

GREENWICH

E N T E R T A I N M E N T

INCITEMENT



Directed by Yaron Zilberman

Runtime: 123 minutes

Press Contacts:

PMK•BNC

Marian Koltai-Levine

Marian.Koltai@pmkbnc.com

Nina Baron

Nina.Baron@pmkbnc.com

Wey Lin

Wey.Lin@pmkbnc.com

Distributor Contact:

Greenwich Entertainment

Andy Bohn

abohn@greenwichtertainment.com

Zach Martin

zmartin@greenwichtertainment.com

Logline

For the first time on screen and based on true events, acclaimed writer-director Yaron Zilberman (*A Late Quartet*) chronicles the disturbing descent of a promising law student to a delusional ultranationalist obsessed with murdering his country's leader, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. *Incitement* is a gripping and unnerving look through the eyes of a murderer who silenced a powerful voice for peace.

Synopsis

In September 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin announces the Oslo Accords, which aim to achieve a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians after decades of violence. Yigal Amir, a law student and a devoted Orthodox Jew, cannot believe that his country's leader will cede territory that he and many others believe is rightfully - by the word of God - theirs.

As the prospect of a peaceful compromise approaches, Amir turns from a hot-headed political activist to a dangerous extremist. Consumed by anger and delusions of grandeur, he recruits fighters and steals weapons to form an underground militia intent on killing Palestinians. After his longtime girlfriend leaves him, Amir becomes even more isolated, disillusioned, and bitter. He soon learns of an ancient Jewish law, the Law of the Pursuer, that he believes gives him the right to murder Yitzhak Rabin. Convinced he must stop the signing of the peace treaty in order to fulfil his destiny and bring salvation to his people, Amir's warped mind sees only one way forward.

FILMMAKERS' STATEMENTS

On the evening of Saturday November 4, 1995, following a rally at the large public square in front of Tel Aviv City Hall in support of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians under the heading "Yes to Peace, No to Violence," an Orthodox Jew, a law student at Bar-Ilan University, fired three bullets at Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's back. Yitzhak Rabin was murdered that evening and the huge shadow cast by the assassination darkens the skies over Israel to this day. The possibility that in the state of Israel a prime minister would be assassinated was incomprehensible. The fact that the assassin was an observant Jew whose motivations for the killing were ideologically religious constituted a violation of one of the country's ultimate taboos. For all the citizens of Israel, this was the assassination of a prime minister in office. For the peace camp, this was the murder of a great leader who had taken a bold, unprecedented step, who had agreed to make peace with the Palestinian people in return for territories, who had tried to end, once and for all, the decades-long conflict between the two peoples. The murderer challenged Israeli democracy and aimed at putting an end to the peace process. Indeed, in the election held after the assassination, the leader of the opposition Benjamin Netanyahu, who strenuously opposed the peace process, was elected prime minister.

In *Incitement* we set out to tell the story of Rabin's assassination. At the very beginning of the process I asked myself, together with Ron Leshem with whom I wrote the script, what the most meaningful approach would be for telling the story in order to create a cinematic experience that transmits the magnitude of the catastrophe and from which we could learn the most about how it happened. We concluded that only through an examination of the assassin's journey could we arrive at new insights. How did a relatively normative right-wing activist become a cold-blooded political assassin? What can be learned from his journey which, although it occurred more than two decades ago, is more relevant than ever to our own times? The wounds are still bleeding and are far from having been treated effectively. The film grapples with these questions and through the cinematic exposition it presents all the personal, interpersonal and public forces that acted on the murderer.

We conducted thorough research for about four years, which included interviews with everyone involved in the affair, from the head of the Shin Bet General Security Service and the police investigators at the time to the assassin himself and members of his family. No stone was left unturned and every incident was confirmed. Of course we exercised artistic freedom in presenting interpersonal scenes. We also viewed hundreds of hours of archival footage from which we selected specific sequences to integrate into the film both in order to reinforce the dramatic effect and to demonstrate that things indeed happened the way they are depicted in the film.

For me, the greatest challenges were how to tell a story of which the end is known to everyone while maintaining suspense throughout the film, and how to tell the story of the assassination when the figure of the murderer leads the narrative without arousing empathy for him. These principles guided me throughout the process and to that end I used the artistic means I have at my disposal as a filmmaker. Above all, we chose to look the murderer and all those who

abetted the assassination (directly or indirectly) straight in the eye, giving them the opportunity to express their ideology and their arguments in order to show that at the end of the day all this led and will always continue to lead to despicable murder, to the path of violence and to a direct threat to democracy. In this sense, I hope that *Incitement* will serve as a warning to us all as well as an appeal to take personal and public responsibility for preventing the discourse of violence, the path of violence and the destruction of democracy.

