

ZAKURA

documentary movie

Created by Ivan Vdovin



LOGLINE

Zakura is a 7-year-old bedouin girl. She is bright and open and she dreams of her own lamb. In a few years her father Arafat must marry her off. That's what traditions dictate.



CHARACTERS

ARAFAT

ZAKURA

WAAD

ODEH



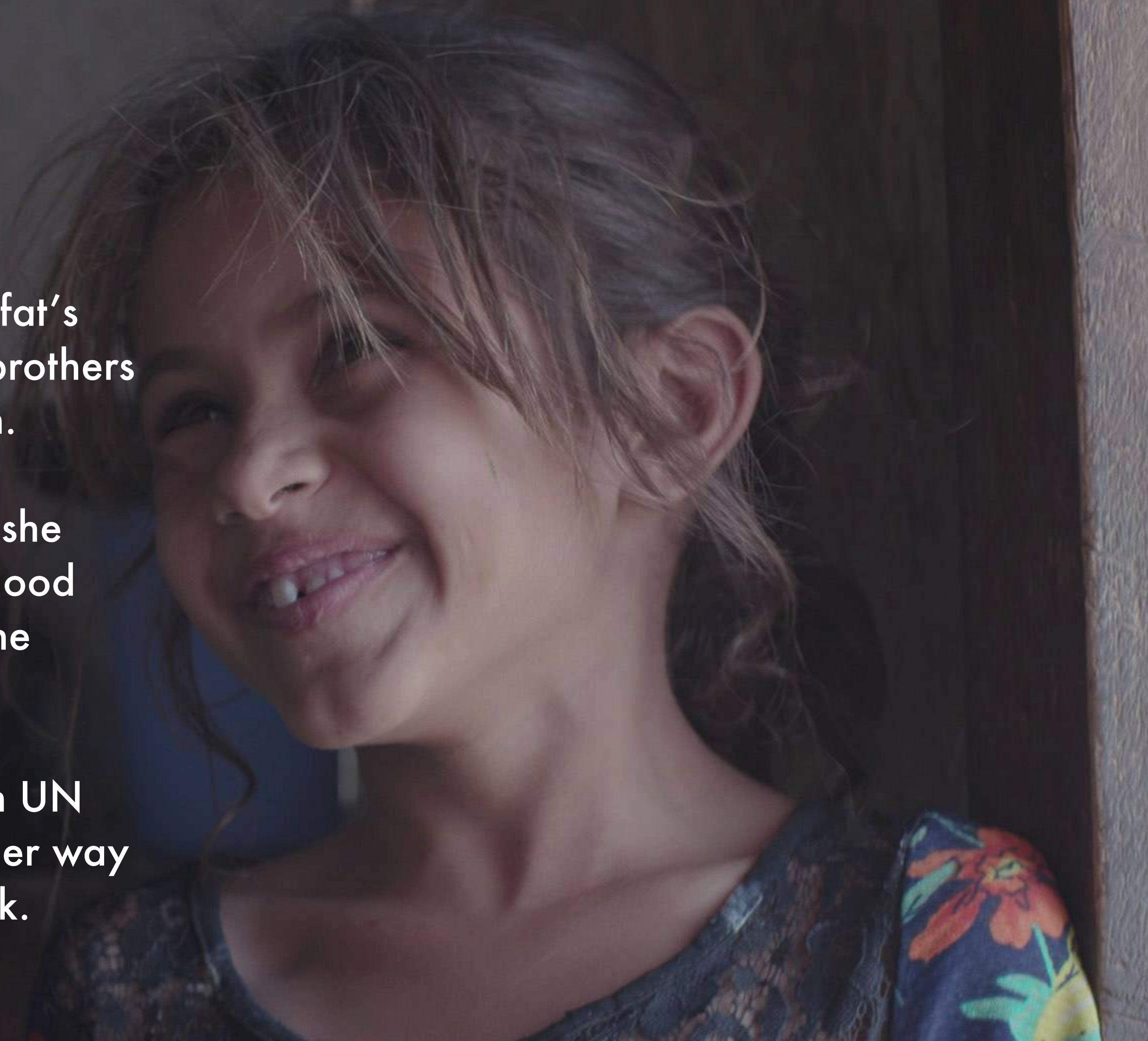
ZAKURA

7 years old

Zakura is an older daughter in Arafat's family. She lives with her parents, brothers and a little sister in a small caravan.

Being a leader in children's games she spends a lot of time with neighborhood kids. They are all part of the Kaabne family.

