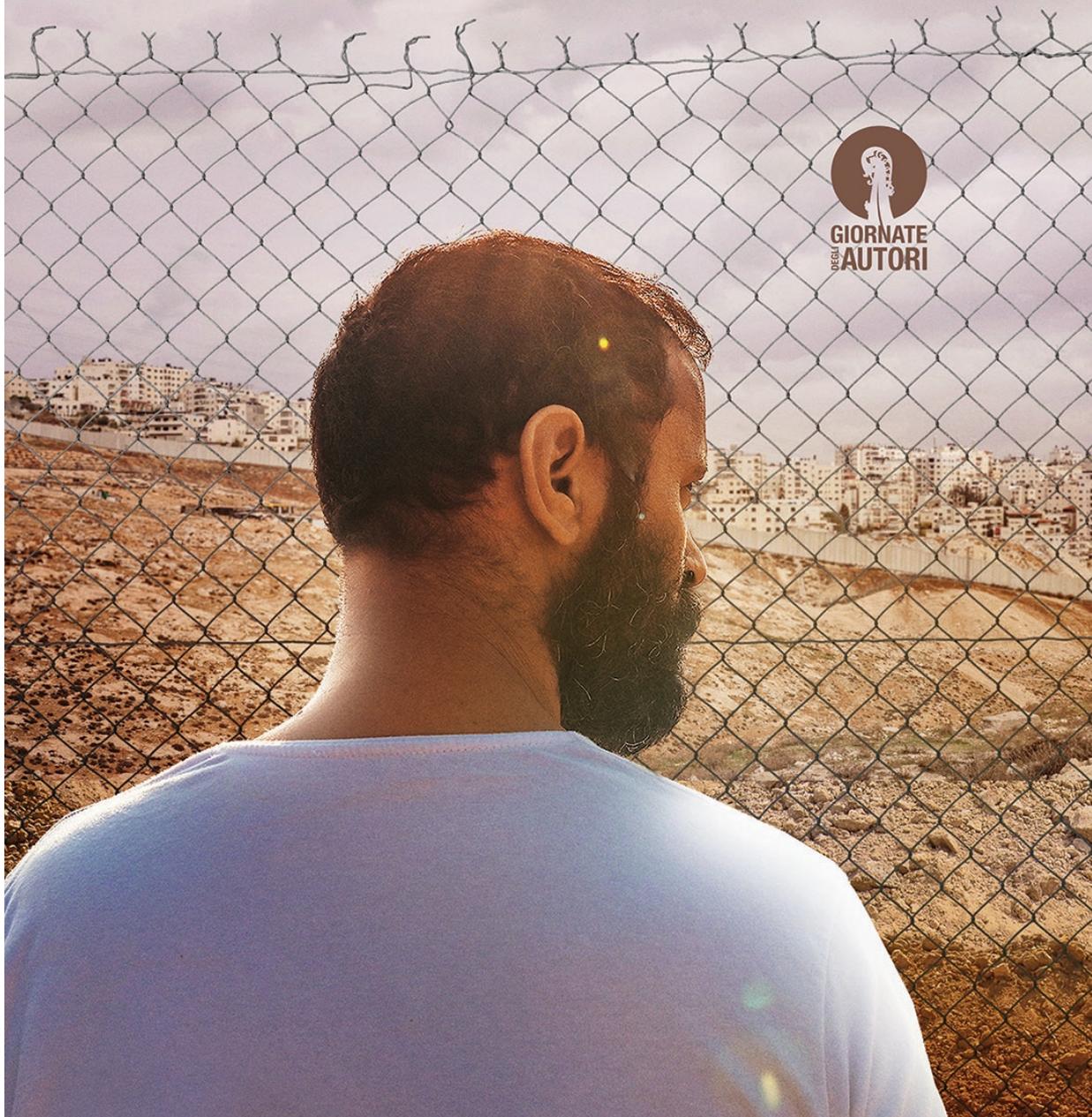


"PERSUASIVELY CAPTURES THE GRINDING INDIGNITIES OF DAY TO DAY PALESTINIAN LIFE."
-SCREEN DAILY

200 METERS

A FILM BY AMEEN NAYFEH

ODEH FILMS PRESENTS 200 METERS WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY AMEEN NAYFEH STARRING ALI SULIMAN WITH ANNE UNTENBERG MOTAZ MALHEES MAHMOUD ABU AITA
PRODUCER MAY ODEH - ODEH FILMS DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ELIN KIRSCHFINK SOUND DESIGN SYLVAIN BELLEMARE PRODUCTION DESIGNER BASHAR HASSUNEH COSTUME DESIGNER FAIROUZE NASTAS EDITING KAMAL EL MALLAKH
MUSIC FARAJ SULEIMAN CO-PRODUCERS FRANCESCO MELZI - MEMO FILMS METAPHORA MARCO COLOMBO - ADLER ENTERTAINMENT JULIA BEBAUER - WAY CREATIVE



