

From Ireland to Vietnam, One Woman's Noble Journey to End Sex Trafficking

Based on her life story, one would think Christina Noble would avoid facing the atrocities of sex trafficking every day. Growing up in Ireland, her family was torn apart by her father's alcoholism and neglect. Then as a young woman, Noble was violated by men and left for dead.

Yet today, 26 years after her first trip to Asia, her work through The Christina Noble Children's Foundation has touched the lives of more than 700,000 children in Vietnam and Mongolia—many thousands rescued from sex trafficking.

Her extraordinary true story has now been dramatized in *Noble*, a feature film currently playing in theaters nationwide.

The issue of sex trafficking comes to the forefront in public policy, as the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act will be voted on in the U.S. House. Pro-life leaders praised the final bill, which passed the U.S. Senate by a 99-0 bipartisan vote, for retaining the vital Hyde Amendment language (restricting any federal funding of abortion).

The personal journey of Christina Noble, which begins with a dream she believes was from God, sheds light on the scope of brutality against innocent lives—and solutions that will include faith-based partners in a vital role.

Writer/Director Stephen Bradley, who has spent five years bringing this story to the big screen, answered a few questions about the film via email.

Bound4LIFE: *Noble* covers a lot of ground, from Christina Noble's early years in Ireland to her decades combating sex

trafficking. Why did you choose to intercut these different chapters in her story?

Stephen Bradley: My goal was for the audience to have an enjoyable, entertaining journey as they travel with Christina Noble; then, through the flashbacks, to discover why Christina is able to achieve incredible things in Vietnam, because of the nature of her similar experiences in Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The most important part of telling the story in a series of flashbacks was getting the casting right so that the audience really believes that this is the same character—even though we cut between episodes at different ages with three different actresses.

Bound4LIFE: With stars from *Game of Thrones*, *Downton Abbey* and *Agents of .*, how did you go about casting this film?

Stephen Bradley: The casting of *Noble* was very enjoyable. Obviously [my wife] Deirdre O’Kane was attached from the very beginning, as we worked on the script together. Gloria Curtis and Sarah Greene were just such uncanny matches for her, that was fantastic.

The other well-known actors you mention—Brendan Coyle (*Downton Abbey*), Liam Cunningham (*Game of Thrones*) and Ruth Negga (*Agents of .*)—were all people I had worked with before and to whom I sent my script for *Noble*. It’s always great when you get a positive reaction from actors you know are so talented and a pleasure to work with, bringing much more to each part than you could have imagined.

In Vietnam, I had a really brilliant casting director and we went through a long but fascinating process to cast each of the Vietnamese parts. The biggest star of all was the young child actor Tien Dat who plays Lam—crowds came out onto the street to see him filming!

Bound4LIFE: Interspersed throughout *Noble*, the story includes a number of scenes where Christina speaks out loud to God—honest prayers like, “You let me down very badly, God.” Why is prayer so important to her story?

Stephen Bradley: Anyone who has read her best-selling books *A Bridge Across My Sorrows* and *Mama Tina* knows that Christina Noble holds a constant outreach with God in a very personal way; she believes that she has a direct communication with Him and responds accordingly. It’s a very simple fact about her life, and in the film I have tried to reflect that.

It is also a vital aspect of telling the story. Very early on in her life, Christina’s mother died and her family was torn apart. Her relationship with God and her struggles with faith enabled me to give a through line to Christina’s life story in the film.

Bound4LIFE: To break the tension, often the story turns to lively music as a source of hope. Share about how the music came together as you crafted this film.

Stephen Bradley: Music is and always has been very important to Christina Noble. As a filmmaker, that was something I latched onto very early in the process of imagining the film because it’s wonderful to have music as an integral part of a story—especially as an uplifting counterbalance to the moments of hardship shown in the film.

The music spans from Christina’s childhood obsession with Doris Day (who is now a supporter of the film and has put the trailer on her website!) through all kinds of other tracks, finishing with Coldplay over the final scenes.

It’s cemented together by a great score from Giles Martin and Ben Foster, which we recorded at Abbey Road Studios in London.

Bound4LIFE: What do you hope people take away from this

snapshot of Christina Noble's life?

Stephen Bradley: The film is very much trying to capture the essence of Christina's character, to reveal the many facets and layers that have given her such strength and tenacity.

I hope that audiences will be inspired by the film *Noble* and also recognize the truth of Christina's life philosophy as she has demonstrated it: that it only takes one person to make a difference.

Directed by Stephen Bradley and rated PG-13 for mature thematic material (including some violent and sexual situations), Noble is currently playing in theaters nationwide.

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