Zakura also studies in 2nd grade in UN school. Every morning she makes her way from desert to Jericho city and back.





ARAFAT

34 years old

Arafat is the head of the family. He divorced his first wife after the birth of the older son and got married for the second time.

He lives with his family in Wadi Kelt, an important place for Christian pilgrims. Every morning he sells them shawls called 'arafatki'.

Arafat likes new media and uses Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to find news, jokes and videos.

SYNOPSIS

Wadi Kelt. 2019. Border between Israel and Palestinian National Authority.

Arafat and his daughter Zakura live according to ancient laws of bedouin society.



Their house is located close to an important christian site. Every day pilgrims pray to God and give money to bedouin kids.

Arafat is against child labour. His children go to school in Jericho. Their father tries to earn alone. But pilgrims only give money to kids.



Arafat is a modern bedouin. He likes different musicians such as Drake, George Michael etc. He wants a better life.

But he can't change the main bedouin rule. It says that every girl should marry at the age of 12-16 years. The first candidate to become Zakura's groom is her cousin Omar.



CREW

IVAN VDOVIN

DIRECTOR, PRODUCER

2008-2013

All-Russian State University of Cinematography named after S.A.Gerasimov

2013

As producer made 'Realness' documentary project with Aleksandr Rastorguev, Pavel Kostomarov, Aleksey Pivovarov. More than 45M views on YouTube.

2015

Created 'Roofers', extreme documentary show filmed in 10 countries: Hong-Kong, China, Thailand, Dubai, France etc.

2016-2018

Creative producer in feature films and TV:

'Matilda', dir. Aleksei Uchitel;

'Ammun', dir. Anar Abbasov;

'Unknown', TV3 Chanel

'Filin', 1 Chanel

Also made more than 40 commercials as director and producer. In 2018 won the bronze in Cannes Lions for '1st Grrrade' advertising campaign.

PETR BUSLOV

CINEMATOGRAPHER

2013-2018

Studied in All-Russian State University of Cinematography named after S.A.Gerasimov

2016-2019

Cameraman in feature films and tv series:

