

Escaping a war was only the beginning of their story.

SALAM NEIGHBOR

سلام يا جار



LIVING ON ONE AND 7001 MEDIA PRESENT SALAM NEIGHBOR IN ASSOCIATION WITH BYOT FILMS
ORIGINAL SCORE BY SNUFFY W.G. WALDEN, A. PATRICK ROSE EDITED BY MOHAMED EL MANASTERLY, JENWIFER TIEXIERA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SEAN KUSUNAGI
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS AUSTIN HEARST, BRYN MOOSER, JEFF KLEIN, JONATHAN BING, MICHAEL LANG
PRODUCERS MOHAB KHATTAB, SALAM DARWAZA, CHRIS TEMPLE, ZACH INGRASCI DIRECTED BY CHRIS TEMPLE, ZACH INGRASCI

PRESS NOTES

SALAM NEIGHBOR

Directed and Produced by CHRIS TEMPLE & ZACH INGRASCI

Produced by MOHAB KHATTAB & SALAM DARWAZA

Edited by MOHAMED EL MANASTERLY & JENNIFER TIEXIERA

Executive Producers AUSTIN HEARST, BRYN MOOSER, JEFF KLEIN, JONATHAN BING,
MICHAEL LANG

Cast RAOUF, ISMAIL, UM ALI, GHOUSSOON, GHASSEM

Director of Photography SEAN KUSANAGI

Original Score by W.G. SNUFFY WALDEN & A. PATRICK ROSE

Animation GABE CONROY

Production Partners 1001 MEDIA & Living on One

In Association with RYOT FILMS

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#SalamNeighbor

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SYNOPSIS

Two Americans head to the edge of war, just seven miles from the Syrian border, to live among 85,000 uprooted refugees in Jordan's Za'atari camp. As the first filmmakers allowed by the United Nations to register and set-up a tent inside a refugee camp, Zach and Chris plunge into the heart of the world's most pressing humanitarian crisis.

From meeting Um Ali, a woman struggling to overcome personal loss and cultural barriers, to the street smart, 10-year-old Raouf, whose trauma hides just beneath his ever present smile, Zach and Chris uncover inspiring stories of individuals rallying, against all odds, to rebuild their lives and those of their neighbors.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

We couldn't help but feel nervous about spending a month in the world's second largest refugee camp. Our fear was only amplified by the fact that we were the first filmmakers anywhere in the world to be registered as refugees and given a tent as a home.

Quickly though, any fear was washed away as we shared countless cups of tea with our refugee neighbors. We were incredibly lucky to have this opportunity. During our four weeks in Jordan's Za'atari camp, while waiting in food lines, talking over shared meals, helping to build homes, and playing countless card games, we witnessed the utmost courage, resilience and creativity from a people who were forced to flee their country and were attempting to restart their lives.

Before arriving in Jordan, our main look into the Syrian refugee crisis was through American mainstream media. Its focus on violence, hatred, extremism and war separated us from the human experience of being a refugee. We found ourselves subconsciously associating refugees with the small minority of people committing the violence we saw on TV. In reality these refugees were the ones who had actively chosen peace over war.

We wondered if our immersive filmmaking process was something we could use to break down these dangerous misconceptions. In our first film, *Living on One Dollar*, we lived as radish farmers on less than a dollar a day for two months in rural Guatemala with the goal of understanding life in extreme poverty.

Our Arab producers' mission at 1001 MEDIA had been to provide a unique window into the real lives of the people of the Arab world—to present human stories that compel us to re-evaluate our often negative misperceptions here in the West. We were all intrigued by this opportunity to bring "East and West" together - both on camera and behind the scenes.

From the very beginning, the support of our Arab producers helped us gain access and trust to quickly assimilate into daily life in Za'atari Camp and the nearby town of Mafraq. Upon arriving we were paralyzed by the scale of the humanitarian crisis. Had our access to the camp been limited to the usual six hours per week granted to other media outlets, our film's message would have reflected this surface level reaction. It took time for our neighbors to fully reveal the depth of their entrepreneurialism and their drive to restart their lives. Almost every refugee we met was actively looking for opportunities to work and further their education. Their main barrier was the lack of resources available to pursue their ambitions; resources that should be provided by the international community.

By focusing our film on the personal relationships we developed with Raouf, Ghassem, Ismail, Um Ali and Ghoussoon, we can humanize an overwhelming crisis. Most people will never have the privilege of inviting a refugee neighbor into their own tent to share tea. Our film is meant to share this experience, because through understanding, we can create a more

tolerant and peaceful world. Alongside our producers at 1001 MEDIA, we are excited to share a positive and deeply human story that encourages us all to not only be global “citizens” but to live as global “neighbors as” well.

