

# Dough

A Film by John Goldschmidt  
Starring Jonathan Pryce, Jerome Holder & Pauline Collins



**U.S. Distribution:**

**Menemsha Films**

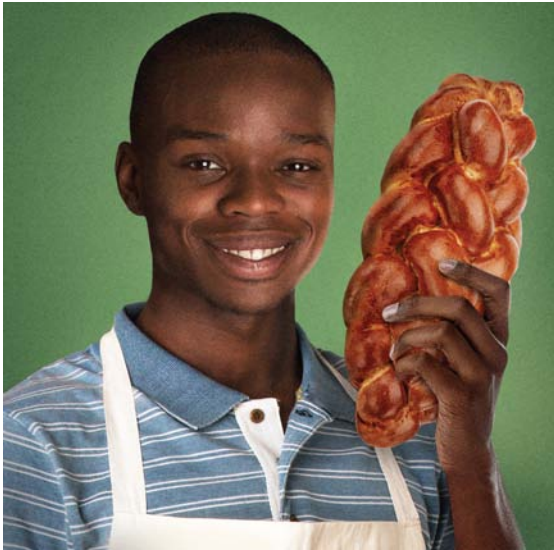
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Synopsis: Curmudgeonly widower Nat Dayan (Jonathan Pryce) clings to his way of life as a Kosher bakery shop owner in London's East End. Understaffed, Nat reluctantly enlists the help of teenager Ayyash (Jerome Holder), who has a secret side gig selling marijuana to help his immigrant mother make ends meet. When Ayyash accidentally drops his stash into the mixing dough, the challah starts flying off the shelves and an unlikely friendship forms between the old Jewish baker and his young Muslim apprentice. **Dough** is a warmhearted and humorous story about overcoming prejudice and finding redemption in unexpected places.



Menemsha Films Presents  
A Docler Entertainment/Viva Films Production  
In Association with Three Coloured Dog Films

Directed by John Goldschmidt

Screenplay by  
Yehudah Jez Freedman and Jonathan Benson

Produced by  
György Gattyán  
András Somkuti  
John Goldschmidt  
& Wolfgang Esenwein

## CAST

Nat Dayan  
Ayyash  
Sam Cotton  
Victor  
Joanna Silverman  
Safa  
Stephen Dayan  
Olivia  
Lucas  
Shaun  
Saul Levy

Jonathan Pryce  
Jerome Holder  
Philip Davis  
Ian Hart  
Pauline Collins  
Natasha Gordon  
Daniel Caltagirone  
Melanie Freeman  
Andrew Ellis  
Malachi Kirby  
Andy de la Tour



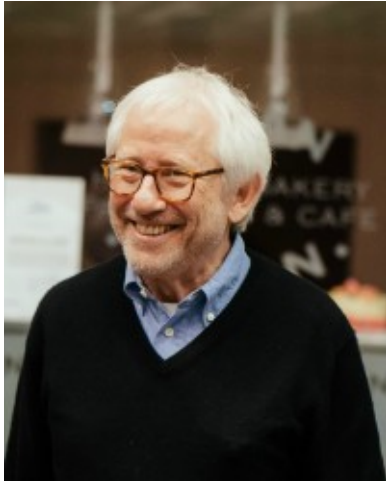
## DETAILS

Running Time:  
Genre:  
Aspect Ratio:  
Country of Origin:  
Language:

94 Minutes  
Comedy  
2.39:1 Scope  
United Kingdom  
English



## Statement from Director John Goldschmidt



Some of the most innovative and successful independent films have been comedies with contemporary social themes. I was looking for such a story when I met the screenwriter Jez Freedman. He pitched DOUGH, a story about the unlikely friendship of an old Jewish baker and a young Muslim cannabis -dealer.

What I liked was the 'buddy movie' concept. Two guys as different as can be, divided by race, religion, and age. Both prejudiced about the other, but needing each other to survive. This is a universal story, which will be understood everywhere. Tensions between Muslims and Jews are increasing worldwide and the best way to challenge prejudice is through comedy.

The story is set in a multi-cultural part of London and is a film of contrasts. From the ethnic high street shops, to the corporate environment of a big Supermarket chain. From middle class suburbia, to a grotty housing estate. From the staid adult community to the vibrant youth culture.

