



OFFICIAL
SELECTION

INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM
2025

كلب ساكن

DEAD DOG

A FILM BY SARAH FRANCIS

PRODUCED BY



placeless films


IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH



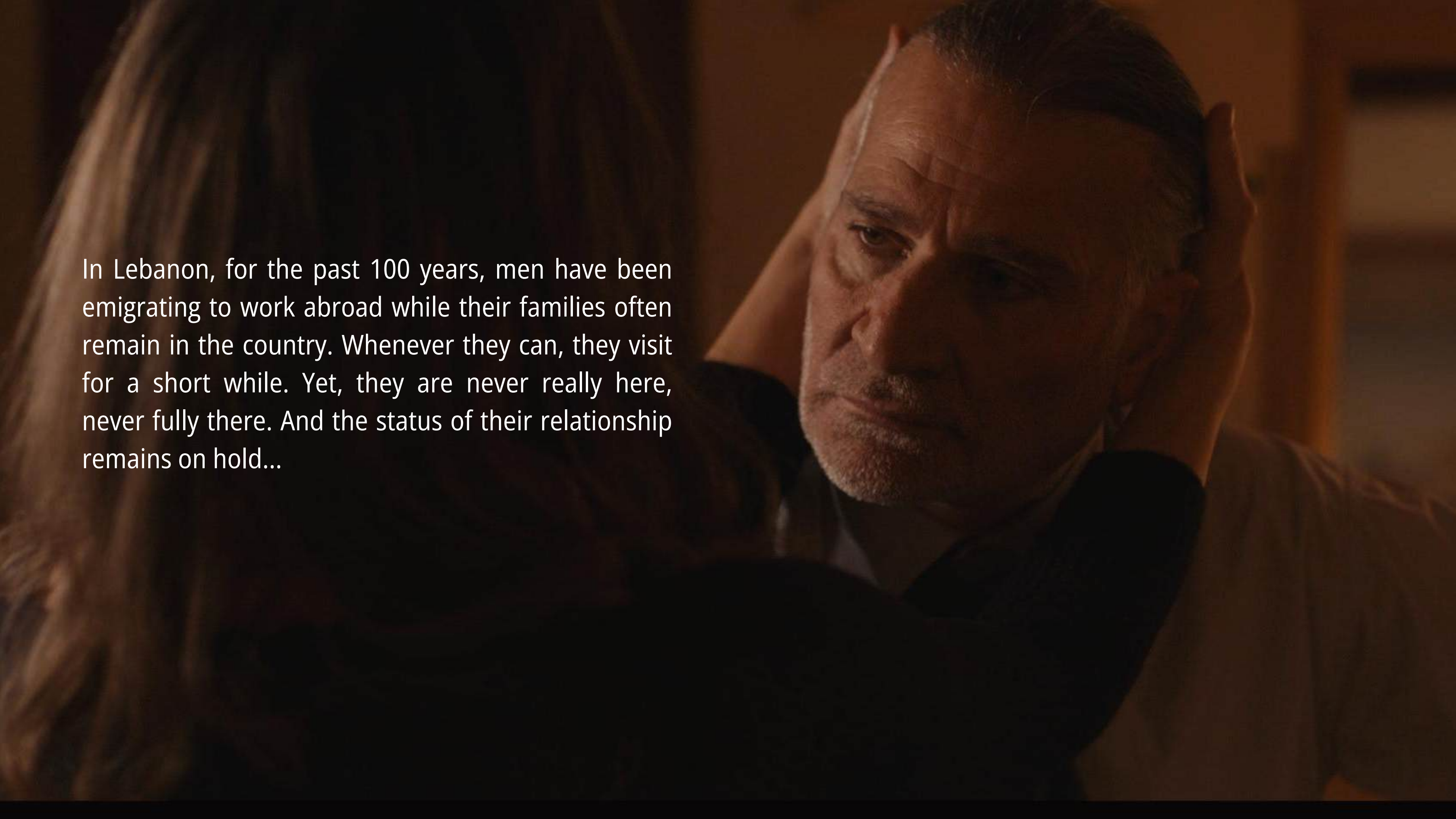
DEWBERRIES FILMS

INTERNATIONAL SALES

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A low-angle shot of a forest with tall, slender trees reaching towards a pale, blue-tinted sky. The lighting is dim, creating a somber and contemplative atmosphere. The text is centered in the middle of the frame.