'Policeman from Rublevka', 2016, dir. Ilya Kulikov

'Middleground', 2017, dir. Alisa Khazanova

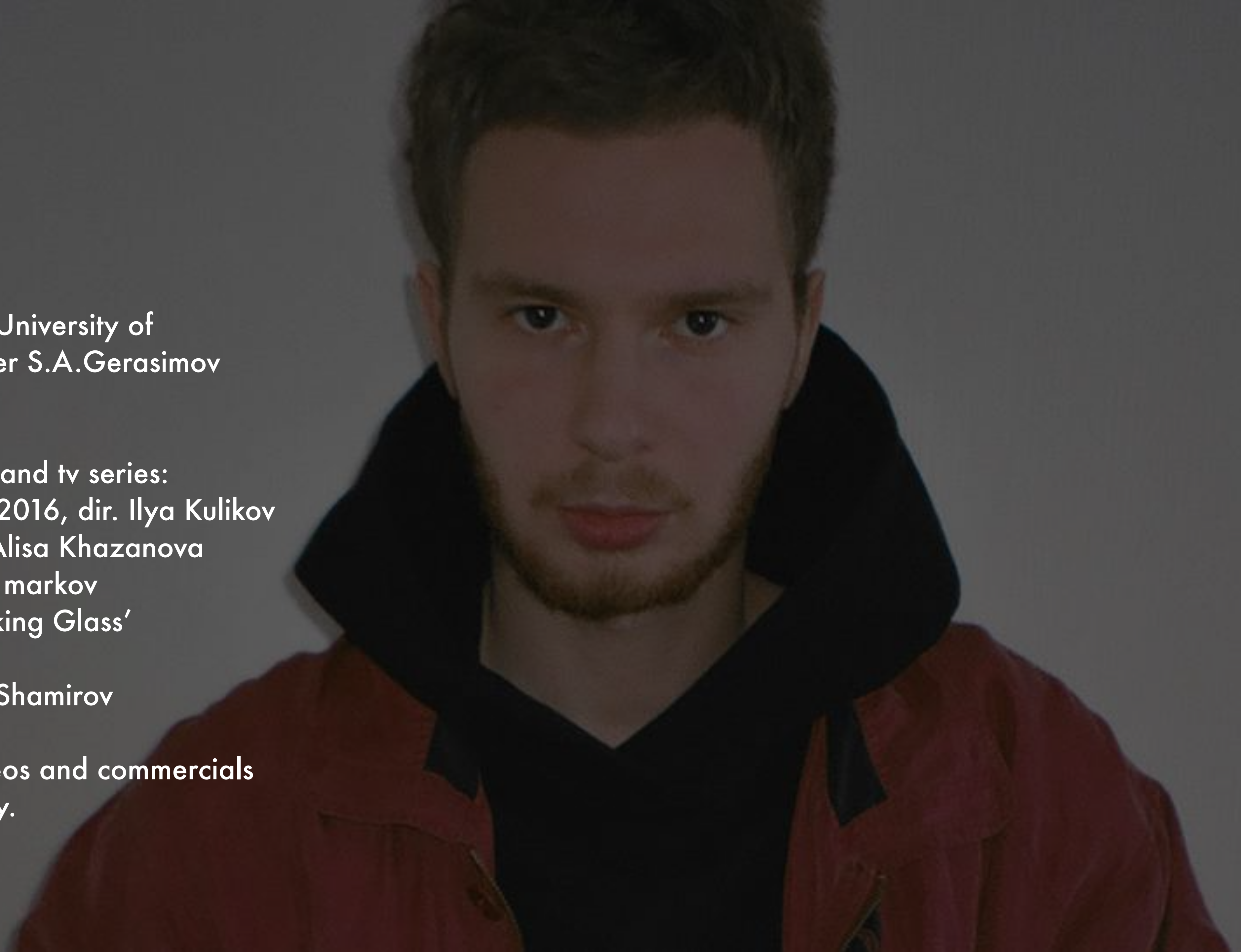
'The Envelope' dir. Vladimir Markov

'Queen of Spades: The Looking Glass'

dir. Aleksandr Domogarov

'Vne igry', 2019 dir. Viktor Shamirov

Made short films, music videos and commercials as a director of photography.





NIKOLAI ROMANKOV

CINEMATOGRAPHER

2005-2011

