

ZION AND HIS BROTHER

TSION VE ACHIV

Israel

First feature film

Eran Merav

Born in Haifa, Israel in 1975. After one year of Film Studies at the Camera Obscura School of Art, he enrolled at the Sam Spiegel Film and Television School, and graduated in June 2002.

Filmography

His graduate film *Underdog* was shown in numerous festivals and won the First Prize, Lodz International Film Festival, Poland, 2002; Best Short Film, Jerusalem Film Festival 2002, the Bronze Lion Award, Golden Lion International Student Film Festival, Taiwan 2003 and a Special Mention at the Berlin Film Festival (Panorama).

Production Company :	Norma Productions (Israel)	Shooting format:	35mm
Category:	Fiction	Locations:	Israel
Length:	90'		
Language:	Hebrew		

Introduction

Zion, aged 14 and his brother Meir, 17, are facing a crisis in their relationship after a terrible train accident. A neighbour of theirs, an Ethiopian immigrant, has been killed in the accident and they are in some way responsible. They keep the secret to themselves and it haunts them until, finally, Zion re-examines his loyalty towards his older brother and decides that he is ready to take responsibility for his own life.

Synopsis

It was summer and pretty hot so Zion (14) took off for the seashore. All in all, he likes the sea. He thinks he owns the world when he's diving into the waves. But there, on the beach, Zion lost his shoes. His new shoes. He walked up and down the beach barefoot, looking for them. They were right here, goddammit. It is no joke, really not. The shoes are gone! How could he tell his mom, Elana (35). They were new shoes. Cost over a hundred bucks.. Soccer shoes with cleats. And his mom was not that rich.

So what happens now? There's not much doing around the neighbourhood. It's the summer vacation and it's hot and sticky. Zion, in his soccer outfit, started to hang around his older brother Meir (17). Meir's friends a bunch of boring nerds, seventeen year olds, shooting at bottles with a BB gun. He wasn't the only one hanging around them. There was also Michelle (14). A little on the skinny side and also bored to tears. She lived with her grandmother in the next building. She was a little in love with Meir. Everything with her was a little. But Meir never even looked at her. He'd fuck her just for the guys. They liked watching. Zion would stand guard to make sure that her grandmother didn't show up.

And then summer ended. The kids stood in formation in the school yard in front of the principal who never shut her mouth. The sun was blinding and they were fed up standing there. They were also fed up with school on the first day. Zion could only think about the water tap. And then suddenly he saw something familiar – his soccer shoes. He looked up and saw Solomon (15), an Ethiopian kid, new in the neighbourhood.

Zion figured that his big brother could probably fix things up. He'd got everything figured out. Zion really admired Meir. He was big, and tough. He had pals, good stomach muscles, and a big prick for sure. Meir also liked his kid brother. A kid brother was a useful thing. So off they went on Meir's bike, looking for Solomon.

They found him hanging around outside the building where the Ethiopians lived. He was playing around with his big ugly dog. Meir went over and warned him that he was nobody to fool around with. So Solomon took off and the dog after him and the two brothers after them. Solomon sprinted over the fence and got caught there, but not before he managed to bite Zion. Meir picked up a stick but didn't get a chance to use it because just then the train passed.

Nobody ever waited for it, nobody ever used it. But it passed through anyway, behind the buildings, every twenty minutes. It was just part of the scenery. The train stopped, its wheels screeching. The noise was deafening. One of the soccer shoes landed near Zion. The dog began to yowl. And it was only when the train came to a full stop that they understood what had happened. Solomon was lying in a field of prickly thorns, his feet higher than his head. One of his shoes was gone. The dog was running around him. Couldn't figure out what had happened. Some guys began to get down from the engine, walking back to see what had happened. Solomon had been run over. He was dead.

Director's statement:

I see it as a simple film, a film that can be understood anywhere. It has no specific place or language. It could take place in any country of the world. Nevertheless, it draws its relevance from its local Israeli colour. It is a strong, straightforward and cruel story, told with compassion, with love and with humour.

I looked for a story that could take place in the social climate that is my world – an alienated, immigrant society, of despair and economic frailty, where life is cheap on the background of an unending war of attrition, where the character of the country changes every few decades.

I set out to look for a story that stems from this economic hardship, in this case – a kid looking for a pair of shoes. It seems to me that the subject triggered the style. I find a small, realistic and brutal story in which there is nothing "larger than life" in it. I envision a style that places the human being at the center, with respect for his person, his smallness, his authentic vulnerability, his awareness of his limits. The human being lost among the endless blocks of buildings, where the sea, blocked from view by bridges and high-rises, is his final refuge. The human being persecuted by a blazing sun that gives him no respite.

I want it to be as realistic as possible, in no way softened – insofar as a film can actually be transparent. Amateur actors alongside with professionals, real locations, natural lighting, the actor at the center of the camera's eye. The actor will be provided with enough space to move in with confidence while, at the same time, every attention will be paid to detail.

Production company:	Norma Productions (Israel)
Budget:	950,000 euros
Financing in place:	600,000 euros (to be confirmed)

Company Profile

Norma Productions, is an independent production company, specializing mainly in full-length feature films and Made-for-TV dramas.

CEO – Assaf Amir Producer – Guy Lavie Producer – Yoav Roeh Int'l relations coordinator – Noa Karvat

Among our productions:

Broken Wings – a feature film written and directed by Nir Bergman.

Among the many awards the film won are the Tokyo Grand Prix for Best Film at the Tokyo International Film Festival 2002 and The Panorama Audience Award at the Berlin International Film Festival 2002.

Chronical of a Disappearance – a feature film by Elia Suleiman.

The film won the Best Film by a New Director Award at the Venice Film Festival in 1996 as well as many other awards, including 1996 Critics' Choice for the Best Israeli Film.

Affula Express/Pick a Card – a feature film directed by Julie Shles. The film won The Best Film Award at the Israeli Academy Awards, and at the Jerusalem International Film Festival in 1997.

Reaching for Heaven - An eight-episode mini-series. Won the Best Television Drama Award -Jerusalem International Film Festival 2000, Best Tv Drama Series at the Israeli Academy Award 2001, Audience Most Popular television program award at the 17th Israeli film festival in the US.

The Food Trail - Produced in 2000-2001, a 23-episode Documentary TV Series, Directed by Uri Rosenwax, Broadcasted in Israel's TV channel 2.

Assaf Amir is currently the chairman of the Israel Film & TV Producers Association

Goals at Paris Project : Finding co-producers & pre-sales

People attending Paris Project: Assaf Amir (CEO), Yoav Roeh (producer), Eran Merav (scriptwriter & director)

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