

EXODUS 91

The Untold Story of Operation Solomon

Hebrew Title: מֵר נְעִיִם



A 3,000-YEAR DREAM. A 36-HOUR MISSION.

Exodus 91 is a genre-blending documentary-narrative hybrid that tells a compelling story while deconstructing storytelling itself. The film weaves together narrative filmmaking, archival footage and documentary interviews — some of which are real and some of which are staged — to give a rich cinematic experience.

Exodus 91 challenges us to consider the interplay of truth and fiction in storytelling, whether it be on the screen, in diplomacy, or in building national and religious identity.

Asher Naim, an Israeli diplomat, is sent to Ethiopia to negotiate the release of 15,000 Ethiopian Jews from a country collapsing under famine and civil war. Working with his Ethiopian-Israeli colleagues who, themselves, immigrated to Israel a decade earlier, Asher begins to question if the Israeli government is using the operation as part of an elaborate publicity stunt to prove to the world that Zionism isn't Racism. At the same time, the Ethiopians themselves question whether they are pawns in this scheme. With rebel forces closing in on the capital, Asher's faith in his mission crumbles as he navigates the treacherous world of bureaucracy and politics.



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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

For 30 years, Ethiopian Israelis have been portrayed by the Jewish and Israeli establishment as a lost tribe, heroically saved and successfully assimilated into Western society where they have thrived in Israel's multi-ethnic, pluralistic democracy.

Four years ago, I was approached to develop and direct a film about the 1991 airlift of Ethiopian Jews to Israel. Known as Operation Solomon, this event holds a sacred place in Israeli and Jewish consciousness. As I began my research into the project, protests erupted across Israel against the institutional racism Ethiopian Israelis face. The protests shocked Jews throughout the world, most especially because the images they were seeing were so different from anything they had seen before.

At its most basic level, Exodus 91 is an exploration of the ways in which Black faces are used in media to support the political agendas of those in power.

As such, Exodus 91 relies heavily on several

aesthetic tools to draw the viewer's attention to the manipulations taking place. The film consciously uses archival footage from promotional videos depicting immigration to Israel over the last 80 years. The camera frequently reveals the edges of the set, even revealing that our "Ethiopia" was reconstructed on a soundstage in Tel Aviv. Most importantly, the film blends narrative with documentary. At times the difference is clear as the film juxtaposes contrasting aspect ratios, color schemes, stylization, and camerawork. At other times, the film obscures the distinction between fact and fiction, even to the extent that some interviews are later revealed to have been faked.

The goal is for the viewer to recognize the historic manipulation of the image of Israel's Black Jews which has obscured their struggles for decades, while simultaneously appreciating the positive aspects of Operation Solomon. Creating a more complex and nuanced understanding of the issues Exodus 91 explores is critical to advancing the conversation around these issues.

ABOUT DIRECTOR MICAH SMITH

Micah is an award-winning filmmaker whose films have been featured on Netflix, and screened at international film festivals, the UN, the British Parliament, and the U.S. Congress. His feature-length documentary films have focused on human rights and environmental awareness.

ABOUT OPENDOR MEDIA

OpenDor Media has been the leading creator of Jewish film content since 2009. It brings Jewish ideas, values and stories to life through quality filmmaking, delivering them to a global audience of millions using today's most popular and far-reaching digital platforms. Its Film and TV division produces award-winning documentary films which have included *Beneath the Helmet*, *Hummus! The Movie*, *Sustainable Nation*, and most recently, *Exodus 91*. Its digital edutainment brand, Unpacked, reaches millions of viewers annually with its short video content on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok as well as its podcasts. Content from both entities, accompanied by extensive educational resources, is featured on Unpacked for Educators, a digital resource that reaches educational institutions around the globe.



CREW

Director: Micah Smith
 Executive Producers: Ari Naim, Gideon Naim
 Producer: Yoav Roeh, Aurit Zamir
 Writer: Eitan Anner
 Music: Erez Aviram
 Sound Designer: Neal Gibbs
 Editor: Gilad Inbar, Micah Smith
 Production Designer: Izaq Ronen Wasserstein
 Director of Photography: Amos Raphaeli

CAST

Yoram Toledano
 Shai Ferdo
 Sarit Wuvet
 Samuel Calderon
 Shmuel Biro
 Michal Yannai

SPECIFICATIONS

Runtime
91 minutes
 Countries of Shooting:
Ethiopia, Israel, U.S.A.
 Country of Production
Israel
 Languages
Hebrew, English, Amharic
 Project Type
Feature Length Narrative

Contact us

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