



I AM NOT A WITCH

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY RUNGANO NYONI



Running Time: 92 min

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TIFF Official Screenings:

FRIDAY SEPT 8 | 2:00 PM | SCOTIABANK 4 | Press & Industry
WEDNESDAY SEPT 13 | 6:15 PM | TIFF BELL LIGHTBOX CINEMA 2 | PUBLIC 1
THURSDAY SEPT 14 | 9:00 PM | SCOTIABANK 3 | PUBLIC 2
SATURDAY SEPT 16 | 4:15 PM | JACKMAN HALL | PUBLIC 3

The debut from Rungano Nyoni follows 9-year-old Shula, who, after a minor incident in her village, is found guilty of witchcraft and exiled to a travelling witch camp.

Synopsis

After a minor incident in her village, nine-year-old Shula is exiled to a travelling witch camp where she is told that if she tries to escape she will be transformed into a goat. As she navigates through her new life with her fellow witches and a government official who espouses her, exploiting her innocence for his own gain, she must decide whether to accept her fate or risk the consequences of seeking freedom.

ABOUT THE FILM

Set in Zambia, *I AM NOT A WITCH* follows nine-year old Shula who is exiled to a witch camp.

I AM NOT A WITCH is the feature directorial debut from Rungano Nyoni, born in Zambia and raised in Wales. The film was shot in Zambia's capital city Lusaka and rural areas around it, and features a cast of non-professional actors, led by nine year-old Maggie Mulubwa in the lead role of Shula. Maggie was discovered during a locations recce in a remote part of Luapula province.

I AM NOT A WITCH is financed by the BFI (with National Lottery Funding), Film4, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Aide aux Cinémas du Monde (CNC-Institut Français), the Berlinale's World Cinema Fund and HBF+Europe: Minority Co-production support. It was developed with the support of the BFI NET.WORK and Ffilm Cymru Wales.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I AM NOT A WITCH came about because of a huge spate of witch accusations that took place over a particularly dry summer in Zambia. What drew me in particular was that these accusations of witchcraft were almost always aimed at Women. Naturally this added to my curiosity. I soon saw this phenomena repeated throughout different parts of Africa. Eventually my research took me to Ghana. For over a month I stayed in one of the oldest Witch Camps in the world (over 200 years old) – The first foreigner to sleep there apparently.

It's my stay at the 'witch camp' that informed the script. I observed the life at the camp, how they were organized, the routines and characters. For example the character of Tembo was inspired by the Keeper whose father and father's father were charged to look after and oversee the witches' welfare. A job that had been passed down his family for over 100 years. I observed how limited these women's lives had become based on nothing more than hearsay. I also witnessed the hostility of the locals towards the women in the camp.

What was particularly shocking in Zambia is that it's a country dominated by Bembas (my Maternal Tribe). The Bemba people are Matriarchal. We pride ourselves in the equality between Men and Women. Women were in the army and police long before many Western Countries admitted them. Women could divorce just as easily as Men. Women can own land and inherit just as a Man does. Even our names are gender neutral. It's this apparent contradiction that held my curiosity.

Rungano Nyoni BIOGRAPHY (Writer/Director)

Rungano Nyoni participated in the Cannes Cinéfondation Residence programme in 2013 and was selected for the Nordic Factory where she co-directed and co-wrote the short *Listen* which was selected for over 150 film festivals and premiered in Directors Fortnight. It won over seventy awards including the Oscar® qualifying Best Short Narrative Prize at Tribeca Film Festival (2015). Nyoni also directed the award winning and BAFTA nominated *Mwansa The Great*, as well as writing the Locarno Golden Leopard winner *The Mass of Men*. She graduated from Central St Martins with an MA in Acting.

An interview with writer/director Rungano Nyoni

What was the origin of this project and why did you decide to make this your feature debut?

