sequence, while Emma is only moving forward. Ultimately Liam discovers the accident that sent him careening through time was no accident – but who was responsible?

With Emma's help, Liam fights for survival at the end of the world and saves time itself, and in the process discovers the most important time is now.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Producers Dean and Cunningham first worked together with great festival success on short film Symptoms (2016). After each producing several further shorts they worked on putting together a slate of intelligent sci-fi films in the £1-3m range. In December 2020, they raised £200k on the strength of their filmmaking skills, which was not attached to a specific project. Without a script that sat within that budget, they started a search for something new.

After reading one hundred and thirty scripts they finally found a script by David Trotti called Breaking Infinity, a time travel sci-fi. "It was fast paced and engaging right from the start and I just couldn't put it down." Dean explains. "We both loved it but we knew it would be an ambitious project to pull off on the limited budget we had."

Cunningham and Dean brought on board experienced British indie producer, Paul Desira, to bolster their team. Desira said "I've been following Marianna [Dean]'s career for a while and I jumped at the chance to work with her on a feature."

Filming began in May 2021 over 18 days. "We wanted a really big contrast to show where Liam is in his time travel journey so having distinct locations that help to tell the story was crucial," Dean says.

Shooting began at Hush House in Bentwaters Airfield, Suffolk. Hush House was originally built as a jet engine testing facility with a spectacular exhaust tunnel. Dean explains, "As soon as I saw the tunnel I could imagine how it could work as our time-travel machine. Spacious, cinematic and atmospheric." The size of the tunnel meant that lighting it to get the time-travel effect was a huge undertaking. Producer, Zoe Cunningham: "I remember on the first day of shooting, we were all there with cable ties trying to put up strip lights that should have been up hours ago and thinking 'Will this film ever get shot?'"

The second location, the Discovery Park in Kent, was by far the most challenging. “We filmed in this incredible facility where we converted a pharmaceutical glass room into a hospital recovery room. Whilst it looks amazing on camera it was a real pain to shoot in with all the reflections.” Dean laughs. “We pulled it off though”.

Production ended with a final shoot in the magnificent Snowdonia National Park. “We only used natural light on the top of a mountain,” Dean explains. “Shooting in Snowdonia gave us incredibly grand landscapes and it shows on camera. But the biggest challenge we faced there was really a scheduling one, just because of our use of natural light. We ended up chasing the light for a few scenes.”

Costume and makeup form a key part of telling the story of Breaking Infinity. Every piece of wardrobe was carefully chosen by costume director Jenny Anderton, working closely with Dean, from Emma’s professional workwear to the incredible costume of the Old Man. “He had the best stick,” said Cunningham, who also played the lead role of Emma. “We were all so jealous.”

A great deal of attention and detail went into Liam’s make-up, created by Madalina Elena, in order to clearly show his journey through different stages of injury, a crucial element of the story.

We had a great cast and crew and everyone played an important part in bringing the script to the screen.

CASTING THE LEAD

Finding the right actor to portray the pivotal role of Liam Jones was a challenge. The filmmakers finally found their Liam in Neil Bishop.

Cunningham recalls, “We spent a long time looking for a Liam. We did two rounds of auditions with actors first sending in tapes then coming in person. Bailey Francis, the casting director, did a great job of finding a real range of actors.”

Dean explains, “We needed a multi-skilled actor that could pull off all aspects of the role. It’s such a complex character in an everchanging timeline. And when Neil Bishop auditioned for the part opposite Zoe [Cunningham], he was perfect. He is an amazing actor. He has an incredible charisma and is a pure joy to work with. So, it’s really exciting to have a guy who really had everything.”

Bishop was thrilled by the opportunity. He remembers, “The script really hooked me right from the start. And my inability to understand what was going on the first time I read it, just really captivated me.”

He continues, “It was an incredibly complicated script shoot but what I loved about it is that all ideas no matter who it came from were appreciated. And it’s the appreciation of those ideas that goes a long way. It often filters down from the top, and Marianna [Dean] is great. She’s got a level-head the whole time even when the pressure is on, when we’ve been behind. And you always know what she wants from you which is great and very helpful from my aspect. I loved shooting it.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

We are limited as human beings to existing in a single time. What if we could exist at multiple times or across all times? Would it be worth sacrificing our small human comforts, like love, for this ability? What would we do differently if we could live a moment again?

Breaking Infinity allows us to see inside Liam on this journey and travel with him as he is forced to answer these questions.

Liam is a very human protagonist. We feel his disorientation at the start of the film as he is fighting to not just work out exactly what is going on but also rediscover his own identity. As his vulnerable position progresses throughout the film, we gain increasing admiration for his inner strength as he fights on against the odds.

