**PRODUCTION NOTES**

**ACE Productions Presents**

**BURN COUNTRY**

Directed by: Ian Olds

Written by: Paul Felten and Ian Olds

Produced by: Caroline von Kuhn

Starring: Dominic Rains, Melissa Leo, James Franco,

Rachel Brosnahan, Thomas Jay Ryan, Tim Kniffin



**WORLD PREMIERE**



Dominic Rains as OSMAN

***For additional information please contact:***

***Caroline von Kuhn***

[***Cvonkuhn@gmail.com***](mailto:Cvonkuhn@gmail.com)

***917-355-6310***

***Fixer (journalism):***

*A person hired by foreign journalists to facilitate the gathering of news stories,*

*Especially in the context of war*

**SYNOPSIS**

Leaving behind his life as a fixer for Western journalists reporting on the war in Afghanistan, Osman (Dominic Rains) lands in a small bohemian town in Northern California, living on the couch of his friend’s mother (Melissa Leo) and working as a crime reporter for the local newspaper.

Restless and eager to penetrate the mysteries of his new home, he strikes out on his own, befriending the unstable hot tub craftsman Lindsay (James Franco) and an elusive local actress Sandra (Rachel Brosnahan). But when Lindsay goes missing under troubling circumstances and Osman goes after him, he is drawn deep into the backwoods of this small town. As things take a dangerous turn and an unfamiliar form of violence burbles up around him, Osman is forced to confront the increasingly untenable reality of his new life.

**DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT**

The germ for this film emerged from tragedy while I was making a documentary in Afghanistan. I had become fascinated with the dynamic between western journalists and their local guides – known as ‘fixers’ – while filming [Occupation: Dreamland](http://www.occupationdreamland.com/) in Iraq. I travelled to Afghanistan to follow this interest, planning to make a new documentary aboutthe mechanics of war reporting by focusing on the crucial relationship between an American journalist and his Afghan fixer – a man named Ajmal Naqshbandi.

I learned the heartbreaking news that Ajmal had been kidnapped and murdered while I was back in the US raising money to return to Afghanistan to finish production. I was badly shaken but felt a deep obligation to return to Afghanistan in an attempt to grapple with Ajmal’s death and honor a man who had become both our colleague and our friend.

In the process of finishing that film for HBO ([Fixer: The Taking of Ajmal Naqshbandi](http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/fixer-the-taking-of-ajmal-naqshbandi/synopsis.html#/)) I became involved in the asylum process for another Afghan fixer. Unlike Ajmal, this friend made it safely out of Afghanistan to asylum in the West where he was facing a very different kind of struggle. After jumping through all the bureaucratic hoops and finally being officially welcomed to his new home, he found himself facing a quieter, existential crisis. He was a man seeking purpose in exile.

Thinking about that moment became the genesis for this film. I couldn’t shake the feeling that there was still much to tell about this hidden class of Afghan journalists and I knew I needed to grapple with the story in a different form. I mean this both in terms of the shift from documentary back to fiction as well as a shift away from the pervasive instinct to see all Afghan stories through the lens of war trauma.

The trauma of war is real, but after thinking about my own experience and talking with several Afghan friends, I kept coming back to one idea. To repeatedly tell the stories of Afghans through the lens of war and its trauma is too reductive; it cheapens humanity and denies the fullness of living. “I hate being pitied.” This was a refrain I heard over and over again from my Afghan friends. Where is the humor? Where is the sexuality? Where is the conflicted inner life? Where is the subtle pain of daily living? For in truth, these are all alive and well, even in the midst of unending war.

This understanding became the basis for our approach to the film.

The story is about a young Afghan fixer named Osman, but we set the film in a small bohemian town in Northern California and intentionally built the drama of the piece around a local event as opposed to a past trauma. We wanted to create an unexpectedly vibrant, dramatically compelling film that treated our main character as a full, conflicted human being and not simply as a symbolic victim of history.

The goal was not to deny the dark reality of trauma. Instead we wanted to grapple with it as but one aspect of a complex man’s search for meaning outside of war.

- Ian Olds

**BIOS**

**Ian Olds** (Director, Co-Writer) is a director of both narrative and documentary work. Directing credits include the Iraq war doc *Occupation: Dreamland* (released theatrically by Rumur Releasing, short-listed for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature and winner of a 2006 Independent Spirit Award), *Fixer: The Taking of Ajmal Naqshbandi* (winner of top jury prizes at Tribeca and Madrid, acquired by HBO and nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Investigative Journalism), and the doc/fiction hybrid *Francophrenia* (Rotterdam, Tribeca, True/False, Abu-Dhabi, Hot Docs). Olds short narrative films have played numerous festivals including Sundance, Los Angeles and Clermont-Ferrand. He was awarded a 2013 Guggenheim Fellowship, five separate grants from San Francisco Film Society, a Princess Grace Award and a Media Arts Fellowship sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation. Olds received his MFA from Columbia University’s Film Division, was named one of 25 New Faces of Independent Film by Filmmaker Magazine and was a fellow at the Sundance Institute’s Screenwriters Lab. Olds was also the editor of the split-screen feature adaptation of William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* directed by James Franco (2013 Cannes Film Festival, Un Certain Regard).