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[SYNOPSIS]

Mustafa, a Palestinian construction worker, lives in a West Bank home a mere 200 meters away from his wife and children, on the other side of the Israeli border wall. Though eligible for an Israeli ID, Mustafa sacrifices living with his family in resistance to what he believes are unjust laws enforced by the occupying Israeli government, so he instead uses his work permit to visit daily. The arrangement is functional, until one day Mustafa gets a call every parent dreads: his son has been seriously injured and brought to an Israeli hospital. Rushing to cross the border checkpoint, Mustafa is denied on a technicality. Stopping at nothing to reach his child, a 200 meter distance becomes a 200 kilometer odyssey, as the increasingly desperate Mustafa attempts to smuggle himself to the other side of the wall. Featuring a mesmerizing central performance by Ali Suliman (PARADISE NOW, JACK RYAN), 200 METERS “persuasively captures the grinding indignities of day to day Palestinian life” (*Screen Daily*) in an impressive feature debut by writer/director Ameen Neyfeh that expertly balances tender family drama and frenetic political thriller.

[DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT]

I carry lots of memories that I no longer have access to, or it could be that I fear to dwell back into it. Oppression does alienate you as it denies you your basic rights; especially when you start adapting to it!

A forced separation aches a lot. 200 METERS is my story and the story of thousands of Palestinians, and stories can definitely alter lives. I believe in the power of the cinema and how it touches our lives and magical ways. I need to tell this story.

Images of the wall, checkpoints and soldiers are probably what come to mind when Palestine is mentioned. Although these images are also in this film, the focus will be on what such a separation does to us as human beings. And to shed more light on the invisible barriers and walls that are created as a result to the physical barrier.

Here, in Palestine we got used to adapt to new situations, to do as we're told and camouflage our feelings. But this should no longer be acceptable. Freedom of movement is a very basic human right that seems to be a fairytale in such a brutal reality. The main character Mustafa has obeyed the rules, endured the humiliation and did as told in order to secure a small chance to be with his family, but when the same rules that alienated his life put his family and fatherhood on stake, will he obey it any longer?

[IN CONVERSATION WITH AMEEN NAYFEH]

The determination of a father to overcome all obstacles out of love for his family, in an extremely absurd and oppressive situation, is at the core of your movie. How did you first come across the idea of making a movie about Mustafa and his family, and the 200 meters that divide them?

I can say that maybe 99% of Palestinians have to go through a similar journey in overcoming such absurd obstacles in their daily life. You fight your way to small victories in order to achieve simple, basic tasks. The idea of the film and the 200-meter distance came as an accumulation of both personal and collective experiences. I've experienced my share of separation as my mother is originally from a Palestinian village on the other side of the wall. The village was my "Neverland" growing up. But after the wall was built, we were cut off from the rest of our family, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and childhood friends. I have lots of bad memories at checkpoints like everyone else. I can go on forever about the tragedies this situation of apartheid has created. Of course, our reality is much more complicated than we portray in the film since we need to simplify it to be able to tell the story.

Almost 13 years ago, I was hanging out with one of my friends. His rooftop overlooks the wall and a Palestinian town on the other side. This friend – who happened to be a construction worker in Israel – started telling us that; "Before the wall, I used to light a cigarette and I'd be home before it was finished. It's a mere 200 meters away! Going to work now is like traveling around the Cape of Good Hope."

This irrational situation has affected thousands of families. Many didn't have the energy to adapt. Others fought their way hoping that the situation would eventually change. But despite this, the story I chose to tell was of the triumph of love.

In your film you seamlessly combine elements from different genres, from family story over social drama to road movie and thriller elements. How did you develop this approach to filmmaking?

