

SPUTNIK Presents

THE OTHER SIDE OF HOPE



SHERWAN HAJI
SAKARI KUOSMANEN

Written and directed by AKI KAURISMÄKI

Produced by SPUTNIK in collaboration with GIFA, THE FINNISH FILM FOUNDATION, TLE EXPANSIONS, BANGORA FILM, CHYVARE, ENLAGE and PROGRAMME and THE CHURCH MEDIA FOUNDATION

SPUTNIK BY GIFA, BANGORA FILM, CHYVARE, ENLAGE and PROGRAMME and THE CHURCH MEDIA FOUNDATION



PRESS BOOK

"The paths of a Syrian refugee and a Finnish travelling salesman cross in the asphalt jungle called Helsinki."

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PRINCIPAL CREDITS

98 min – fiction – Finland 2017 | 35 mm/2K DCP – 1:1.85 – colour – Dolby SRD
Spoken languages: Finnish, English, Arabic | Original title: TOIVON TUOLLA PUOLEN |
German title: DIE ANDERE SEITE DER HOFFNUNG

Screenplay, director	Aki Kaurismäki
Cinematography	Timo Salminen
Lighting	Olli Varja
Production designer	Aki Kaurismäki
Costume designer	Tiina Kaukanen
Set designer	Markku Pätilä
Set decoration	Ville Grönroos Heikki Häkkinen
Sound designer	Tero Malmberg
Editor	Samu Heikkilä
Re-recording mixer	Olli Pärnänen / Meguru Film Sound Oy
Laboratory	Dirk De Jonghe / DeJonghe Film Postproduction
Production	Sputnik Oy / Aki Kaurismäki
Co-production	Oy Bufo Ab / Misha Jaari, Mark Lwoff Pandora Film / Reinhard Brundig
With support of	The Finnish Film Foundation Finland 100 Programme The Church Media Foundation
With participation of	YLE Coproductions ZDF / Arte



SYNOPSIS

The film consists of two stories that by chance intersect at the forty-minute mark. The first one is about Khaled, a young Syrian refugee who has lost virtually all of his family. Almost by accident, he drifts to Helsinki as a stowaway passenger on a collier to seek asylum without great hopes for his future life.

Wikström, the other protagonist, is a travelling salesman of about fifty (representing mainly men's shirts and ties). In the beginning of the film he leaves his alcoholic wife and his profession and turns momentarily into a poker shark. With the small amount of money he thus gains he then buys an unprofitable restaurant at the far end of an inner court along a back street in Helsinki.

When the authorities decide to return Khaled to the ruins of Aleppo he, just like many others, decides to stay illegally in the country and disappears into the streets of Helsinki. There he meets, besides various types of racism, also pure kindness. Finally Wikström finds our fellow sleeping in the inner yard of his restaurant. Perhaps he sees something of himself in the battered man because he hires Khaled as a cleaner and a dishwasher.

For a moment life shows us its sunnier side, but fate soon intervenes and the film concludes with an open ending leading either to a respectable life or to the cemetery. For a person driven into a corner, both have their merits.



DIRECTOR'S WORD

With this film, I try to do my best to shatter the European way of only seeing refugees as either pitiful victims or arrogant economic immigrants invading our societies merely to steal our jobs, our wives, our homes and our cars.

In European history, the creation and enforcement of stereotypical prejudices carries a sinister echo. I freely admit that "The Other Side Of Hope" is, to a certain degree, a so-called tendency film unscrupulously attempting to influence the views and the opinions of its viewers whilst trying to manipulate their emotions in order to reach that goal.

Because these efforts will naturally fail what will remain is, I hope, an upright and slightly melancholy story carried along by humour, but in other ways almost realistic film about certain human destinies here in this world, today.

Aki Kaurismäki

PRINCIPAL CAST

Khaled	Sherwan Haji
Wikström	Sakari Kuosmanen
Calamnius	Ilkka Koivula
Nyrhinen	Janne Hyytiäinen
Mirja	Nuppu Koivu
Wife	Kaija Pakarinen
Miriam	Niroz Haji
Mazdak	Simon Hussein Al-Bazoon



ACTORS

Sherwan Haji (born 1985) plays the role of Khaled, a Syrian refugee. Haji, who came to Finland from Syria in 2010, graduated from Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus in 2008. Haji acted in several TV series in Syria and continued his studies in Cambridge School of Art – Anglia Ruskin University in 2015, graduating last year with a Master of Arts degree. Since 2012 Haji has, in addition to acting, also written and directed several short films and video installations for Lion's Line, his production company. This is Haji's first main role in a feature film. The film's soundtrack also includes music performed by Haji on saz, a traditional stringed instrument.

In the other lead role, the one of Wikström the travelling salesman, we see **Sakari Kuosmanen** (born 1956), one of Kaurismäki's favourite actors. With a long career both as an actor and a musician, Kuosmanen is perhaps best remembered from his lead role in Kaurismäki's film *Juha*, as the gruff harbour guard in *The Man Without a Past*, and of his role as a doorman in *Drifting Clouds*. Kuosmanen has also appeared in the following films directed by Aki Kaurismäki: *Calamari Union*, *Shadows In Paradise*, *Leningrad Cowboys Go America* and *Total Balalaika Show*.

