

A BintFilm – Cinema Libre Studio Co-Production



*One Palestinian actor. One green cab.
One battle between the American Dream and the Dream of Return.*

DRIVING TO ZIGZIGLAND

Directed by Nicole Ballivian

www.drivingtozigzigland.com

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FILMMAKERS

Director	Nicole Ballivian
Producer	Philippe Diaz
Screenplay	Nicole Ballivian
Directors of Photography	Tarin Maja Anderson Mounes Abu Shilbayeh
Executive Producers	Anas Khalaf Rosario Ballivian
Co-Producers	Chris Cory Najwa Mubarki
Associate Producers	Samira Shapuri Jaime Ballivian Manny Mencia Cecilia Mencia
Music	Marcel Khalife Raed Saeed Sidi Yassir Euphrates
Editors	Michael Adelman Charles Ryan

A BintFilm-Cinema Libre Studio Co-Production

Starring

Bashar Da'as

USA 2006

In English & Arabic with English Subtitles
92 Minutes, Color
Not Rated

Visit:

www.drivingtozigzigland.com

Images are available for download at:

www.drivingtozigzigland.com

STATEMENT FROM THE DIRECTOR

It began as a taxi cab driver's bed time story to his wife, a new crazy story everyday; two guys running out of his cab without paying, a prostitute demanding change for her twenty-dollar bill or she would not pay the fare, a baby being left in the backseat of his cab.

Bashar would tell me a different story almost every night and I retained them in my memory until a few years later. Bashar had been incredibly frustrated with getting only terrorist-role auditions in Hollywood and I had my own frustration in not being able to get financing for my very first screenplay about the Palestinian occupation. We threw our frustrations together and I wrote the script for DRIVING TO ZIGZIGLAND based on Bashar's bedtime stories. I found it incredibly important to show not only Bashar's job of having to drive mostly insane Los Angeleans but also to incorporate his real struggle – trying to find legitimate acting work in Hollywood.

When Bashar and I first met seven years ago, it was in the Old City of Jerusalem. I introduced myself as a filmmaker and he then introduced himself as an actor. I thought Bashar was trying to impress me with his response until he invited me to one of his shows at the Al Kasaba Theater in Ramallah of which I missed because no taxis would enter Ramallah from Jerusalem as there had been a bombing of a bus between the two cities.

A few months after finishing the DRIVING TO ZIGZIGLAND screenplay, we would shoot in Los Angeles on a tiny budget and credit cards paying virtually no one and travelling to Palestine to complete our little masterpiece.

Although Bashar's story in America was indeed an interesting one on its own, I felt it was only in my character's truth to show Bashar's life as an actor back in Palestine. The two contrasting depictions of lives – one in America, one in Palestine - reflected Bashar's own current real life questions: Is it better to pursue the American Dream and fight tooth and nail to have a mere chance in Hollywood or is it better to deal with the harsh reality of the Israeli occupation while indeed being a legitimate actor with the country's most reputable theatre? Sometimes life's funny way has fate decide on which is better.

Growing up in Washington DC, living in Los Angeles and being the first American generation in my family, I have watched the cities' immigrants struggle with the two opposing life choices as did Bashar. A doctor from Peru cleans the streets of Chicago and makes more money than he did in his homeland but in the end, he barely has enough money to cover the rent and is figuring out how to get his American medical accreditation while carrying a big sack of guilt for not sending money back home to Lima. Americans pass by these foreigners on a daily basis; and in my case, the cabbie who's driving you to the airport could have been a great actor in a theatre in Jerusalem.

- *Nicole Ballivian*, Director

SHORT SYNOPSIS

A Palestinian cab driver in Los Angeles struggles to become a legitimate actor while trying to make the money to pay the utilities amidst the chaos of post-9/11 American passengers and Homeland Security. All the while, memories of his life in the theater back in Palestine pose big questions for his fate and role in his new country.

SYNOPSIS

Shot in Jerusalem, Ramallah and Los Angeles, DRIVING TO ZIGZIGLAND is a chronicle of a day in the life of Bashar, a Palestinian cab driver in Los Angeles. Bashar holds tight onto the American Dream of becoming an actor in Hollywood but also longs to go back home to his legitimate theatrical acting job in Palestine, despite the Israeli occupation.

