



PAPA --- SIERRA

Episodic feature Film (Trilogy)

Director: Arash Sajadi

Producers: Ali Golbaharan, Max Asheon





LOGLINE & THEMES

Papa Sierra

Chapter 1

Logline: A Canadian woman has a romantic relationship with her Iranian husband named Yousef. However, her husband often distances himself from her and suddenly disappears. In reality, he perished in a plane crash, revealing that her perceptions and dreams of her husband were mere illusions.

Themes: This drama deals with themes of emotional resilience, sacrifice, quest for meaning, and family and community support.



LOGLINE & THEMES

Fall Is Fall

Chapter 2

Logline: A Ukrainian immigrant woman navigates amidst her financial strain the tragic loss of her sister while caring for her niece who's burdened by the trauma.

Themes: This drama deals with themes of emotional resilience, sacrifice, quest for meaning, and family and community support.



LOGLINE & THEMES

Heach

Chapter 3

Logline: An Iranian female artist lost her husband in a plane crash. She has now discovered that she is pregnant with his child and is facing the challenge of deciding whether to keep the baby or not.

Themes: This drama deals with themes of emotional resilience, sacrifice, quest for meaning, and family and community support.



Papa Sierra

SYNOPSIS

Emily (37) lives in a recreational vehicle with her husband, Yousef (40), an Iranian migrant construction worker. They love each other passionately. Unexpectedly, Yousef discovers that his mother has passed away in Iran. Emily is constantly worried about Yousef, who is strangely distraught. He is supposed to travel to Iran for a short time for his mother's funeral, but Emily is upset about this and constantly seeks Yousef, who keeps disappearing. Eventually, we find out that Yousef has traveled to Iran and tragically died in a Ukrainian flight crash, leaving him only alive in Emily's thoughts and imagination.

