




virginity



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A FILM BY
SAEED KHOZE





Press Contact:

L.A Independent Film & Entertainment
E-MAIL: Info@laindependentfilm.com

Sales Agent:

L.A Independent Film & Entertainment
E-MAIL: Info@laindependentfilm.com
TEL: +1(818)642-3311

Synopsis

The story involves an Iranian girl from a religious family, a European call girl and a Russian girl. Due to a prearranged marriage situation set up by her parents, Raha is forced to deal with and endure some very difficult and life-altering events. This is based on true events.





The Goal Of Virginity

Virginity is made for women of Muslim faith in the Middle East who have become the sacrificial lambs of “*honor killings*”; those women whose voices have been choked behind thousands of years of oppression; the same voices, which do not have an echo loud enough to be heard across oceans and mountains. Those same women, who suffer at the hands of a false pride, an inflated bravado, and often die silent deaths buried by bribes and insufficient fines of a corrupt government. Those are the same women who need our voices now. Those are the same women for whom we made this film and who need our support now more than ever. Those women needed films like Virginity to be made, so that they can fall in love without fear, so that they can experience the joys of womanhood without the terror of persecution.

Virginity does not aim to single out at any particular culture or people; it poignantly and artistically draws attention to an antiquated epidemic of small-mindedness and control, which haunts the women of the world to this day. ***Honor killings, rape, prostitution and sexual trafficking*** are a few of the crises affecting the 3 leading characters at the heart of our film. There will be a non-profit company born out of this film, which will aid Muslim women in this plight.



SAEED KHOZE
Writer & Director

His love for performance blossomed onto the Theater stage where he participated in school plays and placed in several local theater festivals in Iran. He began his film-making career by joining the Iranian Youth Film Society, and working odd crew jobs. He quickly climbed the ranks by gathering experience. In 1999, Saeed took on the gargantuan film project “Forgotten Hurricane”, an original screenplay written and directed by him. It gathered a lot of attention at many festivals, however due to the fact that he had not yet completed the required military service in Iran, Saeed was unable to leave the country to participate in those festivals. He became a consultant for an Iranian Writers Association who produced more than 60 science shows for a major television station in Iran by the name of Seda Va Sima. Beginning in 1997, Saeed wrote seven books of poetry, and linguistics, three of which were published by Sokhan Gostar publisher. He decided to change his creative path and move to Europe to continue his education. For continuing his passion, filmmaking then Saeed moved to the United States where he continues his filmmaking career and is making waves in the world of Cinema. His filmmaking resume includes dozens of short films made in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, most of which focus on Human Rights and Social Issues. He is currently working as a Writer, Director and Producer in Hollywood.





INTERVIEW WITH SAEED KHOZE

What are your reasons for choosing this subject?

Subject of *Virginity* has always been a taboo in Middle East as well as western countries. While this is one of the most important social issues in today's life it has never given enough attention nor it has been addressed. As a writer and filmmaker, I am interested in social subjects. There were also a lot of personal reasons to make a movie like "***Virginity***". It's undeniable fact that everyone has the right to live. Our geographical, political and cultural identity shape our lives but still everyone needs to have the right to say what they believe without censorship. In my opinion when a woman is raped, murdered, forced into prostitution, or sold, her right to life is violated. It's against the human rights. The "*Virginity*" documents these undeniable rights. Murder in the name of honor, "***Honor killing***", attacks the human dignity and destroys the bases of our social life. Honor killings are horrific acts of murder that some cultures still try to justify. I have a lot faith that the human race can evolve, learn, grow and change. ***Camera*** is one of the most ***powerful tools*** to aim in to the heart of the ***ignorance*** and injustice. This is why, corrupted governments that are run by dictators, they are afraid of writers and filmmakers more than an army.

Can you explain about your characters in the movie?

The three main characters in the movie are from three different cultures and countries. They represent some of the most common problems in today's society. We point to such subjects as ***Honor Killing, Prostitution, Rape and Human Trafficking***. It's based on ***true events***. By looking around we will find them living around us as forgotten beings. Women are stripped of their rights all around the world, not just in Middle East. When you research honor killings, you will find news articles from all over the world, even in America. I believe with a little change in our point of views, we can live together in peace and without discrimination.



Did you impose a moral point of view on your characters?

When you make a movie about a very sensitive subject you must be *respectful* of different beliefs and *cultures* as well as their *opposing views*. I believe as a writer and a director, I am responsible to simply show the truth, bring awareness, and let the people be the judge.





What kind of visual techniques did you use in your film and cinematography?