Humanitarian Institute of Television and Radio
Broadcasting, named after M.A. Litovchin

2011-2015

PhD 'Cine, television and other visual arts'

2011-2019

Co-founder 'Kakadu Collapse' production studio
Director of Photography for various commercials.

2016-2019

Director-DOP for documentary commercials.

2019

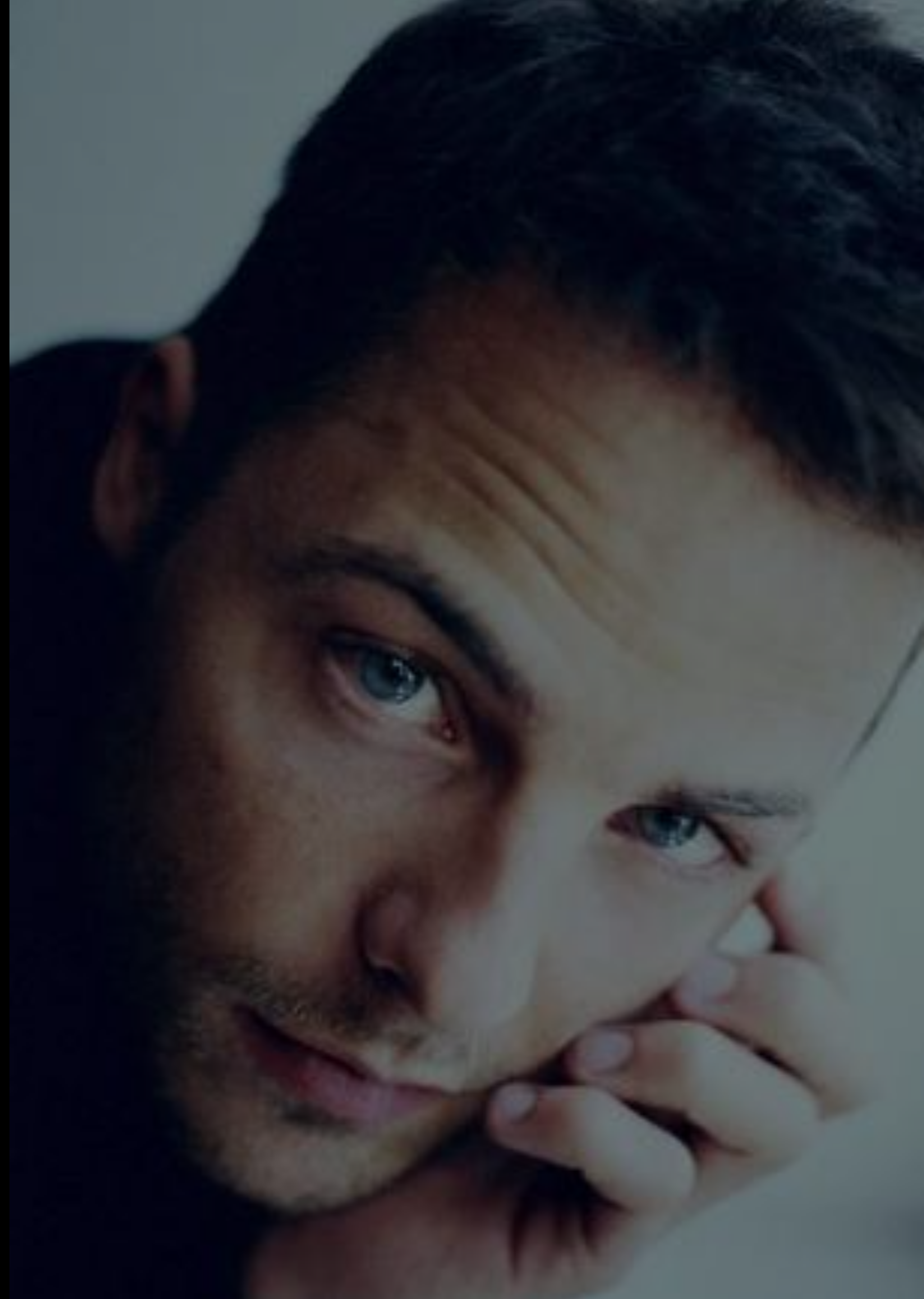
Director of Photography
Feature movie 'Hey, Moskvich!' (In progress)

