

# WINNERS

(AKA, Barandeha)

PRESS KIT



**A Film By Hassan Nazer**

UK/Iran | Family Drama | Farsi | Scope | Colour | 5.1 | 85 Mins

**Bari International Film & TV Festival (2023)**

**Official UK Entry, 95th Academy Awards (2023) - Best International Feature**

**Audience Award Winner, EIFF 2022 (Edinburgh International Film Festival)**

**BIFA Award Winner Raindance Discovery Award, Best Screenplay and Breakthrough Producer (2022)**

**Best UK Feature Nominee, Raindance Film Festival (2022)**

**Nominee, Best British Feature, Dinard Festival Du Film Britannique (2022)**

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## LOG LINE

When a precious statue goes missing in Iran, two children race the authorities to return the treasure to its rightful owner.

## SYNOPSIS

In a poor Iranian village, the children work hard to support their families. One day nine-year-old Yahya and his friend Leyla find a precious statuette in the desert. As the authorities search for the lost treasure, sharing Yahya's passion for cinema, Yahya's boss Nasser Khan (Reza Naji) decides to help the children find its rightful owner.

## STRAPLINES

For The Love Of Cinema

Dare to Dream





## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

**Winners** is a story of a nine-year-old boy's passion for cinema and the reawakening of an old actor's love for the medium, a man who has forgotten and buried his identity because of the hardships of his life.

I wrote the script bearing in mind how films allow us to dare to dream, how cinema is a perfect escape. When I had my synopsis and treatment for *Winners*, I decided to meet with Reza Naji himself, my childhood icon.

I remember he arrived in worn clothes, looking a little aged, and he immediately took an expensive looking box from his old bag.

Inside - wrapped in red velvet - was his Berlinale Silver Bear (for Majid Majidi's *The Song of Sparrows*). The statue was extremely sacred to Mr Reza. He is a very simple artist living a very simple life and often unemployed. He's so caught-up in surviving daily life in Iran, he sometimes forgets his achievements!

**Casting** non-professional children was my aim for *Winners*. They were natural and sometimes rough with each other, how kids are. And they delivered my childhood vision.

As a young boy I grew up in Garmsar selling plastic to make money to buy and rent DVDs, to also escape from my own hardships. Those films kept me in a dream-like place.

And Parsa Naghami (Yahya) also comes from Garmsar. In his audition, he seemed very close to how I was as a boy. Without any rehearsal, Parsa understood what I wanted and for me, he was Yahya, very natural and real in front of the camera.

**Winners** is a peaceful offering, a reminder of classical Iranian films and celebration of the work of all Iranian artists as well as world cinema. I wanted to tell a story that's a bridge between my two homes (UK & Iran), that ties cultures peacefully and harmoniously together through universal themes, with a message that hardship can be overcome through hope and dreams.

**Diversity** is important to me. In the film, I wanted to give voice to a silenced, unheard and under-represented minority. In Iran there are over one million Afghan refugees living in hardship, so I chose to make two of my main characters a widowed Afghan mother and her son (Yahya), to give them voice and raise their profile.

Personally I am against all forms of discrimination and as a filmmaker with first-hand experience of this life, I am strongly pro-refugee. As well as paying tribute to Mr. Panahi and other great artist's achievements, *Winners* should remind the audience to be aware of its environment and those in need around us.

**Location** is extremely important to me. Location is a character without dialogue.

In this production, I had to fight with the authorities to use authentic locations for the story. For instance, the landfill site. Shooting carefully with the children on top of those mountains

of rubbish was so important to me. That's how I grew up running around with my friends!

And *Winners'* main location - the city of Garmsar - is very earthy and dry beneath those peach-like hills. And Padeh Village itself, a historic silk-road village built around its crumbling ancient citadel, everything eroded by the wind and rain.

This is where I was born and grew-up and bringing these locations to the screen generates a great sense of nostalgia in itself.