Breaking Infinity is a film of contrasts. The fast-paced action from the start of the film is set against the gentle unfolding of Liam and Emma's budding relationship.

We explore the future, and go back to the past. We see the futuristic and claustrophobic setting of the military scientific research facility where Liam works contrasted against the wide open and awe-inspiring images of ancient landscapes.

The film is told from Liam's point of view and this is shown by a consistent feel across the whole film (conveyed with camera techniques, framing, sound, and consistent colour-palette). The extensive use of sound elements and organic lighting design visually translates the complex world that these characters find themselves in and makes the environments feel alive.

ABOUT THE CAST

NEIL BISHOP – Bishop's love for acting started from a young age, appearing in various school productions and in after school dramatic society performances. He studied sports science at Durham University, and played cricket and rugby to sub national level but had to stop due to injuries.

In 2015, he decided to pursue career in acting. He appeared in TV series such as "Jekyll and Hyde" and "Killer Clergy" before landing a small role in "Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom."

Bishop will appear in Roger Kumble's highly anticipated "Beautiful Disaster," coming in 2023, where he portrays Parker Hayes, starring opposite Virginia Gardner and Dylan Sprouse.

He will also appear in "Citadel," an Amazon series, starring Richard Madden and Priyanka Chopra.

ZOE CUNNINGHAM (Producer/Actress) – Cunningham is an executive-level businesswoman, with ten years plus experience at the C-Suite level. She worked for 8 years as the Managing Director of Softwire where she quadrupled turnover from £5m to £20m before moving to acting and producing in 2016.

Her first short film (with director Marianna Dean), "Symptoms," screened at 19 festivals and won 7 awards. Cunningham honed her film skills with further short films and two zero-budget features before starting work on Breaking Infinity in 2020.

Cunningham's first acting role was as a reporter in Michael Winterbottom's "The Look of Love" in 2013. From there she has grown to cement herself as a leading lady in independent film productions, taking lead roles in sci-fi festival favourite "Nightlens" and feminist horror "Goodbye Mary" prior to her latest role as the mysterious but sympathetic doctor, Emma, in Marianna Dean's Breaking Infinity.

She's also a massive Star Trek and science-fiction fan and enjoys making Pokémon out of lego.

JONNY PHILLIPS - Phillips has made his on screen debut in 1985 in the British television series "The Ties of Blood."

He is best known for his portrayal of 2nd Officer Charles Lightoller in the 1997 blockbuster film "Titanic." The movie was a critical and box-office smash hit, and went on to win the Academy Award for Best Picture.

Following the success of "Titanic," Phillips continued to get work in large budget feature films, many of them set in England. His credits include "Vanity Fair," "Bronson," "The Edge of Love" and "Outlaw King" to name a few.

Phillips' success on the feature film world did not cause him to give up television entirely. He continues to work on British television series, guesting in episodes of shows like "Midsomer Murders," "Miss Scarlet and the Duke," "Partners in Crime" and "Death in Paradise."

MARTIN BISHOP - Trained at the Guildford School of Acting. Experienced actor and Voice Over artist often playing classic English characters.

Stage roles have included "The Browning Version", "Swan Song" (Chekhov) and "The Rivals", all with the Peter Hall company.

Bishop has appeared in several major feature films including "Wonderwoman," "The Mummy," "The Hustle," "Mr Jones" and "Maleficent II." Television appearances have included "The Crown," "Belgravia," "The Nevers," "Ted Lasso," and "Dangerous Liaisons."

ZED JOSEF - Josef trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. His recent credits include performing for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Netflix series "Valhalla", "Leviathan" and "King of Crime."

Josef will next appear in "Golda," starring Helen Mirren and Liev Schreiber.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

MARIANNA DEAN (Director/Producer) - Having previously established herself in the world of strategy and sales management over a 15 year career, Dean moved into directing and producing in 2016.

Her debut short film, "Symptoms," screened at 19 festivals (including Bafta/Oscar qualifying ones) and won 7 awards. She directed and produced further three short films before moving into television.

Recently she directed 16 episodes of BAFTA nominated "Hollyoaks" for Channel 4.

"Breaking Infinity" is Dean's first feature-length production.

PAUL DESIRA (Producer) - Desira has worked in the film and television industry for over 19 years. His credits include: "Brighstar," "Ill Manors," "Captain America," "Ra One," "The Londoners," "The Power," "Best Laid Plans," "Malice In Wonderland," "The Reeds," "Warhorse" and "Kingdom".

His first feature as producer, "Evil Never Dies" starring Neil Maskell and PH Moriarty, is available on VOD in the UK, USA, AUS and NZ.

