


# THE NARROW BRIDGE



‘a radical, unique and holy  
response to human suffering’

Leonard Cohen



The Narrow Bridge is a compelling, profound and graceful film. It is a beautifully crafted story that traces four courageous journeys from terrible pain and loss to understanding and hope.

Colum McCann

Award winning author of international bestseller *Apeirogon*.  
On the novel's release Steven Spielberg bought the film rights and is currently in development on a feature movie.

I have a deeply personal connection with the film as I wrote a novel, *Apeirogon*, featuring Rami and Bassam, and recognise the filmmakers have captured the essence of these incredible men, extending their stories further into the world.

In a dark world, hope shines through.



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THE NARROW BRIDGE




A most incredible documentary - full of heart, angst and  
existential struggle but so very full of hope, warmth,  
connection and shared humanity

Dr. Cathy Kezelman AM  
President

Blue Knot Foundation - National Centre of Excellence for Trauma

# MEDIA KIT



From conflict to understanding  
from trauma to hope  
I walked The Narrow Bridge and I wept

Richard Moore  
Director of Melbourne International Film Festival &  
Brisbane International Film Festival (2006-2016)

## LOG LINE

From conflict to understanding, from trauma to hope - a journey into the souls of four people who are transforming their searing pain into a bridge for reconciliation.

## SYNOPSIS

THE NARROW BRIDGE is a searching journey into the souls of four people who, after searing pain, develop strengths they never had before. We watch with wonder as Bushra, Rami, Meytal and Bassam, women and men who lost a child or parent in violent conflict, transform their grief into a bridge for reconciliation.

The film follows their paths from devastating trauma to courageous activism. But their stories are not just personal. They all belong to a controversial grassroots movement of broken-hearted people 'Israeli Palestinian Bereaved Families' who stand side-by-side to end the violence and build a future based on dignity and equality. Despite fierce political and family opposition, they refuse to give up.

Bushra, Rami, Meytal and Bassam all wish they could turn back time to before tragedy struck, but they would never change who they have become. Charting a journey of hope amidst pain, THE NARROW BRIDGE lights a way to personal and social change.



## FOUR COURAGEOUS PEOPLE

Rami, Bushra, Meytal and Bassam are compelling individuals; articulate, passionate and frank. Their candid interviews reveal how the violent deaths of their child or parent affected them. They have each travelled a hero's journey with a transformation that is startling and complex.

As we follow these four people through aching loss, internal struggles and courageous shifts in thinking, the film explores who they used to be, who they are now and how the experience of trauma changed them. After meeting the other through grief, Rami, Bushra, Meytal and Bassam understood the need to change the fear and mistrust in both Israeli and Palestinian societies. They saw that conflict resolution requires bottom-up change in civil society as well as top-down political processes.

They are now all part of a people-to-people peacebuilding movement working hard to change the culture of conflict from the ground up. Their many activities include talks to Israeli and Palestinian high school students, workshops for bereaved adults, women's parallel narrative groups and an annual Memorial for Victims of Conflict where the suffering on both sides is witnessed. Although they face fierce opposition from family, community and government in both Palestinian and Israeli societies, they refuse to give up.



Meytal whose father was axed to death in his garden




Bassam whose daughter was shot dead while sharing sweets with her sister



Bushra whose teenage son was killed just outside his home



Rami whose daughter was blown up getting books for the new school year



A most beautiful piece of work - when that degree  
of empathy is on display it is truly a work of art and a  
thing of wonder that draws you right in

Maurie Hasen  
Psychology Department Monash University

## DISTRIBUTION

THE NARROW BRIDGE was completed in 2022 and had a local festival release in the director/producer's home country of Australia where it received wonderful responses and won the Audience Award. Soon after it also won the Audience Award at the 42nd San Francisco Jewish Film Festival.

The film is being distributed globally by Filmoption International and Menemsha Films, and in Australia and New Zealand by Bonsai Films. The film's Building Bridges impact program, designed to increase awareness of people-to-people peace building projects, is being launched in October 2022 to coincide with the high-profile speaking tour of Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan (the two men in the film) across Australia.



