



A film by **AMOS KOLLEK**

SCREENING IN TORONTO

North American Premiere
Contemporary World Cinema

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MAIN CAST

Moshe Ivgy	Moshe
Ran Danker	Tzach
Karen Young	Yolanda
Phyllis Somerville	Sheila

CREW

Director	Amos Kollek
Screenplay	Amos Kollek
DoP	Virginie Saint Martin
Editor	Isaac Sehayek
Music	Delphine Measroch
Production Design	John Meighen Yoram Shayer

Producers Michael Tapuach, Talia Kleinhendler, Martin Paul Hus, Sebastien Delloye, Diana Elbaum, Thanassis Karathanos, Colin Stanfield, Marilyn Watelet

Production Companies Hamon Hafakot Ltd. and Pie Films Ltd. in co-production with Amerique Film, Twenty Twenty Vision, Liaison Cinematographique, Paradise Films and in association with Entre Chien et Loup

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Israel & USA 2008
100 min, HD & 35mm, color, Dolby Stereo

World Premiere: Berlin 2008 – In Competition

SYNOPSIS

Some twenty-odd years ago, Moshe got fed up with Israel, his wife, and his life in general. Especially with his wife, who stopped taking the pill and got pregnant. Since the restless Moshe couldn't see himself as a father, he left for New York – and never looked back. Never answered his wife's letters. Never asked about his son Tzach. Moshe never really made it in New York either, and now, after 21 years in the Big Apple, he peddles junk on the sidewalk and still can't pay his rent. All he has is his poetry, which he recites in a dingy Manhattan bar: biting, sarcastic, tender odes of love and hate to Israel and its people. Rays of light in his life are bartender Yolanda and her young son, who give him warmth and affection. Moshe's own son Tzach, an elite soldier in the Israeli army, now becomes restless himself, since he's forced to give up his military career. When he finds his father's address, he decides to get in touch with him. Years of pent-up anger and resentment are released when the young ex-soldier meets his bohemian dad. Moshe's world-weary, misanthropic view of life begins to crumble, and he realizes that what he is searching for in Yolanda and her son is nothing else than the wife and son he abandoned years ago. Moshe and Tzach are now on a collision course with destiny – and with one another...

A raw yet tender film about a father and his son, and about the elusive quest for redemption, directed by renowned, award-winning Israeli filmmaker Amos Kollek (Fast Food, Fast Women, trilogy Sue, Fiona and Bridget).

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This film is about a father-son relationship – 2 Israeli generations - and the changing times and values in Israel and the Western world in the past few decades. The place of the Jew in the 21st Century. A Jew with a country of his own – but still a “wandering Jew”.

Moshe was raised in the period right after the creation of the State when the existence of Israel was very precarious - a difficult time but one where things were much clearer than they are in the present. More black and white. Tzach, on the other hand, belongs to the confused young generation of today, growing up in a quickly changing world with no firm guidelines, no role models, no father figures. In a way, once his mother dies, Tzach has no identity of his own, except that defined by his role as a soldier. He is good with his gun. But being a Jew – an Israeli – does not have a clear meaning for him. What is he supposed to do with his life? Once out of active service in the army, he has no goals, “no home”. And also no clear emotions. Moshe, on the other hand, has all the emotions in the world and clear goals, - he wants to “make it”. But his priorities are all screwed up. He refuses to confront what is uncomfortable for him to confront. His fatherhood and responsibilities. He feels the world owes him. And the world has not delivered.

They travel in 2 planets – Israel and New York – complete opposites but also with many similarities. Both places are on the cutting edge, nervous, restless, targets of world terror. Sirens everywhere. Difficult places to rest. The film deals with what holds Israelis together really, aside from the threat posed by the Arabs around them. Is there anything else they have in common? Religion? Heritage? Ideals? Camaraderie?

They are a strange breed. After 2000 years of Diaspora and several decades of having a new country of their own, the Jews of the 21st Century and particularly the Israelis roaming abroad, have developed a new set of dilemmas.

An identity crisis that seems at first glance, somewhat bewildering and quite unexpected. A Jew that has his own country but still feels displaced, insecure, unsafe - just the same. “Shimon's bar in the East Village” where a big part of the story takes place, is like a microcosm of Israel. It is a world unto itself, surrounded by the big strange city.

The film itself – the camera – the actors – are always ‘unsettled’ and give the feeling of the alienation, the constant “on the go” search and abundance of emotions. The film never “stops moving”, searching for the piece (and peace), it's missing. “It never rests,” while the 2 main characters look for a bond, a home, a meaning a way to connect with one another ...

The film is shot in 2 languages – English and Hebrew, just as it would play in real life. This is also a sign of the lack of identity, the split personality between being an Israeli and a citizen of “the 51st state of America at the same time.

This project, undoubtedly, emerged at this point in time, because of recent personal changes in my life and active reflection on my past present and future. For 5 years I lived with my family in New York and made movies there. I was happy to be there and to make films about just “people” (not “Jews”). Particularly - I liked exploring the lives of lonely people, lost souls, women on the fringe of society. It was a gratifying experience. But it was also the luxury of a visitor, because my wife and I had never settled in New York “for good.” Recently we decided to move back to Israel, to raise our daughters there and look after our aging parents. A little bit like Moshe – we couldn’t quite run away from our past. It was a very conflicted decision, because we love New York, and for me, particularly, New York always meant freedom and the opportunity to be myself, rather than “only” ‘my parents’ son.’ A person just following in their path. Of course my parents were always “glorious” and Israel had been my parents’ life creation. It’s what they lived and worked for. They never questioned its supreme importance. I always questioned everything. I still do. Who am I? Where would I rather raise my kids? In New York or Israel? Or maybe in both places so they can have the luxury to make up their own minds later? Is Israel now the same Israel my parents came to create and build? What does “being a Jew” mean to me, a person with no orthodox beliefs, but nevertheless a person who served in the Israeli army, born and raised in Jerusalem, only 2 years after the Holocaust.