In Los Angeles, a film audition typecasts Bashar to play an Al Qaeda terrorist role. When Bashar gets home, he realizes the utilities are due and he has twenty-four hours to make the money. For the remaining hours left until tomorrow, an unceasing flow of passengers ride in Bashar's taxi and give the Arab cabbie the run-around on issues that deal with suicide bombers, George Bush, Cat Stevens, the war in Iraq, Rai music and world geography. In a post 9/11 American day, Bashar falls into the interest of the F.B.I. and suffers a massive blow from the bureaucracy of the former INS, now Homeland Security.

All the while, Bashar's nostalgia of the Al Kasaba Theater in Ramallah, his place of work before being confined to his green American cab, poses the question of whether or not the American Dream is an idea really worth fighting for.

Bashar's quest to make the money is won until he realizes he must choose between the Department of Homeland Security and his own family.

Based on true stories.

THE FESTIVAL CIRCUIT

2006 Cairo International Film Festival (In Competition)

2006 Dubai International Film Festival (Official Selection, Arabian Nights)

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Nicole Ballivian (Director)

Nicole was most recently selected for the Sundance Institute – Royal Jordanian Film Commission 2nd Middle East Screenwriter's Lab in November 2006. She currently serves as VP of Production and Distribution at Cinema Libre Studio in Los Angeles. Nicole has also adapted for stage and is in pre-production for *THE PESSOPTIMIST*, a novel by the renowned Palestinian refugee Emile Habiby. *SLEEPING ON STONES*, a Cinema Libre Studio/BintFilm feature film co-production, surrounding a narrative story of Palestinian life under Israeli occupation, was written by Nicole and is currently following financing to shoot in Jordan and the Palestinian territories next year.

Nicole Ballivian has completed projects with Warner Bros. and Universal Pictures in Los Angeles and throughout her 16-year career, Nicole has produced and assistant directed for many independent film and television entities including National Geographic, Greenpeace USA, Quixotic Films, Mumin Pictures, Greenlight Productions, Cerebellum Corporation and Univision. Alongside her production background, Nicole has worked for the largest literary agencies in Hollywood, which allowed her to delve into the creative realm of screenplay acquisition and development.

Nicole received a BA in Film from American University in Washington DC and also has an Islamic social science background which was solidified through a Master of Arts program from the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Virginia.

Anas Khalaf (Executive Producer)

Taking a huge leap from the petroleum industry, Anas Khalaf deftly delved into the world of film, first working with Frederic Golchan of Frederic Golchan Productions. He then went on to co-produce *PROSPECT*, an independent feature film. Following his success, he was able to garner more on-set technique serving as first assistant director for the independent feature, *THE ADVENTURES OF FRANK DERN*. Currently with BintFilm, Anas is in pre-production and financing for *SLEEPING ON STONES*, a dramatic feature film surrounding a story within the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the relationships of three boys: one Jewish, one Muslim, and one Christian set during the first Intifada, to be shot in the Middle East in 2006. Born in Damascus, Syria and raised in Paris, France, Anas received his Master of Arts in International Trade, Economics, Marketing and Business Law from the Normandy Business School in France, 1996

Philippe Diaz (Producer)

Born in Paris France, Philippe Diaz studied Philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, and began his film career as a director in 1980. After directing and producing several short feature and documentary films, commercials and corporate videos, Diaz moved fully into the producer's role with his first feature film, "Havre" by Juliet Berto (cult actor/director of the French New Wave). His second feature, "Rue Du Depart" by Tony Gatlif ("Gadjo Dilo") starred Gérard Depardieu, winning several Grand Prize awards at major international festivals.

His third feature, "Mauvais Sang" by Leos Carax (the first film about AIDS) became an international hit, winning one of most important awards in France, the 1986 Louis Delluc award, and was also nominated for 3 Césars (the French Oscar) as well as winning major awards around the world. This was a movie known for defining a generation, as well as for launching the careers of Juliette Binoche and Julie Delpy.

Recognizing an opportunity, Diaz added a distribution division to his production company, Films Plain Chant, to specialize in distributing feature films by "author/directors" such as "Bless Their Little Hearts" by Billy Woodberry and "Candy Mountain" by acclaimed American photographer Robert Frank (produced by Diaz featuring Kevin J. O'Connor and Tom Waits). This launched Diaz into English language international productions.

His fourth production in 1989, "Pierre Et Djemila" by Gérard Blain (a political Romeo and Juliet), represented France in the Official Competition at the Cannes Film Festival.

Continuing his search for new talent and for producing films that appeal to global audiences, Diaz produced THE BENGALI NIGHT (shot in English in India) that launched the career of director Nicholas Klotz and featured Hugh Grant in his first leading role along with John Hurt and Indian mega-star Shabana Azmi. This film marked the beginning of Diaz's, collaboration with American studios, in particular Columbia Pictures, and the opening of his first US based production company in Los Angeles, Sceneries Entertainment.

