

Milestone Film presents:
Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo's

It Happened Here

"The German invasion of England took place in July 1940 after the British retreat from Dunkirk. Strongly resisted at first, the German army took many months to restore order. But the resistance movement, lacking outside support, was finally crushed. Then, in 1944, the resistance movement reappeared..."

*"A film that firmly grips the imagination
and makes the blood run cold."*

— New York Times

"Jolting! An Orwellian nightmare."

□ Newsweek

A Milestone Film Release
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It Happened Here

1966. Great Britain. Restored Running Time: 99 minutes. Original Release Time: 93 minutes.
Aspect ratio: 1:1.33. Black & White.

Cast:

Honor Fehrson	<i>Honor Hutton</i>
Pauline Murray	<i>Pauline</i>
Sebastian Shaw	<i>Dr. Richard Fletcher</i>
Rex Collett	<i>IA NCO</i>
Nicholas Moore	<i>IA Group Leader Moorfield</i>
Bart Allison	<i>Skipworth</i>
John Herrington	<i>Dr. Westerman</i>
Colonel Percy Binns	<i>IA Commandant</i>
Frank Bennett	<i>IA Political Leader</i>
Nicolette Bernard	<i>IA Woman Commandant</i>
Miles Halliwell	<i>IA Political Lecturer</i>
Claire Allen	<i>IA Girl</i>
Carol James	<i>IA Girl</i>
Stella Kemball	<i>Nurse Drayton</i>
Fiona Leland	<i>Helen Fletcher</i>
Reginald Marsh	<i>IA Medical Officer</i>
Bill Thomas	<i>IA Group Leader</i>
Michael Mellinger, John Snagge,	<i>Announcers & Commentators</i>
Alvar Liddell, Frank Phillips	

Credits:

Production Company:Rath Films/Long Distance Films
Producers/Directors:Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo

Director of Photography:.....Peter Suschitzky
 Additional Photography:.....Kevin Brownlow
 Music:.....Jack Beaver with excerpts from Anton
 Bruckner's *9th Symphony* and the German
 march "People to Arms"
 Film EditorKevin Brownlow
 Art Director and Military Consultant:Andrew Mollo
 Screenwriters:Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo
 Sound Editor:.....George Fisher
 Treatment Collaborators:.....Dinah Brooke and Jonathan Ingrams
 Production Assistants:Johanna Roeber, Rosemary Claxton, Alice
 Brooke-Howard, Graham Samuel, Prince
 Marshall, Pat Sullivan, Eric Mival, Peter
 Watkins

Background

In *It Happened Here*, Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo's brilliant re-write of history, Germany has won World War II and Nazi troops occupy England. The film is a terrifying intimation of what might have happened if the Allied effort had failed. Brownlow was only 18 when he started this monumental 16mm documentary-style drama in May 1956.

The first film I made, The Capture, was based on a Maupassant story about the Franco-Prussian occupation. It was a failure and I wanted to make another occupation film. I'd just gone into the film industry as an office boy and walking from the laboratory. I saw a car draw up outside a delicatessen. Some Germans jumped out and began conversing with each other and it seemed vivid and odd. That was the click. In the beginning it was supposed to be a sort of Hammer film about what it might have been like in London, but slowly the interest of the situation developed and I realized that to give it any validity, it must have political meaning. Otherwise it would be just a romp in Nazi uniform. No anti-fascist film has ever shown exactly what it is. And it is so long since the war that most people think of it as concentration camps and great horror without realizing that they have vast fascist potential in themselves. — Kevin Brownlow, Film, Summer 1962.

But the first few months went badly and Brownlow was unsure how to continue. By luck, he heard of Andrew Mollo, an expert on World War II. When they first met, Brownlow was shocked to find that this expert was himself only 16! But Mollo was the first and only person to point out the previous footage's failings and they formed a partnership to start all over again.

The film took only forty days to make but due to finances, a learning curve and some bad luck, it wasn't finished filming until 1963. Most of the shooting occurred between July 1962 and April 1963. When finances were bleakest, director Tony Richardson stepped in to assist. Not only did he help raise the money to blow up the 16mm film to 35mm, he also gave the filmmakers 35mm stock to complete the film. In all, the cost of the film was a remarkable £7000 (\$21,000). After almost eight years of Sisyphean work and with the help of hundreds of volunteers, *It Happened Here* was finally completed in 1964.

But controversy followed the film. In May 1965, *The Observer* printed an article about Jewish groups attacking the film; the protesters specifically objected to the scene in which the head of the current British National Socialist movement, Colin Jordan appeared. Brownlow and Mollo were devoted to creating a kind of documentary realism that would allow Nazis to speak and thus "condemn themselves out of their own mouths, with their bland talk of racial inferiority." The Jewish groups argued that Jordan's words "might be taken literally by an unsophisticated audience." The writer noted that "many people feel that the dispute is a sad and ironic comment on

the film trade's estimate of the public's intelligence and sentiments." Brownlow responded by saying that "the implicit anti-Nazi bias of the whole film is surely obvious."

