

THE LAW IN THESE PARTS

A film by
Ra'anan Alexandrowicz and Liran Atzmor

Co-Producer: BZ Goldberg. Executive Producer (US): Laura Poitras

Winner – Best Documentary, Jerusalem Film Festival 2011

Official Selection – Sundance Film Festival 2012

101 mins. - Israel/USA/Germany

www.thelawfilm.com

Press Contact:

Sundance Film Festival – Susan Norget Film Promotion

susan@norget.com

NY office: 212-431-0090, cell: 917-833-3056

Israel/Int'l – Libby Lenkinski

libby@libbylf.com

THE FILM

Through archival footage and interviews with Israeli judges, prosecutors and legal advisors, THE LAW IN THESE PARTS unravels an intricate system of military control that symbolizes one of the most enduring and damaging conflicts of our time.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

The legal framework of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories reveals itself in this documentary, which examines what happens when measures driven by security considerations become permanent reality.

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From establishing settlements in an occupied area to dealing with torture in interrogations to rationalizing parallel legal systems for Palestinians and Israelis, THE LAW IN THESE PARTS explores some of Israel's basic moral quandaries. Can a nation that occupies another people act with genuine adherence to the principles of rule-of-law? And what are the implications of the very effort of documenting such a system?

LONG SYNOPSIS

The mechanics of an evolving military occupation reveal themselves through a series of first-ever interviews with the Israeli Judges, prosecutors and legal advisors who created the legal framework of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and upheld it since 1967. Set against the backdrop of historical events and archival footage, THE LAW IN THESE PARTS is a cautionary account of what happens when temporary security measures become permanent reality.

Responding to changing realities on the ground over four decades, the film's protagonists describe moral and judicial dilemmas that they each faced while trying to apply law and make order. The film unfolds as an insider's tour of the logic and reasoning behind the architecture of occupation and calls into question audience preconceptions about terms such as law and justice as well as the portrayal of reality through the documentary form.

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The conception of *THE LAW IN THESE PARTS* can be traced back to another film, a documentary called *The Inner Tour* that I completed a decade ago.

One of the things that happens when you make non-fiction cinema is that you touch people's lives with your camera and at the same time, your life is touched by the people and reality you document.

In mid 2004, I got a phone call telling me that Ahmad S., a boy who had just turned 16 and was one of the hardly-seen participants in *The Inner Tour*, was taken from his home in the middle of the night by masked Israeli soldiers. Ahmad was charged with throwing stones at a military Jeep and was held in a maximum-security prison. After confessing during interrogation, Ahmad was scheduled for a remand hearing in a military court. His family asked that I join them.

For the first time in my life I found myself in an Israeli military courtroom, witnessing the mechanism with which my society purports to administer justice to Palestinian residents of the territories we have occupied since 1967. This event profoundly changed my understanding of the situation in which I live.

There were many striking differences between trials I had seen in regular civilian courts in Israel and Ahmad's military trial, but the thing that disturbed me most was that I was witnessing a supposedly legal procedure, an effort to bring a "criminal" to trial, something that I, like any law-abiding citizen in a democratic state usually support. But there was one major problem – this 16-year-old boy was not part of the society that was indicting and convicting him. Neither Ahmad nor his parents ever had any democratic way of influencing the law by which he was now being tried: the Law of Occupation, the same law which enabled an Israeli settlement to be erected on their family lands. Everyone was "playing along" but the truth was that Ahmad and his family didn't really think that by resisting a military occupation he committed any sort of crime. Ahmad was the subject of a legal proceeding, but the concepts of justice and law, words that were repeated again and again during the trial, belonged to someone else.

After seven and a half months Ahmad's trial ended. The Judge ruled that the time he had spent in prison for the period of the proceedings would suffice as a punishment for what he had done. These seven months led me to try to understand the Law of Occupation.

I began reading the archived legal material published since the beginning of the occupation in 1967 until today. The more laws, orders, trial records and appeals I read, the better I understood how the system of the occupation actually works and how it developed over the years. I was gaining what I felt was an almost unknown perspective on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its evolution over the last forty years. I decided to try to represent this perspective in the form of Cinema.

The Military Law and Justice System is a legal system that functions as a parallel system to the one I am subject to, implemented by the same state. It applies to people who in fact live in the same territory with the regular citizens but are defined legally as a population under occupation. It is probably one of the most significant contradictions in Israeli democracy. It is there to see but is somehow it is hidden from the public eye. In *THE LAW IN THESE PARTS* I attempted to provide a clear view of the historical and social evolution of this contradiction, the way it functions today, and allow the viewer to feel the price a Western democracy pays for this kind of contradiction.