**My hope and vision for *Winners*** was to create something unique and interesting from my own background - to tie two cultures together - to tell a story close to where I grew up - to draw an audience inside Iranian culture - to appreciate everyday life in my village and to enjoy the colour and sounds of that land.

In Arash Seifia Jamadi, I chose a cinematographer who could capture the essence of this world. We wanted to create an inviting and welcoming picture of Iran, to reflect its beauty and offer the audience a great experience for 85 minutes!

I have been living in the UK for over two decades now. *Winners* is a homage to my native country, uniting my vision as filmmaker with my nostalgic memories of childhood, where my culture and the landscape of Iran is so important to me.

# BIOGRAPHIES

## Hassan Nazer - Writer/Director

HASSAN NAZER is a British writer/director of Iranian origin, based in Scotland.

Starting life as a child actor in Iran, from an early age Hassan was involved in directing for the stage and short film. He studied theatre at the Art University in Arak before leaving Iran for Europe as a refugee in 2000. Aged 18, he arrived in the UK before going on to study film and media in Aberdeen in 2006.

Hassan's previous feature films have been released in Iran and internationally: *Black Day*, *Here Iran*, *Utopia*, and *The Check Post*. His latest *Winners* is co-financed by Screen Scotland and financed and produced by Sylph Productions and World Film Productions in association with Edge City Films (All UK). *Winners* won the Audience Award at the EIFF 2022, as well as being the official UK submission for the International Feature Film category at the 95th Academy Awards (2023). *Winners* is a winner of BIFA Raindance Discovery Award.

Hassan was a Jury Member at the All Lights India International Film Festival (ALIIFF), SAARC Film Festival, and BAFTA Scotland. He is an official member of the Producers Guild of Iran.

## Reza Naji (Naser Kahn)

Reza Naji is an Iranian actor and iconic figure of Persian cinema. He started his career in theatre as a teenager and whilst serving in the Iranian army, he continued to perform in different roles on stage.

His first significant part in film came with Majid Majidi's *Children Of Heaven* (1997), an Iranian classic which proved an immediate breakthrough for Reza.

Since then, he has played many roles in cinema and television, perhaps his most notable being Majidi's leading man once again, this time in the wonderful *The Song Of Sparrows* (2008). For his performance, Reza won a Silver Bear at Berlinale (2008), confirming his reputation as one of Iran's greatest talents.



## Nadira Murray - Producer

Nadira grew up in Central Asia during the Soviet Union era and has been living in the UK for almost 20 years. Both her parents worked as theatre actors and she was immersed in the arts from a young age; working as an actress and going on to study European Theatre Arts at Rose Bruford (2006) and Drama Studio London (2007). She eventually found her passion lay behind the camera as a writer, director and producer.

Nadira studied at the Media Business School (Ronda, 2014) before establishing her company **Sylph Productions**, which aims to connect East and West through audiovisual experience and promotes ethnically diverse voices in UK. Her short films have traveled across the world and taken part at many OSCAR & BAFTA qualifying film festivals.

Nadira recently attended **Rotterdam Producer's Lab** (2020) where she secured a commission to produce *Fracture* (Jon K. Jones), a sci-fi short for 20th Digital Century / Hulu.

*Winners* is Nadira's debut feature as a producer. In the midst of other successes with the film, she has been selected for BIFA Springboard, a yearly pioneering programme designed to support emerging UK producers. Nadira is winner of BIFA's Breakthrough Producer Award (2022).

<https://www.sylphproductions.com/>

## Paul Welsh - Producer

Paul Welsh is a screenwriter, producer and commissioner based in Scotland.

As a producer, his debut film *Skeletons* (w/d Nick Whitfield) won **EIFF's Michael Powell Award for Best New British Feature** (2010) and received **BAFTA and BIFA nominations for Outstanding Debut and Best Achievement in Production** (2011). Distributed by Soda Pictures (UK).