**Paul Felten** (Co-Writer) received his B.A. from The Evergreen State College and his M.F.A. from Columbia University's Film Division. His writing has appeared in The Brooklyn Rail and in the anthology *Lost and Found: Stories From New York* (ed. Thomas Beller). A 2011 Sundance Screenwriting Fellow and recipient of the SFFS/Hearst Screenwriting Grant, he is the author, with Ian Olds, of the scripts for the short film BOMB, the experimental feature *Francophrenia*, and the forthcoming *Zeroville*.Felten is currently co-directing (with Joe DeNardo) his script for *Slow Machine*, a microbudget 16mm feature shooting in and around NYC.

**Caroline von Kuhn** (Producer) serves as the Managing Director of the Camden International Film Festival (Maine), coming from Tribeca Film Festival after the Film Society of Lincoln Center (NYFF) and Doha Tribeca Film Festival (Qatar). von Kuhn is a narrative producer/director whose directing work includes LIKE THE WATER (her debut feature) and I, PEER (a US/UK/Norwegian theatre production of Ibsen's Peer Gynt with the National Theatre of Norway). She is currently producing Ian Olds' THE FIXER (Tribeca Film Festival 2016). von Kuhn has a BA in Financial Economics from the University of Virginia and an MFA in Art History from University of Manchester (UK).

**SUPPORT**

The film went through the Sundance Institute Screenwriters Lab and is a sponsored project of IFP, going through the IFP Filmweek No Borders Program. Additionally the film received five grants from the San Francisco Film Society (SFFS/KRF program) and Ian Olds received a Guggenheim Fellowship.

US Distributor: Samuel Goldwyn

International Sales: Charlotte Mickie, Mongrel

Contact: Caroline von Kuhn, Producer - 917-355-6310, cvonkuhn@gmail.com

**END CREDITS**

ACE Productions presents

In association with

Night & Day Pictures, Rabbit Bandini Productions

Gigi Films, Amphora Films, Heart-Headed Productions, RAA Ventures, Relic Pictures

Directed by Ian Olds

Written by Paul Felten and Ian Olds

Starring Dominic Rains

Melissa Leo

James Franco

Rachel Brosnahan

Thomas Jay Ryan

Tim Kniffin

Produced by Caroline von Kuhn

Producer Jennifer Glynn

Co-Produce r Lily Whitsitt

Executive Producers: Robert Afshar, George Rush, Michael Roiff, Lisa Kleiner Chanoff, Gardner Grout, Mary Regency Boies, Gia Walsh, Kara Baker, Alex Witherill, Eric Schultz, James Franco, Vince Jolivette

