

Film Description

Title: American Ramadan

Production Company: JustSayGo, LLC.

Total Running Time: 48 minutes

Country of Production: USA

Year of Production: 2006

Shooting Format: Digital Video

Exhibition Format: DVD, miniDV, BetaSP, DigiBeta
Available in NTSC or PAL.

Synopsis:

"American Ramadan" is a bold and exciting new look at the American Muslim experience, produced and masterfully captured by first time director Naeem Randhawa. "American Ramadan" explores and reveals the holiest of rituals, shared by the Abrahamic traditions, but practiced by more – the act of Fasting for Faith. As diverse as the fabric of America, from the divorced Dad, the student coping with school, work and family life, the convert to Islam and his Indonesian wife, another interracial couple, and the wife of an incarcerated businessman – the reality of life is vividly and emotionally witnessed on film.

Filmed on location in Dallas and Los Angeles, the feature length documentary follows the lives of five American Muslim families during the Month of Ramadan in 2005. Contrast to the media stereotypes of Muslims as sheltered and outcasts – the film illustrates the everyday struggles, fears, hopes and challenges that everyone, Muslim or not, faces everyday. From the everyday busy lives of the families, the film follows the individuals as they strive to maintain their rhythm, and find time for worship and faith through the act of Fasting and prayer.

The intimate and personal stories of the five families are complemented with scholars from the three Abrahamic faiths. Rabbi Robert Haas from Temple Shalom, Dr. Robert Hunt, a Christian doctor and director of Global Theological Education at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology, Dr. Jamal Badawi who is the founder of the Islamic Information Foundation and a professor emeritus at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Dr. Muzzammil Siddiqi, chairman of the Fiqh Council of North America and director of the Islamic Society of Orange County, and Dr. Mahmood Khan, an internal medicine physician who has studied the medical process and benefits of fasting. All of these scholars bring to light the common thread of Fasting and spiritual yearning between Jews, Muslims, Christians, and other Faiths.

An introspective view of how Muslims in American cope with their religious and cultural traditions, while balancing the western way of life, "American Ramadan" is required viewing for anyone that is an observer of humanity. This documentary does more than build bridges; it exemplifies the plight of everyone who is seeking faith and a higher spiritual understanding.

The documentary has just wrapped up production, and is currently in post-production. It will be released for the upcoming Ramadan season, in September 2006. The producers are currently engaged in securing broadcast releases domestically and in the international market.

All inquiries should be addressed to JustSayGo, LLC, tel: **214.282.4325**, or email: show@JustSayGo.com.

Director's Statement

There are no feature length contemporary documentaries about Ramadan that I'm aware of. Last year, I was looking around for something to draw some inspiration from – I felt I needed more focus, and that a good view of what others go through, would do it. I did come across an old film, which was so outdated, it may have been filmed by the BBC, or some European film company in the 70's. It had the feel of one of those really old "National Geographic" specials, about some lost African tribe, observing this weird ritualistic pagan practice. That's when the decision was made to shoot and direct my first documentary.

To say that this has been a "learning curve", is a huge understatement – it has really been more of a "learning polygon". From the technical challenges of shooting, scripting, lighting, sound designing and general do-it-yourself guy to managing a multi-city filming sequence, for a first documentary, is a challenge – to say the least. We've shot over thirty hours of footage, and hit almost every bump in the road - from a grandmother who dropped by during one of our shoots, who took it as a personal insult that the crew would dare try to work while she visited her family, to a camera breaking in the midst of another shoot, to a family member who decided that she would now wear the hijab – and we may need to consider throwing out the hours of footage shot previously where she was not wearing it! Well, after consulting with a local Imam, we actually got the hijab issue worked out – and only now, can I truly appreciate the "magic" in movie-making.

"American Ramadan" is a view into the everyday lives of Muslims, and it's a statement of how practicing Muslims are really no different than any other practicing people. It's interesting to note, that as we interviewed the scholars, there was a recurring pattern to their views, faiths and opinions – the Rabbi, the Christian doctor and the Muslim scholars, at the core of their message say the same thing, but the dressing is slightly different. We all pray, fast and live to be closer to God, whether we're Muslim, Jewish, Christian or any other faith – it's just our approach that may differ in degrees.

