

# Wajib

Cert 15 Palestine 2017 96 mins

## Crew

Director / Screenplay Annemarie Jacir  
 Cinematography Antoine Héberlé  
 Film Editing Jacques Comets



## Cast

Mohammad Bakri Abu Shadi  
 Saleh Bakri Shadi  
 Tarik Kopty Abu Murad  
 Maria Zreik Amal  
 Rada Alamuddin Fadya

## Synopsis

*Nazareth, the present. Shadi has returned home from Italy for the wedding of his sister Amal, and is now accompanying his father Abu, as they drive around town in Abu's battered old Volvo, hand-delivering the wedding invitations, as is required by custom.*

*Between visits to relatives and old family friends, they bicker and reminisce, manipulate and needle each other, gradually revealing the many layers of their relationship, and the complexities of their lives.*



## Booking Information

**Distributor:** New Wave

[www.newwavefilms.co.uk](http://www.newwavefilms.co.uk)

### DVD bookings:

Can be booked now via Troy Film Agency  
[troyfilmagency@btinternet.com](mailto:troyfilmagency@btinternet.com)  
 01474 833263

See inside front cover for more details

**Available:** January 2019



## Review

...Wajib may translate as duty, but what does that really mean? A duty to return to your homeland, like Shadi, or Abu Shadi's commitment to the traditions associated with a wedding even if it means inviting an Israeli who has spent his life informing? What about the duty of Shadi's ex-wife to attend even though she is now living in another country with a different man? Or Shadi's duty to offer himself as a potential partner to the folks back home even though he has a girlfriend in Italy?

All these questions are gently explored by Jacir, mixing with universal family frustrations that will be familiar to most people who've left home, even if they haven't gone far. She maintains a light touch, filling the various visits with nicely worked comic moments - including a recalcitrant parrot - and decent emotional heft, such as when the two men help Amal pick out her dress. She perfectly captures the way that, in families, whether to screen off a view with tarpaulin can be as, or even more important than a political event, and how these sorts of conversations can flow into one another. The politics of the Middle East are equally gently explored, used as a grace note rather than a driver.

The lensing by Antoine Heberle is workmanlike but its low-key style sits well with the generally unshowy nature of the film, that gradually builds its tensions without tipping into melodrama - simply acting as a platform on which its father and son stars can shine. In this, Jacir is handsomely rewarded - the Bakris burn bright.

*Amber Wilkinson, Eye for Film, April 2018*

....Jacir's script neatly unpeels the layers over the course of the movie, and interleaves the simmering tension with moments of terrific comedy - for example, when the family realises the wedding invitations have the wrong day. With judicious clarity, the film lays out conflicting views in an Arabic-speaking community, a mix of Muslims and Christians, under immense political and economic pressure certainly, but also just as burdened by the romantic nationalism of exiles - such as Shadi's girlfriend's dad - as it is by oppression from the Israeli state. You might argue that the script is perhaps too tidy and neat, but the rich sense of place and multidimensional characters are too seductive to resist.

*Leslie Felperin, The Guardian, September 2018*

### FILM FACTS...

- ☆ The film premiered at the 2017 Toronto Film Festival, and was Palestine's entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 2018 Academy Awards.
- ☆ Annemarie Jacir is a Palestinian filmmaker and poet, and is chief curator and founder of the groundbreaking *Dreams of a Nation* cinema project, dedicated to the promotion of Palestinian cinema.
- ☆ Mohammed and Saleh Bakri are real-life father and son. The latter appeared in Jacir's feature films *Salt of this Sea* (2008) and *When I Saw You* (2012)