DMITRI KORABELNIKOV

EDITOR

Dmitri edited the highest-grossing action feature film in Russia produced by Len Blavatnik ('The Revenant' 'I, Tonya') called 'T-34' (budget \$9m, box office \$40m). The film was sold on AFM to the US and foreign countries.

In summer 2019 Dmitri won the Best Editor Award at Jackie Chan Action Movie Awards with Martin Campbell, Paul Haggis and Tsui Hark in the jury.



SERGEY BOBZA

PRODUCER

1989 - 1994

Kuban State University

1994 - 1997

Kuban State University, Professor

1997 - 2002

Moscow Bar Collegium, Barrister

2002 - 2009

Independent music manager & producer.

Manager of t.A.T.u. band

2010 - Present time

CEO of Leopolis Films (Moscow)

Sergey Bobza is winner of 4 Nika Awards.



MICHAEL J.P. LAURENT

CO-PRODUCER

ENTREPRENEUR / AMERICAN FOOTBALL COACH

HRD ANTWERP CERTIFIED DIAMOND GRADER

2014

Founder / CEO Mila Solidus Ltd, HK
Investment in precious stones

2016

Assistant Coach Team Russia

2018

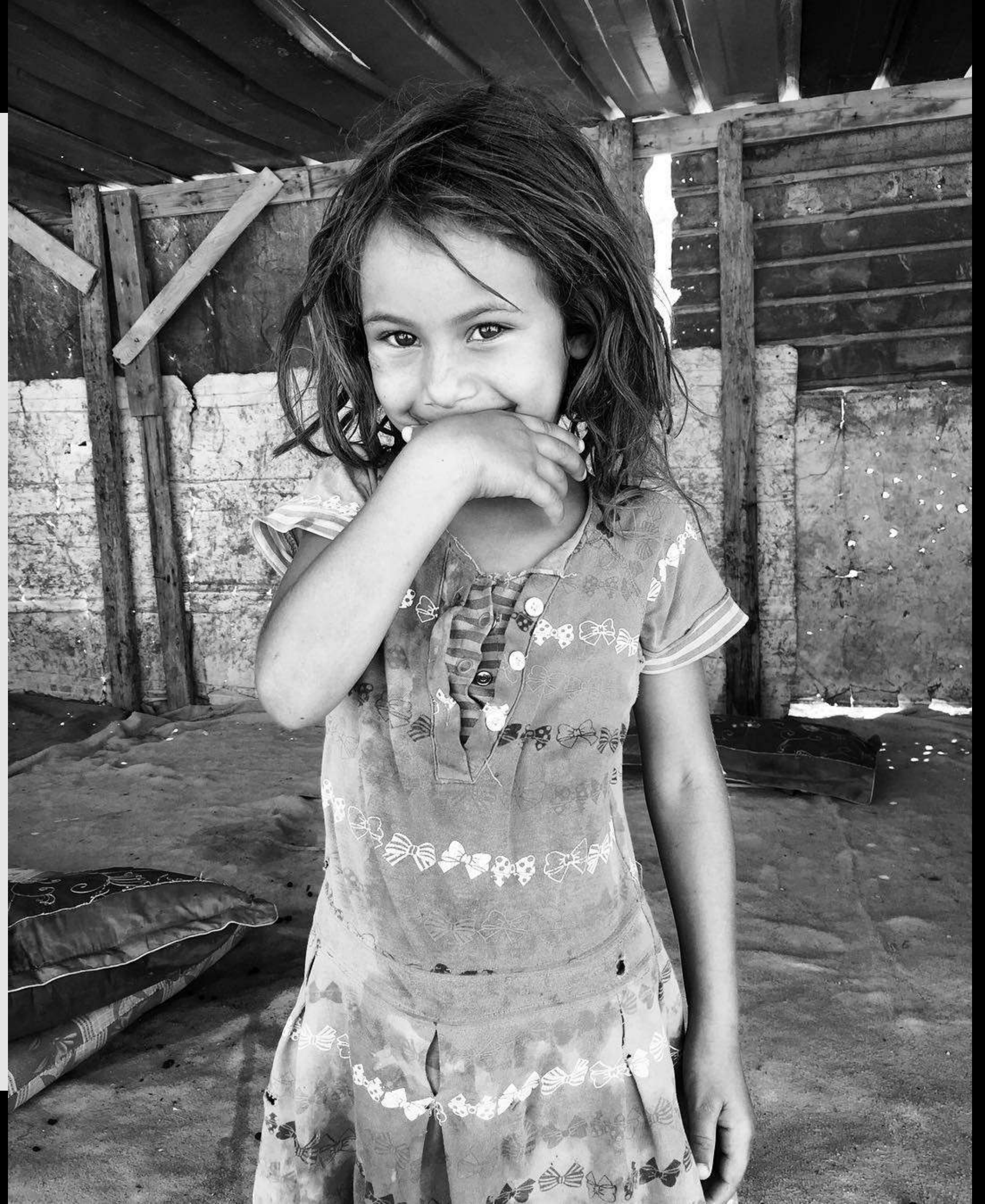
Guest Coach Toronto Argonauts

2019

First experience in the film industry with Zakura Movie

MOTIVATION

'Arafat is 32, he has two wives, three children, an iPhone and a flock of sheep. [His daughter] Zakura is 7, and she is a charming frank kid. She loves to be photographed and is eager to talk with people. Also, she is a commodity. And in a couple of years her own father will trade her to her future husband – for 50 sheep. That happens to be quite a fair price – as she will start her life in a new family that will provide for her, and Arafat will get a good gain to his household. Only that's not a plotline from Game of Thrones, nor is it some fantasy story. It is real life, and it carries on just an hour's drive from Jerusalem.





My name is Ivan Vdovin, 2 years ago as a producer I was engaged in the process of film shooting in Israel. It was at that moment that I met with Arafat and his family. Now I want to make a film about them, because Arafat proposed that I should marry his daughter – just two weeks after we had met – he said, it was the only chance for her to move away and get herself a decent future. And I thought to myself that I, well, I can't just take her and bring illegally to Moscow, instead I should tell her story, make this film and give Arafat and his daughter an opportunity – an opportunity to choose. In order to bring future – this film should get created. It must be created in order to bring this opportunity to them. I invite you to take part in it, to support it, so together we can witness the ending of this story. Thank you and good luck!'

I said these words on my YouTube video that I published on June 13, 2018. On my 27th birthday. That day I started my crowdfunding campaign in Russia. But for me this story had begun well before that.

June 27th, 2016. I'm working on the movie in Israel desert Negev as a creative producer. Filming process is going bad. We urgently need locations, actors and animals for shooting. I get the car and go searching. On the way I see a little bedouin settlement. Men are drinking tea. I go out. One man asks what I need. I respond instantly: I need a desert draw-well, a bedouin boy, a donkey, an oasis and a camel...Right now!

The man smiles and says 'Ok. My name is Arafat. Do you want some bedouin tea?'