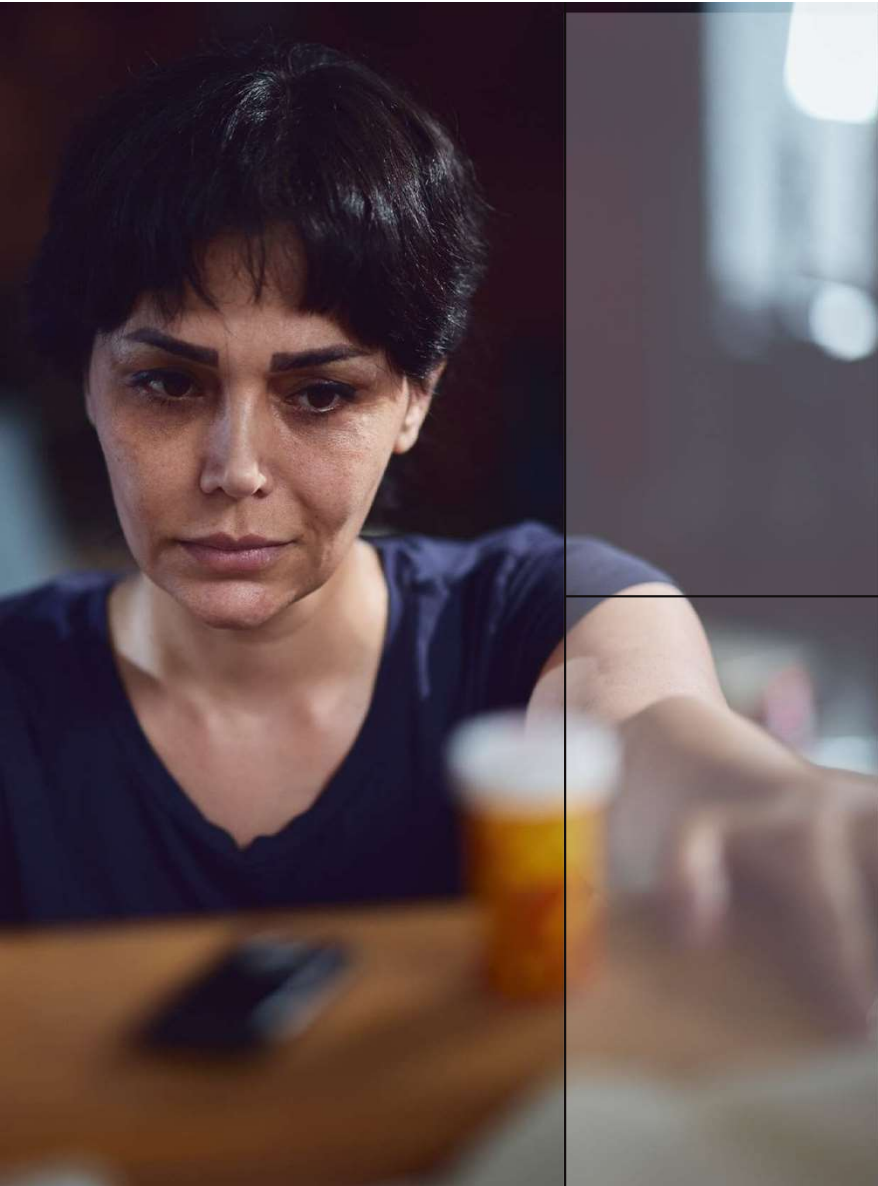


Fall Is Fall

SYNOPSIS

Evana (55), a Ukrainian immigrant in Toronto, grapples with grief and economic issues following her husband's death and her recent loss of her sister in a tragic plane crash. She navigates the complexities of guardianship for her niece, Sasha (9), amidst financial struggles and her own domestic challenges. Despite her hardships, Evana tirelessly cares for Sasha, arranging therapy sessions and sacrificing her own needs to provide for her. Sasha, burdened by her trauma, seeks an understanding of the meaning of life and death, sharing her unique insights with her therapist, Blythe (38), who finds herself deeply moved by Sasha's wisdom.

As Evana's financial state worsens, she reluctantly pauses Sasha's therapy, unable to afford it. Sasha, observant of her aunt's sacrifices, decides to relieve Evana's burden by returning to the care centre, believing she must face life's journey alone. In a bittersweet farewell, Sasha leaves Evana a note expressing her understanding of solitude and her resolution to find her own path. Despite Evana's tearful reluctance, Sasha embarks on her solitary journey, leaving Evana to deal with both pride in Sasha's resilience and the pain of separation.



Heach

SYNOPSIS

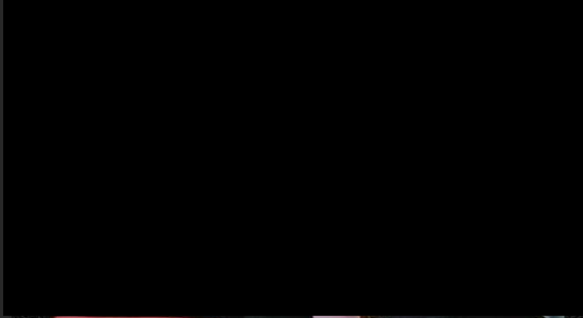
Raha (40) is an artist and sculptor who, after migrating from Iran, has managed to establish her position as an artist. She had a peaceful life until the plane crash incident drastically changed her life in every aspect. The issue of her pregnancy has put immense psychological pressure on her, leading her to a battle within herself between keeping or eliminating the child. Ultimately, she has resorted to cigarettes and alcohol, and engages in constant self-dialogue.

INSPIRATION

At the beginning of January 2020, tensions between the U.S. and Iran began to escalate following the death of Revolutionary Guard Gen. [Qassem Soleimani](#). The downing of Ukrainian flight PS752, caused by a missile fired by The Islamic Republic of Iran, resulted in the tragic loss of all 176 individuals on board, including passengers, crew, and the captain. Despite the passage of time, there remains a lack of clarity surrounding the circumstances of the incident, with the government allegedly withholding information from international investigation committees. I was deeply traumatized by this event, having witnessed the profound impact it had on individuals like my friend, who tragically lost his wife and daughter. Meeting other families in Canada, each struggling to navigate life amidst grief, further underscored the widespread devastation caused by what was deemed a national disaster.

Ali Golbaharan





KEY CHARACTERS

Chapter 1



Emily (KRISTYNA BOJANOWSKI)

Emily (37) is a character full of love and turmoil, living in conflict between loving Yousef and the agony of his absence. She is a pure and delicate woman, whose simple life dreams are tied to her shared life with her beloved. She has accepted this immigrant man lovingly, disregarding the conditions, hardships, and lack of migration, longing for a child and a life of love with her husband. She is a strong and tumultuous woman, putting all her efforts into finding Yousef and passionately seeking him at every moment.

