

Clearance

Presskit

Written and Directed by: Joud Kashgari

Starring: Ara Woland, Bobby Kruger, Sharon Loo



Tag Line:

Are you authorized?

Log Line:

A routine inspection at the airport goes awry when an overzealous security agent meets a well-travelled but secretive traveler.

Short Synopsis:

During a routine inspection at the airport, federal marshal Jason Hadley faces off in a battle of wits against Habibullah Khan, a secretive traveler from Pakistan. With international pressure on her, Interpol agent Nicole Caldera strikes a balance between the two.

Long Synopsis:

During a routine inspection at the airport, federal marshal Jason Hadley faces off in a battle of wits against Habibullah Khan, a chemist from Pakistan. As Hadley interrogates Khan, his true identity as a drug smuggler is revealed. However, with the power of bureaucracy, corruption and invasive technology on her side, Interpol agent Nicole Caldera manages to defuse the situation and take Khan into her custody. Though all is returned to status quo, Hadley leaves the situation forever changed.

Director's Statement:

I am Saudi Arabian by birth, and by default Islam is assumed to be my religion. However, in my 25 years on Earth, I've been lucky enough to have visited at least one country on every continent (barring Antarctica). Furthermore, I've come to call the United States my home. My identity is exemplified by cross-cultural interaction.

As a result of this global exposure, I realized that the malleability of identity politics by corrupt elites is a universal phenomenon. Indeed, as a result of globalization, it has become an almost linear system of interaction between those invested in it.

The symbolism of Khan's hollowed-out Quran is particularly apt. Although it is a holy book, he has no scruples about storing heavy drugs inside. He further attempts to play himself as a victim of discrimination, while never truly having an ounce of religious conviction in his heart. In essence, he is not a role model, but a conman operating in a field of gray morality.

At the same time, the character of Hadley represents the dark side of *Pax Americana*; xenophobia and recklessness guide his paranoid investigation, yet they only lead him to ethical perdition when faced with the truth. With shadowy authorities pulling the strings, Hadley discovers that he is being played for a fool by his own government.

The purpose of the film is not condemn anyone as "evil", as these are gross oversimplifications. Rather the message is that corruption is a universal problem. and people everywhere must look past the superficial divisions of race, religion and language to find the true adversaries of social progress. This is not an attack on Muslims or Americans (and any conflation of the two), but a seething criticism of those who would exploit such identities for personal gain.

About the Production:

'Clearance' was first written during Joud Kashgari's studies at NYU. It was filmed at the Todman Center in New York, NY, in December 2013. It was shot on the Sony F5 over 3 days. The film's location was entirely built inside a studio stage studio set

After a lengthy postproduction process, the film was completed in September 2015. It is currently set to debut in the 2016 festival circuit.

Key Crew List:

Joud Kashgari – *Writer & Director*

David M. Night Maire – *Producer*

Jack Manley – *Producer*

Praveen Elankumaran – *Director of Photography*

Ella Rooney – *Art Director*

Robert Eletto – *Composer*

Adrian Carey – *Editor*

Ara Woland ... *Habibullah Khan*



"Ara Woland has been described as a chameleon, transforming fluidly into vastly diverse roles, from a Middle Eastern terrorist to an Armenian transsexual, from a Soviet ministry official to a 30-year-old Jewish virgin. His expressive eyes, ethnically ambiguous look, palpable depth and intense presence allow him to physically and emotionally portray characters of complex nature. Ara's acting career began in theatre at the age of ten. Later in his twenties, he started producing and acting in films. One of his

most recent feature films "Welkome Home" has screened at dozens of festivals worldwide, and was released nationwide in Russia in 2014. Currently he has two films in post-production, both of which he co-produced and played lead roles in: a Russian language period horror film "12Kilometers" and a coming of age feature film "Pinsky". Ara is trilingual, and has been trained in method acting, pantomime and classical piano. He is currently based in NYC."

Bobby Kruger ... *Jason Hadley*



Sharon Loo ... *Nicole Caldera*



Production Stills:



Film Stills:



Film Festival Selections & Awards:

- New York Eurasian Film Festival, Best Short Film 2016
- L.A. Independent Film Festival, Best Produced Screenplay 2016
- United International Film Festival, Best Screenplay 2016
- World's Independent Film Festival, Best Narrative Short & Millennial Award 2016
- The IndieFest, Award of Recognition 2016
- Best Shorts Competition, Award of Merit 2016
- Accolade Global Film Competition Award of Merit 2016
- Katra Film Series NY, Official Selection 2016
- BAFF's Made In New York Filmmakers Showcase, Official Selection 2016
- Los Angeles CineFest, Official Selection 2016
- World Film Festival San Francisco, Official Selection 2016

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