

DREAMS OF LIBERATION HISTORICAL PALESTINE

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DIRECTOR OF 'JENIN JENIN'**

BAKRI: I grew up on values of liberation, that we should all be revolutionaries. By the age of 15, I dreamed of going to Lebanon on foot to become a fighter, and that before I arrived, while I was in the wilderness, a tiger would attack me, and I would kill it and drag it behind me as I continued on my way. This tiger would be my ticket to join the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, and I would be a hero. *'What do you want more than that? I have killed a tiger!'*

And it really happened that I went to Lebanon, intending to kill the tiger. But on my way to becoming a revolutionary, as night fell and darkness reigned, I felt fear, imagining where the monsters and hyenas lay, so I decided to go home.

These were dreams, dreams of a child who wanted to be a revolutionary but did not have the courage to kill a tiger, so things remained just a dream.

But I had an obsession. Perhaps this was why I went into cinema and theatre because there is the possibility of realising dreams of liberation, not through armed struggle, but through culture.

I was an actor performing on the stage in Nazareth when news began to spread about a massacre in Jenin Refugee Camp. We could hear the bombing from the stage, so we decided to stop the play.

I went with Valentina, my colleague, to the demonstration.

At the protest, an old Israeli in an army uniform, with wild eyes, took out an automatic weapon and started shooting at us. Valentina was standing next to me and was hit by a bullet in her hand.

It was the first time in my life that I was at a scene like this, that I saw this amount of blood.

And I started to think, if these soldiers gave us all this hatred while standing in peace, what would the Israeli army do in Jenin, where there is fierce resistance?

I rented a jeep, a camera, and a sound device.

I infiltrate through the mountains, a closed military zone. The Israeli army convoys passed, and we marched on until we reached Jenin.

When I saw the situation there and how much Jenin was destroyed, I was paralysed; I did not know what to do, my body trembled.

I managed to control my nerves and for five consecutive days filmed whatever my eyes fell on. A spontaneous act with my limited capabilities... Walking the streets and filming people that I encountered.

Since the first screening of my documentary, '*Jenin Jenin*', there have been protests, revenge and intimidation. Attempts to silence me, make me a lesson for those who think about undertaking actions critical of Israel.

Trials and prosecutions have been going on for 20 years, from 2002 until now. I'm tired and tired, the same stories, the same accusations.

In 2021 I was fined \$55,000 for defamation damages to be paid to an Israeli army captain who participated in the invasion of Jenin Camp.

Then the judge ordered that the documentary be permanently banned from being screened.

They try to tame the horse, try to tame every human who does not follow their line. That is why they are afraid of imagination.

Today, I continue to tell my story because I do not see any other solution, and I do not see any other way to address my case except to deliver it to the world.

My dream is to tell the great story of Palestine, about my life and our lives.

But for now, I'll go smoke.