I believe I was really influenced by my professor Mr. Dewi Griffiths, who always emphasized the importance of genre. I actually started developing the script in film school back in 2010. I first pitched it as a road movie, where it was warmly received. Making a genre film was an early goal, but I did not want to make a melodrama. It took me some time and a couple writing workshops to develop the film from a straight road movie with no elements of social drama to a story that's not only functional but also has emotion, and to weave the various story elements together into the quest of the main character. I believe this was the best approach to tell this story.

The first short film I wrote was both a western and a road movie. I am still at the beginning of my career and exploring style. But I am a fan of genre films and yet I also appreciate social dramas, as they touch me the most.

How was the collaboration with Ali Suliman, one of the most iconic Palestinian actors? At what point did he get involved in the film? Did you have him in mind when writing the role of Mustafa?

He was in mind since the inception of the screenplay – the first draft, really. I first met him in person a year ahead of production and he was very interested and supportive. We started working together two months before the shoot, where we went through the tiniest details of Mustafa's world. A reassuring experience that I had prior to 200 Meters was that I had edited a short film that he starred in. So I was able to get first-hand information from my friend (who was also a first time director) on working with Ali.

Besides that, I didn't know much about Ali other than his great acting. I was always asking myself how the hell am I going to direct such a talent? He has worked with such top-notch directors! But it turned out that working with him was a real blessing. He was very generous with his ideas and solutions. At one point he also helped with casting. He is more than a world-class actor. The support and trust he gave me – in addition to his support to any first-time actor in the film – shows the kind of person he is.

Mustafa meets a very diverse group of travelers, from Palestine and beyond, during his odyssey. Can you tell us how you developed this ensemble of characters?

The script went through a long period of development where the ensemble changed many times. The only constant characters were Mustafa and Kifah – the young men going to the wedding of his cousin. I wanted to keep the journey and the characters as authentic as possible. Credibility was a key issue for me. All characters are either people I knew, met, or had heard about.

But it didn't mesh together until I had a cohesive structure for the screenplay. Only then was I able to see the dramatic potential of these characters and their relationship with Mustafa and his experience. The characters came to life to create a balance within our absurd realities. There is something truly arbitrary about the way we experience apartheid and separation. And yet the experience is both plausible and true, which is where a lot of the irony and humor came from, as well.

It was such a great memory when I started casting and started to see my characters as real people. It was an absolutely exhilarating experience.

A documentary filmmaker plays an important role in Mustafa's journey. How much did you conceive her character as a comment on perceptions of Palestinian reality from the outside?

The idea of having a foreign character started when I was looking for a way to pass information to the audience but without spoon-feeding them complex details. It would be natural for a foreigner to ask about certain issues, but it would be unnatural for Palestinians to explain the situation to each other. But I also didn't want this character to function only as an exposition tool to help a foreign audience navigate the story.

When I decided to create the character of Anne, the German filmmaker, I based it on a real story. But as I was reworking the script and her character, I realized that many layers made her into a crucial element in this story. There's a particular trust-mistrust dichotomy of how her group dynamic keeps changing based on what we know about her background, regardless of who she is as a person.

Do you see yourself as part of a group of Palestinian filmmakers, or what are your references as an artist?

I do identify as a Palestinian filmmaker and it is an honor to be affiliated with this group of hard-working individuals who took it upon themselves to reach out to the world. We are facing many challenges as independent Palestinian filmmakers. After all, we are working in a country with no filmmaking infrastructure.

Personally I am influenced by my countryman Hani Abu-Asad, but also by filmmakers such as Asghar Farhadi or the Dardenne Brothers. My ambition is to tell good, inspiring stories from our region, not only from Palestine.

[BIOGRAPHY - AMEEN NAYFEH]

Ameen Nayfeh (born in Palestine, 1988) spent his formative years moving between Jordan and Palestine. Despite an early interest in filmmaking, in 2010 he earned his B.Sc. in Nursing from Al-Quds University in East Jerusalem. Two years later, he earned an MFA in film producing from the Red Sea Institute of Cinematic Arts in Jordan. Ameen Nayfeh's previous films include *The Crossing* (2017, Short), *Suspended Time / Zaman Muaalaq* (2014, documentary segment), *The Eid Gift* (2012, Documentary), *The Uppercut* (2012, Documentary). 200 METERS is his first feature film.

