



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

RED PATH (18)

Director: Lotfi Achour

Starring: Ali Helali, Yassine Samouni, Wided Dabebi, Jemii Lamari

Tunisia/France/Belgium/Poland/Saudi Arabia/Qatar, 2024, 1 hour 37 minutes,
Arabic + English subtitles

Set in the isolation of the vast Tunisian mountains, this dreamlike journey probes the wounded psyche of a young shepherd. When a group of jihadists set upon two young shepherds, killing one of them, Achraf, 13, is forced to bring the head of his cousin Nizar to the family as a macabre message.

Based on a real murder during the 2015 Tunisian unrest, the story foregrounds Achraf's point of view, from his playful interaction with his cousin, through the gut-churning terror of the attack, to his mounting inner anxiety as he faces his family's grief and sense of dilemma. With stunning cinematography, the film delves deep into the psychological impact of violence on children, portraying the stark reality of rural Tunisia while contrasting it with more introspective, ethereal moments. As one critic puts "*...this juxtaposition reflects the protagonist's psychological dissonance as he attempts to make sense of the brutality he has witnessed and find ways to cope amidst grief, sorrow and the absurdity of the situation within the community that both boys lived in*" (**Cineuropa**).

Achour frequently explores themes of trauma, resilience and social disparity. His previous works, such as the Cannes-screened short *Law of Lamb* and the feature *Burning Hope*, reflect a commitment to untold stories, a quality that carries over into *Red Path*.

Red Path presents only a tiny glimpse into the terrifying reality for children on the front lines and trying as they might to be as respectful as they could. The production took great care not only to cast locally, but to recruit those from the area wishing to work behind the camera. Daoud stated that the producers "*had this preoccupation [...] to not [just] come from the outside, make the movie and get out,*" (**The National**).

Preview courtesy of Sovereign Film Distribution

Notes compiled by Alex Albion

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