



coming

soon *(in post-production)*



Log line

Two Albanian brothers, SAIMIR and VINI, migrate to GREECE and try, each in his own way, to integrate into their host country by following two different lifestyles, with no way of turning back.

MAIN CAST & CREW

Actors

Main roles

Saimiri	Marvin Tafaj	<i>Albania</i>
Vini	Guljem Kotori	<i>Albania</i>
Elektra	Isabela Cogevena	<i>Greece</i>
Keno	Xhevdet Jashari	<i>FYROM</i>
Nikos	Andonis Kafexopoulos	<i>Greece</i>
Beni	Laertis Vasili	<i>Albanian (residence Greece)</i>
Majlinda	Eglantina Cenomeri	<i>Albanian</i>
Uncle	Nikolla Llambro	<i>Albanian (residence Greece)</i>
Uncle wife	Hajrie Rondo	<i>Albanian</i>

Crew

Author, screenplay and director

Robert Budina *Albania*

Producer

Sabina Kodra *Albania*

Co-producer

Lilette Botassi *Greece*

Co-producer

Dan Burlac *Romania*

Co-producer

Guillaume De Seille *France*

Director of photography

Marius Panduru *Romania*

Sound recordist/ sound editing

Vangelis Zekas *Greece*

Set designer

Bianca Nikolareizi *Greece*

Cheff Make up

Vicky Tataki *Greece*

Costums

Emir Gramo *Albania*

Editor

Eugen Kelemen *Romania*

Composer

Aldo Shllaku *Albania*



AGON

a
film
by

Robert BUDINA



Synopsis

AGON

Thessaloniki, Greece. SAIMIR and his younger brother VINI, who has recently migrated from Albania, try to get by in Greece, each one in his own way. SAIMIR is about to get married to ELEKTRA, a Greek girl; at the same time, he tries to take care of his younger brother and finds him jobs that VINI doesn't really like. As if this weren't enough, VINI can't stand ELEKTRA's father NIKOS and the way he tries to control SAIMIR and ELEKTRA's life.

Right at this critical juncture, SAIMIR's uncle arrives from Albania in need of delicate eye surgery; he arrives, along with his entire family, at SAIMIR and ELEKTRA's apartment. UNCLE brings with him a piece of Albanian family tradition to GREECE. He was used to being in command at his home in ALBANIA and tries to act the same way at his

nephew's apartment, also because he has raised SAIMIR himself; he often teases SAIMIR's Greek girlfriend and pressures her to adopt a more traditional female role in the family. The situation for ELEKTRA becomes unbearable, to the point that she decides to leave her apartment, because of UNCLE's rudeness.

SAIMIR's Greek father-in-law wants him to choose between his old Albanian family and the new family he is trying to build with ELEKTRA, whereas ELEKTRA finds herself divided between the two great loves of her life: her father and SAIMIR.

In an attempt to prove to SAIMIR that he can get by in life without his older brother's help, VINI leaves the apartment and moves to BEN's place. BEN is a document forger and a trafficker of illegal immigrants; while working with him, VINI discovers



the horrors of that underground world. VINI falls in love with MAJLINDA, who is mafia boss KENO's crown jewel; with all the courage and ingenuity of a 20 year old boy, he attempts to free her from KENO's grip and takes her to BEN's apartment; BEN is scared to death because of this. KENO will never forgive them this affront. BEN eventually kicks VINI out of his apartment, but cannot escape KENO's wrath; they torture him and finally kill him in an almost comical manner.

VINI takes MAJLINDA to the apartment where his brother lives with his Greek fiancée ELEKTRA and wants to keep her there until he can make some money and leave the city for good. This love has made him more mature and responsible, giving him strength while blurring his reason; and eventually makes him feel grateful for SAIMIR and respect him even more; SAIMIR is also happy with the changes he notices in VINI. To give him a hand, he persuades NIKOS to hire VINI to work at the auto shop.

KENO finds out where VINI is hiding, goes to check

out NIKOS' auto shop and ends up trashing the place savagely. NIKOS is deeply disappointed with SAIMIR and regrets having believed his words about VINI's having changed for the better. He fires SAIMIR from his job and his son-in-law position, and also goes to the apartment to kick MAJLINDA out; VINI doesn't want MAJLINDA to go back to KENO's and eventually he and KENO's gang clash, in front of NIKOS, his Greek neighbors, and SAIMIR.

They fight, and KENO kills VINI in front of a horror-struck audience. A desperate MAJLINDA manages to steal KENO's handgun from him and tries to kill herself in the car. In the fight that ensues, as KENO's car drives away from the crime scene, she fires two bullets that hit KENO and one of his goons, QIMJA, both of whom die later.

Now SAIMIR has no other option left, but to go back to ALBANIA and bury his brother.

Six months later, NIKOS and ELEKTRA travel to Albania as well, with a newborn child; they will try to find him, even though they have no idea how.

Director's Note

If I said the word "Albanian" right now, what would be the first thing you thought of?

Wouldn't you think of crooks and pimps?

You probably would; this stereotype has been fed by most of the European media dealing with the immigrants' difficult lives.

Yes, there are Albanian criminals,

But still, who encourages sex trafficking? Who needs it? Where is the market for this type of merchandise? Who are its customers? Crime has no homeland and it doesn't recognize borders.

I have been a victim of prejudices like these for quite a long time, when I used to be an Albanian immigrant myself, in Italy. With my permit of stay still valid, I decided to leave Italy and go back

to my country. As I was crossing the border, the last Italian police officer who checked my papers asked me why I hadn't kept the permit of stay, in order to sell it. I told him that wouldn't be legal. He didn't expect this. He said: "Look... an Albanian who obeys the law!" This is the kind of prejudice I've had to endure, and I should add that Albanians, with what they have done, may have even justified it sometimes.

