

**STRAND
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presents

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT

A FILM BY TARIK SALEH

Starring Fares Fares, Mari Malek and Yasser Ali Maher

PRESS NOTES

*Official Selection:
Sundance Film Festival 2017
(World Cinema Grand Jury Prize: Dramatic)*

Country of Origin: Sweden / Denmark / Germany

Format: DCP/2.39/Color

Sound Format: 5.1 PCM

Running Time: 107 minutes

Genre: Thriller

Not Rated

In Arabic, Dinka, English and French with English Subtitles

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Please download photos from our website:

<http://www.strandreleasing.com/films/the-nile-hilton-incident/>

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT

SHORT SYNOPSIS

A political thriller based on a true story. Weeks before the 2011 Egyptian revolution, Noredin (Fares Fares), a police officer in Cairo's corrupt system, investigates the murder of a famous club singer at the Nile Hilton Hotel. What initially seems to be a crime of passion turns into something that concerns the very power elite of Egypt. Upon realizing this, Noredin decides to break the rules in order to obtain justice, colliding not only with the system but also with himself.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Noredin, an ordinary corrupt police officer, cruises down the crowded streets in his police car, his partner Momo behind the wheel. Street market stalls line the sidewalks, faintly greenish light illuminates their wares: pirated perfumes and brand-name knock-offs. Vendors salute the slowly passing police cruiser, a few men run up to the window trying to get their complaints heard. Noredin makes the rounds, accepting bribes. These are his streets. It's a protection racket – the payoffs keep the vendors from being harassed by the police themselves. Gangsters in uniform.

In Tahrir Square, not far away, huge billboards featuring film stars, singers, and president Hosni Mubarak glow white against the yellow-black sky. And there, the colossal structure, more a monument than a hotel, the blue neon sign spelling out in cursive letters: NILE HILTON.

Inside the hotel, Salwa, 19, just another invisible, undocumented Sudanese member of the housekeeping staff, is maneuvering her cleaning cart down the corridors. Its early morning and she can hear a fight inside one of the rooms. A man's voice and a woman's. Louder. The door opens and a man leaves the room, fiddling with the clasp of his Rolex watch. The woman's voice calls out "You promised!" before the door closes behind him. The man's eyes meet Salwa's, then he looks away. Noredin is called into the Nile Hilton Hotel. Lalena, a famous singer, is found brutally murdered. When Noredin flips through her receipts, a certain one catches his eyes – a photo developing pick-up receipt.

It turns out that one of the most powerful business tycoons, Hatem Shafiq, might be involved in the murder. As a personal friend of the president and a member of the parliament, Shafiq has immunity, he belongs to a group called "The Untouchables". What initially seems to be a crime of passion turns into something that concerns the very power elite of Egypt.

Small protests have begun to break out in various parts of Cairo. But for the moment, the government forces have control over the situation. Forced away from her job, Salwa, decides to take advantage of the situation and escape her misery by blackmailing Shafiq. This sets a bloody game in motion, shedding innocent blood to maintain silence.

Tensions have reached a breakpoint. As the police clashes with protestors, the revolution hits full swing. The streets are filled with people defying the curfew. When Noredin decides to break the rules to obtain justice, he not only collides with the system, but also with himself.

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT: TARIK SALEH

The film is all about Cairo. About the past and the future colliding – and the people that get crushed in the middle. 3 days before principle shooting was gone begin, Egyptian State Security closed us down. We had to move the production to Casablanca. I was devastated. Then I thought of Fellini and AMARCORD. The people in his hometown of Rimini could swear they recognized streets and houses in the film. But he had shot it in Cinecittá. It could be done! But to recreate a city you have to capture its soul. I wanted to recreate Cairo in its futuristic dystopian glory. High contrast, not black and white but yellow and black. I don't want to tell a story, I want to take the audience on a journey. It's not one of those tours where you never leave the bus – here we actually make stops, eat the food and get sick from it.

It's never what happens – but HOW it happens. Noredin is our guide – a prince of the city. He will teach you the art of bribery, the social codes with cheek kisses and addressing people according to their social status. Then there are the hands, changing money, small gestures. You will learn the beauty of power and the ugliness of the truth.

The fiction of THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT was constantly crashing into reality. At times it scared me, but to be honest, this is why I do this – to make my dreams come true.

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT

PRODUCER'S NOTE: KRISTINA ÅBERG

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT is the fourth film I have produced with Tarik Saleh. We have worked together since 1996, starting out at Swedish Television. For a long time, Tarik Saleh searched for a story set in Egypt. Being of Swedish and Egyptian origin, Tarik regards Egypt as his second homeland.