The main protagonist of the movie – Moshe - is a “flawed” character. We see him right from the start as a man who lies and cheats, is behind on his rent, uses foul language, chases after young women half his age – not to mention the fact that he had abandoned his son at birth, as well as his country.

But my intention is, for sure, to make Moshe a sympathetic character. One we grow to understand, to empathize with, despite and because of his many shortcomings - and eventually, to love. He is a man born into hard circumstances, frustrated and flustered by his ‘lost opportunities.’ He is a human being that walks around, bleeding, hurting others and being hurt. But he is a man that despite his harsh criticism of Israel, and his sometimes pornographic sharp tongue - clearly really loves his country and his people. He always feels the pain of what he has left behind. He wants to get back. He wants to “fix” his mistakes. And as the story progresses, he grows and he gets the opportunity to make new choices, as does his son.

At 21, Tzach has already been through a lot of pain and loneliness, a rough childhood and a dangerous military service. But as lost and angry as he feels, he still has his innocence. He can still be redeemed, as can his father.

|Amos Kollek|

PRODUCTION NOTES

First of all, it’s a bit weird to make a film that is a co-production of 5 countries (Israel, Canada, Germany, France, Belgium).

I went for a day and a half to pick a Belgian DOP. I was supposed to see 2, but one of them dropped, so I saw the other. Chemistry seemed so-so and it wasn’t clear if he was available. So on the morning right before my departure back to Israel I saw a new candidate a female DOP, Virginie Saint Martin. I liked her name and there seemed to be no other options anyway and I was done with buying Belgian chocolate for my daughters. So we exchanged a few sentences, just so nobody would blame me afterwards that I never even spoke to the DOP of “Restless.” Then Virginie, a nice person basically, turns and says to me like this: “You know you remind me of a very famous American actor director.” Good looks were always the most important thing to me and you can’t beat Clint Eastwood in that department, so I rose and said: “Yeah, I know, thanks. You’re hired.” And Virginie said: “Isn’t it amazing, he looks just like Woody Allen.”

Since I already had my coat on and the taxi waiting, I said to Virginie: “I’m not short, I don’t wear glasses, and even if you’re the last DOP in Belgium, I’ll never work with you on anything. Vaya con Dios.” And I left. But Virginie turned out to be a great find and the most dedicated cinematographer imaginable. She used to refer to me as “you very hold (old) man” and squeeze my nose which is too big anyway, to those who care. And I told her she could lose a few pounds so that maybe she would be able to move about the set, as cinematographers often do. Other than that, we got on famously.

One of our key producers, the former Talia Kleinhendler, decided that just prior to production was the right time for her to get married. There was an upside to that. Her husband was both a medical doctor and an ex security man for El Al. I, for one, felt safer, having him around for the first leg of our shoot in Montreal. He used to walk around on our exterior sets in Montreal, with his hands stuck deep in his pockets, as though they might come out any minute with a loaded pistol.

For my wife Osnat and me it was a great thrill to have our daughters, Avigayel and Noaa with us in Montreal. And in New York they got to do a little scene with our lead actor, Moshe Ivgy, possibly, the greatest living actor in Israel. So it was a great thrill for them, too.

Moshe Ivgy and I had met a couple of years earlier in New York through a mutual friend. Ivgy was always set to do the role of Moshe, an Israeli in midlife who has a hard time in New York. In fact Moshe was called Moshe because to some extent I modeled him after Ivgy himself, and the name stayed. For the second lead, Tzach, Moshe's son, we had no pre-conceived notions. Ran Danker was a soap opera star and a big heart-throb in Israel. I met him at first primarily because our daughters were watching him on TV all the time. But the minute I saw him in person I knew he would be the right choice for the part. He connected with it completely. Later on, when we got to know one another better, I realized that there were many parallels between his own childhood and the young man he was going to portray. His audition with Ivgy was electrifying. The tension was felt in the air. They were great together.

We shot in crazy weather conditions. In Montreal it was freezing. In New York, where we had only exterior scenes, it rained most of the time. In Israel we shot some military scenes in the desert during the 2 hottest days in decades. But people, both cast and crew, seemed in good moods, and generally it was a very pleasant shoot.

[Amos Kollek]

AMOS KOLLEK – WRITER & DIRECTOR

Amos Kollek, born in 1947, studied Psychology and Philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He has been writing and directing films for over 20 years. His films include:

2003 Nowhere to go but Up
starring Audrey Tautou and Justin Theroux

2002 Bridget
starring Russ Russo, Anna Thomson.
Official selection Berlin IFF 2002: In Competition

2001 Queenie In Love
starring Victor Argo, Valerie Geffner

2000 Fast Food, Fast Women
starring Anna Thomson, Jamie Harris, Louise Lasser.
Official Selection Cannes 2001: In Competition

1999 Fiona
starring Anna Thompson

1997 Sue
starring Anna Thomson, Mathew Powers.
Official selection, Berlin IFF 1997: Panorama
Winner: FIPRESCI Award

1992 Double Edge
starring Faye Dunway and Amos Kollek

1992 High Stakes
starring Sally Kirkland and Kathy Bates.

1987 Forever Lulu
starring Hanna Schygulla, Deborah Harry, Alec Baldwin.

1984 Goodbye New York
starring Faye Dunway