- YARON ZILBERMAN - CO-WRITER & DIRECTOR

Many around the world have been losing their faith in democracy. A wave of separatism, nationalism and even fascism has swept up many countries. The political discourse is violent. Fearmongering is powerful, overwhelming rational discourse, showing deep division. In Israel, a deep gash is widening within our society. Some dream of replacing democracy with a religious state. A theocracy.

When it started, we had no idea how far the wave would go. When we sobered up, it was hard to imagine how it could possibly be stopped. It began with a political assassination. Tens of thousands of protesters called Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin 'a traitor', many cried out for his death. Rabbis provided a religious justification, legitimizing the death sentence as one decreed from above. Fearmongering and hatred became rampant in the media. Among these walked a right-wing, religious law student, incited by violent voices on the street and a harsh political atmosphere, a man subject to inferiority and rage, a twisted relationship with his mother, heartbreak from a romantic failure, and narcissistic religious fantasies about becoming a savior. He pulled the trigger for the masses that had brainwashed him. He fired his gun to silence the exhausting voices of the Israeli public discourse. The bullets that killed our Prime Minister opened a historic chapter that would change the face of Israel forever.

As writers, we always hope that art transforms the world with the truth. For six years, we were working out our grief, our rage, our wounded hope, and our deep desire to awaken people.

We wanted, for the first time, to, courageously, return to the killer, to visit the stations of his brainwashing, the dark and terrifying ideas that propelled him, and that today wish to shape Israeli society. To look at violent extremism through his messianic eyes. It has been the mission of all those involved, to reflect with fervent accuracy, the clear truth, for history's sake, while a growing part of the population believes in conspiracy theories and the killer himself has recently demanded a retrial.

While this film is a psychological thriller, a profile of a political assassin, it has been our lifework to bring to the screen a sharp, value-based message in defense of our future as a democracy, and in opposition to the populist discourse of hatred and political violence, anywhere, globally.

- RON LESHEM, CO-WRITER

CAST AND CREW BIOGRAPHIES

Yaron Zilberman (Co-Writer & Director)

Yaron Zilberman directed, co-wrote, and produced his internationally acclaimed debut feature film *A Late Quartet* starring Academy Award® winners Philip Seymour Hoffman and Christopher Walken, Academy Award® nominee Catherine Keener and Silver Bear Winner Mark Ivanir. The film tells the story of a world-renowned New York based string quartet as its members struggle to stay together on the eve of their 25th anniversary season. *A Late Quartet* debuted to a standing ovation at the Toronto International Film Festival (Special Presentations) and has since been theatrically released all over the world. Zilberman's first film, the award-winning feature length documentary *Watermarks* was co-produced with HBO and ARTE, having both successful North American and international theatrical releases. The film tells the story of the champion women swimmers of the esteemed Jewish sports club Hakoah Vienna, as they reunite in their 80s to swim together one more time in the city from which they were forced to escape 65 years earlier. Zilberman graduated from M.I.T with a Bachelor's and Master's in Science. *Incitement* is his third film, an official selection at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival

Ron Leshem (Co-Writer)

Ron Leshem is a writer, producer, TV executive, and Academy Award®-nominated screenwriter. He serves as executive producer on HBO's *Euphoria*. He won Israel's top literary award, the Sapir Prize for Literature, and has been published in 22 languages. In 2005 he became chief of content and programming for Keshet TV, Israel's lead broadcasting network. Later, he co-created and wrote the drama series *Euphoria*, *The Gordin Cell*, and script-edited *Baker and the Beauty*.

As head of programming and content for Keshet he commissioned and oversaw the development and production of some of the most popular and successful Israeli TV series, including *Prisoners Of War* (the Israeli original version of *Homeland*), *The A-Word*, *Traffic Light* and *Arab Labor*.

His novel *Beaufort* (2005, original Hebrew *If There is a Heaven*) was on top of Israel's bestseller's list for 2 years. The film version of *Beaufort*, which Leshem co-authored, was nominated for Academy Award® for Best Foreign Language Film and won the Berlin International Film Festival Silver Bear for Best Director. *Beaufort* sold over 150,000 copies in Israel.

As a journalist, Leshem served as deputy chief editor and director of news division for the "Maariv" daily newspaper and chief reporter at Yediot Ahronot newspaper, for which he also wrote as an analyst for military affairs, and spent 3 years as a reporter in the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza.

Leshem is often invited to talk at Harvard, Yale, Brown, Boston University, University of Illinois, Brandeis, Wesleyan, Rutgers, Berkeley, San Jose State University, and University of Leeds.