Over four days,
a middle-aged couple faces what's left of their relationship.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a man with short dark hair and a light beard, wearing a dark blue or black long-sleeved shirt. He is looking down and to the left with a serious, somewhat distressed expression. His hands are raised behind his head, with his fingers resting on his temples. The lighting is warm and dim, creating a somber and intimate atmosphere. The background is out of focus, showing what appears to be a window or a doorway with a light-colored frame.

In Lebanon, for the past 100 years, men have been emigrating to work abroad while their families often remain in the country. Whenever they can, they visit for a short while. Yet, they are never really here, never fully there. And the status of their relationship remains on hold...

OVERVIEW

FORMAT

Feature Film, Fiction

GENRE

Drama

RUNNING TIME

92 Minutes

LANGUAGE

Arabic Lebanese

COUNTRIES

Lebanon, France, Qatar, KSA

WORLD PREMIERE

International Film Festival Rotterdam 2025

MAIN CAST

Chirine Karame, Nida Wakim

SOUND DESIGN

Victor Bresse

EDITING

Zeina Abou El Hosn

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Mark Khalife

SOUND DESIGN

Victor Bresse

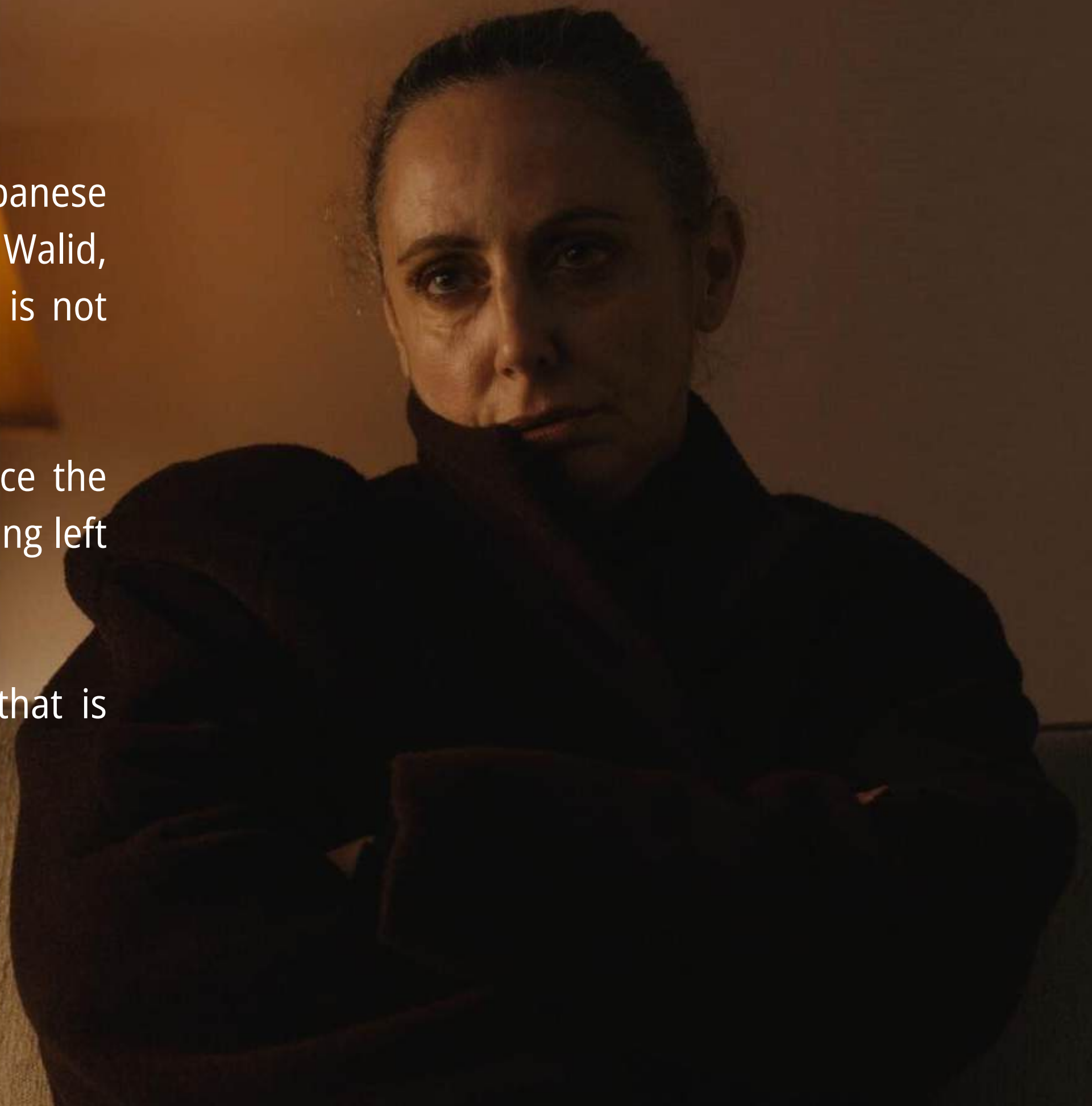


SYNOPSIS

On a rainy evening, Aida drives up to the Lebanese mountains and unlocks an empty family house. Only Walid, her husband who has been living abroad for years, is not expecting to find her there.