The script started off a series of short stories of several characters. I wasn't sure what I was trying to say and eventually it was clear what they all had in common - I was trying to talk about themes related to oppression, freedom or the price of freedom. I became fascinated with this and started researching around this subject. I thought a witch camp was the perfect place to set my characters and ideas in. I visited and stayed in a witch camp for a month in Ghana. I spoke to the women there and incorporated some of that research into the script. The story is a representation of that research - I took those ideas and created my own world that represented those ideas and feelings.

As far as deciding that it was my debut feature - It was the only story I was working on at the time. I had a couple of other ideas but they didn't hold my interest as much as this one and I just kept at it until I was happy with it.

Why was this a story you wanted to tell as your first feature? Did it start with themes or characters or plot for you?

When I started writing the story - I wasn't really thinking whether it was going to be my first feature. At the time it was the only story I was interested in exploring.

The story started off with me getting very angry and rilled up about something and I thought that I ought to write about it. When you do that it can be very fruitful but after a while you realize you're writing some kind of argument that you want to win and it becomes dull. All the characters ended up saying things I've always wanted to tell people but never could - it was very therapeutic but didn't necessarily make an interesting script. It evolved from there and setting the story in the witch camp seemed to fit all themes I wanted to tackle.

What was your experience like in Cinefondation Residence, was that a formative experience for writing this script?

The great thing about Cinefondation is that they are totally hands off, this really appealed to me. There is no obligation to deliver anything - they just give you a space for you to work on your project. I would highly recommend anyone to apply for it - it opened up so many doors and allowed me to find my story. I originally applied with a short treatment and I took it to a draft 0.0 and it became the foundations of the final script.

People associate Cannes with glamour and the festival itself and what they don't see is the amount of dedication they have to fostering new talent throughout the year. George who runs the cinefondation is someone I am still in contact with - he's been an incredible support.

How did you go about casting your young actress Maggie?

Originally I set the film in Luapula - North Zambia. It's 10 hours from Lusaka and borders the Congo. We had come out 2 months before pre-production to scout for locations. The location manager Gabriel found a peninsular. On that peninsular he found Maggie - playing with her friends. He took a couple of pictures of her because he found her interesting. When I saw those pictures I told him 'That's Shula'.

When we came back to Zambia for pre-production a couple of months later I had change the setting to Lusaka. We auditioned 900 kids in Lusaka and I wasn't that convinced by any of them. Gabriel reminded me of the picture of the little girl he'd taken. I was very skeptical but the team started to work on finding her. Tobias (Unit Manager) reassured me he'd find her. He contacted the local Chief and whatsapped him a picture of Maggie. Based only on a picture - we didn't have a name at the time. He sent out his people and asked them to scour an area that's 50,600 km² to find this little girl. They eventually tracked her down and she was brought to the chief who sent her to Lusaka. I auditioned her with 3 other kids and I couldn't keep my eyes off her - she was incredible.

You studied acting at Central St Martins before directing; did that help you prepare your actors (even the non-professional ones)?

My time there really helped me shape my directing, writing and the way I work with Actors. We learn a lot of devising. This is what I use in some shape or form during my rehearsals and production.

My approach to actors (especially non-professional ones) is to give them freedom to make their own choices. Improvisation is great to get natural performances but it can be shapeless, meandering and unfocused. So I work a lot with the actors to explain the scene and get an idea how they would react and try and refine those choices to shape the scene/ character and make everything more deliberate.

I think by empowering actors (especially non-professionals)— you can get better than what you've written on paper. I do this approach with everyone including Maggie.

Most of the African filmmaking we usually see in international festivals would be more earnest, yet you've created a satire with moments of humour. Is that reflective of your overall sensibility as a director or just for this particular story you were telling?

What we see in film festivals such as Cannes or Toronto is probably more a reflection on the type of films that attract large financing than anything else. Local productions or independently financed film coming from Africa tend to be funnier and more experimental. Cannes did, however, accept Hyena - an incredible Senegalese absurd comedy - in competition. So there are always exceptions.