But it's the humanity of the film that connects with people everywhere. The characters touch and move the audience and the casting of the leading roles was paramount. Legendary theatre actor Jonathan Pryce as the old Jewish baker became a real father figure to first time black actor Jerome Holder who played the Muslim cannabis dealer. And I like to think that everyone, young and old, will leave the cinema with a smile on their face, and the word will spread about their enjoyment of DOUGH.

John Goldschmidt

## Statement from Star Jerome Holder



As an actor you hope, more than anything, that you are gifted a character to play who is complex, vivid and somewhat recognizable within whatever historical context it was borne from. Ayaash is many things. He could be described as a refugee, as a Darfurian, as a young black male, as a Muslim - and he is, indeed, all those things, but when confronted with a foreign entity, so far away from what Ayaash would deem as normal, which Nat came to represent, Ayaash begins to transcend rigid categorisation and instead becomes coloured with a rich and expansive experience - that gifts him with a

newfound humanity and a fuller knowledge of the world.

It was an honour to be given the chance to inhabit a character who demonstrates such a personal growth on screen - one that thwarts stereotypes and encourages you to look beyond the surface. Over 10 or so weeks Jonathan Pryce and I cultivated our own relationship off-set, I learnt so much from Jonathan over that time, and I think that raw camaraderie we shared imbues the dynamic of Nat and Ayaash's story in the film.

It was a journey that begun in London and has taken us to Hungary, America and France. It has opened my eyes to the differences and the many similarities that the Jewish and Islamic faiths share. In a time where some parts of the world struggle to understand Islam, and Islam's message of peace and understanding unto all, has been marred and changed out of shape - it has been a joy to play a part in a project that challenges that and humanises the British-Muslim experience.

Jerome Holder

## Background Information

**DOUGH** is a London-based comedic drama about the unlikely friendship between an old Jewish baker trying to save his family business and a young Muslim refugee from Darfur trying to help his mother by selling cannabis on the side. When these two worlds collide and some cannabis accidentally ends up in the dough, not only the bread gets baked and things become complicated...

Casting director **Celestia Fox** put together an impressive award-winning cast including **Jonathan Pryce**, **Phil Davis**, **Ian Hart** and **Pauline Collins**, with talented young actor **Jerome Holder** making his feature film debut as the co-lead. The cast also includes Andy de la Tour, Daniel Caltagirone, Andrew Ellis, Malachi Kirby and Melanie Freedman as Nat's beloved grand-daughter Olivia.

**DOUGH** is written by **Yehudah Jez Freedman** and **Jonathan Benson**, and directed by award-winning **John Goldschmidt**; produced by **György Gattyán**, **András Somkuti**, **John Goldschmidt** and **Wolfgang Esenwein**. Bruno György and Geraldine East are executive producers. The film was commissioned after Freedman had pitched his old school friend Benson's story idea to BAFTA award winning director and producer **Goldschmidt**. Freedman had previously won the International Emmy Sir Peter Ustinov Award. **DOUGH** is his first feature film screenplay.

Having known each other for over 10 years, Goldschmidt and his company Viva Films partnered with internationally established German producer **Wolfgang Esenwein** and his **Three Coloured Dog Films** to package and finance the project. After having produced numerous German and English language movies, Esenwein relocated to London with his company to fully concentrate on his English language development slate. Goldschmidt and Esenwein also have several other joint feature projects in development.

For **DOUGH** they found the ideal financing and production partner with Budapest based **Docler Entertainment**, a recently established subsidiary of internationally active IT company Docler Holding, who partnered with former Korda Studios COO **Andras Somkuti** and former Korda Studios Executive **Bruno György** as CEO and COO of Docler Entertainment. The project was set up as an official UK/Hungarian co-production with Docler Entertainment fully financing.

The film crew includes renowned British HODs including **Jon Bunker** (production design), **Peter Hannan** (director of photography), **Stewart Meachem** (costume design) and **Mike Ellis** (editor).

Filming took place on location in London and at **Origo Studios** in Budapest.

