



UN CERTAIN REGARD
PRIX DE LA MISE EN SCÈNE
CANNES 2011

GOODBYE

directed by MOHAMMAD RASOULOF

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PRIX DE LA MISE EN SCÈNE
CANNES 2011

GOODBYE

(Bé Omid É Didar)

directed by MOHAMMAD RASOULOF

Iran - 2011 - 1h44 - 1.77 - Dolby SRD

INTERNATIONAL SALES

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SYNOPSIS

In the desperate situation in today's Iran, a young female lawyer whose professional license has been revoked is several months pregnant. She lives alone, for her journalist husband is obliged to live in hiding. Pursued by the authorities, almost a stranger in her own country, she decides to flee...

INTERVIEW WITH MOHAMMAD RASOULOF

You did not receive authorization from the Iranian government to come to the Cannes Film Festival where your film GOODBYE received an excellent reception and won the Un Certain Regard award for Best Director.

How did you experience this period? Were you kept up to date of events in real time?

It was not an easy period for me. Generally speaking, I prefer to talk about cinema and avoid subjects that interfere with how films are perceived. At the moment though, unfortunately, due to the sensitive situation in Iran, people talk a great deal about the environment surrounding films and not enough about the films themselves. I would like to be considered a filmmaker who is simply doing his job. But in my country, there is no framework for independent filmmakers. I followed the events in Cannes from a distance at first, but when I realized that the discussion was constantly brought around to subjects that had nothing to do with the film, I stopped paying attention.

Did the film's media exposure have an impact on your living conditions in Iran?

In Iran, the majority of the media belongs to the State. All of them considered that the presence of my film in Cannes, and the prizes it obtained (Best Director - Un Certain Regard and the François Chalais Prize*), were a form of disloyalty, and that the Cannes Festival was using my film to make a political statement. They announced publicly that the film was weak and of no artistic interest. For them, the award had no value; the Cannes Festival had simply taken a political stance to support Iranian filmmakers who were facing sentences. Certain members of the press even claimed that by giving a dark, negative image of Iran, I had betrayed my country with the sole aim of becoming rich and famous. They even published a false synopsis of the film to discourage people from seeing it. These things will all make my next film even harder to produce. But on the other hand, I heard that the film was very well received in Cannes. That makes me happy, yet at the same time I'm sad because my fellow countrymen and women will not be able to see GOODBYE. But such is life in Iran, and I have no other choice but to fight to make my next film.

What is your current situation?

I have appealed against my first court ruling and am waiting for another trial. If the verdict is identical, I will return to prison for six years.

* The François Chalais prize was created in 1997 to pay tribute to the French journalist François Chalais and rewards a film dedicated to the values of journalism.



How was your film project born?

My inspiration always comes from personal experience for I feel concerned by the lives of those around me. In GOODBYE, I focused on the lives of certain friends and acquaintances. I wanted to show how life's circumstances could push people to behave extremely violently, even with those they love. It is a serious subject because due to the political situation and pressure that exist in Iran, certain qualities, such as trust and kindness, are starting to disappear. I am not a politician and I believe it is a mistake to perceive my films as political. My films depict the complexity of the lives and situations surrounding us. It is the intolerance and rashness of the Iranian film authorities that lend a political dimension to these simple situations.

GOODBYE was shot in partial secrecy. What were working conditions like during shooting?

Let's just say that the film was not made in an usual manner. After appealing against my court ruling, and while waiting for a new verdict, I decided to make another film. To ensure the safety of my crew and avoid the same tragic scenario as last year (i.e., when my entire crew was arrested during the shoot), I put every ounce of energy into obtaining a filming authorization from the relevant authorities. I went to see them in person, and they told me that if the script obtained their approval, they saw nothing wrong with me making a film during this legal "parentheses". I know the leanings of the censorship commission very well, and so I wrote a script that to my mind would not encounter any problems when applying for authorization. Unfortunately, the script did not receive a visa. But thanks to the support and perseverance of the members of the House of Cinema - the only independent institution in Iran which unites all cinema professionals - and after making certain changes to the script, I finally received authorization.

I've always aimed to preserve my independence and make films without any constraints. For this reason, I shot the film with a very small crew, a very small budget, and an inexpensive digital camera. Well-known Iranian actors agreed to work for free in this film. Mohammad Reza Moini, one of the most highly respected film editors in Iran agreed to edit the film for free as well. We worked day and night to finish the post-production. In Iran, once you've finished your film, you must present it again to a commission in order to obtain a distribution number. As of today, I still do not know the fate of my film. Will it be shown in Iranian cinemas or not?

The film seems to go one step further in denouncing the Iranian regime. This time, you deal head on with the oppressive climate that reigns in Teheran...