I wanted to to make this story absurdist because the subject matter is absurd. I researched witch camps and witch accusations and I found the whole thing quite comical and ridiculous in its blatant misogyny.

What were the challenges of shooting in Zambia, and on the flip side what was wonderful about it?

The pitfalls for any production from abroad that come to work in Zambia is trying to assimilate whatever works in their country. You really have to have an open mind and a different approach when you shoot here to get the most out of it.

The Zambian film infrastructure is at it's infancy.

Assuming things will be the same becomes more expensive, time consuming and frustrating in the process. It's just time - and that's what you unfortunately can't afford during production.

The great thing is that there is so much enthusiasm. Lack of experience never scares me if there is drive and willingness to learn. Our casting director for example had zero experience in casting - she was a hotel manager. It took me half a day to explain her role and she took to it very quickly.

Did it feel like a big step up making your first feature or did it just feel like a continuation of the way you had been working in shorts?

It was a huge step. I thought it would be like making a short but longer - but it's just not the case at all. You have to have an incredible amount of stamina to see it through to the end. All the things that I'd learnt through making shorts were either a benefit or a hindrance when it came to making my first feature.

I realised how spoilt you are when you make shorts. On shorts everything tends to eventually bend to my will. On a feature you're just one bit of the cog. I am used to a lot autonomy in shorts - I have an organic way of working that reacts to whatever happens but doing a feature is like a machine - everything has to be explained, pre-determined, organised and there has to be a rationality behind how you do things. Which is sort of anti-creative. It's something that I don't think I ever got the hang of.

Juliette Grandmont Biography (Producer)

Juliette Grandmont of Clandestine Films has been the producer, coproducer, and associate producer on 7 features and 26 shorts, such as *Platform* by Jia Zhang Ke (Venice, Competition 2000) - *El custodio* – by Rodrigo Moreno (Berlinale competition 2006) *Huacho* by Alejandro Fernandez Almendras (Cannes Critic's Weeks 2009), or *Shanghai Belleville*, By Show-Chun Lee (2016).

Emily Morgan Biography (Producer)

UK producer Emily Morgan is an NFTS graduate who has produced a number of shorts including *The Mass of Men*, co-produced artist feature *Invention* (2015) by Mark Lewis shot in France, Brazil and Canada and is the current recipient of a BFI Vision Award and iFeatures production award with director Claire Oakley.

David Gallego Biography (Director of Photography)

David Gallego is an award-winning director of photography, known most recently for his cinematography on the Oscar® nominated *Embrace of the Serpent* (2015).

CREDITS

Kinology

Film4

FCW

BFI

CNC

Aide aux cinémas du monde

Institut Français

World Cinema Fund

HBF+Europe

Open Doors / SDC

Film4

Ffilm Cymru Wales

BFI

Present

A Clandestine Films and
Soda Pictures Production

Produced in Association with
iCreate Films and unafilm

Produced with the support of the Hubert Bals Fund + Europe programme of the International Film Festival Rotterdam and
Berlinale World Cinema Fund

With the participation of Aide aux Cinémas du monde – Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée - Institut français

Written and Directed by
RUNGANO NYONI

Produced by
JULIETTE GRANDMONT
EMILY MORGAN

Executive Producers

EVE GABEREAU
MARY BURKE
EVA YATES
DANIEL BATTSEK
HANNAH THOMAS

Co-Producer
Titus Kreyenberg

Margaret Mulubwa

Henry B. J. Phiri

Nancy Mulilo

MARGARET SIPANEIA

Director of Photography
David Gallego, ADFC

Production Designer
Nathan Parker

Edited By
Yann Dedet
George Cragg
Thibault Hague

Costume Designer
HOLLY REBECCA

Composer
Matthew James KELLY

Sound Recordist
Olivier DANDRE

Sound Designer
MAIKEN HANSEN

END ROLLER:

CAST in Order of Appearance

Man With Stall	Christopher Malundu
Tour Guide	Victor Phiri
Bangled Woman	Ritah Mubanga
Mama	Margaret Sipaneia
Florence	Miriam Nata
Mubango	Selita Zulu
Woman With Bucket	Eunice Mapala
Shula	Margaret Mulubwa
Police Officer	Nellie Namweemba Munamonga
Witness At Police Station	Chileshe Kalimamukwento
Charity	Nancy Mulilo
Government Official	Henry B.J. Phiri
Witch Doctor	James Manaseh
Headman	Joseph Tembo
Chieftainess	Pulani Topham
Tembo	John Tembo

Village Elder	Simon Muhango
Teenage Boy 1	Mwengele Lwipa
Teenage Boy 2	Musa Zulu
Mwape	Margaret Z. Mwale
Leader	Dyna Mutanti
Guard	Shepard Mayanda
Old Man In Courtroom	Goodfellow Kayuni
Nelson	John Ng'ambi
Detective	Davy Muyunda
Bwalya	Becky Ngoma
Motorbike Driver	Masanbo Chikunga
Chipili	Mrs Banda
Doreen's Husband	Mr Banda
Shula 2	Juliet Banda
Doreen	Nora Kanchule
Family Member	Trisa Mwansa
Tourist with Phone	Gloria Huwiler
British Farmer	Travers Merrill
TV Presenter	Innocent Kalaluka
TV Caller	Professor Proud
Teacher	Azzion Nyrenda

Witches

Janet Chaile, Martha Chig'ambo, Loveness Chilando, Joyce Chilombo, Nelly Chipembele, Kalenga Chipili, Josephine Chishimba,
Aliness Chisi, Mary Chulufya, Miriam Chansa Kabunda, Chama Kaifa, Grace Kunda, Mary Lungu, Dina Lupiya, Mandalena,
Eneless Mbewe, Joyce Mbomema, Gertrude Mulenga, Magdalena Mumba, Ruth Njobru, Josephine Pentti,
Lexina Phiri, Fides Sinyangwe, Setrida Zulu

Village Folk

Felix Chibole, Mr Chimuya, Astrida Daka, Moses Jere, Alfred Kanomba, Martin Matakala, John Mubanga, Simon Muhango
Aem Mushuma, Doreen Musonda, Evans Mutubila, Evans Nkhoma, Bright Ndopu, Clinton Ngoma, Josphine Ngoma

Blind Children

Dualism Banda, Patricia Chaambwa, Obvious Cube, Odis Mainz, Charles Malambo, Oliness Monopoly, India Mukandawila,
Junior Musale, Sokaiya Nasilele, Azion Nyrenda, Frank Nyalwa, Benford 'Wee do, Charles Malambo, Frank Nyalwa

Men in Courtroom

Boyd Banda, Kalundu Banda, Mweene Chaba, Dimass Chipako, John Chisha, Webster Daka, Richard Kayamba,
Joe Malala, Joe Mulalu, Dennis Musendo, Stephen Phiri, Joseph Tembo

Tourists

Patricia Carreira, Chichi, Frankie Cox, Alice Dreyer, Jody Dreyer, Gabriel Gauchet, Bright Kapelewa, Agatha Lyobe,
Bean Lyobe, Gibson Malenge, Njebe Mukobeki, Joytay, Kathryn, Lee, Prisca Musaka, Mirram Musaka, Tayna Musaka

Supermarket Attackers

Fadi Hus, Sombo Kapole, Tobias Tembo, Chilufya Kwenda

Hotel Staff

Boniventure, Justina Fwalanga, Hotel Manager, Masiye Jose, Mary Kalembe, Gloria Kunda, Mathews, Moona Mulenga,
Joseph Mumba, Jane Munthali, Mate Musialike, Abbreviah Mwape, Yoram Phiri, Pruderia