Reunited in the same space over four days, they face the status of their lives together and apart. Is there anything left to be saved?

Dead Dog is a measured dissection of a marriage that is simultaneously breathing and decomposing.





SARAH FRANCIS

WRITER/DIRECTOR

Lebanese filmmaker Sarah FRANCIS grew up and studied in Beirut. Her works often present sonic landscapes and visual tableaux that explore our ever-changing position within the world we inhabit. Oftentimes, the inner territory and the geographical one intertwine, as we reflect on beginnings, transitions, and the difference between the two.

Sarah's first feature film 'Birds of September / Touyour Ayloul' (2013) premiered in the main competition of CPH:DOX. It then screened at numerous festivals and museums such as Art of the Real' Lincoln Center, Stedelijk Museum, DMZ Docs (South Korea), and received several international awards.

Her second feature 'As Above so below/ Kama Fissamaa' Kathalika Alal Ard' (2020) premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival before touring worldwide.

Her third feature film 'Dead Dog/ Kalb Saken' (2025), will have its World Premiere at the Rotterdam International Film Festival.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Lebanese people have a long history of emigration to the US, Latin America, Africa, Europe then the Arab Gulf, dating back to the 1880s; and our diaspora is at least twice the size of the population in the country. Sometimes, only the man leaves on his own, returning on short visits to see his family - he is never really here, never really gone. In many cases, this situation brings underlying pressure to carry success stories back home, and after leading a double life, returning becomes more difficult than expected.

We filmed in a mountain village 30 kilometers from Beirut, surrounded by pine trees which are typical of our Mediterranean landscape. During winter, these towns suddenly fall silent as most residents move back to the city for work or studies, and expatriates depart in September after a lively joyful summer spent reconnecting with family and renovating the house.

I'm generally drawn to the themes of "transitions", 'temporary spaces' and the "meantime". The story takes place over four days in Walid's inherited and semi-abandoned family house. In that sense, it is rooted in the 'here and now'. Yet, I also wanted this moment to echo other moments in space and time, and to have all these points connect in the viewer's mind, like a constellation. In previous films, these other spaces were suggested through soundscapes which evoked geographies, and in this film, they are brought by interludes describing 'found objects'.

At its core, Dead Dog is a universal story of estrangement and loneliness within a couple. I'm interested in the ordinary - the small battles we wage with others and with ourselves. The stage of life depicted by the characters is often underrepresented on screen, yet it is a pivotal moment when people quietly assess their past choices and wonder whether they can still change their lives, or if it's simpler to just let it slide, let things be, and maintain the status quo. I wanted the film to carry the feel of a tale of some sort, with its structure, its thematic music, the forest and the fleeting dogs.

As for the process, I usually love creating 'with others' instead of seeking to apply the script in a rigid way. In that sense, I try to treat each stage - writing, production and post-production - as a new beginning and to be receptive to the elements that are available in the present moment.. I am very grateful to the producer Lara Abou Saifan, the actors Chirine Karamah and Nida Wakim for trusting the process and playing along, and to Zeina Bou Hosn (editor), for her precious input.

Sarah Francis



CAST

Chirine Karamé's journey as a theater actress, includes performances directed by renowned names such as Roger Assaf in "Waiting for Godot", George Hachem in "Locusta" alongside Antoine Kerbaj, Sihame Nasser "Jazz" and others. She directed "Children without Heaven" and "Hello I Miss You", which successfully represented Lebanon at the Biennale of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean in Sarajevo.

In the past 20 years, Chirine embraced relocations across the Americas, Europe, and Asia. She continued to develop projects like "Cycle" (Belgium, Spain) and "Absolutely Sublime" (England), alongside earning an MSc in Psychology from Roehampton University, London. These diverse life experiences have infused her acting approach with unique depth and empathy.

"Dead Dog" propels Chirine onto the screen, launching her captivating journey into Cinema.



CHIRINE KARAMEH

Aida



CAST

Nida Wakim is a Lebanese/Swiss actor and writer, who has spent years in both Switzerland and Paris, but remained connected to Lebanon.