Soon after, New Line Cinema tapped Diaz to co-finance and produce "The Man Inside", a political thriller directed by Bobby Roth with Jurgen Prochnow and Peter Coyote.

After moving to Los Angeles in 1991, he has continued to produce films with budgets ranging from \$200,000 and \$15 million under his production shingle. With "Heavy Metal 2000", he was able to broaden his production knowledge with the animated production and his collaboration with Columbia / TriStar.

PHILIPPE DIAZ (cont'd)

In 2003, he created Cinema Libre Studio, with a consortium of partners to provide an alternative structure for intelligent, independent films to get developed, financed, produced and distributed.

For a complete list of production credits:

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0225034/>

FINAL END CREDITS

CAST

Bashar	Bashar Da'as
Hussam	Hussam Abu Eisheh
George	George Ibrahim
Merlot	Amber Kendrella
Officer Polk	Stephen Caldwell
Officer Mendez	Raul Rodriguez
Jose	Everette Motta
Orthodox Woman	Rima Laham
Orthodox Man	Sherwin Buydens
Tunisian Cabbie	Sufyan Omeish
Steve	Zak El Yazgi
Ethiopian Cabbie	Pawlos Girmay
Disgruntled Passenger	Samiramis Izadifar
Rodeo Drive Man	Oto Brezina
Rodeo Drive Woman	Lenore Cutler
Declan	Declan Geraghty
Dolores	Theresa Galarza
Suzy	Elena Schuber
Quentin	Robert Olding
Singing Driver	Gary Robbins
Margaret	Isabel Carter
Casting Director	Liz Beckham
Producer	Greg Arrowood
Nicolas	Sam Hargrave
Diebold Businessman	Maurice King
Greg Portello	Kevin J. Mello
Chinese Diplomat	Kerry Liu
Churchgoer	Carolyn Baker
Tow Truck Man	Edward Rodrigo Diaz
Hotel Manager	Jay Bingham
Khalil	Alfred Soygar
Moussa	Salman Salman
Corporate Lawyer	Angelo Loukas
Heather	Lejla Hadzimuratovic
Culver City Man	Jon Raymond
Elderly Man	Bud Mathis
Brian	Michael Oliveira
Jake	Brian Laesch
Mike	Tom Hippler
Laurent	Reza Mahvi
Fabian	William Landsman
Drunk Man	Tom Rees
Japanese Tourist	Victor Chi
Japanese Tourist	Samantha S. Yokoyama

Japanese Tourist	Midori M. Okada
Musician	Jay Flatley
Musician	Casey Gonzalez
Musician	Brian Batts
Bangladeshi Cabbie	Kamran Pasha
Jamil	Luigi Petrigh
Gabriel	Edgar Thatcher
Muhammad	Muhammad Nache
Dispatcher	Samiramis Izadifar
Armenian Cabbie	Simeon Angelo
Terrorist Audition Actor	Joel Simons
Palestinian Cabbie	Samer Abu Subeih
Nicole	Nicole Ballivian
Baseem	Baseem Da'as
Ummi	Nazira Da'as
Bashar's Daughter	Taima Da'as
Arab Actor	Syed Raza Jaffery
Arab Actor	Jake Yacoubi
Arab Actor	Muhammad Abdulla
Arab Actor	Avais Chghtai
Casting Receptionist	Clare Scarpulla
Nicole's Girlfriend	Sarah Leddy
Nicole's Girlfriend	Rebecca Elswit
Khateeb	Maher Hathout
Cabbie Passenger	Erin Endow
Club Girl	Amber McConnell
Club Girl	Lindsey Nelson
Nurse	Lyn Embree
Nurse	Carole Balkan
Nurse	Fay Gaultier
Doctor	Ben Trimm
Doctor	Bryan Cournoyer
Waiting Room Patient	Yolanda Solis
Waiting Room Patient	Willie McMiller Jr.
Waiting Room Patient	Tina Moorehead
Waiting Room Patient	Donnie Eversole
Waiting Room Patient	Alex Wilson
Waiting Room Patient	Mario Nunez
Waiting Room Patient	Naz Nunez
Da'as Brother	Ashraf Da'as
Da'as Sister	Sabreen Daas
Da'as Cousin	Iyad Hashimeh
Da'as Cousin	Ayman Hashimeh
Da'as Cousin	Einar Hashimeh
Da'as Cousin	Yumna Da'as

