

RUN FOR NEW YORK

A movie outline by
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Nearly 400 years after his heroic exploits the legacy of Nathaniel Courthope survives. Forgotten by English and Americans alike, nonetheless his courageous stand on the tiny spice island of Run helped to reshape history and led to the founding of New York.

1. It's the early 1600s and the plague is rife in London. It has no respect for rank nor station – the poor die in the streets and the rich suffer in opulent surroundings. At one such aristocratic home the men are poring over a world map, wondering when the next vital shipment of nutmeg, the only known cure, might arrive from the six remote Banda islands thousands of miles away in the East Indies.
2. At the harbour, it's all hustle and bustle as Capt. Nathaniel Courthope prepares his two ships for departure in early 1616 under strict instructions from the East India Company. By now five of the six Banda islands have fallen into Dutch hands, leaving Run as England's only source of nutmeg. He is to hold Run for the Crown and to secure supplies of this most valuable spice, which would appreciate in value by some 60,000% on its journey back to England.
3. On the other side of the world, at his HQ on Neira, the Dutch Governor General, Jan Coen, is eagerly plotting further brutal attacks against the resilient Bandanese who refuse to accept Dutch control.
4. Two days before Christmas in 1616, Nathaniel finally arrives at Run and expects to meet hostile Bandanese warriors, as several years have passed since England first laid claim to the island. Instead he receives a warm welcome from the natives, most of whom have escaped to Run from the other Banda islands where they were tortured and degraded

by the Dutch. In a celebratory ceremony, the Banda Chief surrenders Run to the English Crown "forever" in return for protection and fair treatment.

5. Celebrations are short-lived as the Dutch are seen circling the island on Christmas Day, having hoisted the blood flag to signify the start of hostilities. Although overwhelmingly outnumbered, Nathaniel rallies his few men and refuses to contemplate any notion of leaving which he regards as a "traitorous act".
6. And so an incredible struggle starts for control of Run and its invaluable nutmeg, with a powerful Dutch fleet and army being kept at bay by an inspirational English leader with a handful of men and Bandanese. For more than three and a half years Nathaniel tricks and trumps the Dutch, with great acts of daring and bravado. Attempts to invade Run are all repelled, aided by the island's natural defences and forbidding cliffs. And so the Dutch turn to a blockade, hoping to starve Nathaniel into submission. Despite foul water, dysentery and disease, Nathaniel manages to retain the men's loyalty and obtain secret supplies from the Bandanese on neighbouring islands.
7. News of Nathaniel's daring exploits filters back to England, where he is hailed a hero and his defence of Run is a source of great pride in royal circles and throughout the realm.
8. In October 1620, the Bandanese revolt against the Dutch on Great Banda, and a secret meeting is planned with Nathaniel to forge an alliance. Nathaniel and William (a local boy) set sail in a small skiff in the dead of the night for the secret meeting on Ai. But Nathaniel has been betrayed by a Dutch spy and two warships lie in wait. Ambushed and realizing his fate he stands and returns fire, but is shot through the chest and flings himself overboard – never to be seen again.
9. Overjoyed at finally disposing of the troublesome English captain, Governor General Coen quickly dispatches 25 heavily armed warships to take Run once and for all. The Bandanese pledge to fight to the death but Nathaniel's right hand man, Hayes, who has neither the courage nor charisma of his captain, regards their position as hopeless and negotiates a surrender. So ends 1540 days of resistance as Run falls under Dutch control.

10. Coen now shows his true colours, torturing the English, killing or selling the Bandanese on Run into slavery, and rendering the island barren by cutting down the nutmeg trees and burning the roots.
11. Back in England news of Nathaniel's betrayal and death horrifies the nation. The King steadfastly refuses to accept Dutch sovereignty of Run, and bitter wrangling drags on for three decades, trying to right the wrongs committed against Nathaniel and the Crown. Finally war breaks out in 1652 and after two years of fighting the Treaty of Westminster in 1654 restores Run to England together with £85,000 damages.
12. Ten years pass before Anglo-Dutch hostilities break out again in Europe. When word reaches the Bandas, the Dutch again attack and seize control of Run, and again devastate the island by cutting and burning the replanted nutmeg trees.
13. News reaches England and brings back all the memories of Nathaniel's daring exploits in defence of the Crown. The somewhat impetuous James, Duke of York (the brother of King Charles II), is outraged and to honour the memory and deeds of Nathaniel Courthope he commissions four ships to cross the Atlantic and teach the barbaric Dutch a lesson. The aim is to seize the Dutch island of New Amsterdam (Manhattan).
14. The English fleet arrives off New Amsterdam in 1664. It looks impressive but is really only one warship and three converted merchant ships with 400 men in total. But the Dutch fear the worst having heard rumours about the English fighting spirit, and Governor Peter Stuyvesant fails to persuade his men to defend the island. The English offer an honourable surrender and on 8 September 1664 all Dutch rights to New Amsterdam are signed over to England.
15. In Europe, the Anglo-Dutch hostilities have reached stalemate. The English demand the return of Run and the Dutch demand the return of New Amsterdam. After much wrangling the Royal Commissioners suggest that the Dutch keep Run and the English retain New Amsterdam. At the Treaty of Breda in April 1667 the two islands are formally exchanged.

16. Soon after, the tiny settlement of New Amsterdam is renamed New York in a stirring ceremony recalling the memory and exploits of an English patriot, Captain Nathaniel Courthope.

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20 November 2001

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