## Production Notes

DOUGH, as a project, was born following a chance encounter between Producer/Director **John Goldschmidt** and young screenwriter **Yehudah Jez Freedman**, who happened to meet him at the Groucho club in Soho and asked Goldschmidt if he needed a script reader. "He turned up out of the blue and we had a coffee together," says Goldschmidt, "he said he wanted to read scripts for me. Although I had made films all my life and developed scripts with the patronage of the BBC, Granada, Channel 4 or HBO, by that time I had already decided to do things on my own. It was time to be grown up and really own scripts that I had developed, and so I was looking for projects. I said to Jez, 'I don't need a script reader but I do need a really good idea and the kind of thing I am looking for is a comedic drama with some sort of social edge'. Jez said, 'well I haven't got an idea like that...' So I told him to 'go away and come back when you have one.' "

Although the pair had never met before, they got on well and three months later, Freedman contacted Goldschmidt again to tell him that his friend, Jonathan Benson, had come up with an idea and briefly outlined the story. Goldschmidt says: "I read the outline and told him it sounded like a terrific idea, and to go away and write it, which he did. We then collaborated on it until we felt it was ready. I really liked Jez's attitude and he did whatever it took to make the script really work. So it was really his idea and his attitude that started the whole adventure."

Freedman takes up the story: "My friend Jonathan Benson heard I was doing a Masters in screenwriting, and told me he had a great idea for a film. Normally when people tell me that, it turns out to be their life story and I switch off after 30 seconds," he says laughing. "But he started telling me this tale about an old Jewish baker, a young kid who goes to work for him, cannabis, and how the cannabis ends up everywhere; and this ended up as a four hour conversation! So I pitched it to John, and he listened intently and asked me if I could do him an outline. So of course I said 'yes, absolutely, no problem'. At that stage we didn't have a thing, not a word, so on the way home I called Jonathan and said 'look I have just had this meeting, and I hope you don't mind but I pitched the idea for DOUGH, and if we are ever going to do it, I think we should do it now'. So we wrote the outline in about a week or two, sent it to John and happily he really liked it. We then spent a further 18 months working on it together to make it the best it could possibly be. I even spent some time in a bakery and things just went from there."

Freedman is rightly happy at the outcome: "I was so fortunate," he says, "John had the contacts, the passion and the ability to get this film made. Often you submit scripts, and you wait to hear back, and often you never hear back. So it was great working with John from such an early stage, and now that the film is made, it's an unbelievable feeling."

Three Coloured Dog Films, founded by producer **Wolfgang Esenwein** in 2013, is an independent film production company located in Notting Hill, London. It develops, packages, finances and produces live action and animation movies for audiences around the world. It has currently around 10 projects in various stages of development. Wolfgang has been a producer since 1996 and has produced 17 movies to date, including romantic werewolf movie BLOOD & CHOCOLATE, fantasy film DUNGEONS & DRAGONS – WRATH OF THE DRAGON GOD, family movie CHESTNUT – HERO OF CENTRAL PARK, Irish music comedy THE BOYS & GIRL FROM COUNTY CLARE as well as numerous German movies. Wolfgang has been working as an independent movie producer and financier since 2005 after having headed Studio Hamburg World Wide Pictures and Studio Hamburg LETTERBOX Film Production in Germany for almost 10 years. He has successfully structured a \$30M film fund and private placements in Germany. He is a graduate of the producers program at the Munich Film School and studied screenwriting and script analysis at UCLA and business and management at Ludwigs Maximilian Universität in Munich. Wolfgang is a member of the producer's council of the Producers Guild of America (PGA).

When he was CEO of Studio Hamburg World Wide Pictures he met John Goldschmidt who was producing TV films for NDR and had an office nearby. When the two met up again in Cannes in 2012, John told Wolfgang about DOUGH. "I really liked the idea," explains Esenwein, "We set out to find the most beneficial setup for the project and one of the studios we contacted was Korda in Hungary and at the time, Andras Somkuti ran the studio and Bruno Gyorgy was head of production. They read it and said they would love to do it. Sometime later I got an email from Andras to say that he and Bruno were leaving Korda to work for Docler Holdings and to run a new entertainment division (Docler Entertainment) for them. Happily they said they were still committed to doing it; and then we started talking about finance, and we reached a point when the committed to fully finance DOUGH, which is a very rare thing to happen. By then we were working hard on the script, and the fact they were no longer with Korda, meant we were not locked in to working with any specific studios - so we could really consider the best way to make the film and get all the money on the screen. After we broke it all down we realized we could make it here in the UK and in Hungary and settled on Origo Studios where we shot all the interior scenes."

As COO of the newly formed Docler Entertainment, producer **Andras Somkuti** was involved from the moment he read the script. "When Wolfgang brought it to me, I was really impressed. Jez Freedman had written an excellent script and once we (Docler) had decided to support it, and after a great deal of planning, it came to the point of casting the movie".