Paul's second film *Lore* (w/d Cate Shortland) premiered at Locarno, TIFF, LFF (2012), winning numerous awards including Australian and German Academy Awards. *Lore* was also Australia's nominee for the Best Foreign Language Oscar (2013). Co-produced by Porchlight (Sydney), Rohfilm (Berlin). Sold internationally by Memento Films (Paris) including Curzon-Artificial Eye (UK), Music Box (US) and Transmission (NZ/Auz).

His third feature, *Lost In France* (w/d Niall McCann), was an Irish-Scottish documentary co-production financed by Screen Scotland and Screen Ireland. The film premiered at CPH-Dox, EIFF and GFF (2016/17) with Curzon- Artificial Eye (UK) and Wildcard Distribution (Eire) handling locally.

Over the last 25 years - as developer, commissioner and producer - Paul has also designed and managed many talent "incubator" programmes, working with funds and broadcasters including Screen Scotland (inc SFTN), BFI (inc NETWORK), BBC Films, Film 4, UKFC (inc DIGITAL SHORTS), EM Media, Screen Australia (inc SPRINGBOARD), Screen NSW and Screen West.

With 100 + short film credits alongside his features, Paul has helped kick-start many successful careers in film and TV across Britain and Australia. A graduate in Linguistics and Artificial Intelligence (MA, Edinburgh), Paul is a voting member of BAFTA and sometimes lecturer on film.

<https://imdb.to/3W3kFoj>

<https://edgecityfilms.co.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/paul.a.welsh.94>

<https://twitter.com/PaulAWelsh>

# CREDITS

Written and Directed by Hassan Nazer

Produced by Nadira Murray & Paul Welsh

Executive Producer - Jennifer Armitage

## CAST in order of appearance

Reza Naji	Nasser Khan
Parsa Maghami	Yahya
Malalai Zikria	Mother
Mir Taher Mazloomi	Taxi Driver
Ava Asilian	Taxi Passenger
Shahzad Kamalzadeh	Post Office Manager
Erfan Mosaferchi	Post Office Worker
Mahmoud Ja'fari	Karam
Hossein Abedini	Sabir
Ezzatollah Ramezani Far	Amoo Ezzat
Helia Mohammad Khani	Leila
Asghar Semsarzadeh	Antique Shop Owner
Mohsen Fadaei Bash	Village Councillor
Rahman Mohammadi	Jafar

## ADDITIONAL CAST

Mani Noor Mohammadi  
Mahan Noor Mohammadi  
Arshida Fadaei Bash  
Aylin Najafi  
Hassan Ghanbari  
Arnika Mohammadi  
Arshia Nazer  
Romisa Ravansoor  
Sara Mohammadi  
Arash Nazer  
Aynaz Nowrouzi  
Anita Ghobad Poor  
Mehdi Saberi  
Amir Ali Emadian  
Saman Ahmadian  
Abbas Asgari

Line Producer      Mohsen Mosaferchi

Director of Photography      Arash Seifie Jamadi

Original Music by      Mohsen Amini  
Mohammad Saeed Shayan

Editors      Dave Arthur  
Hassan Nazer  
Reza Jouze

Production Designer      Mohammad Mohammadi

Sound Designer	William Aikman
Colourist	Colin Brown
Re-Recording Mixer	John Cobban
Additional Dialogue	Hamed Emani

#### **DIRECTOR'S DEPARTMENT**

1st Assistant Director	Rahman Mohammadi
2nd Assistant Director	Afshin Hedayat
3rd Assistant Director	Forogh Lesani
Script Supervisor	Leila Morabbi

#### **PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT**

Production Manager	Mojtaba Noor Mohammadi
Production Coordinator	Farbod Kiani Oskoei
Production Assistants	Navid Eisa Poor Mohammad Rasti Almani Amir Khalafi Amir Yourd Khani Alireza Mohammadi Akbar Tallh Mohammad Abbas Reza Kamal Rajab Poor
Production Accounts	Ali Mohammad Babaei Abdollah Jabbari Marzieh Torab Poor