CREW

Director	Nicole Ballivian
Screenplay	Nicole Ballivian
Executive Producer	Anas Khalaf
Executive Producer	Rosario Ballivian
Producer	Philippe Diaz
Associate Producer	Jaime Ballivian
Associate Producer	Cecilia Mencia
Associate Producer	Manny Mencia
Associate Producer	Samira Shapuri

LOS ANGELES

Co-Producer/UPM	Chris Cory
Director of Photography	Tarin Maja Anderson
Sound Mixer	Jeremy Horn
Wardrobe/Propmaster	Lindsey Nelson
Assistant UPM	Anthony Gumapon
2nd Assistant Camera	Roberto Lewis
Script Supervisor	Michele Dodds
Script Supervisor	Lisa Parker
Stills Photographer	Clare Scarpulla
Key Production Assistant	Erin Endow
Production Assistant	Sandra Angeline
Production Assistant	Mari King
Casting Assistant	Heather Anhalt
Editor	Michael Adelman
Editor	Charles Ryan
Colorist/Online Editor	John Coldiron
Sound Editor/Mixer	David Doran
Assistant Sound Editor	Casey Olson

PALESTINE

Co-Producer	Najwa Mubarki
Director of Photography	Mounes Abu Shilbayeh
Assistant Camera	Ghassan Abu Eid
Production Assitant	Mahasen Nasr El-Din
Production Assistant	Walid Al-Husseini
Production Assistant	Muhammad Da'as
Production Assistant	Iyad Hashimeh
Dialogue Translation	Sabreen Da'as
ADR	Sabreen Studio

Music courtesy of and performed by Marcel Khalife:

“PASSPORT”

“RITA AND THE RIFLE”

“PROMISES OF THE STORM”

“MY MOTHER”

JAFFRA”

“MARE”

“DANCES OF THE SCARVES”

“HORSEMEN (DABKE)”

“ARABIC COFFEEPOT”

“AFTER ALL THAT HAPPENED”

“SING A LITTLE, O BIRDS”

“OH MY FATHER, I AM YUSIF”

“OH WHAT A COUNTRY”

“COFFEE TREES”

“HANDS OF THYME AND STONE”

“THE WEDDING”

“HAIFA STARTED HERE”

“AHMAD THE REFUGEE CAMP”

“AHMAD THE WIND”

Music performed by Euphrates, produced by Sandhill Productions 2005:

“MECCA TO MEDINA”

“CREEP UP”

“STEREOTYPES”

“TOLD YOU SO”

Music performed by Sidi Yassir, produced by Remarkable Current:

“JA'A AL MATR”

“J'AI ENTENDU BIR”

“TLEB RABBI TSIBU”

“WILD WORLD” performed and written by Cat Stevens

“MAHALAGESCA” performed by Mahala Rai Banda

“KHALLIOUNI” courtesy of and performed by Khaled, Taha & Faudel

“EI H'MAM IMHOTEP REMIX” courtesy of and performed by Khaled

Original music written and performed by Raed Saeed, Jerusalem

SPECIAL THANKS

Issam & Samer
Sabreen Studio
Jerusalem

Baseem & Nazira Da'as
Sabreen Da'as
Ashraf Da'as
Manal Sawalha
Samaher Da'as
Riyadh Khalil
Mourad Da'as
Sameh Da'as
Yumna Da'as
Zeina Da'as
Ossama, Loubna, Moataz and Safa Hashimeh
Wafa & Taysir (The Godfather) Hashimeh
Old City, Jerusalem

Muaz Jubeh, Georgina Asfour, Raed Saeed, Raed Hawileh
Artistic community, Jerusalem & Ramallah

George Ibrahim
Al Kasaba Theater, Ramallah

Dar Al-Tifl Al-Arabi
Jerusalem

Siyam Café Shop
Old City, Jerusalem

Yoav Shneor
SUN VIDEO LTD.
Tel Aviv

Inbal
FTS Video
Tel Aviv

Jacqueline Fletcher
Rana Kazkaz
Zak El Yazgi

Brian Williams & Paul Formanek
SPF Transfer
Chatsworth, CA

The Knitting Factory
Los Angeles, CA

Islamic Center of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA

Cinema Libre Studio
Beth Portello
Kindra Ruocco
Batya Gilbert
Rich Castro
Arik Treston
Nick Santillan
Rick Rosen
Mary Keeler
Khadijah Rashid
Scott Inbody

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