

a film by
ANNE PAQ AND DROR DAYAN



not just your picture

THE STORY OF THE KILANI FAMILY

SHORT SPECS

Colour
DCP / ProRes 4.2.2 HQ (Stereo)
Sound: Stereo
Format: 16:9

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SYNOPSIS

“**Not Just Your Picture**” tells the story of two young German-Palestinian siblings, Ramsis and Layla Kilani, who had their life shattered one early morning during the summer 2014 when their father, Ibrahim, together with his second wife and their five young children, was killed by an Israeli airstrike during the attacks on Gaza.

Thrust into an accelerated process of politicization and rediscovery of their Palestinian roots, the two struggle to find justice for their family while trying to make sense of a political reality that not only allows for such atrocities to happen, but even attempts to silence any criticism of it.



DIRECTORS' STATEMENT



“**Not Just your Picture**” is a highly personal and important project for us. Both of us have been deeply involved with the situation in Palestine for years - Anne through her decades-long journalistic and human-rights work on the ground, and Dror, who was born and raised in the country as an Israeli Jew for 25 years, through his films and political work. Anne also witnessed firsthand the devastating consequences of the Israeli offensive of 2014 on the Gaza Strip, which deepened her commitment to shed light on the long-term impact of the attacks on the communities of Gaza. Both of us are also involved in solidarity campaigns in Europe, which is another reason why this film is so timely and important for us, as we are well aware of the way the issue of Palestine is perceived in the West. It is precisely this perception that we aim to challenge with the film - by introducing two young people, who are European as well as unapologetically Palestinian and demand to be recognized as both, we hope to bring the injustices of the situation in Palestine to the doorstep of viewers around the world.

We see “Not Just your Picture” as a continuation of the award-winning web documentary “Obliterated Families”, in which we

were both involved - Paq as co-author and Dayan as video editor. It is through “Obliterated Families” that we have got to know the Kilani family, one of the ten families portrayed in the project. We see “Not Just your Picture” as following in the same tradition of raising public awareness through media, through intimate portraits which allow the people truly affected to have their say unmediated and in their own voice. It is part of the Kilani family’s tragedy that their story has been widely ignored by the media, and perhaps this is one small injustice we might be able to partly address.

It was not our aim to create a didactic film, teaching people the facts on the ground or preaching to them how to handle the injustice. It is much more the opposite - we wished to create a deeply personal and moving film, allowing the audience an insight into an intimate situation of a family in grief, physically separated by occupation and denied justice by political powers much stronger than them. It is our hope that our film will encourage its viewers to reflect on the situation in Palestine, as well as their own governments’ part in it, and engage in trying to change it.



PROTAGONISTS



RAMSIS KILANI

Ramsis was born in 1991 in the working-class city of Siegen in North-West Germany. He is a student at the University of Siegen, working towards completing a Masters in German and English and a teaching diploma. He lives with his partner in a student apartment in the outskirts of the city by the forest.

As a child, Ramsis quickly developed an understanding of what it meant to be a German-Palestinian in Germany, yet never perceived himself as different in any way. He claims he always had a leftist worldview “as a gut instinct”, participating since a young age in demonstrations against racism and social injustice. But it was only after the death of his family that he plunged himself into activism and developed his critical view of the situation in Palestine. Since the killings of his family members, he deeply reconnected to his Palestinian roots, travelled for the first time to the West Bank and now regularly speaks at political events on Palestine and activism and is involved in political organizing and campaigning well beyond the issue of Palestine – he is an outspoken critic of racism and sexism in Germany, an anti-capitalist and a staunch vegan.



LAYLA KILANI

Layla was born in Siegen in 1993. At the time of filming she studied mathematics and religious studies and acquired her teaching qualification for students with special educational needs at the University of Siegen. She is vegan and an avid advocate of animal rights. She lives in her childhood family home, with her cat Willy, who recently passed away, and her mother, a home which was partly built by her father Ibrahim.

Like her brother Ramsis, Layla also never paid special attention to her identity as half-Palestinian. Memories relating to her Palestinian identity mostly included her feeling proud of her father making falafel for the other children in school events or telling her stories about the beauty of his homeland. Two years younger than Ramsis, her childhood memories of their father are much vaguer.

The terrible death of Ibrahim, his wife and their children has led Layla to view her roots and her place in the German society in a different manner and confronted her with the injustices of the world. She embarked on a journey of political awakening and connecting to her Palestinian roots by having the chance to visit the West Bank for the first time as part of a student exchange between her German university and a Palestinian university near Ramallah. This journey brought her only a mere 80km from her family in the Gaza Strip, but she could not reach them due to the ongoing blockade. Back in Siegen, she became much more aware and prouder of her Palestinian identity.

