



CULTSCALE PRESENTS

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

Mo'

A film by Yussuf El Khoury

cultscale.com/slate/mo

LOGLINE AND SYNOPSIS

A war orphan turns to television to find his mother.

During the 1982 Beirut siege, Mo's mother hides her children from the fighting. By the time Mo is found, she is already gone, believing she has lost him forever. He grows up in an orphanage and, after twenty-five years of searching, makes a last appeal on a television show watched across the region. From Gaza, his mother recognises him, but the show cannot bring her to him while the blockade stands between them. When the Queen of Jordan intervenes, a televised plea becomes a journey toward the mother he has spent a lifetime trying to reach.

Mo'

Twenty-five years.

Saved from a garbage box during the 1982 Beirut siege, Mo grows up in an orphanage believing his mother is alive, despite everyone insisting she died during the chaos that tore their family apart.

Scarred by brutal war trauma and hardened by the slums, he spends twenty-five years fighting to survive while clinging to the longing that kept him dreaming of finding her.

After twenty-five years of searching, one night on Al-Forsa, he turns that longing into a single plea.

Wafa

My mother.

In Gaza, Wafa is watching from behind the blockade when she sees him on Al-Forsa.

She recognises her son, but coming out of Gaza is impossible.

The same forces that separated them stand between them once again.

Then Queen Rania works behind the scenes and brings Wafa to the Al-Forsa studio on Laylat al-Qadr.

AL-FORSA

The reunion.



AL-FORSA BROADCAST ARCHIVE · MO
The Al-Forsa set where Wafa is brought to Mo.

THE FILM

The film is the arc around the reunion.

BEFORE

Twenty-five years of looking. In faces. In cities. In names that might be hers. He enlisted friends, worked every connection he could find. Then Al-Forsa came. He used it.

AFTER

Wafa returns to Gaza. Mo returns to Beirut. The cameras leave. Decades of survival had taken something she could not give back. He left more orphaned than before.

THREE ACTS

The search, the reunion, and what it cost.

VISUAL

ACT I – THE SEARCH FOR WAFI

1982-2007

Separated from his mother, Wafi, in the 1982 siege and raised in a Beirut orphanage, Mo spends his life trying to find her. After twenty-five years of dead ends, he takes that search onto Al-Forsa.

VISUAL

ACT II – AL-FORSA

Ramadan 2007

A call from Gaza proves that Wafi, Mo's mother, is alive, but still unreachable. The Jordanian Crown moves through quiet channels and brings her to Amman and onto the Al-Forsa set, where Mo meets her under the lights.

VISUAL

ACT III – ZAHRA

2007 onwards

The reunion gives Mo the answer he spent twenty-five years chasing, but not the outcome he hoped for. Back in Beirut, he returns to Zahra, who was there for him all along, before the miracle and after it.

CHARACTERS

The people who carry it.

VISUAL

MOHAMMED

Protagonist

An orphan looking for his mother, carrying one trace of family: her name.

VISUAL

WAFI

Mother

Separated in 1982 and unable to leave Gaza, with no way of knowing if her son survived. She arrives carrying all of it.

VISUAL

ZAHRA

The one he comes back to

She is there before the broadcast and after the reunion. When it leaves him more lost than found, he comes back to her.

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

The story behind the story.

VISUAL

ALI

The father who stayed hidden

He was never gone. He chose not to be found. Ali Shamas knows where his sons are. The film asks what kind of man carries that decision at all.

VISUAL

AHMAD

The brother

Raised beside Mo in the same orphanage, with the same rupture and different scars. He mirrors Mo, then diverges from him.

VISUAL

NAJI

The uncle

He is the catalyst who gets Mo onto Al-Forsa, turning his nephew's plight into a public event and trying to benefit from and commercialize his pain.

WHAT TRAVELS

These tensions carry the film beyond the screen.

16:9 CLIP

ALI / WAFA

Survival or betrayal?

Nothing here settles the parents' choices. The tension stays open between what survival allows and what a child might still call abandonment.

Clip / campaign: judgment.

16:9 CLIP

THE CROWN

Miracle or method?

Was this a singular act of grace, or a rare glimpse of work practiced quietly away from cameras? The film leaves the question open.

Clip / campaign: Crown.

16:9 CLIP

THE FRAME

Witness or spectacle?

Television makes the reunion visible and arguable at once. The tension is whether the camera honors pain or packages it.

Clip / campaign: media.

16:9 CLIP

1982

Memory or warning?

The reunion pulls 1982 into the present. The tension is between mourning what happened and asking what would stop it from happening again.

Clip / campaign: history.

COMPS

Comparable titles in the same lineage.



SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE
25x ROI

2008

\$378M on \$15M · 8 Oscars



LION
11x ROI

2016

\$140.3M on \$12M · 6 Oscar noms



CAPERNAUM
17x ROI

2018

\$68.6M on \$4M · Cannes Jury Prize



WEST BEIRUT
FIPRESCI winner

1998

Fortnight · Mohamad Chamas



PHILOMENA

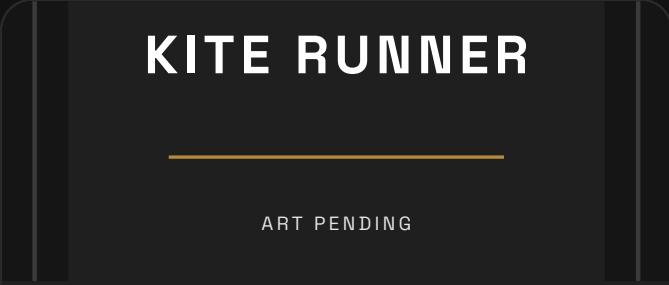
2013

placeholder

PHILOMENA
8x ROI

2013

\$100M on \$12M · 4 Oscar noms inc. Best Picture



KITE RUNNER

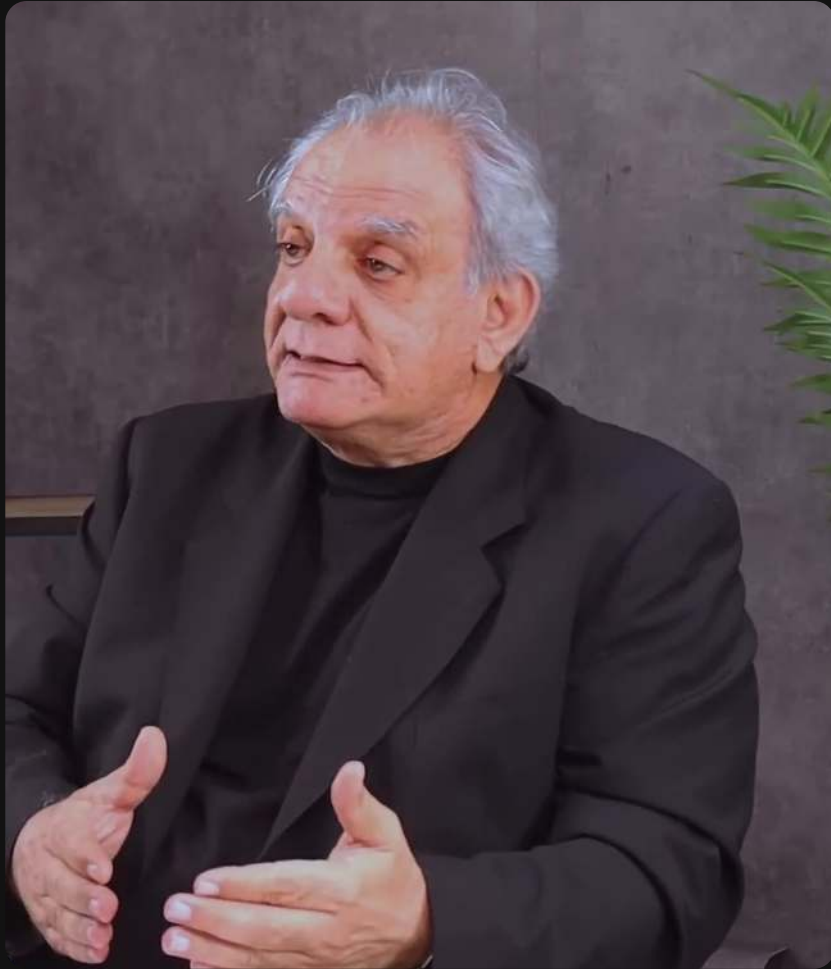
ART PENDING

THE KITE RUNNER
3.7x ROI

2007

\$73.2M on \$20M · Golden Globe film nom

WRITER / DIRECTOR



Yussuf El Khoury

Al-Forsa · BBC · MBC · LBCI · Dubai TV

DIRECTOR'S VISION

"A film about what the reunion cannot repair."

Mo survives the night that made him. The film stays with what survival leaves behind once the television moment is over: endurance, shame, longing, and the gap between being found and feeling whole.

Yussuf was present for the broadcast and the reunion in Amman, with direct access to the archive and the trust of the people inside the story.

VISUAL LANGUAGE

Beirut is close and abrasive. The studio is operatic and overlit. The film moves between those registers because Mo does.