The film tells the story of a young couple, a journalist and a lawyer. I touch on the difficulties and pressures they experience in their lives. I wanted to show how life's circumstances can push people towards violence. I wanted to talk about their problems, about their loss of trust. I thought about their everyday life, about the problematic issues that are imposed on them regardless of their will. I think that a political viewpoint is not appropriate for the stories I tell. But in a totalitarian regime, every reaction, every critique is perceived as a political statement.

How did you choose the leading actress, Leyla Zareh? Was it difficult to convince her to play this role?

I saw Leyla in a film several years ago. She is a talented actress. Playing the role in this film was a new experience for her. She had to endure a great deal of pressure. She was on the set every day during shooting, for she is in every scene.

There is this incredible scene in the subway, where the heroine takes her nail polish off before an important meeting. Something so insignificant to us – taking care of one's appearance – almost becomes a revolutionary gesture here...

This scene is incredible for Western viewers but it's the daily lot of all Iranians. Cultivating multiple facets of one's personality has become the favorite national pastime of my fellow citizens, and the only means to survive in this country. What interested me was to show the gap that exists between the real culture and lifestyle of Iranians, and the restrictive laws that the State tries to impose on them. It is this gap that makes life in Iran very complex. Let me give you an example. Every time I'm summoned to appear in court, I see that women are forbidden to enter the courts, including female lawyers who wear nail polish. They must either remove their polish, or wear gloves to hide their nails. I've seen many women wear gloves inside the courts, then take them off once they're back out in the street. I don't understand laws like this for they only encourage people to act hypocritically. It is precisely this type of situation that pushes Iranians to develop multiple personalities.

Leyla Zareh's character finds almost no support, at least none without ulterior motives behind it. We get the impression that social bonds are diminishing in Iran, that there is less solidarity. As if each person has to struggle individually to survive. Could you enlighten us on this point?

It seems to me that the lack of trust in others today has had an overall impact on human relations. The main character in my film is affected by this general state of mind; she finds the world around her cold and glum. I think that each one of us knows this feeling of solitude, the sensation of seeing a patch of blue sky at the end of a narrow tunnel.





MOHAMMAD RASOULOF

director, writer, producer

Mohammad Rasoulof was born in 1973 in the town of Shiraz in Iran. He started his career by making numerous short films. His first feature film, in 2002, *The Twilight*, was presented at various festivals, including Locarno and Montreal. His second film, *Iron Island*, was selected in 2005 at the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes. In 2008, he shot *Head Wind*, a documentary about the ban on satellite dishes and Internet in Iran. In 2009, *The White Meadows* was presented in the Official Competition of the San Sebastian International Film Festival and at Tribeca Film Festival.

Mohammad Rasoulof was arrested in 2010. Charged with "hostile actions and waging propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran", he was sentenced, along with Jafar Panahi, to 6 years in prison, with the prohibition of making films or leaving Iran for 20 years. Released on parole while waiting for the verdict of his appeal, he shot the film GOODBYE (Bé Omid É Didar) in semi-underground conditions. This film, which he wrote, produced and directed, won the Un Certain Regard prize for Best Director at the Cannes Film Festival 2011.

Mohammad Rasoulof is currently awaiting a new trial for his appeal and could return to jail for 6 years.

Filmography

2011	Good Bye (Bé Omid É Didar) <i>Best Director – Un Certain Regard (Cannes Film Festival)</i>
2009	The White Meadows <i>Official Competition – San Sebastian Film Festival</i> <i>Official Competition – Tribeca Film Festival</i>
2008	Head Wind
2005	Iron Island <i>Directors' Fortnight (Cannes Film Festival)</i>
2002	The Twilight



LEYLA ZAREH

Noura

Leyla Zareh began her acting career in 2004 with *We Are All Fine*, a role for which she won Best Actress at the Fajr International Film Festival. Leyla Zareh has since played in numerous films and series, including *White Nights* and *The Postman Never Rings Three Times*.



CREW

Director, writer, producer	MOHAMMAD RASOULOF
Executive producers	ROZITA HENDIJANIAN DARIUOSH EBADI
Director of photography	ARASTOO GIVI
Set designer	SAEID ASADI
Makeup artist	MEHRDAD MIRKIANI
Editor	MOHAMMAD REZA MOINI
Sound mix	HOSEIN MAHDAVI
Sound recordist	MOHAMMAD HABIBI
International sales	FORTISSIMO FILMS FORTISSIMO FILMS

CAST

Leyla Zareh, Hassan Pourshirazi, Behname Tashakor, Sima Tirandaz, Roya Teymorian, Fariba Jedikar, Shahab Hoseini, Omid Rohani, Fereshteh Sadreorafai, Bahar Katouzi, Asha Mehrabi, Javad Yahyavi

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