

# KINO LORBER

Presents

## A STRANGE COURSE OF EVENTS

A film by RAPHAËL NADJARI

2013 Cannes Film Festival

Israel | 100 minutes | 2013

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## Synopsis

Hospital worker Shaul (Ori Pfeffer) doesn't really get on with his shopping-mall-employee dad, Shimon (Moni Moshonov), nor his new age step-mother, Bati (Michaela Eshet). As such, he has not seen them for five years and in this time his life has had a turn for the worse, with a recent divorce and custody battles. One day, Shaul sporadically decides to come up and stay with his father for several days, despite refusing to be friendly with him. During this time, Bati, much to the irritation of Shaul, tries to get the two men to talk to one another. However her plans fall flat. After Shaul injures himself by slipping on a fish at the local market and his own young daughter, Michal (Bethany Gorenberg), arrives suddenly to be at the aid of her father. Her presence eases the tension between the two men, resulting in them rebuilding their relationship.

## Cast

Shaul.....	ORI PFEFFER
Shimon.....	MONI MOSHONOV
Bati.....	MICHELA ESHET
Orly.....	MAYA KENIG
Michale.....	BETHANY GORENBERG

## Crew

Directed by.....	RAPHAËL NADJARI
Written by.....	RAPHAËL NADJARI & GEOFFROY GRISON
Produced by... ..	CAROLINE BONMARCHAND, MAREK ROSENBAUM, ITAI TAMIR
Casting by.....	AMIT BERLOWITZ
Music.....	JOCELYN SOUBIRAN & JEAN-PIERRE SLUYS
Production Director.....	MAHA ASSAL
First Assistant.....	YONTAN ROZENBAUM
Director of Photography.....	LAURENT BRUNET
Editing.....	SIMON BIRMAN
Sound.....	MICHAEL GUREVITCH
Sound Mixing.....	CHEN HARPAZ
Costumes.....	YAM BRUSILOVSKY
Make Up.....	MEIRAV BOSHUSHA-HOROVITZ
Colorist.....	CHRISTOPH BOUSQUET

# KINO LORBER

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Raphaël Nadjari (Writer/Director)

Raphaël Nadjari was born in France in 1971. He studied fine art and soon after moved to New York where he made his first feature film, *The Shade*, which was selected in A Certain Regard. In the three years that followed Raphaël completed his New York trilogy: *I Am Josh Polonski's Brother* (Berlin Forum), then *Apartment #5C* (Director's Fortnight). In 2003 he made his first film in Israel, *Avanim* (Berlin Panorama 2004), followed by *Tehilim* in 2007, which was presented in competition in Cannes. With *A Strange Course of Events*, his sixth feature film, Raphaël has found the opportunity to work again with *Apartment #5C* actor Ori Pfeffer, and to explore a new genre blending melancholic and burlesque elements and his presented at the Director's Fortnight.

### Filmography

2013 *A Strange Course of Events*  
2009 *A History of Israeli Cinema*  
2007 *Tehilim*  
2004 *Avanim*  
2002 *Apartment #5C*  
2001 *I am Josh Polonski's Brother*  
1999 *The Shade*

### ORI PFEFFER (Shaul)

The son of an Israeli architect and Australian psychologist, Ori Pfeffer was born and raised in Jerusalem. He split his childhood between Israel, Australia, and the United States, finally landing at the Lee Strasberg Institute, where he completed his acting studies. After cutting his teeth in several off-Broadway productions, Ori headed west with the hit show, *De La Guarda*. In 2001, he left to work on *Seduced by a Thief* (Ron Perlman, Sean Young), his first professional film. Raphaël Nadjari gave him the lead role in *Apartment #5C*, which premiered at Director's Fortnight in Cannes. Ori currently shuttles between projects in Hollywood and Tel Aviv, where he stars in TV and films.

2010 *Jewish Connection* by KEVEN ASCH  
2008 *You Don't Mess with the Zohan* by DENNIS DUGAN  
2005 *Munich* by STEVEN SPIELBERG  
2004 *Shallow Ground* by SHELDON WILSON  
2001 *Apartment # 5C* by RAPHAËL NADJARI  
2000 *Jewel of the Sahara* by ARIEL VROMEN

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## **MONI MOSHONOV (Shimon)**

Moni Moshonov was born in 1951 in Sofia, Bulgaria. At the age of four, he immigrated with his family to Israel. He grew up in Ramla and after studying drama at Tel Aviv University he joined the Haifa Theater. In 1977 he made his first appearance in the film *Masa Alunkot* directed by Yehuda Ne'eman. He is one of the most famous actors in Israel and pursues his international film career thanks to great directors like James Gray, Amos Gitaï and Dover Koshashvili while continuing to act on stage.