45° C in the shade. We seat on the baking sun. Arafat introduces his family. His brother's name is Yasser. Together they make Yasser Arafat. They don't like politics. Their father did, though. I'm watching Arafat's children. Beautiful kids. Especially – his daughter. I ask her name, Arafat answers 'Thikra', but I hear 'Zakura'. I take my phone and make a photo that will change my life forever.

Inshallah. Bedouin's favorite word. The answer to any question. When I tell Arafat that I can't marry Zakura, but will try to find a different way to help, he utters one word only. Inshallah.

October 21th, 2018. Two desperate cinematographers and I come to Arafat's house and start filming.

One month later we return to Moscow with 200 hours of video. How did the shooting go? It was delight and horror. We were in delight and horror.

If I needed to update my story on YouTube I would say 'Arafat is 34, he has one wife, four children and a cracked smartphone. He had a flock of sheep before but now it's not profitable'.

The world has changed. But some things can never be changed.





Arafat divorced with his first wife but want to find another one. Zakura began to study in school but her father needs to find her a husband in few years. The traditions say so.

November, 3, 2019. Two weeks ago I returned from the second film expedition to Negev desert. We came to Arafat and Zakura for one week.

Our bedouins still seat and drink tea. But that experience was absolutely different. Zakura has grown up, Arafat has got prostatitis, his wife is expecting one more daughter. Nobody knows what to do next.

I know one thing. This story is not finished.

And as I said at the beginning: I invite you to take part in it, to support it, so together we can witness the ending of it. Thank you and good luck!

Ivan Vdovin
November, 3, 2019

MEDIA

- June 13, 2018. I started crowd-finding company for 'Zakura'. I wanted only \$5000 to start my project.
- August 31, 2018. British newspaper Daily Mail took note of my story.



The seven-year-old girl who faces being sold as a wife for 50 sheep as soon as she has her first period: Father pleads for help saving his daughter from nomadic tribe's customs

By Will Stewart In Moscow for MailOnline
08:33 31 Aug 2018, updated 15:48 31 Aug 2018



Daily Mail

31 августа 2018 г. · 🌐

Her father is pleading for help to save his daughter

[Показать перевод](#)



DAILYMAIL.CO.UK | ABTOP: DAILY MAIL

The girl, 7, who faces being sold as a wife for 50 SHEEP when she has her first period

👎👎👍 3,9 тыс.

Комментарии: 571 Поделились: 666



5.6k shares



Нравится



Комментировать



Поделиться



- Dozens of publications around the world came out next month.
- Crowd-finding company finished successfully.

Girl, 7, faces being forced to marry in exchange for 50 sheep when she starts having periods



Georgia Diebelius

Friday 31 Aug 2018 7:41 am

A director is making a documentary on a young bedouin girl in a bid to stop her from being sold as a wife for 50 sheep when she reaches the age of 11.

Ivan Vdovin from Russia is pushing to help Zakura escape the long-established path for girls in her traditional and partly nomadic society, after he was contacted by her dad.

Now the 27-year-old is set to make a film about her plight hoping that her father Arafat's wishes can come true – and that she can avoid being sold for sheep after she starts her period.

ESPRESO



Foto: Printscreen/Youtube

SUROVI OBIČAJI

OTAC ODLUČIO DA PRODA ĆERKU (5) ZA 50 OVACA: Planirao da je uda čim dobije prvu menstruaciju, a onda se pojavio RUS

Asistente FINANCIERO

Póliza Daños a Terceros

Emítela en 3min

MUNDO

Un padre entrega a su hija de 7 años en matrimonio para evitarle un peor destino

07 de septiembre del 2018 - 02:48 AM

CORPRENSA



Παλαιστίνη: Κοριτσάκια πωλούνται σε μεγαλύτερους άντρες για 50 πρόβατα λίγο μετά την πρώτη τους περίοδο

HCy By HALLOCY.COM — 06/02/2019



SHARES



Ένας Ρώσος δημιουργός ντοκιμαντέρ έχει



SOCIÉTÉ



© REUTERS/ Khaled Abdullah

Cette jeune fille bédouine serait vendue pour 50 moutons après ses premières règles

15:32 03.09.2018 (mis à jour 16:00 03.09.2018)

S'abonner



Un documentariste russe a lancé une campagne pour sauver une jeune fille bédouine dont le destin est d'être



ข่าวคราวรอบโลก

ประเพณีอันโหดร้ายของชาวเบดูอิน ชีวิตของเด็กหญิง ที่อาจถูกขายเพื่อแลกแกะ 50 ตัว

By เหมียวเลเซอร์ - 04/09/2018

👍 Нравится 2,8 тыс.