[Krystina Bojanowski - IMDb](#)



Yousef (ALI GOLBAHARAN)

Yousef (43) is an immigrant man who has faced all the hardships of migration to create a simple life with his wife. Due to the death of his mother in Iran, he is experiencing a strange psychological crisis, torn between his distant mother and the nearby Emily, feeling stuck. His mother represents love for his roots, past, and childhood, while Emily's love for him symbolizes the love of Canada as a land of refuge for immigrants. Yousef seeks his path of liberation in between to rediscover his identity.

[Ali Golbaharan - IMDb](#)

KEY CHARACTERS

Chapter 2



Evana (REBECCA LAMARCHE)

Evana (55) is an Iranian-Ukrainian woman in Canada who moved there 20 years ago. She lost her husband in a car accident a few years ago, and she's grappling with financial issues to maintain their house and pay the mortgage. She used to have a happy marriage before the incident. She's a resilient, hard-working, independent, and generous woman who goes out of her way to help others in need. She makes photo frames in her garage. She also works in a mechanic shop, and in people's gardens to make ends meet. She's grieving the loss of a beloved sister in a plane crash. Her goal now is to take care of her orphaned niece.

[Rebecca Lamarche - IMDb](#)



Sasha (ANTONINA BATTRICK)

Sasha (9) is a nine-year-old Ukrainian immigrant. She moved to Canada with her parents seven years ago. While her parents were visiting Ukraine a few months ago, she was staying with her aunt, Evana. Her parents were on their way back to Canada when their plane was hit by a missile. Their death had a huge impact on her. She used to be a vibrant, talkative, and playful girl before the event. Now she's reticent, irritable, and very sensitive. However, this experience has made her grow up fast. She's more insightful and perceptive than most girls her age. She's overcome with depression at this point.

[Antonina Battrick - IMDb](#)



BLYTHE (OKSANA ANDRULIS)

Blythe (38) is a Canadian psychotherapist. She's empathetic, kind, and professional. She's one of the best therapists in Toronto, known for her unique approach to treating patients who are dealing with grief. She's good-looking and well-dressed, but not too much into her looks. She's single, never been married. However, she believes in love and thinks it is the only thing that can save humans. She approaches her patients, including Sasha, based on this worldview. However, she sometimes gets personally involved with some of her patients and that is her Achilles heel. Through her relationship with Sasha, she grows as a human being and realizes that the young generation can be spiritual guides in this world.

[Oksana Andrulis - IMDb](#)

KEY CHARACTERS

Chapter 3



Raha (SHERVIN ESFANDYARI)

Raha (40) is an artist and sculptor who, after migrating from Iran, has managed to establish her position as an artist. She had a peaceful life until the plane crash incident drastically changed her life in every aspect. The issue of her pregnancy has put immense psychological pressure on her, leading her to a battle within herself between keeping or eliminating the child. Ultimately, she has resorted to cigarettes and alcohol and engages in constant self- dialogue.

CHARACTERS



Symbolism in Character Design

One of the most important ways symbolism manifests in the film is through character design and their attributes. These characteristics can symbolize the inner identity, beliefs, or transformations of the characters throughout the story.

Movements and Behaviours: Specific movements or habits of characters also serve as symbols of their mental states or inner transformations. A character who frequently looks in the mirror symbolize a search for identity or internal crises.



Cinematography



Use of Colours and Lighting

In this film, each part of the story is represented with specific colours and shadows to highlight the contrast between moments of joy, sorrow, or inner turmoil. To reflect the turbulent emotions of the characters, cold lights and dark colours are used in indoor spaces and crisis moments, while warm lights and soft colours are employed in scenes of calmness and positive emotions.

Camera Movement and Framing

Camera movement serves as a tool to express the characters' inner worlds and engage with them. Long shots are used to showcase emotional distances and gaps in human relationships, whereas in intimate or emotional scenes, a softer and closer camera movement is utilized to convey the closeness and deep feelings of the characters.



Cinematography



Camera Angles and Object Representation

Utilizing specific and unconventional camera angles to portray the characters' states and thoughts is essential. During moments of inner and psychological struggles, asymmetrical camera angles highlight feelings of instability or ambiguity in their minds.

Lighting

Low and dark lighting may indicate fear, loneliness, or danger, while bright and natural lighting symbolizes hope, truth, or growth. In scenes where characters face significant decisions or inner changes, lighting can particularly enhance the emotional impact and symbolic understanding of the scene.