However, in reaction, Arthur Krim and United Artists backed down and cut the seven minutes of controversial material before the film's release. It has taken Brownlow more than thirty years to regain the rights for *It Happened Here* from United Artists in order to re-release the film as he and Mollo had originally intended it. Thanks to the generosity of the new leadership at MGM/UA, he is now finally able to do so. At last, one of cinema's greatest historians and archivists has a chance to restore his own film. Milestone's release of *It Happened Here* is the first presentation of the complete version here in the USA.

Production Details

(Adapted from the original press kit written by Kevin Brownlow & Andrew Mollo)

Every shot in the film was created by the directors. Not one foot of stock footage was used.

Most of the cast are non-professionals. Pauline Murray, the lead character, was a doctor's wife from Wales.

The film started the careers of many individuals later prominent in the British industry including cinematographer Peter Suschitzky and director Peter Watkins.

Several members of the fictitious Immediate Action Organization in the film were actual members of the National-Socialist movement. In the discussion scene, their replies to political questions were filmed spontaneously. The leader of the group was "played" by the infamous Colin Jordan, head of the movement. These scenes were the focus of protest by Britain's Jewish groups claiming that the "unsophisticated" public would not recognize the film's savage irony. United Artists removed the scene and only now could it be placed back in the movie by the directors.

This was the first film to show what the German occupation of England might have been like. In 1940, Ealing Studios made a picture called *Went the Day Well* in which British soldiers, billeted in a country village, prove to be Germans in disguise. Humphrey Jennings made *Silent Village*, a dramatized documentary in which a Welsh village suffers the same fate as Lidice.

In 1996, Kevin Brownlow presented *It Happened Here* for the first time on the Channel Islands, English territory which had been occupied by the Germans in WWII. "They were *very* offended — assuming the scenes of collaboration were meant to reflect on them and their five-year occupation. But some veterans were very positive, which made up for it!"

Cooperation from the authorities during the making of the film varied. The unit was banned positively from shooting in one London district. The Trafalgar Square rally led to a Ministry pronouncement: "Never again. We do not allow costume filming in the Square." At other times, local authorities cooperated to a surprising degree; once a local police force supplied policeman and bicycle for a scene in the picture — and then, seeing that a wartime police uniform was slightly incorrect, rushed an original helmet and tunic to the unit by express motorcycle.

In order to achieve an accurate re-creation of the period, practically everything in the film was original. Not merely authentic, but original. From tank to tunic button. During production, Andrew Mollo built up one of the largest — and rarest — collections of military uniforms and equipment. Thanks to the cooperation of Prince Marshall, editor of *Old Motor* magazine, collectors of vehicles came to the aid of the production with an astonishing variety of trucks, taxis, buses and private cars.

Assistance from other filmmakers was generous. Stanley Kubrick, recalling the days of his own independent productions, donated short-ends (35mm film stock) from *Dr. Strangelove* to bolster the stock allocation for the last sequences of *It Happened Here*.

For much of the film, WWII newsreel techniques were employed, including hand-held cameras, grainy footage and quick cuts. Peter Watkins, then working on his first film, adapted this technique for his own films, *The Forgotten Faces* (1961), *The War Game* and *Battle of Culloden*. Now a common device in films such as *Mash* and *Saving Private Ryan*, this was one of the first uses in a feature film. Interestingly, Stanley Kubrick used the same effect in *Dr. Strangelove*.

The war broadcasts in *It Happened Here* were helped immensely by the presence of John Snagg, Alvar Lidell and Frank Phillips — veteran BBC announcers who were perhaps the best-known voices in England during World War II.

The 1914 Flanders Truce scene was shot during one of the worst rainstorms on record. Every time the cameras were erected, the gale blew the tripods on to the mud. The actors, wearing original 1914 uniforms, were soaked to the skin. Two cameras recorded the scene — one was a modern Bell and Howell, and the other was an original hand-cranked Kodak.

During the shooting of the street fight, the arrival of the Immediate Action Organization's riot squad, dressed in black greatcoats and carrying riot batons, led worried local residents to alert the Special Branch. They reported to the authorities that Colin Jordan's Nazi's had finally mobilized.

During the shooting of the march through Parliament Square, a playback system broadcast the music of a German band to keep the troops in step. Meanwhile, just around the corner, sight-seeing on their last day in England, were fourteen Bundeswehr officers from a German tank battalion training at Castlemartin. Attracted by the sound of the band, they walked into the Square — and discovered a column of World War II infantrymen. Overcoming their astonishment, they inspected the troops — and pronounced them “absolutely correct.”

