

A film for DocScapes in the framework of the
European Media Event

USA vs AL-ARIAN



Director: LINE HALVORSEN

Year: 2009

Country: Norway

Duration: 99'

Production & Distribution: Dalchows verden



Synopsis

English

'USA vs Al-Arian' is a close portrait of an Arab-American family facing terrorism charges leveled by the U.S. Government. In February 2003, the FBI arrested university professor and political activist Sami Al-Arian in Tampa, Florida. Charged with supporting terrorism, he was placed in solitary confinement for two and a half years before he received a trial. The film follows Al-Arian, his wife Nahla and their five children through the 6 month long trial and the difficult period after the verdict. It is a personal story of a family, who like many Muslims in the USA today, are fighting against increasing stigmatization and discrimination in a post 911-climate.

The film deals with themes of freedom of speech, and the right to a fair trial. It also shows how the media influence public opinion and how the USA`s fear of terrorism can threaten civil liberties.

French

Un portrait émouvant d'une famille arabico-américaine ciblée par la justice américaine. En 2003 Sami Al-Arian, professeur d'université et activiste politique est arrêté par le FBI sur charges de collaboration et soutien au terrorisme. En attendant son procès, il est emprisonné en isolation complète pendant deux ans et demi. Ce film raconte les six mois du procès même, tels qu'ils sont vécus par Al-Arian, son épouse Nahia et leurs cinq enfants. Et la période difficile après la prononciation du verdict. C'est la tragédie personnelle d'une des nombreuses familles arabes aux Etats Unis, qui doivent faire face à une stigmatisation et criminalisation continue. Le film traite des thèmes divers, tels que le rôle parfois perfide joué par les médias et la pression sur les libertés civiles dans une Amérique prise par la peur de la terreur.



Dutch

Een indringend portret van de juridische lijdensweg van een Amerikaans-Arabische familie uit Florida. In 2003 arresteert het FBI de universiteitsprofessor en politiek activist Sami Al-Arian op verdenking van medewerking en steun aan terrorisme. Al-Arian werd twee jaar en een half in een geïsoleerde cel in voorhechtenis gehouden in afwachting van een proces. Deze film toont ons hoe Al-Arian, zijn vrouw Nahia en hun vijf kinderen samen de moeilijke periode beleven van het daaropvolgende zes maanden durende en hoogst onwezenlijke proces. En de periode na de uitspraak. Het is het persoonlijke verhaal van een van de vele Arabische families die vandaag de dag in de Verenigde Staten te maken krijgen met een toegenomen stigmatisering en criminalisering. naast een persoonlijke tragedie boort de film them'a aan als de vrijheid van meningsuiting, de rol van de media en de groeiende druk op de burgerlijke vrijheden in een Amerika dat in de ban is van de angst voor terrorisme.



Biography LINE HALVORSEN

Line Halvorsen (b. 1969) has worked as a director and editor on more than 20 documentaries and travel series for Norwegian and International television since 1997. Many of these have focused on human rights issues. She received her degree in film at the University of Trondheim and specialized in documentary film at Volda College, Norway.

From 2002-2004, Halvorsen lived in Bethlehem on the Occupied West Bank where she made the award-winning documentary *A Stone's Throw Away* (2003) about the lives of three young Palestinian children. The film received several awards, among them the prestigious Norwegian film





award Amanda and it has been screened at festivals and events worldwide. With the film *A Stone's Throw Away*, Halvorsen contributed to a renewed debate on the desperate plight of many Palestinian children and encouraged sympathy and understanding for innocent victims living in a conflict area.

In 2004, Halvorsen moved to the United States. Concerned with human and civil rights, and possessing a personal interest in the Middle East, she found an intriguing combination of these two fields of interest when she learned the story of Sami Al-Arian and his family.

Halvorsen's background in Palestine led to her receiving the family's trust and confidence, and has given her a unique opportunity to tell a detailed and intimate human story of a family that is experiencing hardship during a trying time for Muslims in America.

Her work:

Line Halvorsen has directed and edited more than twenty documentaries and travel films since 1997.

2000 Horsebacking Australia
2000 Behind the Scenes 71° North
2002 Orphan Voices
2003 A Stone's Throw Away
2007 USA vs Al-Arian



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Credits:

A documentary by **Line Halvorsen**

Producer: **Jan Dalchow**

Photographer: **Tone Andersen**

Additional photography: Line Halvorsen, Matt Mayes, Tordis Lovise Bersaas

Editing: **Trond Winterkjær, Line Halvorson**

Producer: **Jan Dalchow**

Music: **Stein Berge Svendsen**

Sound design: **Erling Rein, megaphon**

Illustrations: **Gro Vik, Sukker**

On-line / animation: **Mathias Theissen (The End)**

Production company : **Dalchows verden**

Length: 1 hour 38 minutes/ 52 minutes (TV version) **Year of production:** 2007 **Rating:** allowed for all

Production:

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