THE NARROW BRIDGE is a powerful, nuanced, and unforgettable film – beautifully scripted, tightly constructed, balanced, never exploitative or gratuitous

Michaela Kalowski  
Interviewer, Moderator, Curator





A complex, deeply moving journey – from darkness and despair towards the glimmer of light and hope

Alex Skovron  
Poet, Writer, Editor



Through her lens as a trauma psychologist, director Esther Takac takes the audience on a captivating journey as we witness how pain can be a springboard toward empathy and a powerful tool for reconciliation.

John Lyndon  
Executive Director  
The Alliance for Middle East Peace

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As the writer-director of *THE NARROW BRIDGE*, I'm also a child and adult trauma psychologist. Based mostly in Melbourne, Australia I see children and adults in my private practice and have delivered workshops on Understanding and Healing Trauma locally and internationally.

Over the last decade I've also been consulting regularly as a psychologist with Palestinians and Israelis in a Jerusalem hospital. Through that work I've seen the effects of the ongoing conflict - how fear and hate grow on both sides. But I've also seen how grief levels people, drawing them down into life's essentials, creating a bond. It was during my time there I met my four film participants. Over the five years of making the documentary we have developed a collaborative and trusting relationship.

Rami, Bushra, Meytal and Bassam are all compelling individuals; articulate, passionate and frank. They want their story told and speak out despite walls of overwhelming opposition. Their candid interviews reveal how the violent killing of their child or parent affected them, changing their body, mind and spirit. And yet, through their experiences we witness how pain can become a springboard toward empathy. Each of them has travelled a hero's journey with a transformation that is startling and complex.

As I was working on this film, I became aware that being a psychologist and a filmmaker at the same time is complicated. When Rami tells me he wakes up at night sweating with nightmares, I know he's still suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. At times my roles conflict as I push people to revisit their pain. I have been very careful not to re-traumatise Bushra, Meytal, Bassam or Rami. Rather the film focuses on their journeys from searing grief to post traumatic growth as they discovered a newfound sense of personal strengths amidst their loss. Like Bushra says 'I started believing in myself. That I'm a strong woman with the self-esteem and courage to face life with all its beauty and challenges.'

Amazed by their strength and compassion I set out on a journey to understand how these four people met the human face of their enemy; how grief changed their identities and how their broken hearts filled with the wisdom of compromise - allowing them to harness their pain into a powerful tool for reconciliation.

Finally on a personal note, I try to understand why I've chosen to make this particular documentary? As I film, I've put myself in some uncomfortable and dangerous situations. My deepest response is I've been humbled by the courage and empathy of Rami, Bushra, Meytal and Bassam. As I followed their transformative paths, I kept seeing these people could be a model for others dealing with trauma, and conflict, across the world. I truly sense their struggle to become the best version of themselves speaks to us all as we deal with the pain and conflict in our lives.



## CREDITS



### ESTHER TAKAC

WRITER  
DIRECTOR  
PRODUCER

Esther Takac is a filmmaker, an author and a child and adult psychologist. She is very excited to have just released (March 2022) her first feature documentary *The Narrow Bridge* to wonderful responses in her home country of Australia. She's currently working on a number of other film projects, including a feature drama about the power of finding one's own story explored through relationship between a child psychologist and her child patient, and an interactive film about memory.

As an author Esther has published three books, (U.S. National Jewish Book Award, Sydney Taylor Award, Victorian Children's Reading List, Australian Intercultural Curriculum.) As a psychologist she is in private practice, has worked as a consultant with The Lighthouse Institute and Monash University, and delivers training on trauma locally and overseas. She also consults in the paediatric department of a Jerusalem hospital and has developed 'My Journey to Hospital Land' a therapeutic program for Israeli and Palestinian children.



### URI MIZRAHI

EDITOR

Uri Mizrahi is one of Melbourne's most highly regarded editors, whose work over thirty years includes drama for cinema and television as well as documentaries.

His documentary work has garnered him numerous nominations and awards including the Best Editing AFI Award for *RAINBOW BIRD & MONSTER MAN* (2002) and the AFI Award for Best Visual Design with John Hughes for *AFTER MABO* (1998).

Uri's recent work includes the telemovies, *SISTERS OF WAR* (2010) & *PARER'S WAR* (2014) and the documentaries, *PUTUPARRI & THE RAINMAKERS* (2015), *ON RICHARD'S SIDE* (2016), *MY MOTHER'S LOST CHILDREN* (2017), *GUILTY* (2017) & *THE COMING BACK OUT BALL* (2018)

## CREDITS



ROSIE  
JONES  
EDITOR

Rosie Jones is an award-winning filmmaker who has been writing, editing and directing in the documentary field for more than 25 years.

