

Publicity Pack – one like him – 10th December

Synopsis

We begin with a shot of a bedroom in Amman in the 1990s . Teenage Karim stands in front of the windows on the phone. He asks his best friend Ramzi if he wants to come over. But Ramzi's mother has found Karim's letter on his pillow. Ramzi tells Karim they can't see each other anymore. The line goes dead.

We cut to the present day – a bar in Amman. Karim and Ramzi are meeting for the first time since that call, twenty years ago. Ramzi is uncomfortable, fiddling with his whisky glass and cigarettes. Karim hands him a card and tells him to open it later. He then alludes to the fact that he is now engaged to a man. Ramzi, affronted, leaves the bar. Water begins to seep from the card left unopened on the table... Suddenly, the scene resets, and Ramzi is back at the table. Karim has another chance to have this conversation. Like before, Ramzi leaves affronted but this time he cannot get out of the bar. Their table is suddenly floating in the Dead Sea, in the place where Karim first realized he was in love with his best friend. Ramzi, unable to leave the situation, even in his panic, is forced to listen to his friend.

The pair are back in the bar once more, halfway through their conversation. Karim has given up trying to appease Ramzi. He tells him in Arabic: I am gay, khawal (faggot), Mithli (one who loves one like him). But this time his friend is not disgusted. And he does not leave. Ramzi explains that he always knew and he loved Karim anyway. Karim is suddenly transported back to his teenage bedroom. He sees his younger self taking that fateful phone-call from Ramzi. He goes to the phone and listens. The line doesn't go dead. This time, teenage Ramzi tells him that everything will be okay. Karim finally has another version of the story.. Back in the bar a final time: Karim, alone at the table, crumples up a wedding invitation in his hand. He waits for Ramzi to arrive.

Shorter Synopsis

Amman, 1990s. Teenage Karim rings his best friend Ramzi and asks if he wants to come over. But Ramzi's mother has found Karim's letter on his pillow. Ramzi tells Karim they can't see each other anymore. The line goes dead.

Present day Amman. Karim and Ramzi are meeting for the first time since that call, twenty years ago. Karim alludes to the fact that he is now engaged to a man. Ramzi, affronted, leaves the bar.

Suddenly, the scene resets, and Ramzi is back at the table. Like before, Ramzi leaves affronted but this time he cannot get out of the bar. Their table is suddenly floating in the Dead Sea. Ramzi, unable to leave is forced to listen to his friend.

The pair are back in the bar once more, halfway through their conversation. But this time his friend is not disgusted. And he does not leave. Ramzi explains that he always knew and he loved Karim anyway.

Karim is suddenly transported back to his teenage bedroom. He goes to the phone and listens. This time, teenage Ramzi tells him that everything will be okay.

Back in the bar a final time: Karim, alone at the table, crumples up a wedding invitation in his hand. He waits for Ramzi to arrive.

Logline

A Jordanian man (Karim) must find a way to tell his childhood friend and first love (Ramzi) the truth about what happened twenty years ago, when a single moment changed both their lives. When he can't find the words, the conversation repeats, becoming increasingly surreal until he loses control.

Full Credits

CAST (in order of appearance)	
Teenage Karim	MOHAMMAD NIZAR
Teenage Ramzi	HAMZEH MAHADIN
Karim	KAIS NASHIF
Ramzi	LOAI NOUFI
Waiter	MOHAMMAD SULEIMAN HUSSEIN
Written by	TAREQ BACONI
Written and directed by	CAITLIN MCLEOD
Produced by	JESSICA PALMAROZZA
For BFI Network:	
Executive Producer	ROXY MCKENNA
Project Coordinator	RUTH THOMPSON
Co-Producers	ZIAD SUNNA
	YANAL KASSAY
Cinematographer	GIULIA SCHELHAS
Production Designer	RAND ABDUL NOUR
Editor	JAD DANI ALI HASSAN
Costume Designer	PHAEDRA DAHDALEH
Sound Designer	HARRY J.N. PARSONS

Composer	ZEINA AZOUQAH
First Assistant Director	LEEN HAMARNEH
Second Assistant Director	MALAK OTHMAN
Production Assistant	NUHA ABU JABER
Supporting Artists	AHMED HARBI MAJEED ALSUHAILI
	TONI LOUIS MIKHO
	RAMIZ ALMANAWI
SA Wrangler	ADEL SHAMKHY
Stunt Coordinator	MARWAN NAGHWAY
Art Director	BASEL HASAN
First Assistant Camera	MAIS GAMMOH
Sound Mixer	NOUR HALAWANI
Boom Operator	ISSAM GHARAIBEH
Gaffer	ABDALLAH HOURANI
Best Boy	RAAD HOURANI
Key Grip	FIRAS DAIHOUS
Electrician	MOHAMMAD ALDWEIK
Location Manager	ANAS ABU DEYAH
Art Consultant	NASSER ZOUBI
Scenic Artist	RAZANAH SILAWI
Key Scenic	OAN KLOOB
Scenic Painter	KHALED DARWAZEH
Assistant Costume Designer	ALAA JOHARY
Hair and Make-Up Consultant	FARAH JADAANE
Key Hair and Make-Up Artist	ASEEL YASEEN
Medic	LAITH ARADA
Colourist	ALEXANDER BEYER
Translation by	DEEMA AL-MOHAMMAD
Subtitles by	DEEMA AL-MOHAMMAD
MUSIC	
<i>"Il Mokhtalif"</i>	
<i>Written and performed by Wizzy</i>	
<i>Arranged and produced by zazuka</i>	
Executive Producers	SAWSAN ASFARI
	MOE FAKHRO
	FARES GHANDOUR
	CLARE MCLEOD
SPECIAL THANKS	
ZOHAR AGENCY	CHRIS MORGAN
ADD CONTENT AGENCY	OMAR AZAR

