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LUXEMBOURG

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SAWAH

A FILM BY
ADOLF EL ASSAL

#SAWAHMOVIE

A
Luxembourg-Belgium-Egypt
Co-Production

Comedy - 86' - Colour - 2:39 - 5.1. - DCP

English - French - Arabic - Luxembourgish



SYNOPSIS

Skaarab, a DJ from Cairo, is invited to play in Brussels; the gig of a lifetime. Just as a revolution breaks out in Egypt, he jumps on a plane and lands in a country he's never heard before: the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg. It all goes awry when he loses his passport and is mistaken for a refugee, forcing him to navigate an absurd tangle of eccentric characters and events.



INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

How did you come up with the idea for this film?

I was born in Egypt but spent most of my life in Luxembourg. While growing up, I was part of a very multi-cultural and cosmopolitan society. I always wanted to tell a story of a protagonist who lands by mistake in Luxembourg just as my parents did. Plus, one of my biggest passion is telling stories with a comedic feel but with a serious background. In my case, it's the story of young artist from the Middle East who gets mistaken for an illegal refugee simply because of his looks. And I didn't want to tell a heavy story with this serious, contemporary issue.

Why so many languages?

Growing up in Luxembourg, I am lucky enough to learn speaking five languages fluently. This is simply part of Luxembourg's DNA. Most people are fluent in French, German, English as well as Luxembourgish. That's why I would like to show a different side of Luxembourg many people don't know about.

What about the cast?

I always wanted to have a main actor from Egypt. Egypt is not only considered as the cradle of civilisation but is also the Middle East's biggest film industry. During the casting process for Samir, I met many of the region's biggest stars but I was focused on finding an actor who could fill the screen and having a natural comedic sense plus being fluent in English, which wasn't an easy task. A couple of months before principal photography, I met Karim Kassem, who is one of Egypt's heartthrobs. We instantly clicked and a big friendship was established. The same thing happened with Eric Kabongo, who I met during the shoot of "Troisième Noces" in Luxembourg. And to put the cherry on the cake, working with Jean-Luc Couchard and Mourade Zeguendi was a dream come true as I had written their characters with them in mind.

And the music?

Working with a composer is never easy. And trying to find the right sample of a 1950s Egyptian song doesn't make life even easier. So, I decided to work with my friend Eric "Cehashi" Bintz, who is one of France's best Hip Hop producers. But coming from a Hip Hop background and working on a film about electronic music was a huge challenge for Cehashi. We spent hours and hours in the studio trying to recreate the right Egyptian sample that would then be used a major track throughout the film. After lots of trials and errors, we managed to find the right notes for the film and I'm very happy with the result.



ADOLF EL ASSAL



Born in Alexandria (Egypt), Ady has spent most of his childhood between the UAE, UK and Luxembourg. In 2008, his first feature film as a producer, **DIVIZIONZ** was selected at the Berlin International Film Festival and was selected at over 100 festivals and sold in more than 30 territories.

In 2010, he directed the award-winning short films **LA FAMEUSE ROUTE...** and **MANO DE DIOS**. Ady is a Berlinale Talents as well as an EAVE (European Audiovisual Entrepreneur) alumni.

In 2014, he completed his first feature directorial effort **LES GARS**, that he produced, directed and successfully distributed in French-speaking countries.



CHARACTERS



SAMIR (DJ Skaarab)

Actor: Karim Kassem

Samir aka Skaarab is a talented Egyptian DJ who has big ambitions of an international career. His father never accepted his choice and believes that being an artist is a waste of time. Samir's frustration reaches a level that he simply wants to leave his country in order to travel the world and fulfil his dream as a DJ and music producer.

Karim Kassem is a prominent actor in Egyptian movies and TV series. Discovered in 2006, he had his cinematic breakthrough in the critically-acclaimed film *Awqat Faragh*. He acted alongside Gael García Bernal and Kim Bodnia in *Rosewater* (2014), written and directed by Jon Stewart. In 2017, he appeared in the acclaimed Channel 4 mini-series *The State*.



DANIEL

Actor: Eric Kabongo

Born to Congolese parents, Daniel has fled his home country during the civil war in the 1990s. He has applied for asylum in Luxembourg. Since then, Daniel makes a living helping people in need.