Every person who watches this film can play an active role in dispelling fear and unlocking the resources needed to create a positive future, not only for refugees, but for the entire region. Together we can support host countries. We can open our own borders to refugees. We can prevent a lost generation of children by supporting education and we can even begin to see this crisis as an opportunity for women and girls to be empowered to take control of their lives. There is only one way forward if we want long term peace; we must start treating refugees, not as a burden, but as our neighbors.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The story behind the scenes of *Salam Neighbor* reflects what you see on screen; Arab producers and American directors/producers uniting to weave a story much bigger than any individual tale.

Far from Za'atari refugee camp, Chris and Zach first met Salam in a small café in Manhattan Beach, CA in March of 2013. Salam's personal story of growing up as the daughter of Palestinian refugees inspired the group to collaborate on a project relating to the Syrian refugee crisis, the most pressing refugee crisis of our time. One that would promote a creative, positive dialogue between the Middle East and the West and engage Americans growing up in a post-911 era.

Salam Neighbor's team was formed when 1001 MEDIA's Salam and Mohab and Living on One's Chris and Zach joined forces to pursue the ambitious goal of becoming the first filmmakers to be registered and given a tent in a refugee camp. 1001 MEDIA's connections in Salam's home country of Jordan and Living on One's connections with the UN allowed them to gain this unprecedented access. As the second largest camp in the world, Za'atari fascinated the team because of its huge do-it-yourself informal economy that was springing up in the middle of the Jordanian desert - just seven miles from Syria.

Once on the ground in Jordan, Chris and Zach quickly made close friends within the refugee community but due to cultural barriers relied on Salam to gain the confidence of Arab women. Without the voices of Ghoussoon and Um Ali the film could never have truly represented the narrative of the crisis.

From inception, the *Salam Neighbor* team knew this project was much bigger than just a film. By bringing on the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) as social impact partners, the film will be the spark to create real impact. Even before the film has officially premiered, the project has raised over \$36,000 to benefit refugees. The intention is to raise far more upon release and to mobilize a western audience to advocate on behalf of refugees all around the world.



(Pictured above: Salam Darwaza, producer; Zach Ingrasci, dir/prod.; Chris Temple, dir/prod.; Mohab Khattab, producer)

FILMMAKER PROFILES

CHRIS TEMPLE & ZACH INGRASCI – Directors & Producers

From living in a tent in a Syrian refugee camp to working as radish farmers and surviving on \$1 a day in Guatemala, Chris Temple and Zach Ingrasci are pioneering a new style of documentary filmmaking, using immersive storytelling to raise awareness and inspire action around pressing global issues. Chris and Zach produced, directed, and starred in their award-winning film, *Living On One Dollar*, which shot to #1 on iTunes for documentaries and was featured on the homepage banner of Netflix.

They have spoken at the United Nations, TEDx, and on CBS This Morning with Charlie Rose. Their work has been featured in major international publications including the Associated Press, The Huffington Post and Variety.

So far, their non-profit production and impact studio, Living On One, has produced two feature documentaries, *Living on One Dollar* and *Salam Neighbor*, the short documentary *Rosa - These Storms* and the eight part educational web series, *The Change Series*. Through targeted impact campaigns associated with each piece, Living on One has raised over \$410,000 to provide microfinance services around the world and education programs for the communities in which they film. You can see their work at www.livingonone.org.

FILMMAKER PROFILES, cont.

MOHAB KHATTAB – Producer

As the founder of Book Club for Men in Bahrain, aka documentary film night, Mohab is pleased to give up his home theater seat to produce meaningful films. After years of advocating for corporate clients as an attorney, Mohab co-founded 1001 MEDIA to cast light on the Arab world's unseen humanity. As the team's grey-hair (or what's left of it), Mohab's legal, financial, strategic, and entrepreneurial skills help round out the creative talents. A frustrated graphic artist, Mohab was thrilled Zach and Chris let him choose the fonts on Salam Neighbor's website. Mohab also serves as a board member of and legal advisor to the Professional Squash Association. Yes, he's a frustrated athlete too.

SALAM DARWAZA - Producer

The daughter of Palestinians working in Saudi Arabia, Salam grew up alongside the children of American oil drillers, with one foot in the Arab world and one in the West. Fluent in both English and Arabic, Salam's unique life experience has made her a human bridge—able to connect two sides of what may be the world's widest cultural gap.