Translating my research into a film was the most complicated cinematic challenge I have faced. As the person who has been in those archives, I searched for the cinematic form that would preserve something of the raw, cold and formal legal papers which fuel the machine that controls the lives of millions of people who are subject to it. I had to try to satisfy both the filmmaker and the researcher in me. I had to deal with ethical and aesthetic questions posed constantly by the material. It was not only about what I can or should film, but also about what I decided I would not film. Most of all I had to find a way to engage and implicate the audience in this journey into the heart of Israel's moral quandary – and the basic universal questions that it raises.

TEAM BIOS

Ra'anán Alexandrowicz (Writer, Researcher, Director) established his name as the writer and director of award-winning films such as the full-length feature *James' Journey to Jerusalem* (Cannes Directors' Fortnight 2003, Toronto 2003), and the documentaries *The Inner Tour* (Berlin 2001, Sundance 2002) and *Martin* (Berlin 1999, New Directors/New Films 2000, MoMA permanent collection). Alexandrowicz's critically acclaimed works have been theatrically released to international audiences and broadcast worldwide.

Liran Atzmor (Israel Producer) is the former managing director and senior producer at Belfilms, Israel. Atzmor has produced programs for all major Israeli broadcasters as well as broadcasters and distributors in North America and Europe including the BBC, ZDF-Arte, The History Channel, and many more. Credits include *The Yad Vashem Films*, *The Inner Tour* and *My Stills*. Atzmor also served as senior commissioning editor for Israel's documentary channel (Channel 8).

B.Z Goldberg (Co-Producer) is a director and producer living in Jerusalem. His 2001 documentary *Promises* won two Emmys and was nominated for an Academy Award. He is also known for his groundbreaking film work on climate change for the Klimahaus Museum in Germany, *8^o34' East: The Journey Films*.

Laura Poitras (Co-Producer, USA) is currently working on a trilogy of documentaries about America post-9/11. *My Country, My Country* was nominated for an Academy Award, Independent Spirit Award and Emmy Award. *The Oath* received the

Cinematography Award at Sundance, the Grand Jury Award at the Edinburgh Film Festival, Special Jury prizes at Hot Docs and Full Frame, and the True Vision Award at True/False. She received a Peabody Award and was nominated for both an Emmy and Independent Spirit Award for *Flag Wars* (2003).

Martin Hagemann (Co-Producer, Germany) is the owner and managing director of ZERO FICTION in Berlin. He has produced dozens of documentary and feature films with directors such as Hal Hartley, Alexander Sokurov and Jan Schuette.

Shark De Mayo (Cinematographer) graduated in Fine Arts from the Thelma Yalin School of Arts in 1987. He has worked as a director of photography on a range of productions in Israel and abroad, including *The Cemetery Club* (Cinematography Award Docaviv 2006), *White Gold - Black Labor* (2004), *James' Journey To Jerusalem* (2003), *Mother* (2001), and *The Inner Tour* (2001).

Neta Dvorkis (Editor) has edited films and television series since 2003. Her credits include Oded Lotan's *Blue Nathalie*, Shlomi Hayoun's *The Acting Teacher* and Barak Heiman's *Lone Samaritan*.

Karni Postel (Composer) is a cellist and composer who performs and records with some of Israel's leading recording artists including Shalom Hanoach, Assaf Amdursky, Arcadi Dochin, Mashina, and others. Since 1991 Postel has written music for dance, theatre and films. She has worked with Ohad Naharin, Yasmin Godar, The Beit Lessin Theatre, Tzippi Brand, and others.

Libby Lenkinski (Outreach) is a Tel Aviv-based human rights activist and the Director of International Relations at The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI). Her professional background is in non-profit consulting, having worked with major human rights and social change organizations in Israel. Lenkinski's recent projects include outreach and public relations work on the award-winning documentary *Budrus*.

INTERVIEWEES

Justice Meir Shamgar

Brigadier General (Retired)
Military Advocate General 1963-1968
Judge, Supreme Court of Israel 1975-1995
President of the Supreme Court 1983-1995

Dov Shefi

Brigadier General (Retired)
Legal Advisor, West Bank Military Command 1967-1968
Military Advocate General 1979-1984

Abraham Pachter

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired)
Military Prosecutor 1967-1970

Alexander Ramati

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired)
Legal Advisor, West Bank Military Command 1973-1979
Military Judge 1980-1981

Jair Rabinovich

Major (Retired)
Military Prosecutor 1977-1982
Military Judge 1988-1992

Justice Amnon Strashnov

Brigadier General (Retired)
Deputy Military Advocate General 1985-1987
Military Advocate General 1987-1991

Jonathan Livny

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired)
Military Judge 1976-1999

Ilan Katz

Colonel (Retired)
Military Judge 1988-1992
Deputy Military Advocate General 2000-2003