2009 *Jaffa* by KEREN YEDAYA

2009 *Mrs. Moskowitz and the Cats* by JORGE GURVICH

2008 *Two Lovers* by JAMES GRAY

2007 *We Own the Night* by JAMES GRAY

2003 *Matana MiShamayim (Gift from Above)* by DOVER KOSHASHVILI

2001 *Kedma* by AMOS GITAÏ

2001 *Hatuna Meuheret (Late Marriage)* by DOVER KOSHASHVILI

1986 *Every Time We Say Goodbye* by MOSHE MIZRAHI

## **MICHAELA ESHET (Bati)**

Michaela Eshet was born in 1962 in Hadera, Israel. She acts for the stage and cinema, and has starred in films by directors such as Joseph Cedar and Dover Koshashvili. In 2004, she received a Best Actress nomination from the Israeli Film Academy for her performance in the film *Campfire*.

2012 *Ende der Schonzeit (Closed Season)* by FRANZISKA SCHLOTTERER

2011 *Yaldehy Rosh Ha-Memshala* by NOA BEN-ARTZI AND SHAHAR MAGEN

2010 *Hitganvut Yehidim (Infiltration)* by DOVER KOSHASHVILI

2010 *Bein HaShmashot (Dusk)* by ALON ZINGMAN

2004 *Medurat Hashevet (Campfire)* by JOSEPH CEDAR

1994 *Ahare Hahagim* by AMNON RUBINSTEIN

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## 5 QUESTIONS TO RAPHAËL NADJARI

***Please tell us more about your intentions for the project A Strange Course of Events...***

I wanted to continue to address the question of family in a different way than in my previous films, but with more of a focus on characterization. When we were talking about the project with the producers, we really wanted to follow the itinerary of a contemporary forty year-old man - someone who, without being us, would have a parallel way of looking at life, who we could feel connected to. In order to avoid stereotypes, we had to be open to different images and not be too set in where we were going. We had to defeat our own wills as best as we could in order to devise something else. Of course this didn't go exactly as planned - which is why the process was such a journey!

***How did you proceed to apply these intentions? Can you talk about the writing process?***

With Geoffroy [Grison, co-writer] we were careful to allow the door to the imagination to open - while consciously trying our best to avoid the systematic and the psychological. Thanks to this process, we literally shot the film on paper a first time, talking and drawing a storyboard in parallel on two continents and regularly sharing each new segment with the producers, who were seeing the process unfold in front of their eyes. It was a lot of fun to show them the storyboard every week. So what was supposed to create anxiety - because a film must be written down on paper in order to be shot - was all about pleasure in this way.

***Could you describe the relationship between the main character, Shaul (Ori Pfeiffer), and his father Shimon (Moni Moshnov)?***

The relationship between a son and his father was already the subject of my film Tehilim, which was shot in Jerusalem. In this film the father disappeared, creating a vacuum of meaning - and the film was about the search for the father - a matter of faith against the void. In A Strange Course of Events, the son (Shaul) goes back to his father to find that he cannot recognize himself in this land anymore. This relationship is about faith and the definition of love, and it was a starting point for the actors. The cast and crew was amazingly dedicated and patient with the experimenting we had to do, even though we only had twenty shooting days. Ori and Moni had never worked together before, and it soon became apparent to me that they wanted to switch parts - to play each other's roles - which was great. We created a father-and-son body language and past stories that they used on set - they had only met four times before shooting. Working with Moni was also an achievement in itself for me, because even though I already knew him, it wasn't until we got to set that I discovered how generous he is with his acting partners. And when Michaela Eshet (Shimon's new partner in life) entered into the game we started playing like a jazz band that flowed to the rhythm rather than following a road map. In the tension of the search, we all learned something about the process.

# KINO LORBER

***A Strange Course of Events is a film that mixes various genres, how did you come to combine them?***

This is a film that refuses to know what it will be. The accumulation of what we were able to get on set always hinted at the genre. Then we harmonized everything through the gaze of the main actor (Ori Pfeffer), whose character was making this trip to his father. Every step of the process from shooting to editing, to sound mixing to music recording, and even the color grading, enabled us to create the strange atmosphere that unifies the entire film in an organic way. My DOP, Laurent Brunet, and I decided to shoot the entire film with a 60mm fixed lens. This allowed us to blend subjective and objective view points and gives the impression of seeing through the character's eyes. Simon Birman [editor] and I spent hours and hours watching every take and we edited throughout the shoot to make sure we were capturing the story. The music score by Jocelyn Soubiran and Jean-Pierre Sleuys also came in to reinforce the character's different states. We went through the story looking to convey meaning in scenes that apparently did not have one in the first place - something that conscious writing cannot do. This is how we managed to create some sort of sense of non-coincidence between events - this *Strange Course of Events*!

***The film is entirely shot in Israel (the action takes place in Haifa): What does it mean to shoot in Israel today?***

It was very beautiful to go back to Haifa and to look at it in a different way than when I was a child. Just like with New York, I had the impression that I had to do another film in Haifa if I really wanted to enter the city. The same is also true for Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. My films don't represent countries or cities as such, instead they go through them as I listen to the language of their world with my own internal filter. They are places that I know I will revisit and feel as if I don't know them at all. I have learned to listen more than to say, to watch more than to show. I think this paradox also creates my filmmaking grammar.