John Goldschmidt had worked on many projects with renowned Casting Director **Celestia Fox** and DOUGH was no exception. "We were very fortunate that



Jonathan Pryce agreed to take the role of Nat very early on," explains John. "Celestia had seen him at a party and he was sporting some kind of beard, and she called me and said 'I've got him, I've found Nat Dayan, your man is Jonathan Pryce!' And as usual, she was absolutely spot on. He and I met for lunch, he read the script and committed to it while we were still in development."

**Jonathan Pryce** is no stranger to the big screen, and boasts an impressive repertoire of live theatre and television as well as blockbuster feature films such as *PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN*, *TOMORROW NEVER DIES*, *BRAZIL* and *EVITA*. He describes his reaction to reading the script: "I thought it was very well written and for me as an actor, here was a role I had not played before. There was enough in there politically to make it interesting, and it is a genuinely funny human story, and I just liked it."

Producer Andras Somkuti takes up the story: "Once we had Jonathan signed, we had several casting sessions to find Ayyash, the other lead. Ayyash was a very difficult character to cast in actual fact; he's a young boy and we really wanted it to be a young person, with an authentic face. Ayyash comes from Africa, he has a specific accent which again was very important, and, as well of course as the way he looks and behaves. We were looking for someone natural, and he had to be funny and entertaining; but he had to have a deep emotional quality to him. Ayyash is very religious, has a lot of history, and a lot of tragedy in his life that he carries with him. And he had to bring all those emotions into the funny scenes as well as the dramatic ones. Once we found **Jerome Holder**, we knew we had our boy. Jerome has natural warmth about him, but also has the deepness we were looking for. And the accent he uses is really amazing.... I really thought it was his natural accent, but he told me he learned it from YouTube clips! It is actually a very tricky accent to do, and he nailed it absolutely."

"I auditioned with five very capable actors, but Jerome had that special extra something," adds Jonathan Pryce, "he is highly intelligent and a very instinctive actor. One of the things I noticed in the audition was that he listened really well, and reacted to what we said. We got on really well too both on set and off; he's a lot of fun."

This is Jerome's first full-length feature film having worked previously in television, and he describes it 'as the best experience I have ever had on a film set'. He says: "This is the first time I have ever been given a leading role, where it has been dependent on me to actually bring something to the table in terms of character. It has been wonderful working with Jonathan Pryce, he has been fantastic. I just don't have enough superlatives to try and describe the guy, to me he is a god, and he taught me so much. I hope the film will have a wide appeal and help people understand not to generalise, or stereotype, and to see people beyond their religion, race or background," he continues.

John Goldschmidt describes how the casting came about: "In a way I was trying to avoid the Jewish cliché. I cast Jonathan Pryce who is not a Jew, I cast Pauline Collins and she is not a Jew. I thought it would be interesting casting for those definitive Jewish roles. Luckily my choices were approved by the financiers. I had never worked with Pauline Collins, although I had seen her in several films and I thought she had such humanity. I was delighted she gave us her support."

BAFTA Award-winning Pauline Collins - whose body of work includes *SHIRLEY VALENTINE*, *QUARTET* directed by Dustin Hoffman, *ALBERT NOBBS*, *YOU WILL MEET A TALL DARK STRANGER* directed by Woody Allen; *FROM TIME TO TIME* directed by Julian Fellowes - describes her character Mrs Silverman as 'a rather forward lady' in that she has designs on Nat. "They were friends, but she is definitely looking for something more," she begins, "but after a while she kind of gives up and thinks it all a waste of time, then he suddenly shows a bit of interest, or agreement perhaps rather than interest," she smiles. "I was attracted to the film first of all because I thought it was a lovely story. It's a real 'buddy' movie – about this very old Jewish baker who loses his assistant and takes on this young Muslim boy. You see the two cultures clashing, particularly when you see them both praying which of course is very similar. On the side the boy is doing a little bit of drug running, in a very mild way, and he is a really lovely character. That is the real love story, like a father and son, although Nat does have a son doesn't want to be a baker."

"The script made me a smile a lot," Pauline continues, "it was the heart of it that appealed to me, and also getting the chance to work with Jonathan Pryce again, after only 37 years," she laughs. "I had never worked with John Goldschmidt before, I knew a lot about him as he has a terrific track record, a lot in documentary, and production and he is a really sweet man. He creates a very loyal atmosphere on set and is very committed to this project. And he says, and we all hope to believe him 'that we are all his first choices', now isn't that a lovely thing to say?"