Oded Pesensson

Colonel (Retired)
Military Judge 1988-2008

CREDITS

The Law In These Parts

A film by

Ra'anan Alexandrowicz and Liran Atzmor

With the participation of
Justice Meir Shamgar
Advocate Dov Shefi
Advocate Abraham Pachter
Advocate Alexander Ramti
Advocate Jair Rabinovich
Justice Amnon Strashnov
Advocate Ilan Katz
Advocate Oded Pesensson
Advocate Jonathan Livny

Written and Directed by
Ra'anan Alexandrowicz

Producer
Liran Atzmor

Cinematography
Shark De Mayo

Editor
Neta Dvorkis

Original Music
Karni Postel

Co-Producer
B.Z. Goldberg

Editing Consultant
Ron Goldman

Research
Ra'anan Alexandrowicz
Reuma Gome
Avichay Sharon
Hillel Cohen
Raz Hazon

Executive Producers

Laura Poitras
Martin Hagemann

Sound Design and Mix

Ronen Nagel
Sound Around
On-line and Compositing
Yoav Raz

Visual Effects

Gil Elnatan
Dan Owen

Gaffer

Yana Mitnick

Sound Recording

Tully Chen
Amos Zipori
Ravid Dvir

Dialogue Editor

Rafi Chen

Effect Editors

Nati Taub
Gilad Shavit

Music Recording and Mix

Orpaz Agranov

Post Production Coordinator

Chen Kalifa

Visual Archives and Sources

Israel Broadcast Authority Archive

Head of Film Archive - Billy Segal
Dan Kedem
Carmit Ronen

IBA Film Excerpts

"The Terrorist organizations"
Dir.: Zvi Dor Ner

"REKA 72"

Dir.: Shim'on Tesler

Other Film Excerpts

"Deadly Currents"

Dir.: Simcha Jacobovici

Producer: Felix Golubev

"Inside God's Bunker"

Dir.: Micha X. Peled

"Years of Blood"

"Shattered Dreams"

Dir.: Dan Setton

FR2 Video Archive

Charles Enderlin

Cecile Justine Berecz

Gil Miterani archive

Niv Hachlili archive

Israel Puterman video archive

Oded Yedaya

Albatross - Aerial photography

Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive

Deborah Steinmetz

Robin Zalben

United Studios of Israel Archive

Other Archives

Advocate Lea Tsemel archive

IDF Archive

Doron Aviad

Al-Haq Reports Archive

B'Tselem reports Archive

Memorial Archive - Bituach Leumi

The Law Library - The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Lorraine Epanand

The Law In These Parts was inspired by the work and writings of:

Advocate Netanel Benishu
Akiva Eldar
Advocate Avigdor Feldman
Advocate Shaul Gordon
David Grossman
Prof. Lisa Hajjar
Advocate Yehudit Karp
Advocate Elias Khoury
Prof. David Kretzmer
Advocate Jonathan Kuttab
Justice Moshe Landau
Advocate Felicia Langer
Advocate Darawshe Nasser
Advocate Tamar Peleg
Advocate Andre Rosenthal
Justice Meir Shamgar
Advocate Raja Shehadeh
Justice Amnon Strashnov
Advocate Lea Tsemel
Dr. Irit Zertal
Advocate Riad Anees
Advocate Abed Assli
Hannah Barag
Dror Etkes
Advocate Sahar Francis
Dr. Neve Gordon
Amira Hass
Dr. Jad Ishaq
Shawan Jabarin
Advocate Gaby Lasky
Dr. Moshe Negbi
Hagit Ofran
Advocate Michael Sfard
Hagit Shlonsky
Advocate Limor Yehuda
Advocate Theodor Meron
Shlomo Gazit
Hava Halevi

Additional Participants
Advocate Shaul Gordon
Advocate Joseph Hikri
Advocate Nick Kaufman
Advocate Adrian Agassi
Advocate Arie Koks

Outreach and Media
Libby Lenkinski

Web Design
Danny Felsteiner

Distribution Designer
Yaron Shin – Jewboy

Ostrovsky Family Fund
Vivian Ostrovsky

The Ford Israel Fund
Aaron Back

Channel 8 - Noga Communications
Eyal Openhaim
Levi Zini
Maya Lahat Kerman
Adi Tourgeman
Michal Weits
Nurit Geffen

Content Division, HOT
Yoram Mokady
Michal Rivlin
Yael Shoval

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Giora Einy
Raya Morag
Arie Raichman
Nachman Ingber
Yoav Abramovich

Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program
Cara Mertes
Rahdi Taylor

Kristin Feeley

Editing Consultants

Sundance Documentary Edit and Story Lab

Mary Lampson

Robb Moss

Kate Amend

Jean-Philippe Boucicaut

Jean Tsien

Laura Poitras

Sundance Documentary Composers Lab Advisors

Miriam Cutler

Daniel Anker

Peter Golub

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Antje Glawe

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Jacqueline Ada

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Ellen and Steve Susman

Andrew Ingall

Ester Bloom

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TSR

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