PROTAGONISTS



SALEH KILANI

Saleh was born in Beit Lahiya in the Gaza Strip in 1956 where he has spent all of his life. A hard worker since childhood, he is very proud of having been able to help all of his children to get high education and four of them being able to move abroad. The family's home in Beit Lahiya is only 6km from the border; over the hills they can see the wall separating Gaza from Israel. Like two million other Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, they try to continue living as best as they can, despite the siege, recurrent attacks and lasting trauma, as well as the resulting everyday hardships such as only having a few hours of electricity per day, limited access to clean water, and the dire economic situation.

The eldest child of six siblings, whose father died when they were still very young, Saleh always felt a special responsibility towards his younger brothers and sisters. He and his brother Ibrahim developed a special connection and looked strikingly alike. Beginning to work at a young age as a skilled worker, specializing in making aluminium window frames, Saleh did all he could to support Ibrahim's dream of studying architecture abroad, collecting and sending him money for his journey and family.

Although nothing can replace Ibrahim and his children, Saleh still finds some comfort in knowing that Ramsis and Layla exist, and still wishes to reunite with them - "if I ever come out of Gaza, I will visit you in Siegen first, even before visiting my own children", he tells them.

BACKGROUND ON THE KILANI CASE



THE ATTACK

On 21 July 2014, in the midst of the Israeli military offensive against the Gaza Strip, an Israeli warplane attacked Al Salam Tower in central Gaza City. The ten-storey building was completely destroyed. A number of civilian families had sought refuge in this building following warnings issued for people to leave their homes and intense Israeli shelling in their neighbourhoods. Warnings instructing people to shelter in the city centers had been issued by the Israeli forces. It is alleged that Sha'ban Suleiman Al Dahdouh, 30, affiliated to the Islamic Jihad, was the target of the attack. His body was found under the rubble of the building weeks after the attack.

Eleven people were killed in the attack, including five children (aged four to twelve years), and four women, from two families: the Al Kilani and the Derbas families. The Al Kilani's, originally from Beit Lahiya town in the North Gaza district, left their town after seeing the leaflets that were dropped by Israeli forces that were instructing the residents of their area to leave Beit Lahiya and shelter in city centers. Ibrahim Al Kilani and four of his children hold German passports as Ibrahim had spent 20 years in Germany where he was married, had two children and was working as an architect. (source: Al Mezan Human Right Center)

THE CASE IN GERMANY

In Germany the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) together with its partner organization the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) filed a criminal complaint in 2014 with the German Federal Public Prosecutor (Generalbundesanwalt – GBA) on behalf of Ramsis Kilani from Germany, who lost his father and half-siblings in the strike.

According to ECCHR, «Germany has an obligation to prosecute crimes against German citizens like Ibrahim Kilani – even where those crimes are committed abroad...To date the GBA has only set up a monitoring process in the Kilani case. There are however sufficient factual indications that a war crime has been committed, and as such the GBA is obliged to open a formal investigation. The investigations should be followed by the issuing of international arrest warrants. « In Israel, the appeal against the 2015 decision by the Military Advocate General (MAG) to close the case was dismissed.



DIRECTORS' BIO



ANNE PAQ

Anne Paq (France) is an award-winning photographer and film-maker with a background in international human rights law. She had lived and worked in Palestine for over a decade and has been a member of Activestills photo collective since 2006 and is currently based in Paris. In 2017 she won the “International Photographer of the Year” award for her award-winning web-documentary “Obliterated Families”, about the families in Gaza shattered by the 2014 military offensive.

Filmography

I Insist to Keep on Filming (10 min), 2019
The sea is bored of me (15 min), TV reportage for ARTE, 2017
Checkpoint 300 (4 min 37 sec), 2017
Obliterated Families (multimedia project, 2016)
Gaza: A Gaping Wound (13 min 47), 2016
Return to Seifa (10 min 49), 2015
Not a Dreamland (6 min 02), 2012
Bethlehem checkpoint, 4 am (8 min 59), 2007

DROR DAYAN

Dror Dayan (Germany/UK) was born in 1981 in Jerusalem and is a filmmaker, political activist and film scholar based in Berlin and the UK. He studied cinematography at the Film University “Konrad Wolf” where he completed his first feature documentary “Even Though My Land is Burning”, which analyses the role of Jewish-Israeli activists within the Palestinian popular struggle in the West Bank. He is currently a lecturer for media production at the Screen School of the John Moores University in Liverpool.

Filmography

Even Though my Land is Burning (2016, 77 min)
Losgelöst von allen Wurzeln ... (2016, 60 min, co-director)
Mich rettet die Poesie (2017, 43 min, co-director)
Numerous clips and shorts as director and/or DoP



CREDITS

Directed and Produced by
ANNE PAQ and **DROR DAYAN**

Cinematography by
ANNE PAQ and **DROR DAYAN**

Edited by
DROR DAYAN

Produced in Association with
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KEREM BLUMBERG

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AHMAD AL-BAZZ
ELOISE BOLLACK

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MICHAEL KUBE at **MAINLAND MEDIA**

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Post-Production Supervisor
MARC SCHWESER at
MASCHINENRAUM

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