ROBIN D.G. KELLEY	LINA NABULSI
BARBARA HOWARD	ANGELA JEFFREY
LAURIE NUNN	MARCUS REDIKER
HANS LEEWENS	CARLA F. WALLACE
JULIE FOX	JULIE CHRISTIE
THOMAS BEAMONT	DUNCAN CAMPBELL
GEORGE KENWRIGHT	MATTHEW MAGUIRE
RORY ANTCLIFF	ELIZABETH WALLACE
CAROLIN-MARIE and JORG ROTH	SOPHIE GLOVER
ALFREDO BULLMORE	OLIVIA PALMAROZZA
LINDA PALMAROZZA	PAUL and JUDICA PALMAROZZA
BRIAN A. KATES	ROYAL FILM COMMISSION - JORDAN
GLENN	MAIKE GALAMA
CANDY	MEGAN
Shot on location in Amman, Jordan and by the Dead Sea.	
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BFI NETWORK	
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Biographies

CREW

Writer / Director

Caitlin McLeod is a director with over a decade of experience in developing and producing original narrative content. Her first short film PLANTLIFE was a finalist in the London LIFT-OFF Festival '19 and Nominated at UNDERWIRE '19. Her recent work includes a number of music videos, short form dramas and audio dramas for leading production companies including the *BFI*, *BBC*, *Naked Productions* and *Alcove Entertainment*. Last year Caitlin was in Haifa assisting Academy Award nominated director Basil Khalil on his new film "A Gaza Weekend".

Caitlin has also directed and produced theatre at foremost institutions in the UK, US and Europe including Shakespeare's Globe, the Almeida and Signature Theatre, NYC. In 2016 Caitlin was a Sky Arts Scholarship Winner and used the grant to found The Coterie - a production company which developed multi-disciplinary projects with women artists at the core.

Writer

Tareq Baconi is a queer Palestinian writer living in London. He is writing a book about queer love in Amman. *one like him* is an adaptation of extracts from the book in which Tareq

imagines writing a letter to a friend he lost in adolescence. Tareq is the author of *Hamas Contained: The Rise and Pacification of Palestinian Resistance* (Stanford University Press, 2018). His writing has appeared in the London Review of Books, the New York Review of Books, the Washington Post, among others, and he is a frequent commentator in regional and international media.

Producer

Jessica has a credit on Sally Potter's award-winning comedy *THE PARTY* (2017) and is associate producer on Potter's drama *THE ROADS NOT TAKEN* (2020), backed by BBC Films and the BFI, starring Javier Bardem and Elle Fanning. After starting her own company, Flumeri Films, she produced queer surrealist drama *ONE LIKE HIM*, backed by the BFI Network – Filmhub North, which was shot in Amman in June 2021. Since then, she has produced a London-based thriller starring Emmett Scanlan ('Peaky Blinders', 'The Fall') and Gina Bramhill ('Us'), funded by Creative Earth Films. In 2022, she has produced 'A Particular Friend' funded by NI Screen, set in a conversion-therapy centre for priests in a remote part of Northern Ireland. The short stars Brian Milligan ('Hunger') and Desmond Eastwood ('Normal People'). She has also produced another short funded by the BFI, this time via the Film London hub which is a coming-of-age story set in Birmingham. This is a co-production with Red Production Company and The Keep Productions. Her flagship longer-form project for 2023 is a lesbian coming-of-age drama set in the Pennsylvania Amish community and is co-production with Oscar-winning company, Slick Films.

Cinematographer

Giulia Schelhas is a Berlin-based cinematographer, trained at the Film and Television Academy Berlin (DFFB). She shot numerous shorts, medium and feature films both in analogue and digital format. In 2020, the medium-length film "I Want To Return Return" was included in the Cannes Cinéfondation's Selection and received the third prize. In the same year the film was screened at numerous other festivals including the San Sebastian Festival and Max Ophüls.

In 2020, her short film "The Day X" was nominated for the Best Cinematography at the Watersprite Film Festival and in 202, the short was nominated for the Student Oscar.