I used simple European *Art House style*. My goal was to keep it simple because I want people to trust the movie. I do not desire to overwhelm our audience with fancy camera work and editing techniques; I needed to keep them connected and some what relate to it. I believe actors' performance and the story is enough to convey the point of this movie. I used *mirror* as metaphor in "*Virginity*". I believe part of the power of mirror is that the single image captures many aspects of human development and human experience and reflects the image of self and others.





What was your experience directing this film?

When you write a movie, you become absorbed in it to the point that it affects your mind, body, as well as your personal and professional life. In order to feel the characters pain you need to picture yourself embodied in that character. Working on this project helped me to understand women and the severity of this issue on their personal decision-making.

Final words from Saeed Khoze...

With this film, I want to recognize JAFAR PANAHI, one of the most influential Iranian filmmakers; now in prison for the content of his movies. I wish to honor all the *writers, filmmakers*, and humanitarians who have fought and punished for speaking out on their beliefs. Through my films, I am working to help bring awareness and peace to the world and people.





Edwin Avness received his Master of Arts Degree from Northwestern University's Radio/TV/Film Program, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Film & Digital Media productions at University of California, Santa Cruz. He joined the executive board of Arpa Foundation for Film, Music & Art in 1999 and directed the 3rd Annual Arpa International Film Festival in 2000. The annual humanitarian honor, in conjunction with Arpa International Film Festival at Egyptian Theater in Hollywood, is co-created by Mr. Avness, where filmmakers are awarded for their work that has contributed to the fight for social conscience and human rights issues. Among the past recipients of this award are documentary filmmakers Carla Garapedian for *Screamers*, and Theodore Braun for *Darfur Now*. Mr. Avness also serves as a board member of Armin T. Wegner Society of USA, where the society revives the legacy of this 20th Century humanist through his work. After co-producing his first feature film, *My Dark Days*(2001), at Bear-smouth Entertainment, Mr. Avness joined J F Productions where he oversaw all aspects of production for the company. During his time at J F Productions Mr. Avness produced and directed the feature film *The Journey*. This feature was shot professionally and used a full international cast and crew. *The Journey* was awarded the "Audience Award" at the Milan International Film Festival in 2002. Mr. Avness also worked at Arbor Vitae Entertainment as a producer of *Tabriz: Images from the Forgotten World*, an international docudrama, which has gone on to popular reception and awards during its tour of over ten film festivals.



EDWIN AVNESS
Producer

CAST

Michelle Farivar Raha
Jessica Hendrickson Jassmin
Vera Nova Natasha
Nina Nayebi Raha's mom
Kamran Malak Motiei Raha's dad
Eric Michael Kochmer Man #1
Arthur Kirakosyan Boss
Julian Grant Business Man
Eric Fine Client #2
Ahmad Davari Uncle
Bobak Bakhtiari Amir
Hossein Mardani Amir's Friend
Mathew Cape Client #3
Ian Kerch Man #2
Lilian Khani Raha's cousin
James McCabe Doctor
Wayne Hellstrom Client #1
Janet Spitzer Helena
Steven Soro Mohammad
Djilali Rez-Kallah Storyteller
Joanna Jones Russian Woman
Louchia Tchoukiri Dance Teacher

CREW

Writer & Director Saeed Khoze
Producers Edwin Avanness
Saeed Khoze
Carly Sturgeon
Cinematographer Daphne Wu
Composser Sean Paxton
Editors Nancy Frazen
Amir Sheikh
Edwin Avanness
Saeed Khoze
Production Manager Jerry Ramirez
Light Designer Axel Johansson
Assistant Camera David L. Rivera
Roger Mosqueda
Eric Glowski
Jordan Lanham
Greg Taylor
Ari Palewsky
Chris Bernal
Location Manager Eric Michael Kochmer
Wedding Set Designer Stella Avanness Gharabegi
Storyboard Artist Sima Mohammadzadeh
Singer Sima Bina
Assistant Directors Carly Sturgeon
Malcolm Weekes
Set Decorator Kaveh Etemadmoghaddam
Sound Designer Daniel Fasold
Key Make-up Artist Jennifer Maimone

Make-up Artists Anneken Meertis
Sara Dashty
Sam Bangs
Graphic Designer Tannaz Taheri
Photographer Eliza Huang
Production Assistant Jessica Hendrickson
Chris Prang
Stephen Thomas
Choreographer Louchia Tchoukiri
Jill E. Collins
Translators Niloo Khodadadeh
Michelle Farivar





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