Over the years, he has played in medium and short films, hybrid works, across various genres... With his curious and playful approach, he has embraced several mediums and storytelling styles and has joined various cinematographic adventures.

Today, he has first major roles to his credit in cinema and theater. He plays the leading role in feature films such as; "Zenar Nar", "Kamaloca", "Dead Dog", and "Zaman Dark" which will be released in theaters in France in April 2024.

NIDA WAKIM
Walid





PRODUCERS



LARA ABOU SAIFAN - PLACELESS FILMS (Lebanon)

Lara has been producing films in Lebanon and around the world for more than twenty years. Films she produced have premiered at major festivals like Venice, Locarno and Berlin, and garnered support from major entities like the Doha Film Institute, AFAC, Red Sea, CNC and OIF.



SARAH FRANCIS - INDEPENDENT PRODUCER (Lebanon)

Sarah produced her 2 previous feature films: Birds of September (2013) and "As Above, So Below" (2020) which respectively premiered at CPH:DOX and at the Berlinale, then screened in various festivals around in the world and won awards. As a producer on Dead Dog, she is partnering with Placeless Films (Lebanon) and Dewberries Films (France).

CO-PRODUCER



MARINE VAILLANT - DEWBERRIES FILMS (France)

Marine produces fiction and documentary films by young Middle Eastern authors and directors. Her experience includes working with Les Films des Tournelles and Special Touch Studios in France. Films she produced have received support from DFI, CNC and other major financiers and premiered at the Berlinale, El Gouna Film Festival & Malmö Arab Film Festival, among others.

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

CAROL MEZHER - NIAM ITANI

COMPANY PROFILE

Placeless Films is a film production and consulting company based in Beirut led by female filmmakers Lara Abou Saifan and Niam Itani. The company is committed to producing and supporting short & feature films that bring social and/or human issues to the fore.

Placeless Films credits include:

- Sarah Francis' fiction feature "Dead Dog" (IFFR, 2025)
- Mathijs Poppe's hybrid feature debut, "The Jacket" (IDFA, 2024)
- Seyfettin Tokmak's fiction feature debut, "The Empire of the Rabbits" (Tallin POFF, 2024)
- Anna Fahr's, "Valley of Exile" (Jury Award for Best Feature Drama at Cinequest, 2023)
- Feyrouz Serhal's award winning fiction short, "Tshweesh" (Locarno, 2017)
- Niam Itani's feature documentary, "Twice Upon a Time" (Edinburgh IFF, 2016)

The company is also developing the first Lebanese animated series for children, "Rawi".



COMPANY PROFILE

Founded by CEO and producer Marine Vaillant, *Dewberries Films* is a French production company specializing in the production of fiction and documentary films by Middle Eastern writers and directors.

Dewberries Films produces shorts and feature films marked by a strong mix of cultures, fruits of the encounter between East and West, like the career of its founder.

Dewberries Films' first release, "*Roadblock*", a short movie directed by Dahlia Nemlich and written by Pascale Seigneurie, won the silver FIFOG and the Khayrallah prize in USA in 2022.

In 2023, "*Les Chenilles*", directed by Michelle and Noel Keserwany won the Golden Bear award for Best Short at the Berlinale, and "*Somewhere in Between*" by Dahlia Nemlich won the Golden Yusr at the Red Sea International Film Festival.



DEWBERRIES FILMS

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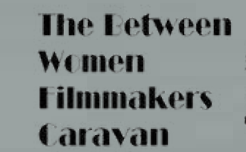
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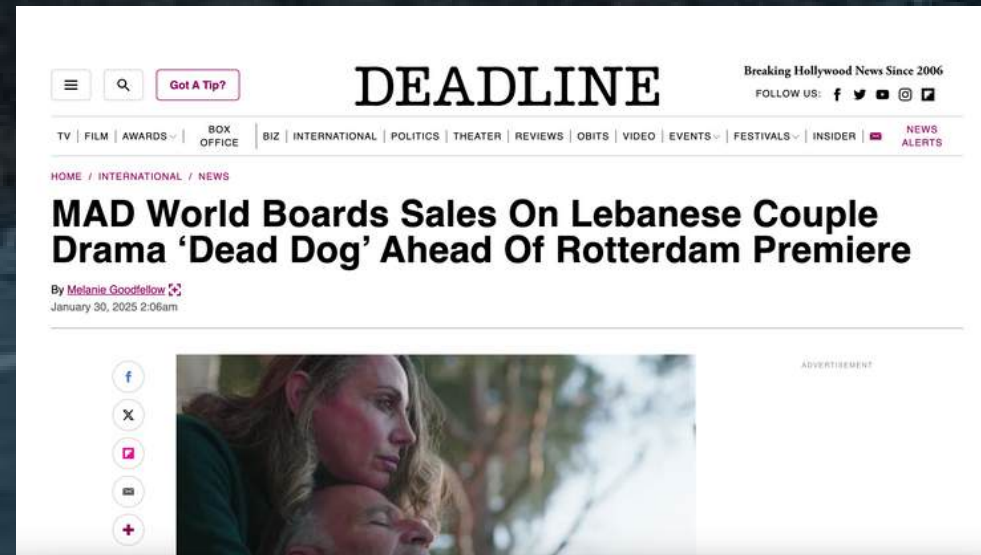
FONDS IMAGE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE (OIF)