Sound

Sound Design and Music

Alongside cinematography, sound design and music in this film work harmoniously with the visuals. The use of ambient sound to convey the atmosphere and music with minimalist or surreal themes significantly enhances the visual effects. In sensitive and emotional scenes, the music gently supports the camera movements and lighting changes.



Production Design



Each environment or space reflects the mental and emotional state of the characters.

Interior and Exterior Spaces

The design of the spaces where characters find themselves is carefully aligned with their character development and the storyline. During moments when characters are grappling with crises or significant changes in their lives, tight, dark, or enclosed spaces can convey feelings of psychological pressure and entrapment. Conversely, scenes where characters experience a sense of freedom or comfort utilize open and bright spaces.



Production Design

Environmental Details

Sometimes, the details in production design can express key aspects of characters and their relationships. The choice of furniture, colours, and other objects in the environment can add depth to the characters' worlds and, in some cases, convey hints about their inner states or cultural and social backgrounds. These details are designed with consideration for the characters' culture, history, and emotional states.



Costumes



The clothing of the characters can express their individual traits, social status, psychological state, and even their inner transformations. Costume design is directly linked to the overarching themes and messages of the film, adding depth to the characters.

Colour and Fabric Choices

The colours and fabrics of the characters' clothing can reveal hidden and inner meanings. For example, characters dealing with psychological crises or emotional changes might wear dark or muted colours to indicate confusion or a lack of feeling within. In contrast, characters in a phase of growth or development wear brighter, more vibrant clothing.



Costumes



Character Traits Through Clothing

Clothing can reflect specific characteristics of the characters, such as age, profession, taste, and even their outlook on life. For instance, a character struggling with financial issues may wear simple, unadorned clothing, while a character searching for their identity might don unconventional attire to signify their quest for self-discovery.

The use of dark colours (black, earthy tones) for a character may signify sadness, loneliness, or introversion. Conversely, bright colours like white or yellow may represent hope, freshness, and positive changes in the characters.



Art Direction



Harmony Between Production Design and Costume

The coordination between the design of spaces and costumes is particularly important, as these two elements complement each other and cohesively contribute to the expansion of the narrative and a better understanding of the character's motivations.

Creating Visual Harmony

The design of interior spaces aligns with the colours and fabrics of the costumes. In a scene where a character is engulfed in doubt, a setting with earthy colours and simple clothing can harmonize to provide a clearer understanding of their psychological state.



Connecting Characters' Past and Present

To illustrate character transformations, costume design may draw connections to the characters' pasts. For example, characters might have worn specific outfits in the past, and their new clothing choices over time reflect inner changes.

Locations



Home

Home is often used as a symbol of security, shelter, and belonging. However, in this film, unfavourable conditions symbolize the loss of security and identity. In this context, the home is not just a physical space but also represents the mental state of the characters.

Dark and Enclosed Spaces

Limited, tight, and dark locations evoke feelings of suffocation, anxiety, or isolation in both characters and the audience. In scenes where characters confront negative emotions such as fear, worry, or psychological crises, these types of locations enhance the dramatic feelings and intensify the situation.



Locations

Open and Bright Nature Spaces

Locations with expansive spaces and more light convey feelings of freedom, hope, or joy. Natural settings like waterfalls or lakes in scenes where characters are discovering themselves or reaching a positive goal visually represent growth, hope, and liberation. The growth or transformation of characters, can symbolize freedom, change, and a new path.

Industrial or Urban Spaces

Urban or industrial settings, such as garages, bars, and tall buildings, will create feelings of harshness, tension, and alienation. These locations serve as symbols of the struggles of urban life, loneliness amidst crowds, or a sense of disconnection from the outside world. The character feels lost in the bustling environment and disconnected from others.



Locations



Natural Settings in Moments of Hope

Conversely, scenes where characters are situated in natural settings can signify a positive turning point in the story, where characters confront themselves and discover a new path for growth and improvement.

Industrial Locations During Character Crises

When characters are placed in cold, industrial environments, it can symbolize pressure, stress, or feelings of being trapped in complex situations. These locations can directly influence the psychological states of the characters.

The design and selection of locations should be meticulously aligned with the film's themes and character developments. These locations can evoke various emotions in the audience and indirectly communicate the film's concepts and messages.



Philosophy



Identity and Belonging Challenges During Crisis

The film explores how personal and social identity is challenged during global crises and major disasters. Families of the disaster's survivors confront their identities and the new circumstances imposed on them due to the loss of their loved ones. This identity crisis can stem from social, political, and even psychological pressures. The erosion of identity following such an event, along with society's perception of the survivors, could be one of the film's significant and profound themes.