Co-Executive Producers Adeel Ahmed, Ken Chang, Jennifer Konawal, Tom Wright

Director of Photography Adam Newport-Berra

Production Designer Caity Birmingham

Editors Scott Cummings, Joe Murphy, Ian Olds

Associate Producers Michelle Maxson, Gabe Maxson

Costume Designer Phoenix Mellow

Composer Jim McHugh

Casting Director Adrienne Stern

Line Producer Rachel Nederveld

First Assistant Director Jeff Keith

Second Assistant Directors Brand Birtwistle, Harry Katz

**CAST AND CREW**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Osman |  | Dominic Rains |
| Gloria |  | Melissa Leo |
| Lindsay |  | James Franco |
| Sandra |  | Rachel Brosnahan |
| Dimitri Sokurov |  | Thomas Jay Ryan |
| Carl |  | Tim Kniffin |
| Gary |  | Jason Craig |
| Maddie |  | Wendy vanden Heuvel |
| Beaux |  | Christopher Kuckenbaker |
| Pyro Kid |  | Ari Vozaitis |
| Joseph |  | John Craven |
| Karen |  | Michelle Maxson |
| Doula |  | Jessica Jelliffe |
| Drunken Woman |  | Nancy Prebilich |
| Screaming Woman |  | Sharia Pierce |
| Ingrid |  | Amy Pinto |
| Mini Mart Girl |  | Elena Lucero |
| Doug |  | Emile Rosewater |
| Receptionist |  | Rachel Quintana |
| Deputy |  | Keith Baker |
| Gray-Haired Man |  | David Lear |
| Marcus |  | Gabe Maxson |
| Mario |  | Brent Lindsay |
| Suzie |  | Liz Jahren |
| Burn Victim |  | Christian Caetano |
| Birthing Mother |  | Liz Sklar |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  | **Theatre Troupe** |  |
|  | Quenby Dolgushkin |  |
|  | Danielle Levin |  |
|  | Adam Magill |  |
|  | Rami Margron |  |
|  | Ilana Niernberger |  |
|  |  |  |
|  | **Crew** |  |
| Stunt Coordinator |  | Rocky Capella |
| Stunt Doubles |  | Alicia Ivanhoe |
|  |  | Mike Martinez |
|  |  | Tim Meredith |
|  |  | Monika Sloan |
| Special Effects Supervisors |  | Rudy Perez |
|  |  | Scott Harrison |
| Art Director |  | Ben Plunkett |
| Set Decorator |  | Katy Tiemann |
| Prop Master |  | Caroline Louis |
| Set Dresser |  | Drew Bender |
| Leadman |  | Stephen McGlade |
| Construction Coordinator |  | Dylan Maxson |
| Graphic Artist |  | Tak Boroyan |
| Picture Car Coordinator |  | Bijan Khalaji |
| Armorer |  | E. Brian Normandy |
| Armorer |  | Jesse Rozal |
| Department Head Makeup |  | Doniella Davy |
| Department Head Hair |  | Kirsten Coleman |
| Makeup Assistant |  | Josie Rodriguez |
| Makeup and Hair Assistant |  | Rachel Dagdagan​ |
| Makeup and Hair Assistant |  | Antoinette Yoka |
| Key Costumer |  | Christine Nguyen |
| Set Costumer |  | Larissa Rocha |
| Steadicam Operator |  | Stewart Cantrell |
| First Assistant Camera |  | Timothee Arene |
| Second Assistant Camera |  | Gregoire Albertini |
|  |  | Renni Pollock |
| Camera Production Assistant |  | Quinn Halleck |
| Digital Imaging Technician |  | Chris Hackett |
| Still Photographer |  | Katrina Marcinowski |
| Location Sound Mixer |  | Josh Bissett |
| Boom Operator |  | Houston Guy |
| Gaffer |  | Andrew Hubbard |
| Best Boy Electric |  | Alexa Wolf |
| Set Lighting Technician |  | Mario Colli |
| Balloon Light Operator |  | Frank Helbig |
| Additional Electricians |  | Matthew Bunker |
|  |  | Marc Schatalow |
|  |  | Nick Yee |
| Key Grip |  | Drew Verderame |
| Best Boy Grip |  | Joachim Glaser |
| Grips |  | Ryan Baustian |
|  |  | Robert Keith |
|  |  | Rachel Kessler |
|  |  | Walter Orsini |
|  |  | Danny Valentine |
| Grip Production Assistants |  | Evan Plamerston |
|  |  | Austin Peck |
| Script Supervisor |  | Vaughn Greve |
| Set Medic |  | Natalie Boothe |
| Production Coordinator |  | Matthew Thomas Garza |
| Assistant Production Office Coordinator |  | Kimberly Vanni |
| Sonoma County Coordinator |  | Jennifer Butler |
| Second Second Assistant Director |  | Bryce Feeser |
| Key Set Production Assistant |  | David Fonseca |
| Production Assistants |  | Harris Ansari |
|  |  | Noah Bashevkin |
|  |  | Natalia Chamaki |
|  |  | Marcus Champion |
|  |  | Dolan Chorng |
|  |  | Susie Heyden |
|  |  | Meighan Visco |
| Location Managers |  | Cynthi Stefenoni |
|  |  | Sarah Date |
| Assistant Location Manager |  | Alex Bretow |
| Location Production Assistant |  | Ry Basham |
| Local Casting |  | Michelle Maxson |
| Background Casting |  | Toni Staniewicz |
| Search Casting Directors |  | Debbie and Adam DeLisi |
| Casting Assistant |  | Nicole Hoffman |
| Transportation Captain |  | Ricky Mejia |
| Transportation Co-Captain |  | Blake Lengle |
| Drivers |  | Danny Cornejo |
|  |  | Glen Curtis |
|  |  | Robert Dargenzio |
|  |  | Aaron Francesconi |
| Additional Editing |  | Morgan Wajda-Levie |
| Studio Teachers |  | Steve Elster |
|  |  | Elise Ganz |
|  |  | Diana Touchton |
| Catering by |  | A La Heart Catering |
|  |  | The Cook and The Drummer |
|  |  | Hole in the Wall |
|  |  | Sally Tomatoes Catering |
| Official Coffee Sponsor |  | Taylor Maid |
| Legal Services |  | George M Rush |
| Production Accountant |  | Brenda Blair |
| Colorist |  | Mikey Rossiter |
| EP of Color |  | Dee Allen |
| Senior Color Producer |  | Natalie Westerfield |
| Color Production Coordinator |  | Evan Bauer |
| Color Assistant |  | Elias Nousiopoulos |
| Sound Designer / Re-Recording Mixer |  | Pete Horner |
| Supervising Sound Editor |  | Steve Slanec |
| Sound Effects Editor |  | Andre Zweers |
| Dialogue / Foley Editor |  | Erik Foreman |
| Assistant Sound Editor |  | Cameron Barker |
| Foley Artist |  | John Roesch |
| Foley Mixer |  | Scott Curtis |
| Engineering Services |  | Dusty Jermier |
| Digital Editorial Support |  | David Peifer |
| Audio/Video Transfer |  | John Countryman |
| Post-Production Sound Accountant |  | Jessica Engel |
| Client Services |  | Eva Porter |
| Scheduling |  | Carrie Perry |
| Skywalker Sound Executive Staff |  |  |
| General Manager |  | Josh Lowden |
| Head of Production |  | Jon Null |
| Head of Engineering |  | Steve Morris |
| Title Designer |  | Ben Tousley |
| Original Score |  | Sunwatchers |
|  |  | Jeff Tobias, Peter Kerlin, Jason Robira, Jim McHugh |
| Music Supervision |  | Jonathan McHugh |
|  |  | Jonathan Zalben |