Eric Kabongo, also known as Krazy-E, is a Congolese-Belgian actor and rapper. In 1997, at the age of 12, he moved from Zaire to Belgium. In 2016, he played the leading role (Diallo Makabouri) in the German hit comedy, *Willkommen bei den Hartmanns* (English Title: *Welcome to Germany*). The film was the most successful German film of 2016 bringing over 3 million people to local cinemas. Eric is currently starring in the comedy *Troisième Noces* with Bouli Lanners and Jean-Luc Couchard.



ZEPP

Actor: Jean-Luc Couchard

Zepp belongs to a Yenish family living on the border with Luxembourg. His daughter Rosa is about to get married and he wants to offer her the honeymoon of a lifetime. But because of his roots, getting the right passport is easier said than done.

Jean-Luc Couchard is one of Belgium's most recognisable and beloved actors. He has starred in over 60 feature films including *Dikkenek*, *Taxi 4* and *Les Visiteurs 3*. Jean-Luc is currently starring in the acclaimed TV series *Le Baron Noir*.

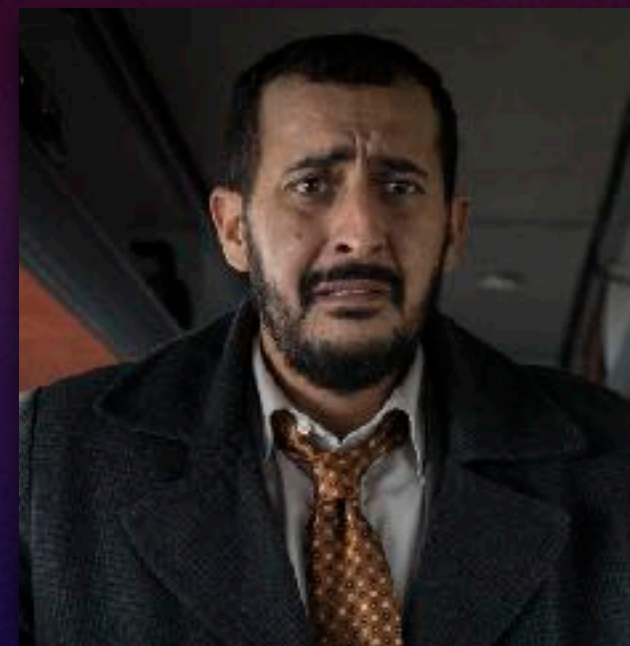


NADIA

Actress: Stéphane Bissot

Nadia is an independent woman who has built her own business from scratch. She helps people in need especially those who have had a rough past, such as Daniel.

Stéphane Bissot is a Belgian actress with over 30 feature film credits. She has worked with directors such as the Dardennes Brothers, Fabrice du Welz, Nabil Ben Yadir and Joachim Lafosse.



RAMZY

Actor: Mourade Zeguendi

Ramzy is a Moroccan businessman who lives between Tanger and Brussels.

Mourade Zeguendi is a Belgian actor of Moroccan decent. He is a very recognisable face in the French-speaking community as he has starred in many cult movies going from *Dikkenek* to *Les Barons* as well as *JCVD*. He is currently starring in the hit mini-series *Champions*, produced by RTBF.



CAST

SAMIR: Karim Kasseem
DANIEL: Eric Kabongo
ZEPP: Jean-Luc Couchard
RAMZY: Mourade Zeguendi
NADIA: Stéphane Bissot
MIGUEL: Nilton Martins
ELVA: Elisabet Johannesdottir
TOM: Paul Robert
YOUSSEF: Mahmoud Elissy
AMAL: Sarrah Abdelrahman
WESLEY: Wesley Weigel
TONY: Bess Limani
CHARLY: Dan Sluizer
ROSA: Mara Taquin
IBRAHIM: Negweny El Assal
Hakim: Mö Sbiri

CREW

Directed by Adolf El Assal
Written by Adolf El Assal
Dennis Foon
Sirvan Marogy
Produced by Désirée Nosbusch
Alexandra Hoesdorff
Adolf El Assal
Co-Produced by Robin Kerremans
Dimitri Verbeeck
Mohamed Hefzy
Associate Producer: Wekas Gaba
Daniel Ziskind
Line Producer: Alexandra Dondelinger
Director of Photography: Nikos Welter
Music: Eric "Cehashi" Bintz
Editor: Philippe Ravoet
Production Designer: Christina Schaffer
Costume Designer: Uli Simon
Sound: Carlo Thoss
Michel Schillings
Angelo Dos Santos













CONTACTS

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