

The Outrun review: Saoirse Ronan strikes an emotional chord with audiences.



Ronan highlights versatility in the portrayal of a recovering alcoholic. Pic: STUDIOCANAL.

Rona (Saoirse Ronan) is sitting in AA as fellow addicts discuss how alcohol makes them feel. She reveals she associates happiness with being drunk and doubts she could ever experience such joy again. Simultaneously, clips from her past flash on the screen, starkly disproving Rona's claims. The audience sees faded memories of her being dragged out of bars, throwing glasses at her boyfriend, and overall, behaving destructively. This juxtaposition between deluded memory and actual reality creates contrast, making the audience keenly aware of the effects of her addiction and setting an unnerving narrative for the rest of the film.

The Outrun, directed by German filmmaker Nora Fingscheidt, is an adaptation of Amy Liptrot's 2016 memoir of the same name. Fingscheidt structures scenes between the 29-year-old biology graduate's present and her tainted recollections of a debauched London lifestyle.

The film takes the audience on her journey of teetotalism, which is not short of up-and-down moments. It unfolds as a memory piece centred on Rona's return to where she grew up in [The Orkney Islands](#), Scotland. The plot regularly recalls her student years in the capital and as far back as her childhood. These flashbacks insight into her relationships with her bipolar father, Andrew (Stephen Dillane) and her devoutly Christian mother, Annie (Saskia Reeves). Rona is haunted by drunken memories, almost like an exaggerated version of "hangxiety."

To offset this, she must reconnect with the wild beauty of her hometown to stay sober. [In a Guardian article](#), Liptrot describes she was apprehensive to return and felt "washed up", like the forceful waves drove her into sobriety.

Parallel narratives play a significant role in the manic drama, from the juxtaposing locations and soundtrack to the tension between Rona's past and present identity of being sober and intoxicated. At first glance, her two worlds – the chaotic city and remote countryside – seem entirely different. But they might not be as distant as we think. Liptrot connected the sounds of both places in her [memoir](#): "The waves crashing don't sound very different from the traffic in London."

Moments from Rona's tumultuous Hackney life are vividly portrayed. Including relationship struggles with her partner, Daynin (Paapa Essiedu), which reveal nights out culminate in violent episodes, when he attempts to settle her down. These scenes are hard to watch due to their realism. Despite this, we can't help but root for Rona's recovery.



Essiedu plays Rona's softspoken boyfriend, who struggles to impede her addiction. Pic: STUDIOCANAL

Ronan's performance is compelling but sometimes one-dimensional. In Orkney, relapses are rare as Rona dedicated her time to working at a bird protection reserve. However, her homecoming is not free from emotional turmoil, especially when dealing with her father's depressive episodes. Dillane did a believable job of delivering these heart-wrenching scenes.

The film offers a poignant exploration of Rona's two contrasting worlds and her battle with alcoholism. The adaptation of Liptrot's memoir is a powerful depiction of how addiction affects the addict and those around them.

Although it was slow-paced and included a particularly odd animated sequence that feels out

of place amid the dramatic cinematography, The Outrun is a film that might make you reconsider your relationship with alcohol.