Recipient of a production grant from

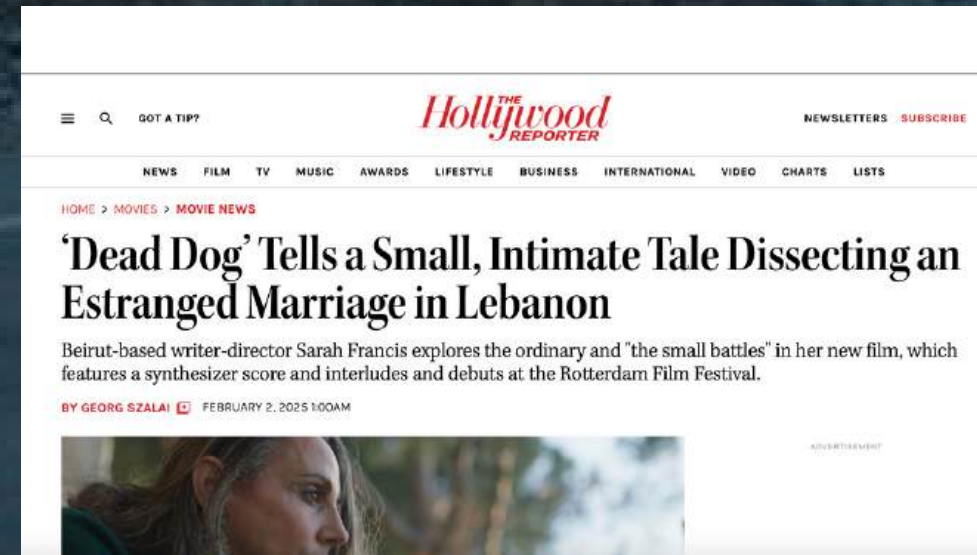
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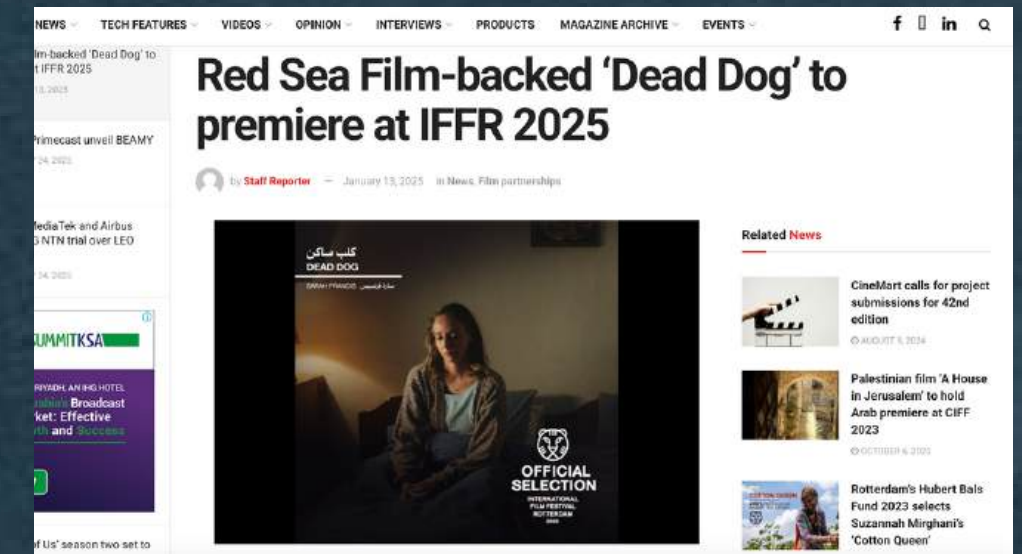
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