

A Somewhere Film directed by

KAREN GUTHRIE

Produced by

KAREN GUTHRIE &  
NINA POPE

# THE CLOSER

# WE GET

Editor:  
ALICE POWELL  
Director of Photography:  
NINA POPE  
Sound Design:  
DOUG HAYWOOD

     
splice sources 2  SOMEWHERE



Cinematography:  
KAREN GUTHRIE &  
NINA POPE  
Original Score Written,  
Arranged & Produced by:  
MALCOLM MIDDLETON  
Titles:  
ANDREW WHITE  
Digital Imaging:  
DAMIAN SHIELDS  
Additional Camera:  
KATE REID  
ADAM SUTHERLAND  
Post Production:  
SPICE

## ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

Running time ..... 87 min  
Genre ..... Creative Documentary  
Rating ..... Exempt  
Year ..... 2015  
Language ..... English, Arabic, French, Amharic & English sub-titles  
Country of Origin ..... United Kingdom

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# SYNOPSIS

**Before it's too late, a family that never really talked - starts to.**

This is a powerful and bittersweet portrait of loyalty, broken dreams and redemption told by its director, reluctantly-dutiful daughter Karen, who takes you under the skin of the household she returns to for this long goodbye.

Karen's mother Ann suffers a devastating stroke that brings her daughter back home. But Karen isn't the only one who comes back to help care for Ann in the crisis: Her prodigal father - the endearing yet unfathomable Ian, who's been separated from Ann for years - also reappears.

Reunited so unexpectedly, and armed with her camera, Karen seizes this last chance to go under the skin of the family story before it's too late, to come to terms with the aftermath of the secret her father had tried - and failed - to keep from them all, and to find that Ann's stroke has in fact thrown them all a life raft.

With candour, warmth and much unexpected humour, Karen's role as family confidante, busybody, therapist and spy brings to life both an extraordinary story and a profound portrait of family survival.

# AWARDS

Best International Feature (Hot Docs 2015)

Best Feature (SMHAFF 2015)

Best UK Feature (Open City 2015)

Women Filmmakers Award (LA Diversity Film Festival 2016)

Special Jury Award (Flahertiana International Documentary Film Festival 2016)

Official Award (Budapest International Documentary Festival 2016)

# CREDITS

**A Somewhere Film produced by karen guthrie & nina pope**

**written & directed by karen guthrie**

**director of photography:** nina pope

**cinematography:** karen guthrie & nina pope

**editor:** alice powell

**sound recording:** karen guthrie

**sound design:** doug haywood

**original score written, arranged & produced by** malcolm middleton

**additional camera:** kate reid & adam sutherland

**post production:** splice.tv

**titles:** andrew white

**digital compositing:** damian shields

**poster design:** koby barhad

**production assistants:** anne carlin & samantha towle

**post-production assistant:** maria duvidzon

**website assistant:** zoë guthrie

**executive advisor:** amy hardie

# DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Karen was raised on the West coast of Scotland and now lives on a smallholding in the rural Lake District (North West England).

She met co-producer and Director of Photography Nina Pope whilst students at Edinburgh College of Art and they have since worked together on many creative projects and commissions, winning the first Northern Art Prize in 2007 for their films and installations.

Together they founded Somewhere in 2002 and have undertaken art commissions from the likes of Tate Modern and Cambridge University alongside their three feature documentaries:

*Jaywick Escapes (2012)*  
*Living with the Tudors (2007)* &  
*Bata-ville: We Are Not Afraid of the Future (2005)*

These have screened at many festivals including Edinburgh International Film Festival, SXSW & Sheffield Doc Fest.

Alongside her films, Karen continues to work as an artist on diverse projects including a recent commission for Hauser & Wirth Somerset.

The Closer We Get is Karen's solo directorial debut.

# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*"I'd wanted to make a film about my family story for a long time - but my parents were the last people on earth to imagine themselves interesting enough for a film! I wanted to get underneath this nonchalance., and I knew this was one of those stories that only someone as close as I was to them could - or should - tell the world. I finally got round to starting the project in 2008 by filming a wonderful interview with my Mum Ann when - just a few weeks later - she was struck down by a devastating stroke which was to change everything forever. Several years passed, and one quiet afternoon I was looking after Mum and I reminded her about the film we were once going to make together. 'Well, let's get on with it' she said, with a very mischievous smile. And so we began to film, almost weekly for several years, amassing an amazing range of material. And after her bed time, I'd go out with the camera onto the seafront at Largs and shoot some more!*

*Mum always looked forward to filming together - to joke, impart wisdom, or just to let off steam. And - of course - it was a chance to talk about my Dad, Ian! The immense sadness of her disability faded during these times because we were creating something new in this film, and though she sadly didn't live to see The Closer We Get finished, she knew it was a powerful legacy to leave behind her and her trust in me made anything and everything possible. Working on such a personal project was really only viable with my longterm collaborative partner Nina Pope and my fantastic editor Alice Powell at hand to support me and guide the development of the film whilst I was still living 'inside' it. The end result - as I'd always hoped it would be - is both a real 'page-turner' of a story and a portrait of hope and survival - mine, as a grief-stricken daughter who found a way to recover through making this film, and of my parents and their extraordinary relationship"*

# FACTS ABOUT THE FILM

- Somewhere raised over £15,000 (UKP) via an Indiegogo campaign in 2014 to finish the film, from 333 Backers. Amongst the most successful 'Perks' offered were 'heirloom cakes' baked by Karen's sister, from Ann's own recipes.
- The film's original soundtrack was written and arranged by Scots musician Malcolm Middleton (formerly of Arab Strab) and is his first full length film score. The soundtrack also includes tracks by James Blackshaw and Bristol musician Kathy Hinde.
- Director Karen has hosted workshops with the film for the UK Stroke Association NW, working with stroke survivors and their carers, and has launched 'See Beyond Stroke' an outreach campaign supported by Big Lottery Scotland.
- The Closer We Get won the biggest Hot Docs festival prize (CAD \$10,000) after its World Premiere - Best International Documentary Feature.  
The jury's comments were:  
*"In a story told with unflinching honesty and written with poetic precision, this film exemplifies cinematic craft, and a generosity of approach resulting in admirable subtlety and nuance. First person film making is notoriously difficult to pull off and that is why the jury is delighted to make this award"*
- BBC Scotland broadcast the 58" cut of the film in August 2016

# FESTIVAL SCREENINGS

2015:

51st Chicago International Film Festival (USA)  
Antenna Documentary Film Festival (Australia)  
Washington DC Independent Film Festival  
Dunoon Film Festival (Scotland)  
Edinburgh International Film Festival (Scotland)  
Galway Fleadh & Guth Gafa (Ireland)  
Hot Docs (Winner of Best International Feature)  
Keswick Film Festival (England)  
Open City Documentary Festival (London) (Winner of Best UK Feature)  
Reykjavik International Film Festival (Iceland)  
Scottish Mental Health Arts & Film Festival (Glasgow) (Winner of Best Feature)  
Taiwan Women Make Waves Film Festival

2016:

ZagrebDox (Opening Night Gala Film)  
Tartu World Film Festival (Estonia)  
Krakow Film Festival (Poland)  
Budapest International Documentary Festival (Hungary)  
Flahertiana International Documentary Film Festival (Russia)  
iDocs (China)