We've just wrapped up production, and what a ride it's been so far. I'm fortunate for having a great crew, Imran Randhawa who leads the second camera unit in Dallas, Murad Aldin – our Los Angeles unit cameraman and unit co-director, and our samurai editor, Christopher Lorne, who knows how to slice and dice in FCP, like he's on fire. The crew has had the not-so-enviable job of answering to the ever changing and evolving script as we moved along our timeline, having to go back for more and more shoots. Like I said, not a "learning-curve"..., but a "learning polygon"!

We've already gotten so many great reviews and encouragement about our trailers from around the world, and support from the local communities has been overwhelming. I'm anxious to get the documentary broadcast and featured in the coming months. We're now focused on post-production, marketing and securing broadcast and release agreements here in the US, and internationally. Of course, fundraising for the project, like any independent work, is an on-going effort as well. I'm looking forward to hearing from media networks and individuals who share our vision of building bridges through media, and promoting positive works in the future.

-peace

Naeem Randhawa

Filmmaker, Writer and New Dad

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Cast and Crew Credits



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TBD

PRODUCTION CREW

Director and Producer **NAEEM RANDHAWA**

Editor **NATHAN LEWAN**

Los Angeles Unit Field Producer **MURAD ALDIN**

Dallas Unit Field Producer **IMRAN RANDHAWA**

Executive Producers
AZHAR AZEEZ
GULAM BAKALI
NAEEM RANDHAWA

Animation and VFX Editors
IMRAN RANDHAWA
NATHAN LEWAN

Sound **NATHAN LEWAN**

Production Assistants
ABDULLAH HELWANI
SONIA LAFLAMME
KHADIJA RASHID
IRFAN RANDHAWA

CAST – THE FAMILIES

First Family
WASEEM NASRULLAH
JANNAH NASRULLAH - DAUGHTER
LAYYANNE NASRULLAH - DAUGHTER
YOUSUF NASRULLAH - DAUGHTER
DR. PATRICIA M. DODD - FRIEND
ROBERT BURRAGE - FRIEND

Second Family
ABDULLAH MIKAIL MACKAY
SITI K. MACKAY - WIFE
ANISSA MARIA MACKAY - DAUGHTER

Third Family

AHLAM SAID
AMAL SAID - SISTER
SUMER OTHMAN - COUSIN
DINA OTHMAN - COUSIN
CHELSEA GIUNTA - FRIEND
KHADIJAH THOMAS - FRIEND
OASAS AIGBEDION - STUDENT
SHONTALE WATSON - STUDENT
BUNMI ODEWOLE - STUDENT

Fourth Family

FATIMAH MILBIS WILLIAMS
DAWUD P.A. WILLIAMS
KATHEM JUMA MILBIS - FATHER
MONA MILBIS - MOTHER
GADEER MILBIS - SISTER
MANAR MILBIS - SISTER
SUBHI AWATH MILBIS - UNCLE
JUMA MILBIS - UNCLE

Fifth Family

INTISAR HAMDAN
ABDEL-JABBAR HAMDAN - HUSBAND

CAST – THE SCHOLARS

In alphabetic order

DR. JAMAL BADAWI

PROFESSOR EMERITUS, ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY, HALIFAX, N.S., CANADA
MEMBER OF FIQH JURISTIC COUNCIL OF NORTH AMERICA
MEMBER OF EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF IFTA AND RESEARCH
MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL UNION OF MUSLIM SCHOLARS
SHURA COUNCIL OF ISNA
FOUNDER/CHAIRMAN OF ISLAMIC INFORMATION FOUNDATION

RABBI ROBERT W. HAAS

RABBI, TEMPLE SHALOM, DALLAS

DR. ROBERT HUNT

DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

DR. MAHMOOD R. KHAN

INTERNAL MEDICINE PHYSICIAN, PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL

MOHAMMAD ABDULAH KHAN

MOAZZAN – CALL TO PRAYER

DR. MUZAMMIL SIDDIQI

CHAIRMAN FIQH COUNCIL OF NORTH AMERICA
FORMER PRESIDENT OF ISNA – ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA
CHAIRMAN SHURA COUNCIL OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
DIRECTOR OF THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO

ARSHAD AND FARKHANDA RANDHAWA
ASHLEY LYNN LEWAN
ASSMA ALHAYEK
NIKHAT QURESHI
SAFFIA AND ERIC MEEK (CAIR-DFW)
MOHAMED ELMOUGY
MOHAMED ELIBIARY (FREEDOM & JUSTICE FOUNDATION)
SUHAIL NIAZI (MUSLIM GEAR)
MARK BIRNBAUM (MARK BIRNBAUM PRODUCTIONS)
DR. SHAKEELA Z. HASSAN
MARWAN MAROUF (MAS-DFW)
IMAM YUSUF ZIYA KAVAKCI (IANT)
AMIRA WEBER AND DR. RIYAD A. TAHA
BASIT SIDDIQUI
DR. NABIL SA'DOUN (CAIR)
DONNA GEHRKE-WHITE
SARWAT HUSAIN (CAIR)
ANNIE AND AMIN FARUKI (LONE STAR CRESCENT)
SAIF KHAN (IANT)
BART WEISS (VAD)
AMY LOU ABERNETHY
KEVIN SULLIVAN (BLOCKBUSTER)
NATALIE SMOLENSKI (KERA)

ALSO SPECIAL THANKS TO

ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION OF NORTH TEXAS EXECUTIVE BOARD
ISLAMIC CENTER OF IRVING EXECUTIVE BOARD
COUNCIL ON AMERICAN-ISLAMIC RELATIONS, DFW CHAPTER
SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLIN COUNTY
TEMPLE SHALOM, DALLAS
DALLAS PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION
LONE STAR CRESCENT

For updates and more clips of the families and interviews with the scholars, please visit

www.AmericanRamadan.com

For more information about Ramadan and Islam, please visit

www.WebsiteHere.com

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Filmed on location in Texas and California, USA.

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(JSGFILMS Logo)

About JustSayGo FILMS

To counter the negative Muslim stereotype in the main media and to meet the growing demand for positive Muslim content, Naeem Randhawa launched JustSayGo Films (www.JustSayGoFilms.com), a diversity focused film company, based in Dallas, Texas.

"We have been working with the local and national Muslim communities to film and produce news and in-depth stories that bring attention to the diversity that exists in America, and to build bridges between all Americans" says Randhawa, "With the recent mainstream interest in more diversified films, like "Syriana", "Paradise Now", "Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World", and many others, it's imperative for us to bring to the forefront, high-quality media productions for television and film that portrays Muslims in a realistic, non-biased point of view."

With strong ties to the American Muslim communities, JustSayGo Films is currently providing events and news coverage for a national satellite network. The company is interested in working with local and national broadcast and film companies, with the goal of producing premiere television programs and films for American and international markets.

In addition to filming news segments, JustSayGo Films also produces an entertainment show, which focuses on family friendly content. In the works, are a documentary, "American Ramadan", featuring an introspective look at 5 families in Dallas and Los Angeles, observing and practicing their faith in America, and a first of its kind – a Muslim travel show. The travel show to be aired in the fall of 2006, is the first American Muslim production of its kind. On location filming across the U.S., Mexico and Singapore has already been completed for the first three episodes – they are now seeking distributors for this exciting and unique program.

"We have so many projects we'd love to do, including documentaries, feature films and music videos, but right now we're focused on making the best possible content we can, and build a network of broadcast companies and distributors that we can work with", say Randhawa. "I'd like to talk with other individuals and companies who share our vision to collaborate on projects."

For more information, please contact Naeem Randhawa.

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For high-resolution photos, visit <http://www.americanramadan.com/gallery.html>