Salam's passion for film and storytelling and her unique ability to connect two disparate worlds gave rise to 1001 MEDIA, a production company she co-founded to use the power of film to initiate more positive dialogue between the Middle East and the West. She produced the documentary film, *Salam Neighbor*, the story of two Americans who deliberately head to the edge of war, just seven miles from the Syrian border, to live among 85,000 refugees in Jordan's Za'atari camp.

Prior to this project, Salam worked in development and production for prolific film director Robert Rodriguez's Troublemaker Studios, on projects with George Clooney, among many other talented artists. She started her career at Apple's renowned advertising agency, TBWA Chiat/Day, helping to create some of their award winning work.

Salam currently resides in Manhattan Beach, California, comfortably nestled between a giant sand dune, five palm trees, and an oil refinery.

About 1001 MEDIA (www.1001mediagroup.com):

1001 MEDIA uses the power of film to shine a light on and introduce an element of humanity to a highly publicized and polarizing part of the world where negative images in the media have built damaging and untrue stereotypes of Arabs. Our mission is to challenge a global audience to re-think their current perceptions of the Arab world by initiating a dialogue between Arabs and the rest of the world and offering a different perspective. We intend to build a gateway between the Arab world and Hollywood by developing and financing commercially successful, English language, global films. Each of these films will focus on human stories where "East meets West", enabling every film to transcend politics and engage audiences on an emotional level through stories of adventure, romance, reality and comedy.



RAOUF

10-year-old Syrian Child. Raouf is entering his third year inside of Za'atari refugee camp, and his third year not in school. With his parents and five siblings, he was forced to flee his childhood home in Da'ara, Syria. After sharing his dream of wanting to become a doctor, he's persuaded to register for the limited number of schools inside of the camp. Outside his new classroom, Raouf's adult bravado crumbles as he curls into a ball and sobs. No one can convince him to enter the classroom. His school was bombed while in Syria, and like many of Za'atari camp's 50,000 children, his deep trauma lurks just beneath his ever present smile. Thanks to Save the Children activity centers around the camp that focus specifically on education for traumatized kids, hope remains that Raouf will go back to school.



UM ALI

Grandmother, mid-50's. She arrived in the camp with nothing but a jacket - shared with her during the several week journey from Syria to Jordan. Back home in Syria, her eldest son was dragged through the streets and eventually shot - leaving Um Ali beyond grief. Isolated in the camp, she begins to cover the inside of her caravan with her own writings and drawings in an attempt to express her emotions. She begins to venture around the camp collecting discarded plastic bags to weave into remarkable crafts. As others around the camp notice her, she sells her crafts and is even paid as a volunteer by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to mentor and teach art to young girls at a local community center. With over 3,000 businesses inside of the camp, she is one of the many refugee entrepreneurs who are choosing to find purpose and healing through work. Having never worked in her life in Syria, she's proud of her achievements and of becoming the new breadwinner of her family. In the midst of crisis she has found opportunity.



GHOUSOON

Female, mid-30s. Single mother of three, entrepreneur and former nurse. Ghousoon arrived before Za'atari was built and expected to return to Syria within a couple weeks of leaving. Three years later, despite no formal right to work, higher living costs, and more safety risks, she is doing everything she can to keep her family out of a refugee camp and in her small home in Mafraq. 80% of refugees, like Ghousoon, live outside of the camps. She makes and sells hair clips and babysits for her Jordanian neighbors to feed her family. She earns barely enough now that the additional aid she was receiving from the IRC has run out.



GHASSEM

Male, mid-40s. Outreach Officer for the IRC and women's rights advocate. A father of three, Ghassem and his family arrived in Za'atari with almost no personal possessions. He quickly fell into a deep depression after leaving a middle class life to be unemployed, living in a tent, in Za'atari. Luckily, he is one of the few Syrian refugees able to leverage his former skills as a public opinion researcher to become a paid volunteer for the IRC. His work at the IRC has renewed his hope in the future of his people and has encouraged him to become a strong advocate for women's education and empowerment.



ISMAIL

Male, late-20's. Education advocate and university student. Like so many refugees, Ismail made a harrowing journey in the middle of the night to cross from Syria into Jordan. For fear of being caught by soldiers, his group was forced to give the children sleeping pills to keep them quiet. In Za'atari, Ismail has not been able to continue his university studies to become a French teacher. Feeling incapable of attaining his own educational dreams and worried that the younger generation will fall behind in their studies, Ismail has become a devoted education advocate. He helped found the Syrian Youth Committee to assist physically handicapped people in the camp and put on plays and demonstrations to inspire kids to go to school. He has even begun to tutor Raouf.