#### **CAMERA DEPARTMENT**

1st Camera Assistant	Jalal Alifekr
Additional Assistants	Ghasem Akbar Zadeh Mohammad Biabani Alireza nari Nejad Amir Arsalan Babaei
Camera Operator	Mehrzad Nowrouzi
Photographer	Alireza Faraj Poor
Cine Mobile	Mohammad Biabani
Crane Operators	Davoud Valad Khani Hossein Mosafer
Camera Technical Support	Studio Shantia
Digital Laboratory	Pishgaman Aria Co
Company Director	Fariborz Kamrani
Company Secretary	Maryam Kamrani
Administration Manager	Homan Shidrang
DI Technician	Hamid Mehrabadi
Coordinator	Akram Moghimi
Assembly Editor	Hamid Bashe Ahangar

#### **ART DEPARTMENT**

Art Director	Mohammad Mohammadi
Costume Designer	Hamed Mohammadi

Art Department Assistant     Ashkan Mirzaei  
Costume Assistants             Hamed Mohamadian  
   Razieh Keshvari Sabir

**HAIR & MAKE-UP**

Make-Up Artist                 Mohammad Zoghi  
  
Make-Up Assistants             Elnaz Tavallay  
   Masoumeh Shahavand  
   Mohadeseh Toolaei  
   Mostafa Nazari

**SOUND**

Production Sound Recordist     Ja'far Alian Nasab  
  
Sound Assistants                 Hamid Ghavami  
   Ali Reza Asgari  
   Mohammad Javad Akbari  
  
Additional Sound Design         John Cobban  
   Mohammad Saeed Shayan  
  
Sound Editing                     William Aikman  
   Mohammad Saeed Shayan  
   John Cobban

**MUSIC**

Original Composition by         Mohsen Amini  
   Mohammad Saeed Shayan

**Musical Artists**

Acoustic Guitar                 Reza Haghighi  
Concertina                         Mohsen Amini  
Kamalin                             Arsam Babaei  
Santoor                             Atege Nazari  
Drum                                 Habib Arman

Recording Studio (Iran)         Studio Mehr Ava Nava

**PICTURE AND SOUND POST BY BLAZING GRIFFIN (GLASGOW)**

Head of Post Production         Ross MacRae  
Head of Production             Joanna Clements  
Head of Tech Operations         Alex Keane  
Operations Manager             Courtney Welsh  
  
Technical Manager               Paul Martin  
  
Post Production Manager         Lauren Tyack  
  
Online Editor                     Lewis Carmichael

VFX Artist	Sam Goodwin
Conform Artist	Stephen Beavis
QC Technician	Laura Wedlake
Opening Credits (Farsi)	Masoud Shayan
End Credits	Martin Allison

#### **TRANSPORT**

Transport Manager	Majid Azizi
Drivers	Ali Akbar Divan Darri, Ali Hamed, Yousof Trab Poor, Reza Mohammadi, Mehran Yousefi, Milad Karimi, Feyz Ahmad Rezaei, Moharram Ghola, Saeed Foroozan, Ali Kamali, Ebrahim Khalafi, Golam Mohsen, Masoud Pashae, Reza Kashmir, Eskandar Yousefi Aghdan, Mohammad Reza Eisa Pour (RIP)

#### **CATERING**

Adiban Self Service  
Vishna Patim Restaurant  
Deh Namak Restaurant

#### **INSURANCE**

WK Insurance Group (UK)  
Asia Insurance (Iran)

#### **LEGALS & ACCOUNTS for Sylph Productions**

Katharine Otway (Kenren Media Lawyers)  
John O'Neill (Accountant)

#### **DESIGN & MARKETING**

Jen Davies

#### **FOR CREATIVE SCOTLAND**

Executive Director	Isabel Davies
Head of Scripted	Kieran Hannigan
Legal Manager	Mark Wilson
Legals	Neil Gillard, Wiggin LLP