Well known British actor and director **Phil Davis** plays Nat Dayan's nemesis Sam Cotton, who has plans for Nat's run down bakery. "There is no love lost between the two men, for sure," says Davis. "They are antagonistic toward each other and Sam sees Nat as a remnant of a distant past. He is definitely ruthless, but I do have some sympathy for him, you do have to be fairly ruthless in business. I don't think he's a complete 'baddy' but he's a man who likes to get what he wants. I did think it was a funny script, it made me laugh, and I have known John Goldschmidt for a long time. We are old friends and have never actually worked together before, so it was nice to do something like this with him. But really it was the script that attracted me, and I liked the part."

Phil Davis is a well-known face on British television having appeared in long running series such as WHITECHAPEL, SILK and BEING HUMAN. His many award-winning film roles include ALIEN 3, VERA DRAKE and NOTES ON A SCANDAL.

The 'Bad boy' of the piece, Victor Gerrard, is played by **Ian Hart**, who began acting while a student in Liverpool. He stumbled into acting almost accidentally, but continued to work in British theatre and television, and first gained recognition for portraying John Lennon in the British film BACKBEAT. He made many films in his native Britain, including HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE, MICHAEL COLLINS, NEVERLAND and has appeared in American films and notably, the critically acclaimed US period crime drama TV series BOARDWALK EMPIRE.

"I see Victor as a bit of a 'Fagin' character, says Ian Hart. "Essentially, he is recruiting all these young kids to do his dirty work. Definitely not a nice man to know," he grins.

Nat Dayan is bitterly disappointed that his son Steven, played by **Daniel Caltigirone**, has no interest in the family bakery. Although he comes from a working class background, he managed to get to the higher social spectrum thanks to the hard work of his parents who sent him to a good school and then on to University. "Steven has now become this high-powered lawyer," Daniel explains, "and although it was always Nat's wish that his son should do well, the fact that he eschewed any involvement in the long tradition of the bakery, has caused a lot of tension and friction. When Nat finds a surrogate son in Ayyash, it causes even more resentment. Steven just can't understand why he is giving more attention and emotional support to this boy who just appeared out of nowhere!"

"I think this film should appeal to everyone," continues Daniel. "Putting the comedy aside, the film deals with the issue that all of us carry some form of prejudice and at the end of the day, it's interesting how when you let those barriers go, we all have something in common. It's a beautifully written piece; I loved the script, and was delighted to get to work with Jonathan who has always been one of my favourite actors."

Young **Melanie Freeman** plays Nat's beloved grand-daughter Olivia – the light of his life, and in many ways, his salvation. Melanie says: "She is quite cheeky, and she loves her grandpa. She is quite positive and wants to help her grandpa keep the bakery. I was very excited to get chosen for this part, I never thought I would be in a film, and it's been really fun. John (Goldschmidt) has helped me a lot. At first I thought it was simple, but now I know differently," she giggles. Director John Goldschmidt, rightly, has the last word: "I don't want to be heavy handed about this, but I like to make films that have something to say. I want DOUGH to be

entertaining and comedic; and it's not an outright comedy, it a comedic drama - a 'buddy' movie if you like. The main theme of the film being these most unlikely friends, an old Jew, a young black man – both religious, both prejudiced, who don't trust one another, and who are forced together through economic circumstances. And because they both have enemies who are trying to stitch them up, so this friendship develops which is rewarding for them, and I hope it will be rewarding for the audience."

## Credits

**John Goldschmidt** has made many documentary and fiction films for BBC TV, BBC FILMS, GRANADA TV, GRANADA FILMS, THAMES TV, CHANNEL FOUR, FILM FOUR in the UK and ZDF, WDR, NDR, ORF, SRG, FR3, RAI1, BAVARIA FILM STUDIOS, on the continent and HBO Pictures in the United States. His award winning films as director have included JUST ONE KID, IT'S A LOVELY DAY TOMORROW, SPEND, SPEND, SPEND and THE DEVIL'S LIEUTENANT (writer Jack Rosenthal), A CRIME OF HONOUR (aka A SONG FOR EUROPE), MASHENKA (writer John Mortimer based on novel by Nabakov). His award winning films as producer include UTZ (script by Hugh Whitmore based on novel by Bruce Chatwin for BBC Films), DEADLY VOYAGE (for HBO & BBC Films).