After a great deal of searching and negotiation, the unit finally secured the use of several original wartime London buses — just about the rarest vehicle on wheels. But problems didn't stop there. The buses had to be fitted with headlamp masks and wartime markings — and they had to be staffed. Where does one get a 1940 conductress' uniform? By an amazing chance, one of the units discovered Rose Paddon, working on the 22 route; she had been given permission to wear her old uniform as a special dispensation from London Transport — in recognition of her long service. She even got to retain the familiar peaked cap. Collectors then came to their aid with the old-type ticket-punching machine, original tickets and racks — and the buses were eventually authentic down to the smallest detail.

Dealing with extras who were working for love — and not for money — occasionally proved complicated. Frequently, they just didn't show up. On one location, the unit was forced to find fifty extras at the last minute. Since the location was in the country, it was late at night and pouring rain, the chances were slim. But the headmaster of a local school proved amazingly cooperative. Right on schedule the following day, he escorted fifty of the oldest boys to the location to play the parts of surrendering German soldiers.

The location used for the Lidlington Hospital was a real hospital — and the extras playing TB patients were real TB patients. The hospital was the former house of Sir William Gilbert, of Gilbert and Sullivan, and was being used as a TB rehabilitation center.

Synopsis

Pauline Murray is a district nurse in the Salisbury area, where a resurgence of partisan activity forces the Germans to evacuate civilians to the demilitarized city of London.

When the evacuation transport becomes overcrowded, Pauline is left behind with a group of villagers. A German convoy arrives in the village — and is ambushed by partisans. The villagers are killed in the crossfire, and only Pauline escapes the slaughter. Rescued by German soldiers, she is taken to Salisbury station.

In the train, Pauline is haunted by what she has seen. When she reaches London, she finds she has to walk through the shell-flattened areas of the city to get to her billet in the suburbs. Here she meets Honor Hutton, a friend from the village.

Next morning, Pauline sees another side of occupied London. At a Labor Center she is told she has no alternative but to become a nurse for the Fascist-controlled Immediate Action Organization. A scuffle outside a pub quickly develops into a street fight, and Pauline has her first glimpse of the IA in action. Watching nurses tending the injured, she realizes that she should be one of them — that she cannot continue watching this endless violence from the sidelines. She enrolls in the IA, and goes through an intensive training course.

She visits an old friend, Dr. Richard Fletcher, living with his wife and child in the basement of what was once his own house, now requisitioned because of his refusal to join the IA.

During a visit to the cinema, she sees a propaganda film, which shows the German arrival in England, and insists on an ancient friendship between the two countries. The film puts the blame for the war on the Jews.

Afterwards, in the IA lounge, Pauline questions some IA men about this — and listens to a discussion among these Party Members, whose Fascist affiliations go back to the pre-war days.

Pauline finds that her IA uniform soon alienates those around her. When she goes back to the Fletchers, the shock of seeing her in uniform appalls her friends, who are hiding a badly wounded partisan. Discovering the man, she pleads with Fletcher to hand him over to the police. Fletcher reasons with her and tries to explain that as long as she despises the partisans, she is giving her support to the Fascists. “And the most appalling thing about Fascism,” he says, “is that it takes Fascist methods to get rid of it.” Pauline finally realizes that the Fletchers need her help and she tries to obtain morphine from a friend in the IA. The girl attempts to report Pauline — but fails. Before she can return to her friends, Pauline has to attend the funeral of an IA officer. When she eventually reaches the Fletchers, she sees them being dragged out of the house by SS men — together with the wounded partisan.

Reprimanded by an IA Commandant for associating with political undesirables, Pauline is transferred to a country hospital. The hospital turns out to be a quiet, almost idyllic place — but oddly empty. Soon, however, a batch of Russian and Polish workers arrive, suffering from TB. All are inoculated. The following day, Pauline discovers that the inoculations she had administered have done their intended work.

The patients are dead.

Placed under arrest for refusing to carry on, Pauline sits handcuffed to an SS man in a railway carriage, recalling the excuses of the hospital staff.

Falling into partisan hands due to an ambush on the train, Pauline is ordered to a field dressing station in a forward area, where the Army of Liberation is staging its offensive.

An English SS unit surrenders to the partisans. The men are escorted into a field and closely guarded. Another group of partisans arrive. Shouting and cheering, they race up to the prisoners and start looting them. A scuffle breaks out. The tension snaps and the shooting begins.

Inside the field-dressing station, Pauline tends the wounded while the radio blares out news of the partisan successes.

From the distance comes the sound of machine-gun fire.