The roles of the Golden Pint restaurant staff are manned by **Janne Hyytiäinen** (Nyrhinen, the cook) and **Ilkka Koivula** (Calamnius, the doorman), both familiar from Kaurismäki's previous films, and **Nuppu Koivu** for whom the role of Mirja the waitress is her first in a feature film. Koivu has previously acted e.g. in the short film *Jeanne d'Arc* (2009), directed by **Lauri Timonen** and produced by Sputnik.

In the role of Mazdak we see **Simon Hussein Al-Bazoon**, originally from Iraq, who has since his youth performed with several amateur theatres in Finland, in short films and ads, taught dance and made dance choreographies. The role of Mazdak is Al-Bazoon's first in a feature film.

The film also includes parts played by **Kaija Pakarinen**, **Niroz Haji**, **Kati Outinen**, **Maria Järvenhelmi**, **Milka Ahlroth**, **Sulevi Peltola**, **Matti Onnismaa**, **Hannu-Pekka Björkman**, **Punntti Valtonen**, **Taneli Mäkelä**, **Ville Virtanen**, **Elina Knihtilä**, **Elias Westerberg** and **Tommi Korpela**.

Musical numbers are performed by **Tuomari Nurmio** (both solo and with the Dumari ja Spuget line-up), **Ismo Haavisto**, **Marko Haavisto** ja **Poutahaukat**, and **Harri Marstio** and **Antero Jakoila**.



AKI KAURISMÄKI

*Writer, director,
editor and producer*

Films as director:

- 1981 SAIMAA GESTURE (co-dir. with Mika Kaurismäki)
- 1983 CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
- 1985 CALAMARI UNION
- 1986 SHADOWS IN PARADISE
ROCK 'Y VI (short)
- 1987 HAMLET GOES BUSINESS
THRU THE WIRE (short)
RICH LITTLE BITCH (short)
- 1988 ARIEL
L.A. WOMAN (short)
- 1989 LENINGRAD COWBOYS GO AMERICA
DIRTY HANDS (TV film)
THE MATCH FACTORY GIRL
- 1990 I HIRED A CONTRACT KILLER
- 1991 LA VIE DE BOHEME
THOSE WERE THE DAYS (short)
- 1992 THESE BOOTS (short)
- 1993 TOTAL BALALAIKA SHOW - HELSINKI CONCERT (doc.)
TAKE CARE OF YOUR SCARF, TATJANA
LENINGRAD COWBOYS MEET MOSES
- 1996 DRIFTING CLOUDS
- 1996 ALWAYS BE HUMAN (short)
- 1999 JUHA
- 2002 DOGS HAVE NO HELL (short)
THE MAN WITHOUT A PAST
- 2004 BICO (short)
- 2006 LIGHTS IN THE DUSK
- 2007 THE FOUNDRY (short)
- 2011 LE HAVRE
- 2012 O TASQUEIRO (short)
- 2012 THE PIEKSÄMÄKI RAILWAYSTATION BLUES (short)
- 2017 THE OTHER SIDE OF HOPE

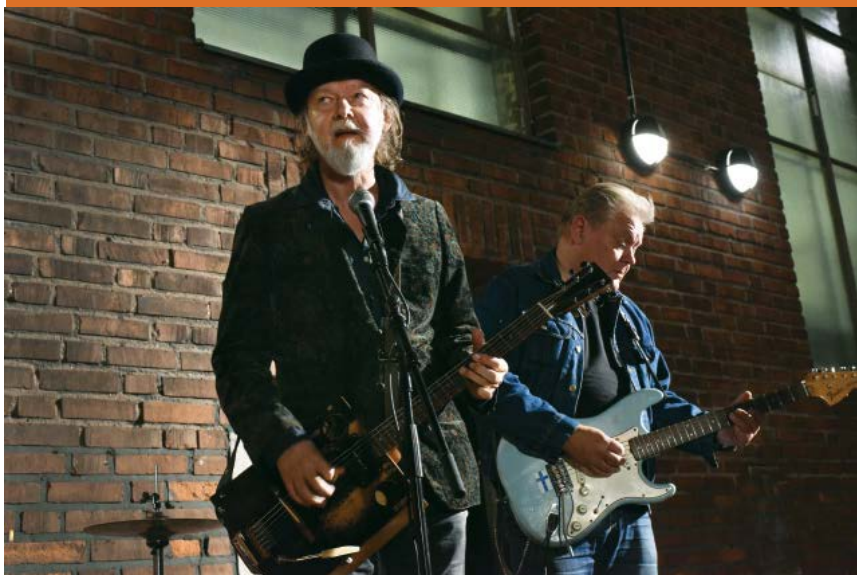
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