He advised the European Union on their audio-visual policy and proposed the setting up of a European Script Fund as part of the MEDIA programme. Goldschmidt has been a member of both BAFTA and European Film Prize juries. He co-wrote the original report which proposed Channel 4's involvement in theatrical films, recently co-wrote The Director's Guild of Great Britain's report to the British government on the UK tax credit for feature film production and has been member of the board of Directors UK and a member of Directors UK film committee.

**Jonathan Pryce** has won BAFTA, Cannes Film Festival and Tony awards and has been nominated for an Emmy and Golden Globe.

Despite being only 18 years of age **Jerome Holder** has played a variety of roles in popular primetime TV dramas including The Bill, Casualty and Holby City, as well as working in the theatre.

**Phil Davis** has won a British Independent Films Award, a London Critics Circle Film Award and was nominated for a BAFTA award.

**Ian Hart** has won an Evening Standard British Film Award, a Tribeca Film Festival Award and was nominated for a BAFTA award.

**Pauline Collins** has won a Laurence Olivier Award, a Tony Award, a Theatre World Award, a Drama Desk Award, an Outer Critics Circle Award, a BAFTA award and has been nominated for an Academy Award and a Golden Globe Award.



# Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

## 'Dough' actor Jonathan Pryce drawn by its message

By Barbara Vancheri / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Even at 8:15 p.m., in a long-distance call from England, Jonathan Pryce's voice comes across as clear, rich and distinctive as ever.

He is rehearsing for "The Merchant of Venice" at Shakespeare's Globe but was happy to take a little time to talk about how he seems to be everywhere these days, including in "Dough," a dramedy screening twice during Pittsburgh's JFilm festival.

Mr. Pryce portrays Nat, a baker who is struggling to hold onto his family business despite slumping sales and a nearby big-box competitor. He finds an unlikely apprentice in Ayyash (Jerome Holder), a young Muslim refugee from Darfur who boosts sales when he accidentally and then secretly salts some of the dough with a little pot or hashish.

One older customer, who unwittingly serves brownies laced with something extra to her guests, enthuses, "Best bridge club ever."

Mr. Pryce tends to keep working but it's a coincidence that all of the projects are tumbling out at the same time. He turns up as Cardinal Wolsey in PBS's "Wolf Hall," the new High Sparrow in "Game of Thrones," a Supreme Court justice in "Woman in Gold," an undertaker/mayor in "Salvation" and an esteemed author in "Listen Up Philip."

So why "Dough"? "I liked what it was trying to say. I liked the fact that it involved the Jewish community and the Muslim community. Looking at it now, it seems with the horrors that are happening in the world — they always were happening but at the moment they seem particularly horrible — it was almost as if we were making a rather naive time. Even a couple of years ago, things seemed simpler."

He had read this script all the way through, rather than picking it up and putting it down.

The veteran actor still remembers the excitement he felt in reading "Brazil," Terry Gilliam's Kafkaesque vision of an office worker for a monolithic organization that controls society. He gets a charge when strangers, especially young people who were barely born when "Brazil" was released in 1985, approach him and talk about the film as if it were made last week.

"You can see the film ['Brazil'], it's so vivid on the page, and I suppose I saw this story quite clearly being told. I've played a number of Jewish characters — I'm not Jewish — and it was an opportunity to find out more about the Orthodox faith, which has informed my playing Shylock now. I don't know what it is about me and Jewish roles, but I've done a number."

Although it's not unusual for actors to employ hand doubles when they're playing musical instruments or typing or cooking on screen, Mr. Pryce and his young co-star spent time with a baker in Budapest, where all of the interiors were shot to supplement two weeks of location work in London. "I was very impressed with my challah," he quipped about the braided Jewish bread he prepares.

While audiences know Mr. Pryce from any number of projects — Tony-winning turns in "Miss Saigon" and "Comedians," the Bond villain in "Tomorrow Never Dies," dual roles in "G.I. Joe" movies, Governor Weatherby Swann in three "Pirates of the Caribbean" adventures and Juan Peron opposite Madonna in "Evita" — his co-star is a relative unknown.

"Jerome was 18 when we were making it, he'd just started university. He'd done some [TV] work as a teenager, and I found him delightful to be with. He's very intelligent, bright and funny. We were in the same hotel in Budapest so we would have dinner together most nights. He's a good lad," from London. "He spent time learning the accent and also the rituals of the prayers."