YEHUDA NAHARI HALEVI (as YIGALAMIR)

Yehuda Nahari Halevi stars and is nominated for Best Actor in a Leading Role in the Israeli Ophir Awards for his performance in *Incitement*. Prior to *Incitement*, notable productions Halevi has worked on include *Zaguri Empire*, which became one of the most successful series to ever air on Israeli television and was later sold to Sony, and the film *Wedding Doll* which was nominated for Best Feature at the 2015 Ophir awards. Additional projects include: the popular musical sitcom *Our Song* on Yes Television, *Dancing Arabs* (directed by Eran Riklis) *Snails in the Rain* (directed by Yair Mozer) and the award-winning Israeli musical *Billy Schwartz*. Halevi was born and raised in Herzliya, Israel. For his mandatory army service he served in the elite special unit Charuv. Following his service he went on to study acting at Haderech Theatre School.

DANIELLA KERTESZ (as NAVA)

Daniella Kertesz, who was born in Jerusalem, has been an actress since 2007. At an early age she was cast in the lead part in the acclaimed TV drama series *Reds* and has been acting in a variety of quality drama series in Israel since. In 2013, she started alongside Brad Pitt in the Paramount Pictures production *World War Z*. More feature film work includes Israeli-French co-production *Operation Sunflower* and Robin Schmidt and Gez Medinger's *After Death*. Most recently, Daniella played the lead part in the miniseries *Autonomies*. The dramatic miniseries imagined a dystopian future for Israel and made significant impact, leading to the series participation in the prestigious Series Mania festival in Lille. Danielle is a graduate of highly acclaimed L'ecole internationale du theatre Jacques Lecoq in Paris as well as the William Esper Studio in New York.

SIVAN MAST (as MARGALIT)

Sivan Mast was born in Haifa, Israel and is an actress in the National Theatre Habima. Sivan's previous film and television roles include *Full Moon*, *Ga/is*, *Bnei Aruba* and *After the Bell* for Disney Israel. Past theatre roles include *Animal Farm* and *He Does As He Pleases*.

AMITAYYAISH BEN OUSILIO (as SHLOMO AMIR)

Amitay Yaish Ben Ousilio is a graduate of the Academy of Performing Arts Beit Zvi and a lecturer at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem. Amitay is an active theatre and film actor, appearing in various plays, movies and television shows in Israel. Previous films include *Zahar* (directed by Eran Riklis) and *Princess* (by Tali Shalom Ezer) which won many prizes in film festivals around the world. Previous series include *Asylum*, *City*, *The Good Cop* and *Dead For A Moment*.

AMAT RAVNITZKI (as OEULA AMIR)

Anat Ravnitzki's first stage experience was at the age of 14 in her hometown's representative band. During her military service she was as a member of the Central Command band and following this Ravnitzki studied acting at the Nissan Nativ acting Studio in Tel Aviv. Ravnitzki's first lead role was Grasha in the play *Caucasian Chalk Circle* at the Haifa Theatre. Ravnitzki has since moved behind the scenes directing stage plays for Yuoght and launching empowerment workshops for girls and women in theatre skills. In recent years Ravnitzki has been a puppeteer

therapist and emotional and media facilitator for at-risk youth and women at the shelter for battered women through puppet theatre therapy. In *Incitement*, Anat returns to the screen after more than 20 years to play the role of Geula Amir, Yigal Amir's mother.

About the Producers

DAVID SILBER

David Silber is a graduate of Hebrew University in Jerusalem in Jewish Philosophy and Kabala, and of Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design Fine Arts department. He was Chief curator of the Museum of Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv, and in 1992 produced "By my spirit", a mega cultural event in both Spain and Israel to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. In 1993, Mr. Silber launched a career as a cinema and television producer. Together with Micky Rabinovitz, they created Cinema Pardes, and in 1999, founded Metro Communications, a Tel Aviv-based production company specializing in international co-productions of full length feature films. In partnership with United King Films, Metro Communications became one of the leading production companies in Israel, producing over 30 feature films that have received both local and international acclaim participating in hundreds of film festivals worldwide, and receiving international distribution. Metro's main titles include Academy Award® nominee and Silver Bear Winner *Beaufort* (2007), Golden Lion and European Academy Award® winner *Lebanon* (2009), Tribeca Film Festival winner and Berlin Film Festival Panorama featured *Junction 48* (2016), Ophir Award winner *Baba Joon* (2015), alongside box office hits such as Avi Nesher's *The Other Story*, the top selling Israeli film of 2018, *This Is Sodom* (2010) and *Turn Left at the End of the World* (2004), two of Israel's top grossing films ever.