**MUSIC**

“Ann Coulter’s Poor Theatre (Polish Language Version)”

Written by Jeff Tobias

Published by Yes Reality Music (BMI)

Courtesy of Jeff Tobias

“Ape Phases”

Written and performed by Sunwatchers

Published by Drones Against Drones Music (BMI)

Courtesy of Sunwatchers Records

“Bent”

Written by Katie Eastburn

Performed by KATIEE

Published by I Like Young People Music (ASCAP)

Courtesy of Selfish Agenda Records

“California Dreamin’”

Written by John Edmund Andrew Phillips, Michelle Gilliam Phillips

Performed by Lee Moses

Published by Universal Music Corp. (ASCAP)

Courtesy of Essential Media Group LLC

“Downtown Train”

Written by Thomas A. Waits (ASCAP)

Published by Jalma Music (ASCAP)

“Gamma Ray”

Written by Bruno Frenzel

Performed by Birth Control

Published by EMI Songs Musikverlag GMBH (GEMA), Edition Intro Meisel GMBH (GEMA)

Courtesy of Ohr Records, By arrangement with Sony Music Licensing

“Herd of Creeps”

Written and performed by Sunwatchers

Published by Drones Against Drones Music (BMI)

Courtesy of Castle Face Records

“Molam”

Written by David Kadden, Adam Apuzzo, Michael Hurder, Jim McHugh

Performed by Drunken Foreigner Band

Published by Drones Against Drones Music (BMI)

Courtesy of Gold Bolus Recordings

The Ode Trip to Jerusalem”

Written by Thomas Greenhalgh and Jon Langford

Courtesy of Low Noise America Music

“Reeds of Osirion”

Written by Matty McDermott

Performed by NYMPH

Published by BMI

Courtesy of Dog Of Junipers Records

“Ruler of My Heart”

Written by Allen Toussaint

Performed by Irma Thomas

Published by Arc Music Corp (BMI) ℅ BMG Platinum Songs (BMI)

Courtesy of Capitol Records under license from Universal Music Enterprises

“Sunrise, Morning After the Apocalypse, Revealing At Its Peak Thousands Dead”

Written by Bryan Poole, Robert Peterson, Jim McHugh, Jason Robira

Performed by Dream Dads

Published by Drones Against Drones Music (BMI)

Courtesy of Sunwatcher Records

“Tomb Howl”

Written by Jeff Tobias and Jim McHugh

Performed by Sunwatchers

Published by Drones Against Drones Music (BMI)

Courtesy of Sunwatchers Records

Produced in association with San Francisco Film Society/Kenneth Rainin Foundation and with support from SFFS/Hearst Screenwriting Grant.

San Francsico Film Society Kenneth Rainin Foundation

Executive Director Noah Cowan President Jennifer Rainin

Director Filmmaker 360 Michele Turnure-Salleo

Narrative Program Coordinator Tamra Melnik

This film was made possible in part with support from the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program.

Thanks to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation for additional support.

The Fixer is a sponsored project of IFP and went through IFP Film Week No Borders.

Special Thanks to Screen Actors Guild.

Camera Equipment Provided by ARRI

Recorded at Skywalker Sound, a Lucasfilm Ltd Company, Marin County, California.