SOUND DESIGN

Live TV is a machine: crowd breath, mic friction, room tone, the instant the format breaks. Private scenes move toward silence, arriving where relief should.

WHY NOW

Mo' begins where the reunion ends.

Displacement at scale and closed borders still shape lives across the region. Mo' speaks to that reality, but its center is one family's search.

Mo' is a universal story carried by one Lebanese-Palestinian family, then refracted through a televised reunion the region witnessed.

AUDIENCE & MARKET

These tensions travel first through community.

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

Arab communities worldwide for whom family rupture, Gaza, royal mediation, and the ethics of visibility are lived tensions: Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian communities across France, UK, Germany, US, Australia, Brazil.

WHY THEATRICAL FIRST

These arguments hit harder in a room together. In cinemas, audiences process the public spectacle, the moral pressure, and the private aftermath as one experience.

DENSITY CITIES

Beirut · Amman · Paris · London · Berlin · New York · Los Angeles · Sydney · São Paulo · Detroit.

The debates begin in recognition, but the film keeps following them into consequence.

THE INTERVENTION

Then the Jordanian Crown moves through quiet channels.

In 2007, the search hits a wall. Then the Jordanian Crown moves through quiet channels. What the show cannot solve on air is solved behind the scenes, and Wafa is brought to Amman and onto the Al-Forsa set. The reunion stops being a wish and becomes part of the public record.

Any appearance of Queen Rania is archive only, sourced from the 2007 public record and handled through standard footage licensing. The film does not dramatize or fictionalize her role.



STATUS

What is attached. What is outstanding.

Attached

Script: Yussuf El Khoury and Chris Churchill · est. 95 min

Life rights: Mohammed Shammam and principal family

Source footage: 15-min Al-Forsa segment identified

Mohammed Shammam in consultation · exploring self-portrayal

Outstanding

Clearance for archival footage tied to the 2007 intervention

Al-Forsa broadcast footage licensing

MENA/European co-production partners

Chain of title and E&O for international sales

THE BROADCAST FOOTAGE

The record on tape.

What exists

The Al-Forsa segment runs approximately fifteen minutes. Two broadcast cameras. Studio floor. Audience reaction. The host's unscripted response to the call from Gaza. The only footage of this moment in existence.

We have identified the segment. The rights chain is still being confirmed between ATV (Arab Television) and the original Al-Forsa production entity.

The footage is the spine of Act II. Without it, the film works. With it, the film is indisputable.

The licensing strategy

Clip license: documentary-style integration fee. Three to five minutes.

Confirm the rights chain before making any archive request part of the financing path.

Treat the footage as upside, not as the only basis for the film's value.

Festival-first, theatrical-first.

Festival credentials drive streaming value

Shahid and OSN+ pay more for a film with a Cannes or Toronto premiere. Festival positioning transforms a USD 1.2M feature into a cultural event.

A focused launch across Arab and diaspora hubs can create a regional news cycle. Streaming arrives with a built audience.

The film returns on Laylat al-Qadr. That timing gives the campaign a culturally specific hook paid media cannot manufacture.

Release pathway

- 1 Cannes Directors' Fortnight. **West Beirut** (1998) opened the same slot.
- 2 North America: Toronto International Film Festival.
- 3 Theatrical: core density markets first.
- 4 MENA pre-sales: Shahid, OSN+. Streaming.

Amman anchors one chapter, not the whole finance plan.

The reunion happened in Amman. That chapter can be produced there without making Jordan the backbone of the film's financing strategy.

Jordan services the Amman material because that chapter happened there

Local facilities and post capacity can support a lean unit

Jordanian support strengthens the package but is not the base-case dependency

The wider plan remains co-producers, gap, and pre-sales

FINANCING

Budget: USD 1.2M

Structure

Production: Lebanon-led, with Jordan services for the Amman material

Co-production equity + selective fund support

Gap financing: 15–20% of budget

Territory pre-sales: MENA and Europe

Recoupment: festival, theatrical, then platform licensing

Co-production targets

France: Mediterranean co-production incentive

Belgium: Arab co-production support

Gulf / MENA: development fund

Jordan: optional institutional support around the Amman chapter

Lion (2016): USD 140M worldwide. **The Kite Runner** (2007): USD 73M worldwide.

What we need now.

1 Co-production partners

MENA and European partners who can bring equity, gap financing, or territory pre-sales, and carry the film into a festival-first release.

2 Execution partner for the Amman chapter

A service or co-production partner who can execute the Amman material efficiently, without making Jordan the centerpiece of the financing plan.

3 Rights and archive clearance

Secure clearance for the Al-Forsa broadcast footage and any directly related archive licensing tied to the 2007 public record.



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