SHARON HAREL-COHEN

Sharon Harel-Cohen started her career as a producer at the age of 24 with the iconic Israeli classics *Halaha* and *Dizengoff 99*. She has produced and executive produced more than 50 films. Among her credits are Robert Altman's Academy Award-winning *Gosford Park* and *The Company*, David Cronenberg's *Spider*, Roman Polanski's *Death & The Maiden*, *Lucky Number Slevin*, starring Bruce Willis and Josh Hartnett, *Every Time We Say Goodbye* starring Tom Hanks, Merchant Ivory's *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*, Stephen Frears' *Tamara Drewe*, Academy Award® nominated *Albert Nobbs*, starring Glenn Close and Ralph Fiennes' *The Invisible Woman*. Following the production of *Incitement* she is currently producing Israel's biggest-budget eight-part TV Drama, *Valley of Tears*, written by Ron Leshem and Amit Cohen and directed by Yaron Zilberman. After building and selling Capitol films, a London-based production, finance and international distribution company with a library of over 100 films, Sharon launched WestEnd Films in 2008 in partnership with Maya Amsellem and Eve Schoukroun. She is a graduate in Chinese Studies and Western Philosophy from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

TAMAR SELA

Tamar Sela is a New York-based producer. She produced the feature length drama *A Late Quartet*, written and directed by Yaron Zilberman, starring Academy Award® winners Philip Seymour Hoffman and Christopher Walken, and two-time Academy Award® nominee Catherine

Keener. The critically acclaimed film premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2014 in the Special Presentations section, and was theatrically released in over 30 countries around the world. In 2005, Tamar formed the New York-based production company Opening Night Productions with Yaron Zilberman, the writer/director of *A Late Quartet* and *Watermarks*, an award-winning feature length documentary co-produced with HBO and ARTE, and theatrically distributed worldwide. Tamar's first feature film, *The Elephant King*, starring Academy Award® winner Ellen Burstyn and directed by fellow NYU Film School alumni Seth Grossman, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and was screened in film festivals nationwide. Tamar graduated with honors from the Film and Television department at New York University, Tisch School of the Arts.

RUTH CATS

Ruth Cats is an independent film producer and financier based in Tel Aviv and Rome, focusing on international co-productions of documentaries and feature films. Ruth's previous films include *A.K.A. Nadia*, directed by Tova Ascher which won the Critics' Award for Directing at the Jerusalem Film Festival, *Oriented*, a documentary directed by Jake Witzenfeld, *Past Life*, directed by Avi Nesher which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2016 to high critical acclaim and *Every Time I Die* directed by Rabi Michael.

MOSHE EDERY

Moshe Edery came from Morocco at a young age with his brother Leon and both worked at the local cinema in a small town in the south of Israel. The brothers' love of cinema paved the way to their success in the local industry culminating in the production of Israel movies and construction of the Cinema City cinema complex. In the 1970's, Moshe and Leon began to distribute films and formed United King Films. The company started its business interests in film distribution, broadening their scope and becoming leaders of local distribution, production and marketing of a vast range of entertainment and its related businesses. Moshe has produced films such as Academy Award® nominee and winner of the Best Director at the Berlin Film Festival, *Beaufort*, by Joseph Cedar, Academy Award® nominee and winner of the Best Screenplay at the Cannes Film Festival, *Footnote*, also directed by Joseph Cedar and winner of the Golden Lion for Best Film at Venice Film Festival, *Lebanon*, by Shmulik Maez.

CREDITS

DRAMA/THRILLER | ISRAEL | 123MINS | HEBREW

CAST

Yehuda Nahari Halevi: Yigal Amir
AmitayYaish Ben Ousilio: Shlomo Amir
Anat Ravnizky: Geula Amir
Yoav Levi: Hagai Amir
Dolev Ohana: Dror Adani
Raanan Paz: Avis hay Raviv
Sivan Mast: Margalit Har Shefi
Daniella Kertesz: Nava Vaid man

CREW

Director: Varon Zilberman
Scriptwriters: Ron Leshem, Varon Zilberman
Producers: David Silber, Sharon Harel, Tamar Sela, Varon Zilberman
Ruth Cats, Moshe Edery, Ron Leshem
Executive Producers: Netta Segal, Gideon and Dita Liron, Hezi Bezalel,
Uzi Zucker and Rivka Saker, Chaim and Shelly Katzman
Co-Producer: Sivan Cohen
Cinematographer: Amit Yasour
Production Designer: Danny Avshalom
Editors: ShiraArad, Yonatan Weinstein
Costume Designers: Laura Sheim, Naomi Bar Or
Makeup Artist: Maya Grestel
Casting Director: Orit Azoulay
Original Score by: Raz Mesinai
Soundtrack Designer: Alex Claude
Sound Recordist: Tully Chen
Line Producers: Angelica Berman, Avner Peled
1st Assistant Director: Ana Droeven Fried
Production Companies: Metro Communications, Opening Night Productions, WestEnd Films In
association with: United King Films, Sunshine Films, Reshet, Yes,
Udi Recanati and Meir Hadar, Tsaffi Shomer, Moshe Shomer, Mountaintop Productions, The
Israel Fund for Film Production