



THE MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION PRESENTS
A JSC PRODUCTION

Live: From Bethlehem

"A truly superb film...exceptional in its nuanced portrayal of the forces that come to bear on media production in the Palestinian Territories."

- Dr. Michael Curtin | author of *Playing to the World's Biggest Audience*

Running Time: 36 minutes

For further information about this film, please contact:

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Matt Sienkiewicz and Joseph C. Sousa | Producer & Director
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PRAISE FOR *LIVE: FROM BETHLEHEM*

"fascinating..."

- *The Chicago Reader*

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"*Live From Bethlehem* goes behind the cameras and beyond the standard frameworks of seeing the Palestinians as either antagonists or victims in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict...This thought provoking, action packed, and sensitive documentary is a must-see for anyone interested in how journalists work, and for anyone who wants an up close look at working life under occupation."

- Dr. Amahl Bishara | Professor of Anthropology at Tufts University

"*Live from Bethlehem*...gives viewers, especially those of us without first-hand experience of the region, a sense of the conflicting political and social forces journalists must deal with as they strive to provide Palestinians with a source of reliable news. This film is an important contribution to both popular and scholarly understandings of the Middle East."

- Dr. Kyle Conway | Professor of English at University of North Dakota

FILM SYNOPSIS

The Bethlehem-based Ma'an News Agency (MNA) emerged out of the ashes of the second Intifada to become the only independent news network in the Palestinian Territories and an increasingly prominent and influential journalistic force in the wider Middle East. *Live from Bethlehem* tells MNA's remarkable story. It chronicles the agency's struggles and successes through the eyes of the station's reporters, producers, and photographers, in the process quietly revealing the humanity of ordinary Palestinians as they go about their daily business. The documentary trains its focus on people more than on abstract issues, yet it never loses sight of the myriad social and political forces and pressures that Ma'an journalists are forced to negotiate as they try to gather and report balanced information. What results is an admirably nuanced portrait of how news gets produced, and how Palestinians live, in one of the world's most troubled regions.

NOTABLE QUOTES FROM *LIVE: FROM BETHLEHEM*

RAED OTHMAN: “We are trying to build a country here. We’re starting from scratch to build a country. So I think the role of media, the first role, is to tell the people the story, what’s happening here, without interfering.”

WISAM KUTOM: “At Ma’an, we decided that we want something that we would report on. I don’t want Fatah to tell me what to say, and I don’t want Hamas to tell me what to say. I don’t want even the president to tell me what to say. I want to say whatever I want to say, because I’m part of this people and I have my views and I have my opinions.”

GEORGE KHLIFI: “Having good media for children in Palestine is important for more than one reason. First of all, because children everywhere, not only in Palestine, are the people of the future. It is very important to try to maintain for them the notion that they are children. Yes, children in Palestine grow up too quickly, because they have really to confront realities that usually in other societies they do not.”

NASSAR LAHAM: “I hate occupation. I’m against occupation. I’m a fighter against occupation. But this does not mean that I’m enemy of any human being.”

FADI TANAS: “Anytime you might be shot, injured, killed. Two rubber bullets in my leg, tear gas goes from the Israeli soldier machine gun straight to my chest, and it was in close range. I got stoned in my back from Palestinians. So we are always getting shot from, Palestinians and Israelis. In our region, photographers are beaten, are shot, are killed. Why in other places they have all the respect? Cause just we are Palestinians? We are just, we are not demonstrator, we are not throwing stones on Israeli soldiers, we are not holding guns or weapons, we are just holding our cameras.”

FADI TANAS: “At the beginning, when I start seeing my photos on Google, Yahoo, AP, Reuters, AFP, Washington Times, New York Times, feel that you are not in prison, like we feel here, surrounded with check points and walls. You are here, but your work is surrounded all over the world. You feel proud about it, and you feel that you have done something. You made something.”

RAED OTHMAN: “We don’t judge the people because of their religion, because of their color, because of their beliefs, because we judge the people because of their work. If they do anything wrong, if it is the occupation, or it’s United States, or it is Hamas or it is Fatah or it is al Qaeda, we speak against al Qaeda, we speak against Condoleezza Rice. We speak against Hamas, we speak against Fatah, we speak against the fighters, we speak against these people who throw the rockets from Gaza, because we believe that these things are touching the human rights.”

WISAM KUTOM: “One of the biggest projects that we would dream to be is the news bulletin, TV news bulletin. And reach the whole Palestinian Territories with a central news bulletin, and this will be the first time that independent media offering in Palestine would do a TV news bulletin.”

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

JOSEPH SOUSA | Producer/Director

Joseph Sousa is an Emmy-nominated producer, director, and writer of non-fiction television and independent documentaries. Sousa has produced programs for PBS, Animal Planet, The Discovery channel, Spike TV, Hearst-Argyle, and Portuguese satellite network RTP-International. Sousa is currently producing a one-hour documentary about Alaska for the Discovery Channel and recently completed work on the acclaimed Animal Planet series, Dogs 101.

MATT SIENKIEWICZ | Producer/Director/Cinematographer

Matt Sienkiewicz is an Emmy-nominated screenwriter and documentarian, as well as a PhD candidate at the University of Wisconsin. His credits include the award winning comedy series Windy Acres and the acclaimed television documentary Festa. His academic research focuses on Western involvement in Middle Eastern broadcasting initiatives and ethnic representation in American media. He has articles forthcoming in The Journal of Film and Video and The Community Media Reader.

AMIRA HANANIA | Producer

At the age of 24, Amira Hanania became a reporter at the Ma'an Network. She now works with Lebanon's Future TV, serving as its correspondent in Ramallah. She has produced documentaries for Al-Jazeera and Egyptian satellite stations.

CREDITS

A Media Education Foundation Production

Produced & Directed by Matt Sienkiewicz and Joseph C. Sousa

Co-Producer | Amira Hanania

Associate Producers | Emily Sienkiewicz, Vera Ventura

Videography | Matt Sienkiewicz

Editors | Walter Blazewicz, Cob Carlson, Joseph C. Sousa

Assistant Editor | Ethan Schwelling

Audio Mix | Joel Schwelling

Colorist | Dave Allen

Translation | Nidal Al-Azraq

UNITED STATES • 2009 • 36 mins • Shot on Mini-DV • Color • NTSC • BETA/DVD/DVCAM
Aspect Ratio 4:3 • Stereo • English/English Subtitles

CONTACT INFORMATION

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The non-profit Media Education Foundation produces and distributes documentary films and other educational resources to inspire critical reflection on the social, political, and cultural impact of American mass media.

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