Ivan Vdovin

这部纪录片的作用很大，成功了就能阻止11岁女童为了区区50头羊嫁给老男人作为妻的悲惨命运，它的作用又很小，因为这个女童只不过是她在所在民族中，无数地位低下如同牲畜的广大女性一员。



Ivan Vdovin和Zakura

导演Ivan和小女孩Zakura的奇妙缘分来自于他的父亲Arafat。



Zakura和两兄弟

在Arafat的帮助下，他们拍摄了很多丰富的资料，即将返程的时候，Arafat要求和导演Ivan谈一谈。



原来他发现这群外国人很喜欢自家活泼可爱的女儿，就想让他们带女儿到莫斯科去

- October, 21, 2018 we began to shoot a movie.



DIRECTOR'S VISION

INTRO



To express my feelings I'll use a metaphor.

Arafat is a train driver that follows the usual route. Zakura is his little girl who walks along the railroad tracks. Arafat know that his daughter uses this way. But he can't stop the train.

A man with a beard and a green cap is shown in profile, looking towards the left. He is wearing a blue t-shirt and has a watch on his left wrist. He is holding a young girl with blonde hair in a striped shirt. The background is a desert landscape with some buildings and a vehicle partially visible.

VISION

'Zakura' is my vision of a dramatic story about father and daughter who live in the modern world but are forced to act by ancient and horrifying laws of bedouin people.

Their society still follows the traditions having full access to modern technologies and civilization.

My heroes are absolutely real people who experience emotions, love, fear and sometimes don't understand at all - which choice is right.

I know these people for few years and I love them. But in my film I choose an observing method.

I don't lead Zakura and Arafat to one choose destination. I follow their life during a long period of time and reveal drama naturally.





METHOD

My director's code consists of several key elements:

- 1. Life integrity.**
- 2. Storytelling is the key.**
- 3. True tone.**

A person is lying on a red and gold patterned sofa. Their left foot is in a white cast, while their right foot is bare. In the background, there are pink and blue pillows and a white wall. A white text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

1. Life integrity.

All what we see and hear in movie springs from reality.

I'm an opponent of saturating the action with meanings that are not there.



2. Storytelling is the key.
Narrative come before other things. Plot is image movement. Texture is dead without story.

3. True tone.

I can tell different stories but always tell through myself. I shoot bedouin girl but show who am I. Tone, accents, conflict reflect my inner state.



LOCATIONS

Zakura and Arafat's family live in Wadi Kelt. It's a very impressive place that is located between Jerusalem and Jericho.







Bedouin houses look like tin cans on Mars.







**Some houses have only 3 walls.
You can watch the stars at night.**



Zakura and other children go to UN school by special bus.





PRODUCTION

The main rule of documentary filmmaking for me is non-interference. We have only 3 people on the set. Two cinematographers and me. We live in Arafat's house and shoot a movie.



SCRIPT

When I was preparing to shoot the movie I wrote a basic script plan. It helped to structure the workflow. The real life has made big adjustments to our story. The process of creating this movie is like reading a dramatic play. Only you have no idea how it ends.





CHARACTERS

I met Zakura and Arafat 3 years ago. The idea of «Zakura» movie is connected directly with my experience of communication with this family.