My own interest in the Middle East goes back to the 90's, when I, for several years, covered the region as a reporter. When I first read Tarik's script I was one hundred percent sure that this was our next film. We actually had another script in pipeline, but we changed direction. I loved the script and was convinced that this was the right time to turn it into a film and wanted to bring a feature story from the Arabic Spring to the rest of the world.

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT has a fascinating storyline. It is the little man against a relentless system. It is about courage and politics composed of many layers. On the surface it is a thrilling film noir, but like all of Atmo's productions, there are layers of social and political context. Both Tarik Saleh and I have backgrounds in journalism and documentary filmmaking, so it is natural for us to be drawn to stories close to reality.

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT has that origin. Tarik Saleh was inspired by the true story and murder of the famous Lebanese singer Suzanne Tamim in 2008. An Egyptian businessman and parliament member was convicted. That was a shock for the nation. Not the murder itself, but that such a person, very close to the Mubarak family, was sentenced.

Tarik Saleh wrote the main character for Fares, having him in mind all the way through the writing process. Atmo's intention is to bring a film to the international arena, telling about Egypt's corrupt system, a system that resembles those in so many other nations.

Democracies are not without corruption, but it's not something that the average person deals with in her or his everyday life. The Arabic Spring in Egypt was very much a revolution against the police and the corruption. The revolution started on Police Day, January 25, 2011, the very day when Egypt celebrates its police force.

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT is a film about what made the young people rise against the police force and a corrupt elite, foreboding the revolution. A filmmaker living in Egypt is not able to make a film like this, revealing the system so clearly.

I'm a very passionate producer. I'm proud of working with Tarik Saleh, I'm proud of his fantastic script, I'm proud of our cast and crew. And I'm very proud of the courage Atmo and our financiers and co-producers have shown in order to make this film come true.

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT

DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

TARIK SALEH

Tarik Saleh was born 1972 in Stockholm. He and Kristina Aberg are two of the founders of Atmo. His most recent film, TOMMY (2014), was a thriller featuring Moa Gammel, Ola Rapace, and singer/songwriter Lykke Li. Saleh directed and co-wrote METROPIA (2009 Venice International Film Festival), featuring Vincent Gallo, Juliette Lewis, and Stellan Skarsgård, and he has co-directed award-winning documentaries, such as GITMO. Saleh produced the music video I Follow Rivers for Lykke Li, which has had nearly 60 million YouTube views.

MAIN CAST BIOGRAPHIES

FARES FARES – *Noredin*

Fares is a Swedish actor born in 1973 in Beirut, Lebanon. His breakout role was in 2000, as the lead character in the cult comedy JALLA JALLA by Josef Fares. His first role in the American cinema was side by side to Denzel Washington in SAFE HOUSE (2012) followed by the Academy Award nominated film ZERO DARK THIRTY (2012). Fares most recent work includes the Fox's drama TV-series TYRANT and the feature films CHILD 44 (by Daniel Espinosa), THE COMMUNE (by Thomas Vinterberg) and ROUGE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY (by Gareth Edwards).

MARI MALIK – *Salwa*

Since she fled South Sudan as a refugee 18 years ago, Malek aka DJ Stiletto, has become a successful Model, DJ and Philanthropist in New York City. She is the founder of STAND FOR EDUCATION a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering girls and providing access to education for underprivileged children in South Sudan and abroad. She uses creativity as a form of activism. Mari is able to bring light to an often- ignored plight, and helps to inspire and introduce opportunities to South Sudanese women and children whose lives have been torn apart by the violence and inhumanity of war.

YASER ALY MAHER – *Kamal Mostafa, General*

Yaser Aly Maher is an Egyptian actor known for his role in WELAD EL AM (COUSINS) in 2009. This role was followed by many well-known roles in the Egyptian film and TV industry. Yaser Aly Maher has also been awarded in many regional and local acting awards based on his exquisite performances in theater.

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT

CAST & CREW

CAST

FARES FARES – Noredin

MARI MALEK – Salwa

YASER ALY MAHER – Kamal Mostafa, General

SLIMANE DAZE – Green Eyed man

AHMED SALEEM – Hatem Shafiq

MOHAMED YOUSRY – Momo

HANIA AMAR – Gina

CREW

TARIK SALEH – Director, Screenwriter

KRISTINA ÅBERG – Producer

PIERRE AIM – Director of Photography

ROGER ROSENBERG – Production Designer

THEIS SCHMIDT – Editor

KRISTER LINDER – Composer

LOUIZE NISSEN – Costume Designer

PETER HJORT – Effects Supervisor

MIKE LUNDIN – 1STAD

MARC MEUSINGER – Sound Recordist

FREDRIK JONSÅTER – Sound Design

FABIEN BOLTIER – Casting Director

MARWA GABRIEL – Casting Director

MAGDI ABDELHADI – Script Consultant

ALEX CORVEN – Line Producer

JON WIGFIELD – Line Producer

ATMO – Production Company