The 67-year-old native of Wales has another week of rehearsals before appearing as the money lender Shylock in "Merchant of Venice" at the open-air London playhouse.

"It's an extraordinary play to be doing at this time, with the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe and racism in general. It's a difficult play. I played King Lear now three years ago. King Lear's a walk in the park compared to Shylock. It's much more difficult. It's easier when you're the king than when you're the victim and you're in the hands of so many other people and so many other people's prejudices. ...

"It will be an unadorned production of the piece, it will be the piece as written by Shakespeare. Its value will be that people can then put on it their own interpretations. We're not making any direct references to how contemporary this is, which I like. It's for the audience — they're not stupid — to say how this reflects what's happening in the world."

<http://www.post-gazette.com/ae/movies/2015/04/15/Dough-actor-Jonathan-Pryce-drawn-by-its-message/stories/201504140044>

## Fuse Film Review: A Delicious “Dough”

*Dough contains plenty of tasty charm and passion.*

By Paul Dervis  
November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Dough is a welcome blast from the past.

From the late 1950s through the early 1970s, British film was in its heyday. With the contribution of gifted directors such as Tony Richardson (Look Back in Anger, A Taste of Honey, Loneliness of a Long Distance Runner), Karel Reisz (Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, Morgan!, Night Must Fall) and Lindsay Anderson (If...., O Lucky Man, The Sporting Life), the English film landscape was turning away from the generally genteel drawing room fare of Noel Coward and early David Lean to a gritty look at the working class and the post-World War II erosion of the caste system.

Dough is the stepchild of this genre, albeit without a piccolo on the soundtrack and with a drug through-line that was rarely explored during that period. You could argue that, thematically, the film mirrors more recent projects such as early Stephen Frears (Sammy and Rosie Get Laid, My Beautiful Laundrette) or Mike Leigh (Life is Sweet), but there is a sorrow and a sweetness here that connects more to the earlier era ... the dankness of the lives of these characters could be lifted right out of a Shelagh Delaney script.

Jonathan Pryce is Nat Dayan, proprietor of a Jewish bakery that has been in his family for over a hundred years. But Dayan is aging; his son has become a highly successful lawyer and has no interest in the shop. (Like the world needs another Jewish lawyer?) Dayan laments the end of a tradition. The 60-something baker is working with a protege that he hopes will keep the place alive, but the young man is lured away by an entrepreneur who wishes to add Dayan's piece of real estate to his growing empire. So Nat is forced to search once more for an apprentice. The only worker left in the store, besides Dayan, is a middle-aged Muslim cleaning woman fresh from Africa. She's a kind of a black Rita Tushingham in a hijab.

But she has a son who needs a job.

Young Ayyash (played with quirky passion by Jerome Holder) is a failing dope dealer who's supplier boss insists he find a do-nothing job that will work as a legal cover for his illicit income.

Ayyash and Nat couldn't be more different. One early scene shows them both doing their sunrise prayers in separate rooms: it is a charming but also disconcerting image. Each brings his own brand of prejudice to the relationship, even as they find they must bond out of mutual need. As Dough rises (in terms of its story), we watch their attachment move far beyond their initial desire to make baking profitable—they become as close as father and son.

It seems as if Ayyash has a rare gift for the culinary arts, but that is because he has chosen to double dip. He bakes some of his high-grade weed into the dough, and that suddenly makes the shop a thriving business. This success holds off Cotton, the businessman who wants the space for his own. But the nefarious capitalist, played by Philip Davis (High Hopes) figures out Ayyash's appetizing gimmick and uses his knowledge as leverage for his take over.

One interesting subplot in the narrative is in the hands of Pauline Collins of Shirley Valentine fame. Here she plays Joanna, the landlady of the building the bakery is housed in. She is recently widowed (six weeks, to be exact) and she is ready to move on...and would like to do so with Nat. If not, then she is ready to sell to Cotton and go where old Jewish ladies move on to die...not Israel—Florida. There is a very funny scene at a women's exercise class. Nat walks in, beseeching Joanna not to sell to Cotton. He cannot stay unless he does the workout with the others.

At times this film feels like a gentle comedy, but director John Goldschmidt never loses sight that it is offering us an intimate slice of life. The climax of this film becomes pretty silly, but that doesn't ultimately take away from Dough's charm and passion. This film should leave hungry cinephiles satisfied.

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