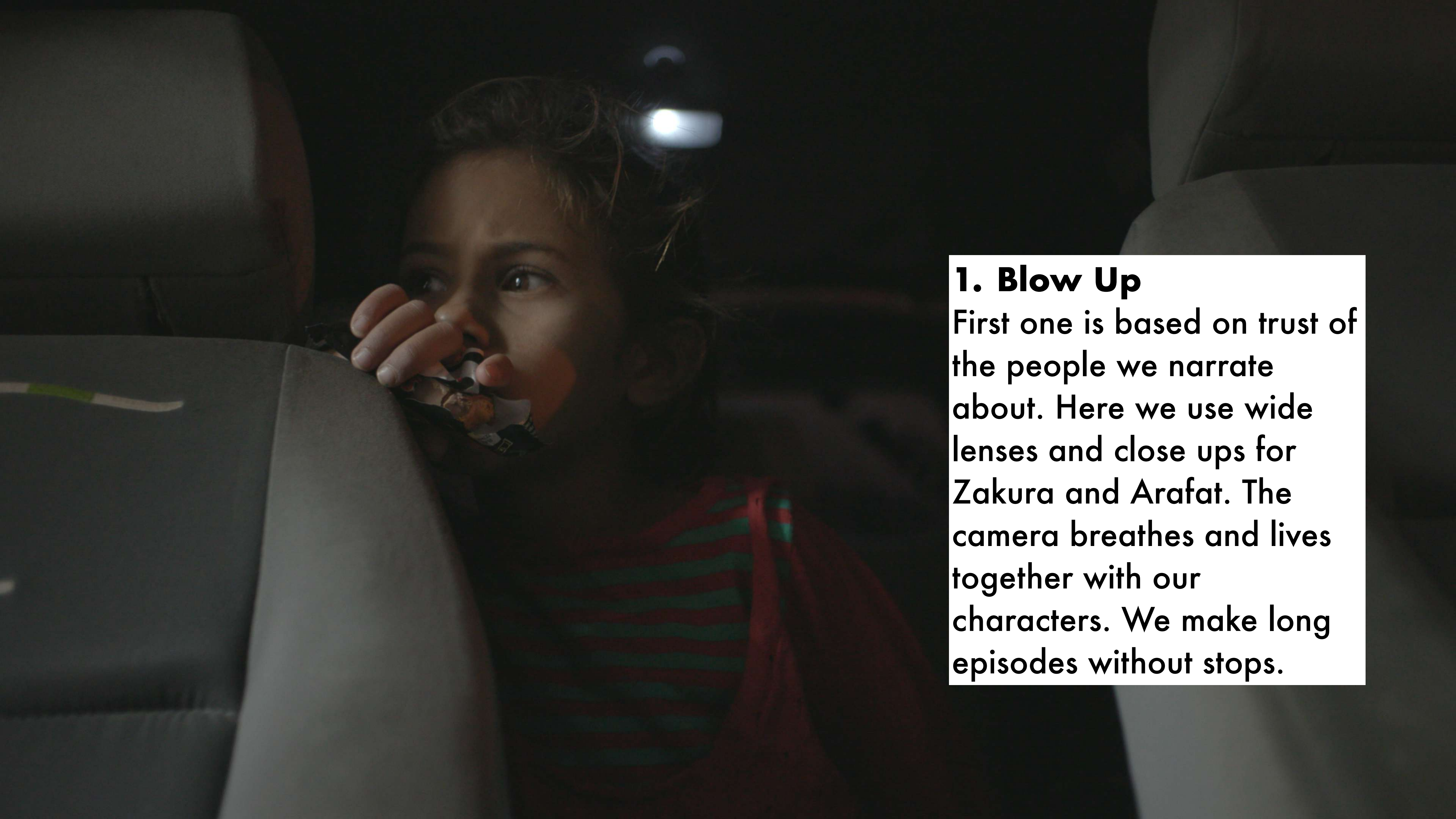
I never wanted to make a movie about other bedouin family or anything of the kind. I'm extremely concerned with Zakura's destiny. It's the main reason why I have begun making this movie.

A man with a beard, wearing a red hooded jacket, is shown in profile, looking out at night. He is holding a thin rod or stick. The background is dark with some wooden structures and a light-colored fabric hanging. The overall lighting is dim and warm, suggesting an outdoor setting at night.

IMAGE

We reflect reality in two main ways.

- 1. Blow Up**
- 2. Peeping Tom**



1. Blow Up

First one is based on trust of the people we narrate about. Here we use wide lenses and close ups for Zakura and Arafat. The camera breathes and lives together with our characters. We make long episodes without stops.





A person is lying on a mat on the floor, wearing blue jeans and a red and green striped shirt. Their right foot is in a white cast. They are looking towards the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. A vertical wooden post is visible on the right side of the frame.

2. Peeping Tom

We never used hidden camera. But some situations need a look from distance. It means that we are not inside the drama. We observe it from another point.







SOUND

Natural sound is most important for me because it reflects unique the atmosphere of location where we shoot. The sounds of desert, animals, pilgrim's prayers, steps, noises...All that you hear in Wadi Kelt has the meaning.

Music that plays in the movie is also dedicated by action. Arafat, Zakura and other bedouins like to listen to different music on their smartphones. The voices of muslim preachers mix with rap music, children's songs. Music style of 'Zakura' movie is like extraordinary mixtape.



CONCLUSION

Arafat watches that train falling apart. He learns about a fork ahead. But all of those riding with him believe that the custom road is better. Even if taking it further - means killing his daughter .

Now it's high time for Arafat to choose the right way.