Associate Producer	Gabriel Gauchet
South African Production Services	Lucky Fish Productions
Line Producer	Karl Hall
South African Line Producer	Platon Trakoshis
First Assistant Director	Alice Carrona
Art Director	Malin Lindholm
Production Manager	Amaka Ugwunkwo
South African Production Manager	Beth Read
Production Co-ordinator	Lailah Orrie
Assistant Production Co-ordinator	Nellie Munamonga
Production Fixer	Mutale Kalimamukwento Merrill, OBE Tobias Tembo
Production Assistant	Joseph Musowe Donolia Zulu
EPK & Stills Photographer	Giraffe Media Productions Fadi Hus
Post Production Supervisor	Ann Lynch
Music Supervisor	Phil Canning
Post Production Co-ordinator	Lisa Jacobi
Assistant Editors	Anna Brunstein Valentin Perruffel Minori Akimoto Bertrand Fauconau
Editing Consultant	Fyzal Boulifa
Casting Supervisor	Patricia Carreira
Casting Co-ordinator	Eunice Mashano
Casting Consultant	Isaac

Casting Assistants

Felix Chali, Martha Kafwanka, Christopher Malundu, Charles Mwanza, Leonard Phiri, Natalia Sikombe,
Bonny Simbali, Huruma Sungula, Fred Tembo

Second Assistant Director	Chris Marshall
Third Assistant Director	Alex Moffat
Script Supervisor	Bruce Tumelo Molema
Floor Runner	Natalia Sikombe
Unit Base Runner	John Chinyante

Construction Manager	Thomas Nyoni
Set Decorator	Clementine Miller
Painter	Ian B. Chisunga
Welder	Chungu Clement

Art Department Assistants

Pamela Ndekazi, Stephen Zulu, Emmanuel Banda, Sibongile Phiri, Muenya a Mulenga
Haylie-Anne Hartlenberg, Henry Chisebe, Honest Musonda, Isaac Moyo

Steadicam Operator	Deon Arnold Vermeulen
First Assistant Camera	Graham John Clark
Second Assistant Camera	Geerick Pepler
Camera Trainees	Leonard Phiri Fred Tembo
Digital Imaging Technicians	Riaan Van Der Merwe Jerry Matlala
Key Grip	Grant Antony Rowe
Best Boy Grip	Benson 'Bafana' Langa
Grip Assistant	Callum Watt
Special Effects Co-ordinator	Phillip Ian Johnson
Special Effects	Gavin Ross Johnson
Gaffer	Brent Webb
Best Boy	Brian Nkosi
Electrician	Itumeleng Alfred Kowe
Generator Operator	Albert Magoro
Boom Operator	Paul Guilloteau
Sound Assistant	Charles Zulu
Costume Supervisor	Jennifer Geach Victoria Gadsden
Head Costume Maker	Kate Tabor
Costume Standby	Lisa-Marie De Beer
Costume Assistants	Esther Mwita Mwangonda Robert Makanta Siulapwa Mulapi Kapembwa
Costume Intern	Evelyn Namatovu
Hair & Make-up Designer	Julene Paton
Hair & Make-up Assistants	Charlette Coetzee Thwanbo Mujanja
Acting Coach	Patricia Carreira
Shula Stand-in	Chilufya Kwenda
Tutor	Sombo Kapole

Shula Chaperone	Doreen Musonda
Shula Stand-in Chaperones	Grace Siwale
	Brandina Mwale

Stunt Co-ordinators	Wayne Gary Giles
	Lee Anne Liebenberg

Location Manager	Gabriel Gauchet
Unit Manager	Robert Kenneth Fletcher
Location Scout	Tobias Tembo
Location Assistants	Christopher Malundu
	James Mwanza
	Ucimvyo Musezye

Unit Drivers

Luke Bwalya, Teddy Simfukwe, Leo Chisanga

Truck Drivers

Chimane Abram Monaise, Osias Mndaweni, Frank Mubanga

Minibus Drivers

Chilengo Banda, Andrew Thole, Joseph Ngweshe Kamwaya, Rodgers Kakompe, Doctor Daka

Caterers	Riche Catering
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Catering Manager	Mwandu Nzimba Mugauri
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Catering Team