He co-produced the independent horror "Heckle" starring Steve Guttenberg, Clark Gable III and Dani Dyer, released in 2021. His short film "Chain," has won over 21 awards and was distributed on Amazon Prime in UK, USA, Germany and Japan. He is a member of the Producer's Guild of Europe.

DAVID TROTTI (Writer) - Trotti is a writer and producer, living in Los Angeles, California. He has worked in the film industry for more than twenty years on such shows as "Star Trek" for Paramount, "Cold Case" for CBS, "Thirteen Reasons Why" for Netflix and "Burn Notice" for TNT.

His most recent films as a producer include "Grey Elephant" and "Butter's Final Meal."

Trotti spends his time away from set researching mid-twentieth century Cold War history, collecting old books and exploring Los Angeles.

VINCE KNIGHT (DOP) - Knight has worked internationally as a Director of Photography on productions spanning from feature films and commercials to fashion films and music videos.

With a number of awards from leading cinematography societies including the Guild of Television Camera Professionals and the Golden Eye International Festival of Cameramen, Knight's work has screened at over 30 film festivals worldwide including Sci-Fi-London and Raindance.

His career has seen him work on projects alongside names such as Daisy Ridley (Star Wars), Kevin Smith (Clerks), Lewis Hamilton (F1 World Champion), Dean Cain (Superman), Vinnie Jones (Snatch), Stan Lee (Marvel), Danny Trejo (Machete) to name a few.

NIA FAUSSET (Production Designer) - Fausset graduated from the London Film School with a Filmmaking MA focusing on Production Design. Her experience has taken her to polar expeditions, Henry VIII, zombie weddings, Neanderthals, former Yugoslavia, wartime Paris, contemporary London, mortuaries and more.

Fausset' credits include: "Beyond Existence," "Rise of the Footsoldier: The Heist", "The Boleyns: A Scandalous Family," and "Devils."

FAQ WITH DIRECTOR MARIANNA DEAN

Who are your influences, as a filmmaker?

There are a lot of directors work I really like such as Alfonso Cuaron, Steven Spielberg, Danny Boyle, Richard Curtis, Nancy Meyers, Christopher Nolan, M. Night Shyamalan, Greta Gerwig to name a few.

But it's not just the filmmakers that influence me. It's also people - be it my family, friends, acquaintances and just people in general. I'm fascinated by human behaviour, relationships and how we all interact differently with each other with external influences/outside forces.

How would you describe your work?

For me, story is key. I love and appreciate a lot of genres such as sci-fi, dramas, action, thriller, romance etc. Each of these can contribute to telling a story in its own way, for example science fiction uses the creation of things that don't exist in the world to shine light on things that do.

Whatever the theme, the script needs to have a human realness to it. For example, whilst Breaking Infinity is a fast-paced sci-fi with time-travel jumps, the characters and their relationships are all recognisable from our own experiences. We all know a Garret, or a Carter and we definitely know a couple like Liam and Emma who get together despite constantly talking at cross-purposes.

It's important to me that we see right into the lives of the characters, in a way that's not possible when you meet someone in the real world. Being able to see how they react when they're on their own – for example Liam in the privacy of his hospital room – gives us a real intimacy with them.

What was your process for directing Breaking Infinity?

My process is extremely simple. I read a script and make sure I understand it. I have a picture in my head of how the film could look from the first reading of the script.

I then hammer it out. I work out what each scene is saying, which emotions are important to convey and how I'd like to shoot it camera/movement wise.

It's also important to me to have the ability to play with the options on set and allow actors to explore characters to see what occurs spontaneously. Not enough planning, and the film won't cut together, but too much and the end result will be wooden and rigid.

What are you most proud of about Breaking Infinity?

I'm proud we managed to deliver a film of high end production value on a small budget. I'm aware how hard it is to achieve that. My most frequent word on set was "no, we don't have the budget". We really had to think outside of box to pull off some of the scenes.

For me the filmmaking process is all about people you work with. We had a wonderful crew that were constantly pushing forward and finding new ways of doing something within our budget. Whilst the conditions were tough at times, the team always pulled through and as a result we enjoyed great camaraderie on set.

Tell us a surprising behind-the-scenes fact?

I've got a couple.

The tunnel we filmed the time travel scenes in was genuinely really freezing. It was relatively warm and sunny outside (shot in May), and we had to use hot water bottles and blankets to keep us warm inside. We were trying to pop outside between takes and at lunchtime in order to warm up again.

Shooting on a top of the mountain was our biggest challenge. We had to get a large amount of kit up the mountain – all carried by hand – to get a perfect shot. This included the hospital bed which we had to take turns carrying.

Tell us a bonus fact about yourself!

Kit Kat Chunky and Bounty bars (controversial, I know!) are a must for me on set.