Now I'd like to show how this culture clash happens; and how Albanian society deals with

the phenomenon. I concentrated all the conflict within one family; a good, close-knit ethical family; two brothers, of whom one tries to make a living honestly, and the other not so honestly, as is the case with SAIMIR and VINI. These two brothers used to be very close, and, within their family, care for one another has always been a primary value, if not an asphyxiating imperative. This is the reason SAIMIR cares for his young brother VINI, as well as for the new family he is building with ELEKTRA, his Greek fiancée.



I concentrated all these contradictions within a family living abroad, for the simple fact that I wanted to show

THE DIVERSITY BETWEEN TWO CULTURES AND TRADITIONS

As in the case of SAIMIR and ELEKTRA, who try to build a life together; their conflict with ELEKTRA's father NIKOS, and the arrival of UNCLE's family to the apartment, which serves to highlight

how difficult it is for people to live TOGETHER, when they let prejudice control their behavior and damage their purest feelings.

Once he gets over the inebriation from easy money, VINI discovers the harsh realities of the illegal trafficking of prostitutes. He also meets MAJLINDA and finds love.

Love makes him more mature and responsible, gives him strength and blurs his reason, and eventually makes him feel grateful for SAIMIR and respect him even more.

There is a thin line between love and hate, crime for love's sake and criminality. This division is almost impossible to see... and can disappear because of a fateful meeting or just serendipity.

What would be the difference between an Albanian gangster, and an



Italian or a Russian one? An Albanian would be more unpredictable. We see this feature embodied in KENO. He first takes VINI under his wing because he sees himself in the young man; but he is also capable of killing him promptly, if he feels betrayed or insulted.

This is no immigrants' story,

but a story about people's efforts to integrate.

This is no story about crime and mafia,

but a story about impossible love.

I have met all the characters of my drama,

in other circumstances.

Today I have an opportunity to recreate them, in order to build a story with them and express, through this story, the complexity of human feelings.

Marvin TAJAJ

SAIMIR –28 years old, VINI's older brother.

After their father's death, he's had to take care of his younger brother and assume responsibility for the family. He is welladjusted and can handle difficulties. A tactful man, he knows how to win other people's respect, as in the case of his father-in-law, NIKOS, who initially didn't want him to be with his daughter. A good listener, he can balance concern for his old Albanian family and care for the new family he is building, although ELEKTRA's father NIKOS puts pressure on him towards the second option. He is even minded and knows how to evaluate every individual situation. The way he experiences the story coincides with the viewer's.



Guljem KOTORI

VINI - 20 years old, Albanian, SAIMIR's younger brother.

He has come to Greece to find a job and he lives at SAIMIR's house. Sanguine and impatient, he wants to show off and prove to his brother that he doesn't need his help to get by in life. VINI's world is that of a troubled teenager, who can't make peace with himself, rails against everybody else, and is skeptical about everything. He resents his brother's patronizing, can't take orders at work, and hates the glaring injustice he witnesses at KENO's. When he falls in love with MAJLINDA, he becomes as responsible towards her as his brother is towards him. After all, that is the way he has been brought up in his family.

Isabella KOGEVINA

ELEKTRA – 24 years old, SAIMIR's fiancée.

Since her mother died when she was young, she has been raised by her father. She is optimistic and reasonably tolerant. She has learned a lot from SAIMIR. She often feels divided in her love for the two men in her life: her father and her boyfriend; and she manages to love them both, in spite of the difficult situations that arise. She is polite and generous. She doesn't lose control easily.



Antonis KAFETZOPOULOS

NIKOS – 50 years old, GREEK, ELEKTRA's father

And owner of a small auto shop. He isn't exactly thrilled when his daughter gets engaged to an Albanian, but SAIMIR is a good guy, honest and hard working – NIKOS' best mechanic. Since he cares too much for his daughter's happiness, he ends up accepting SAIMIR as his future son-in-law. He is self-righteous and possessive towards his daughter and her life. He reacts promptly against injustice and can't stand it; he knows how to be sensitive and he suffers when he realizes that he's done something wrong.

Eglantina CENOMERI

MAJLINDA – 30 years old, Albanian.

A very beautiful woman, KENO's former wife. After she fails to escape from KENO's grip, she only thinks about how to kill herself. Her meeting with VINI sparks some hope in her, but she knows that KENO will get to her sooner rather than later. She endures her predicament with dignity; her suffering has ennobled her and made her more insightful...



Xhevdet JASHARI

KENO – 40 years old, a gangster

And head of the local Albanian mafia... Abandoned by his mother when still a child, he has been abused by his stepfather, who later sent him to a juvenile correction facility. Since that day, he swore he would take revenge on women... He married MAJLINDA and later forced her onto the street; with the money he made by pimping his wife, he acquired more girls for his business. Extremely dangerous, he can kill in cold blood when he feels threatened. A man of many faces, he hates MAJLINDA but, deep down, he still loves her somehow.



Cv Robert BUDINA - Director

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Filmography

- 2005 Script-writer and director of the short
footage film SNOWDROPS
- 2008 Script writer and director of short film
SPIDERMAN 5
- 2009 Script-writer of feature film DAWN
(in production)
- 2010 Script-writer of feature film ALBANA
(in development)
- 2010 Script-writer of feature film ITALIAN
DREAM (in development)
- 2011 Script-writer and director of feature film
AGON (in post-production)

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