[FILMOGRAPHY - AMEEN NAYFEH]

The Crossing | 2018 | Drama Short

Interference | 2017 | Drama Short

Suspended Time | 2014 | Documentary, Drama, Video art

[BIOGRAPHY - ALI SULEIMAN]

The Palestinian star Ali Suliman is a son of a family who were exiled from their village of Safouryia in the Galilee during the Nakba of 1948. Ali was Born in Nazareth in 1977. After graduating from acting school in 2000 he started his career in the theater where he played a variety of different and complex roles including classical dramatic and comedy. In 2004 there was a qualitative shift in his career when he played the main role in Palestinian film PARADISE NOW, directed by Hany Abu-Assad, which was nominated an Academy Award and winner of a Golden Globe in 2005. Since then, his career is international, participating in numerous big productions in Hollywood, Europe and the Arab world.

[FILMOGRAPHY - ALI SULEIMAN]

Selected Awards

Best Actor at Alexandria International Film Festival 2016

Best Actor at Carthage International Film Festival 2012

Best Actor at Dubai International Film Festival 2011

Special Award at Anonimal Film Festival Romania 2009

Selected Filmography

Zinzana | 2015 | directed by Majid Al Ansari

Dancing Arabs | 2014 | directed by Eran Riklis

Lone Survivor | 2013 | directed by Peter Berg | produced by Universal Studios

Flying Home | 2014 | directed by Dominique Deruddere

Everywhere But Here | 2013 | directed by Michal Zilberman

Zaytoun | 2012 | directed by Eran Riklis

Cruel Summer | 2012 | directed by Kanye West

The Attack | 2012 | directed by Ziad Doueiri

Mars at Sunrise | 2012 | directed by Jessica Habie

Inheritance | 2012 | directed by Hiam Abbass

Do Not Forget Me Istanbul | 2011 | Omnibus, various directors

The Last Friday | 2011 | directed by Yahya Alabdallah

The Time that Remains | 2009 | directed by Elia Suleiman

Body of Lies | 2008 | directed by Ridley Scott | produced by Warner Bros Studios

Lemon Tree | 2008 | directed by Eran Riklis

The Prince of Venice | 2008 | directed by Yaa Boaa Aning

The Kingdom | 2007 | directed by Peter Berg | produced by Universal Studios

The Syrian Bride | 2004 | directed by Eran Riklis

Paradise Now | 2005 | directed by Hany Abu-Assad | Winner Golden Globe 2005, Academy Award nominated, Winner Amnesty International Award, AGICOA'S Blue Angle Award for Best European film and Reader Jury Award at Berlinale 2005

Chronicle of a Disappearance | 1996 | directed by Elia Suleiman

The Barbeque People | 2003 | directed by Yossi Madmoni, David Ofek

Selected TV

The Looming Tower | 2018 | Hulu

Jack Ryan | 2018 | Amazon Prime

The State | 2017 | Channel 4

The Promise | 2010 - 2011 | Channel 4

Homeland | 2011 | Showtime

The Battle on Jerusalem | 1999

Selected Theater

I Am Yusuf and This Is My Brother by Amir Nizar Zuabi | 2009 | Young Vic Theater London

The Sneeze by Anton Chekhov | 2007

Forget Herostratos by Gregore Goren | 2007

The Storm by William Shakespeare | 2005

Salome by Oscar Wilde | 2005

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams | 2004

The Can Opener by Victor Lanoux | 2003

A View from the Bridge by Arthur Miller | 2010

Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett | 2002 |

Nathan the Wise by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing | 2000 | Germany

The Mission by Heiner Müller | 2002

[PRODUCER - MAY ODEH]

May Odeh was born in Birzeit-Palestine. She is a director and producer best known for *Maradon's Legs* (2019), *Gaza by Her* (2017), *The Crossing* (2017), *Drawing for Better Dreams* (2015), *Diaries* (2011), *Searching for Napoleon* (2006), and *Unknown Soldiers* (2014), *Roshima* (2014), *Izriqaq* (2013). She is the founder of ODEH FILMS; a production company aiming to produce and distribute creative documentary and fiction films. May has Master's Degree in film and production from Lillehammer University in Norway. Odeh's curates and organizes various film programs including Red Carpet Film Festival, and Mobile Cinema – which is aiming to tour around villages and communities in area C to screen entertainment films for families and kids. She has been recently working in a variety of Art project research including film, photography, cooking and writing.

[PRODUCTION COMPANY - ODEH FILMS]

ODEH FILMS provide production services for filming in Palestine and independent film distribution. The production company is known for *Maradonas Legs* (2019) a short film by Firas Khoury, *The Crossing* (2017), *Gaza By Her* (2017), *Drawing for Better Dreams* (2015), *Roshmia* (2014), *Unknown Soldiers* (2014), and *Izriqaq* (2013). All the films did well in a lot of international festivals around the world.