Kevin Brownlow, Director & Co-Writer

June 2, 1938 —

Universal Horrors (1998, Co-Director), *Cinema Europe: The Other Hollywood* (1996, Co-Director); *D. W. Griffith* (1992, Co-director); *Harold Lloyd: The Third Genius* (1989, Director); *Buster Keaton: A Hard Act to Follow* (1987, Director); *No Surrender* (1986, Editor); *Unknown Chaplin* (1983, Director); *Hollywood* (1980, Director); *Winstanley* (1975, Director and Screenplay); *Abel Gance: The Charm of Dynamite* (1968, Director); *Charge of the Light Brigade* (1968, Editor); *It Happened Here* (1964, Producer, Screenplay, Director)

Andrew Mollo , Director & Co-Writer

(Production Designer unless noted): *Pascali's Island* (1988); *No Surrender* (1986); *Dance with a Stranger* (1985); *Innocent* (1985); *Invitation to the Wedding* (1983); *Xtro* (1983); *Winstanley* (1979, Producer, Screenplay, Director); *It Happened Here* (1965, Producer, Screenplay, Director)

Peter Suschitzky, Cinematographer

Born in London in 1940, Peter Suschitzky is the son of Austrian cinematographer Wolfgang Suschitzky (*Ulysses* and *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*). Although music was his first passion, Peter chose cinema as his profession and studied in Paris at l'IDHEC. Suschitzky got his first break with *It Happened Here* at the age of 22, making him the youngest cameraman ever to make a feature film in Britain. Now considered one of the best cinematographers in the profession, he has worked the past thirty years with some of the most innovative directors of his era including David Cronenberg (four times), Jim Sharman, Tim Burton, John Boorman, and Ken Russell.

The Man in the Iron Mask (1998); *Crash* (1996); *Mars Attacks!* (1996); *Immortal Beloved* (1994); *Vanishing* (USA, 1993); *M. Butterfly* (1993); *Public Eye* (1992); *Naked Lunch* (1991); *Where the Heart Is* (1990); *Dead Ringers* (1988); *Falling in Love* (1984); *Krull* (1983); *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980); *Valentino* (1977); *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975); *Lisztomania* (1975); *All Creatures Great and Small* (1974); *That'll Be the Day* (1973); *Henry VIII and His Six Wives* (1972,); *Pied Piper* (1972); *Melody* (1971); *Leo the Last* (1970); *Gladiators* (1970); *Thank You All Very Much* (1969,); *Lock Up Your Daughters!* (1969); *Midsummer Night's Dream* (dir. Hall, 1968); *Charlie Bubbles* (1968); *Privilege* (1967); *War Game* (1965); *It Happened Here* (1965)

Sebastian Shaw

One of the few professional actors in the film, Sebastian Shaw started onstage at the age of nine. A well-known and respected theater actor, he became a top British film star in the 1930s and '40s, later moving into character roles. At the time of *It Happened Here*, he was the famed narrator of the BBC "Great War" series. Shaw's career has lasted well into the 1990s.

Monkey Boy (1990); *High Season* (1988); *Reilly: The Ace of Spies* (1984); *Weather in the Streets* (1984); *Return of the Jedi* (1983); *Midsummer Night's Dream* ([dir. Hall, 1968); *It Happened Here* (1965); *Scotch on the Rocks* (1954); *Laxdale Hall* (1953); *Landfall* (1953); *Glass Mountain* (1950); *Journey Together* (1946); *East of Picadilly* (1941); *Strangler* (1941); *Flying Squad* (1940); *Three Silent Men* (1940); *Bulldog Sees It Through* (1940); *Spy in Black* (1939); *Too Dangerous to Live* (1939); *Troopship* (1938); *Farewell Again* (1937); *Squeaker* (1937); *Men Are Not Gods* (1937); *Murder on Diamond Row* (1937); *Jury's Evidence* (1936); *Tomorrow We Live* (1936);

Brewster's Millions (1935); *Birds of a Feather* (1935); *Three Witnesses* (1935); *Lad* (1935); *Jubilee Window* (1935); *Department Store* (1935); *Ace of Spades* (1935); *Four Masked Men* (1934); *Way of Youth* (1934); *Get Your Man* (1934); *Adventure Limited* (1934); *Little Miss Nobody* (1933); *Caste* (1930)

Jack Beaver, Composer

It Happened Here (1965); *Stolen Plans* (1962); *Clue of the Missing Ape* (1953); *Hasty Heart* (1949); *Showtime* (1948, Music Dir./Sound); *Candlelight in Algeria* (1944, Music Dir./Sound); *Wings over Africa* (1939); *Scandals of Paris* (1935, Cinematography)

Background

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For more information on the making of the film, see Kevin Brownlow's "How It Happened Here," published by Doubleday & Company, New York, 1968.