Amongst her recent editing credits are the feature docs Palazzo di Cozzo (MIFF 2021), Brazen Hussies (nominated AACTA Best Documentary, winner AACTA Best Original Score), Namatjira Project and The Triangle Wars (Best Australian Doc, Antenna) and the short docs Suicide and Me, Queen of the Desert, Westall '66: A Suburban UFO Mystery, Obsessed with Walking and My Brother Vinnie.

She moved into directing documentaries with Visions of Yankalilla in 1999; her most recent work is the acclaimed series, The Cult of The Family that screened on ABC-TV and internationally.



PETE  
PILLEY  
POST-PRODUCTION

Starting his career as a musician, Pete quickly found his attention turning to production and became one of Australia's top live sound engineers. He travelled the world and honed his expertise performing to crowds of over 120,000 and studio recording Malaysia's top selling artist.

Wishing to broaden his skills, Pete retrained as a video editor/director and later found himself the Senior Online Editor and Documentary Colourist with Melbourne based company Blue Post. With his considerable expertise and people skills, this small company of 3 people now employs over 20 people in Melbourne and Sydney and is the premiere post producer of all local television drama content in Australia. 10 years on and again redefining himself: freelance colourist, online/offline editor/mastering and skilled VFX artist. "I am excited by and passionate about great communication."

## CREDITS



### ANDREW McGRATH

SOUND DESIGN  
& MIX

Andrew McGrath is an experienced Sound Designer | Senior Mixer | Sound Editor, and the owner of Soundwaves, an award-winning sound post production facility based in Port Melbourne, Australia.

Since 1994 Soundwaves has been privileged to collaborate with many outstanding productions, and has been rewarded with multiple AFI/AACTA, and Australian Screen Sound Guild awards.

Soundwaves looks forward to servicing the post industry for many years to come.

A compelling story of four individuals - Bushra, Rami, Meytal and Bassam - who overcome indescribable grief and trauma to embark on a courageous journey seeking mutual understanding

Sherene Hassan  
Director Education & Community Engagement  
Islamic Museum of Australia

## PARTNERS & TECH SPECS

THE NARROW BRIDGE is produced by GRIT & Grace Media and funded by production investment from Film Victoria, supported by Creative Partnerships Australia and Screen Australia through the Producer Equity Program, and the assistance of generous donations made through Documentary Australia Foundation.

With much appreciation to the film's partners Alliance for Middle East Peace, Kids4Peace and Plus61J Media.



Alliance for Middle East Peace  
100+ ORGANIZATIONS. ONE GROWING COMMUNITY FOR PEACE.



Running time 76 minutes

Exhibition formats DCP, H264, ProRes

Aspect ratio 16:9 Sound 5.1

Media Film/Digital/Colour/B&W

Original languages - Arabic, Hebrew, English - English subtitles throughout

Production date February 2022

Very moving and well-told story of brave individuals pushing through pain - you managed the almost-impossible in the context of covering this conflict: Balance

Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen  
US Institute of Peace

## CONTACT

THE NARROW BRIDGE is distributed globally by Filmoption International and Menemsha Films, and in Australia and New Zealand by Bonsai Films.

FILMOPTION INTERNATIONAL:

EMAIL: [lizanne@filmoption.com](mailto:lizanne@filmoption.com)

PHONE: (+1) 514-241-6241

WEB: <https://www.filmoptioninternational.com>



MENEMSHA FILMS:

EMAIL: [neilf@menemshafilms.com](mailto:neilf@menemshafilms.com)

PHONE: (+1) 310-452-1775

WEB: <https://www.menemshafilms.com>



BONSAI FILMS

EMAIL: [jpage@bonsaifilms.com.au](mailto:jpage@bonsaifilms.com.au)

PHONE: (+61) 404-004-994

WEB: <http://www.bonsaifilms.com.au>



For further enquiries about the film, please contact:

Esther Takac

Writer/Director/Producer

GRIT & Grace Media

EMAIL: [esthertakac@gmail.com.au](mailto:esthertakac@gmail.com.au)

PHONE: (+61) 425-795-463



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<https://www.thenarrowbridge.com>