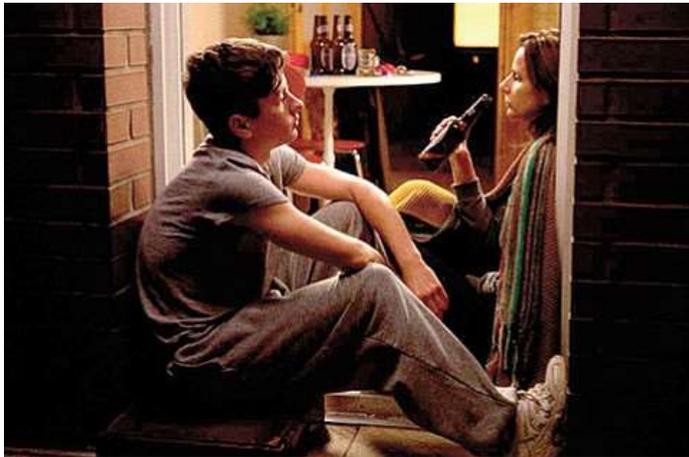


## **‘Mammal’ Director Rebecca Daly**

Monday, February 1, 2016 by **MATT KETTMANN**



Rachel Griffiths and the young Barry Keoghan star in this emotionally complex feature film about a single woman trying to cope with the loss of the son she abandoned by helping a troubled soul. More heart-wrenching than tear-jerking, it's a cinematic study of what it means to be a parent.

### **How was this haunting and emotional story developed?**

My cowriter Glenn had the idea to write a film about a woman who did not know how to parent. But we wanted this to be something that the audience finds out after they have spent some time with her. Mystery is an element of storytelling that Glenn and I are both interested in, so we wanted to play with this although this film is not a mystery as such. Finally, I think the film became a love story, about a woman who tries to love her son too late.

### **We never learn much about why she abandoned her family, so what do you hope viewers think?**

I hope they can see that she struggled with motherhood and her baby, that she didn't know how to do it, that she is not asking for sympathy, that the choice was complex and painful for her — all of this is in the subtext of the film. The clues to the why of what she did exist in her present life. She is still that person.

### **This film is full of symbols. Do you plot those during the writing phase?**

Most of them were in the script. I write a lot of images into the script. It's part of the storytelling for me; sometimes it's doing the job that dialogue might otherwise have to do.

**Do you have children yourself? What did you take from your own life in making this film?**

No, I don't have children. There isn't much of my life in the film. I'm more interested in writing about what intrigues me rather than what I know. If it's something I'm already very familiar with, if I fully understand something, I've solved it in a way; I'd be bored. I tend to be drawn to characters who behave in unexpected and sometimes contradictory ways, or ways the audience mightn't agree with. I'm not interested in characters who make easy decisions. I want to work out why a person might make the choices they make and how every decision and action accumulates. I'm interested in the tension within a character.