James T Mugauri, Tina-Marie Hadjipetrou, Claudette May, Winnie Gondwe, Thandiwe Banda, Kennedy Banda

Unit Medics

Elias Kombe, Ndakaba Luchembe, Emmanuel Chibwe

Production Accountant	Money Penny Production Accounting
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Lucy Drake

Zambian Production Accountant	Margaret Mwila
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Accounts Assistant	K.J. Lamb
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ZNBC Smooth Talk Crew

Producers	Innocent Kalaluka
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Ken One

Mookana

Director	Vinwell Banda
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Sound/Lighting	Abel Mwemba
----------------	-------------

Camera	Bickron Zimba
--------	---------------

Jawadu Sumaili

VTR	Kennedy Mathimula
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Stage Setting	Frank Kaziya
---------------	--------------

Handman Cholwe Mwaka

Digital Intermediate, Sound Post Production & Visual Effects by Creativity Media

Managing Director	Patrick Fischer
Post Production Manager	Jennifer Eriksson
Colourist	Matthew Troughton
Online Editors	Valentina Rutigliano Colin J. Hughes
Assistant Online Editor	Ruta Sile
Visual Effects Supervisor	Jennifer Eriksson
VFX Artists	Alex Murray Dan Pryor Berta Valverde
Sound Re-recording mixers	Richard Kondal Alex Outhwaite
Foley Mixer & Editor	Gwilym Perry
Foley Editor	Baptiste Wanekum
Foley Assistant	Juan Alvarez Fernandez
Foley Artist	Paula Boram
Post Production Assistant	Jevina Zho
Sound Re-recorded at	Creativity Media
Dialogue Editors	Raoul Brand Jens Petersen
FX Editor	Ania Przygoda
Music Editor	Timeri Duplat
ADR Recording Facility	Goldcrest Post Production
Crowd ADR	Phoebe Scholfield, Sync or Swim

Locations Facilities - Centripetal Media Zambia

Lawrence Thompson, Andrew Thompson, Phillip Mwanza, Katuta Chilowa, David Thompson, Kafunga Biemba, Mukona Mwanaleza

Camera & Grip Equipment	Panavision Johannesburg
Lighting Equipment	Panalux Johannesburg
Sound Equipment	Son Altesse
DIT Equipment	Bladeworks
Picture Editing	Film Factory
Clearances	Martin Heberden, Jeva Films Debbie Banbury
Post Production Script	Deluxe Media
Bank (France)	BESV - Banque Espirito Santo et de la Venesie
Shipping Agent (France)	Taf Movie Services
UK Production Lawyers	Harbottle & Lewis LLP Abigail Payne
Insurance	WK Film Insurance

Auditors	Shipleys
Paperwork Delivery Coordinator	Jonathan Taylor
Translations	APA Translations
	Negroes Tembo Dube
Consultant Subtitler	Helen O'Brien
Script Consultant	Gilles Cahoreau
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Head of Production Finance	Ian Kirk
Business Affairs Manager	Virginia Burgess

For Film4

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Head of Distribution & Brand Strategy	Sue Bruce-Smith
Marketing & Brand Executive	Hannah Saunders
Production Executive	Nicky Earnshaw
Senior Legal & Business Affairs Executive	Donnchadh McNicholl
Press & Publicity Manager	Phil Cairns

For Ffilm Cymru

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Head of Creative Business	Kimberley Warner
Production & Special Projects Manager	Adam Partridge
Talent Network Manager	Tracy Spottiswoode
Legal Services	Mary Brehony of Brehon & Co

For Clandestine Films

Line Producer	Benjamin Lanlard
Production Assistant	Julie Riviere
Accountant	Tony Parisi
Legal	Sophie Borowski, Crossen & Borowsky

For Soda Pictures

Co-Managing Director	Edward Fletcher
Acquisitions Manager	Frances Harvey
Head of Finance	Gavin Rose
Accounts Manager	Oliver Boxell

For unafilm

Production Assistant	Tina Haagmann
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