Investigating and Seeking Truth

One of the film's goals is to search for the truth. In a disaster where there is insufficient transparency and accountability regarding the cause, survivors and society may seek a pure and unbiased truth. This quest can lead to the mental and psychological conflicts experienced by the film's characters. Surrealistic elements are used to express the mental and psychological contradictions faced by individuals. Will the truth ultimately be uncovered? And what price must be paid for it?

Philosophy



Revenge and Compensation

The film examines the moral and philosophical issues related to revenge and compensation. In a world where the truth has not been fully revealed and no one responsible for the disaster is entirely accountable, critical questions arise, such as: "How should we confront such injustice?" and: "Is revenge justified?" In this context, the film explores, in a surrealistic manner, how characters interact with issues of blame, punishment, and their psychological consequences.

Accountability and Humanity in Crisis Situations

In such conditions, larger questions arise regarding social and individual responsibility towards others. The director portrays characters grappling with emotional, ethical, and social crises while emphasizing the importance of humanity and solidarity in the face of global calamities, showcasing the consequences of these neglects on characters and their relationships.

Critique of Global Policies and Military Injustices

Since the incident is situated within global conflicts and crises, the film critiques global policies, wars, and how innocent people are affected by political decisions while simultaneously highlighting the damage these policies inflict on the souls and minds of survivors. This segment of the film focuses on the injustices of global systems and political regimes.

Philosophy



Questioning the Meaning of Life and Death

Another philosophical aspect of the film is the exploration of the meaning of life and death. In a surrealistic context, death evolves into a concept of meaninglessness or perhaps a reflection of the endless search for truth. Characters face significant ambiguities while attempting to rebuild their lives after the loss of loved ones, raising questions such as: "Does life still have meaning?" and: "What does death signify for the survivors?"

Control and Dominance

In such situations, one can refer to the dominations and individual and social efforts for reconstruction and control. Society, governments, and even families may react differently to issues like loss, lack of accountability, and social protests, which could become a theme for exploration in the film.

Critique of Power and Corruption

The film utilizes a surreal backdrop to critique political powers and corruption, using it to create narrative tension and character responses. Surrealism also aids in depicting the understanding of this corruption and the social, political, and human injustices in a more symbolic and profound language.

Philosophy



Ultimately, the philosophy behind creating such a film unveils hidden realities and provides a deeper understanding of the impact of global crises and human tragedies on individuals' minds and souls. From the director's perspective, this film strategically aims to invoke ambiguity and utilize surrealistic forms to encourage the audience to think and question social injustices, global policies, and human and ethical relationships. In this journey, the emotional and mental experiences of the characters are challenged, and complex feelings such as loss, injustice, compensation, and deep anguish from death are depicted through a new and intriguing cinematic language.



MOOD BOARD



ALI GOLBAHARAN

Actor/ Writer/ Producer

Born in Tehran on May 15, 1981, into an art-loving family, Ali Golbaharan was immersed in a creative environment from a young age. His uncle, a renowned playwright, and acting trainer in Iran, influenced his early exposure to acting and writing, with famous poems serving as his bedtime lullabies. While pursuing a civil engineering degree at university, his passion for theatre continued to beckon him. At the age of 20, he transitioned into cinema as an assistant, sparking the beginning of a diverse career. Evolving into an actor, producer, and scriptwriter, he has crafted over 10 movie scripts and produced 8 acclaimed films that were showcased at prestigious festivals around the world. Seven years ago, he made the life-altering decision to immigrate to Canada as a political refugee, escaping societal and political oppression. In his new home, he embarked on a journey to reignite his passion for cinema. As a newcomer, he devoted himself to writing, directing, and producing short films, laying the foundation for his feature film.

[Ali Golbaharan - IMDb](#)



ARASH SAJADI

WRITER/DIRECTOR

Arash Sajadi is an Iranian director and screenwriter who was forced to migrate to Europe after the revolution. He has several feature films in his portfolio and has years of experience working in Iranian cinema. He is an intelligent and experienced director who was able to direct the film "Papa Sierra" remotely with precision and great attention to detail. This is one of the most exceptional occurrences in the cinema industry; having a director with the ability and expertise to focus on all the details remotely and create their cinematic work.

[Arash Sajadi
Hoseini - IMDb](#)



THANK YOU

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