Composer

Zeina Azouqah is a Jordanian-born Berlin-based composer, sound designer and songwriter. Her at times atmospheric and at times percussive music utilises both acoustic as well as electronic elements. She started her path in music as a keyboard and piano player in bands, theatres and sufi poetry groups. Through these multicultural experiences, she developed an authentic style for intercultural music arrangements and composition. Some of her pieces have been performed by the renowned Deutsches Filmorchester Babelsberg and the intercultural chamber ensembles in Berlin, Beirut, Cairo and Amman.

After moving from Jordan to Germany in 2009, she completed her studies in Film and Animation in Nuremberg and learned about all aspects of filmmaking, eventually stepping into the film music world, writing and orchestrating music for dozens of films as well as working as a score editor and providing sound design for animated and live action films.

As a singer-songwriter she has released two chamber-pop and classical crossover singles as well as an album under the artist name "zazuka". Her soundtrack for "Cadence of the Valley" was nominated for Best Music for a Short Film at the Retro Avant Garde Film Festival. She has also won the Peer Raben Music Award in 2020 for the soundtrack to "Revolvo".

CAST

Teenage KARIM

Mohammad Nizar is best known for his role in "Jinn" (2019), the first Arabic *Netflix* original series. Nizar has also acted in international productions including Jon Stewart's "Rosewater" (2013) with Gael García Bernal. In 2016, Nizar participated in a number of award-winning short films; "Catharsis" by Sondos Mustafa, "Namous" by Samer Battikhi and Said Zagha's award-winning "Five Boys and A Wheel" which stars the renowned Ali Suliman. He also starred in two TV series; "Oboor" by director Mohammad Hushki, which premiered on Abu Dhabi TV in Ramadan 2019, and "Weapon Without Murder" (2019).

In 2020, Nizar starred in a number of projects, namely: "Gaza Mon Amour" by directors Tarzan and Arab Nasser that landed world premiere at the Venice International Film Festival and marked Palestine's official submission to the International Feature Film category at the Academy Awards 2021. He also starred in two shorts; "The Ghosts We Left at Home", which screened in a number of international festivals in 2020, and "Selahy", where he landed the leading role.

RAMZI

Loai Noufi is a Palestinian actor born and raised in Nazareth to a Christian family. When he turned 18, he moved to Tel Aviv to study at the Beit Tzvi acting academy.

After graduating, he picked up the role of NASER in 'Lemon Tree' (2008) by the great director Eran Riklis. He worked with Riklis on two further movies, playing ABOUDI in 'Zaytoun' and WAJDI in 'Dancing Arabs'. His most known for his TV work, playing Ismael (Baba) Haneya in 'Dumb' Season 3 (HOT TV) sold to HBO Latin American, RAZI in 'The Good Cop' (Yes TV) sold to Netflix, and HAMUDI in 'Zaguri Empire' (HOT TV).

In 2021, he had a role in Basis Khalil's upcoming feature 'A Gaza Weekend' alongside Adam Bakri and Stephen Mangan. He is currently filming the new season of the Israeli series 'Fauda', and is rehearsing for a new play called 'Berlin' by Ilan Hatzor.

KARIM

Kais Nashif is a Palestinian actor living in Tel Aviv. Kais is part German from his mother's side and speaks fluent German, English, Arabic, Hebrew, and conversational French. He trained at the "Beit Zvi" the School for Stage Arts.

Kais Nashif's breakthrough performance was his role of SAID in Hany Abu-Assad's 2005 film 'Paradise Now' which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2006, and won at the Berlinale, European Film Awards and the Golden Globes in the same year.

Since then, Kais has acted alongside his 'Paradise Now' co-star Ali Suliman many times, most recently in the 2021 film 'Amira' which was nominated for Best Film at Venice Film Festival. In 2018, Kais won the 'Best Actor' award at Venice for his performance in 'Tel Aviv on Fire'. He has worked with distinguished international directors such as Ridley Scott ('Body of Lies', 2008), as well as emerging talents like Ben Sharrock ('Limbo', 2020).

Kais also appeared in the feature film 'Happiness Wrapped in a Blanket', directed by Berlinale Talent Yosi Artzi in 2014.

Filmmaker's Note

'one like him' is funded by the British Film Institute and was shot in Amman, Jordan in June 2021. We brought two Palestinian actors across the land border during the conflict with Israel, in the midst of the pandemic. Within this film is the first use of the term 'mithli', a new coinage by the Arabic speaking queer community. It means to love 'one like him'.

The film is a conversation between two men who have not seen each other in twenty years, not since a phone call which caused a huge rupture. It is based on the lived experience of the writer Tareq Baconi. At 17, he told his best friend he was in love with him. He never heard from that friend again. In the film, we imagine those men meeting. Karim, the cypher character for Tareq, tries to restart the conversation with his friend Ramzi. But each time the outcomes are stranger and stranger. Karim is searching for something. To find something in fiction which sometimes cannot be found in reality: closure.