Released Films:

- Maradonas Legs | short film by Firas Khoury, 2019.
- Gaza By Her | short film for Rosa Luxemburg Association, produced and co-directed, Won the Bronze Tanit at JCC 2017
- Drawing for Better Dreams | short Animation for NRC, produced and co-directed, Won best film for kids at Seattle children's film festival 2016.
- Forbidden Sky | directed by May Odeh, produced by Al Jazeera, 2015
- Unknown Soldiers | collective of shorts documentaries, 2014
- Roshmia | by Salim Abu Jabal, Co-Producer May Odeh, Feature Documentary, Won the Al Jazeera Best Documentary 2015, best Audience Award at Karama Human Rights Film Festival, Jury Prize at Algeria International Film Festival, Al Kompis Freedom Award at Malmo Arab Film Festival, best documentary at Rome Medfilm Festival, Won the Grand Prize at Tettauen International Film Festival 2015 & Best Jury Prize in Dubai International Film Festival 2014
- Izriqaq | directed by Rama Mari, Short Fiction, Palestine, Norway, Qatar, 2013 Won the Sunbird Award at Days of cinema 2016
- Diaries | Feature Documentary, 2011

[CREDITS]

CAST (in order of appearance)

Mustafa	Ali Suliman
Salwa	Lana Zreik
Nabeela	Samia Bakri
Majd	Tawfeeq Nayfeh
Zeina	Maryam Nayfeh
Noura	Salma Nayfeh
Abu Sami	Ghassan Abbas
Nader	Nabil Al Raai
Saleh	Ghassan Ashqar
Rami	Mahmoud Abu Eita
Anne	Anna Unterberger
Kifah	Motaz Malhees
Old Israeli Man	Amer Khalil
GMC Driver	Dia Harb
Permits Office Clerk	Mahmoud Nayfeh
Israeli Female Soldier	Hanin Tarabeh
Waleed	Ahmad Tobasi
Khaled	Omar Hattab
Ahmad	Alaa Abu Saa
Gavi	Douraid Liddawe
Elad	Ghantus Wael
Israeli Male Officer	Mohammad Younis
Israeli Soldie	Mohammad Abu Barjas
Yaser	Kifah Quzmar
Mahmoud	Faisal Abu Al Heija
Soldier	Afif Qawasmi
Israeli Female Soldier	Rebecca Telhami

CREW

Written and directed by	Ameen Nayfeh
Produced by	May Odeh
Co Producers	Metafora Production Franseco Melzi Marco Colombo FILM I SKÅNE Julia Gebauer
Director of Photography	Elin Kirschfink
Sound Design	Sylvain Bellemare
Original Music	Faraj Suliman
Production Designer	Bashar Hassuneh
Costume Designer	Fairouze Nastas
Editing	Kamal El Mallakh
Sound	Raja Dubayah
1st Director Assistance	Alex Koryakin
2nd Director Assistance	Dima Sharif
Extra Coordinator	Alaa Abu Saa
Production Manager	Moumen Nayfeh
Production Coordinator	Maria Qwasmi
Ramallah Shoot	
Production Manager	Sophia Harb
Set Manager	Natalie Hodali
Gaffer	léa renaudet
Key Grip	Ahmed Zaoui
Best Boy	Mutaz Ayayd Amjad Wahdan Omar aby Amer
1st Camera Assistant	Ashraf Dowani
2nd Camera Assistant	Ibrahim Hanthal
DIT	Fadi Salman
Continuity	Salam Hamdan
Art Director Assistant	Sami Zarour
Construction	Thabet Samara
Props Master	Ali ALDeek
Boom Operator	Ibrahim Zaher
Makeup Artist	Fairuz Nastast

Costume Assistant	Haneen Zawahrah Wafa Azzeh
Additional Costume Design Assistant	Mohamed froukh
Additional Director Assistance	Mustafa Staiti
Hair	Saed Jarrad
Production Assistants	Ahmed Bazz Sameh Al Idrisi OSAID Malek Al Sayed Abu Shadi Ismat Quzmar AMEER ZABANEH Mohamad Natour Ibrahim Shees Mousa Khalil Abdul Merhi
Still Photographer	Alaa Aliabdallah - Reghash
Translator	Arda Aghazarian