BLACK SLAUGHTER

A film by Gigi Betito



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Alcatraz Films / Betito Films

present

FIRST FEATURE COMPETITION
TALLINN BLACK NIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL 2026

FIRST FEATURE COMPETITION / WORLD PREMIERE

BLACK SLAUGHTER

Directed by Gigi Betito

Story by Gili Yalo and Gigi Betito

Written by Gili Yalo, Gigi Betito, Julien Favre and Roy Betito

FRANCE / ISRAEL / ETHIOPIA / PALESTINE
FEATURE FILM / 2026 / 90 MINUTES
FORMAT: 1.66:1 / SOUND: 5.1

INTERNATIONAL SALES

The Pool Films
Tim Belda / Gilles Sousa
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gilles@thepoolfilms.com

PRODUCTION

Alcatraz Films
Jean-Alexandre Luciani
lucianija@gmail.com
Olivier Théry-Lapiney
otl@alcatrazfilms.eu



Synopsis

Israel, 1996. Against the backdrop of the Ethiopian blood scandal, Hailu, a 21-year-old Ethiopian Jew, is entrusted with his father's knife and sent to perform an ancient ritual: the slaughter of a lamb. His journey leads him into the desert and across into Palestine, where fulfilling his family's tradition becomes a confrontation with identity, violence and the possibility of choosing his own path.

Director’s note

About three years ago, I video-called my best friend and co-writer, Gili Yalo, as I often do. Gili himself had walked, in 1984, as a four-year-old, from Ethiopia to Israel, a journey of over 1,000 kilometers, longer than that of the biblical Israelites.

He was driving back from a Bedouin village. In his trunk was a lamb. In the passenger seat sat an elderly Ethiopian man, dressed in the white religious attire of a Kes, an Ethiopian rabbi.

My immediate question was: why would they go to slaughter a lamb with Arab people? What’s the logic? A Jew going to an Arab for a kosher slaughter?

That was the first time I heard about the concept of “black slaughter”, the illegal practice of Ethiopian Jews slaughtering their meat with the help of Arabs. In Israel, Ethiopian Jews are prohibited from practicing their traditional form of kosher slaughter, as it does not align with the standards of the dominant religious authorities. So, if they want to eat meat in accordance with their faith, they are forced to do so illegally. In this necessity, they have, ironically and beautifully, found cooperation and solidarity with Israeli Arabs.

This encounter revealed something deeper. It was just one of many examples of the so-called “warm welcome” Ethiopian Jews received upon their arrival in the Holy Land: second circumcisions (regardless of age), discarded blood donations, forced conversions, police brutality, racial profiling, and systemic isolation in poor neighborhoods.

I was in my thirties when I first became aware of what has been happening since the 1980s.

In 2019, Solomon Tekah, an Israeli of Ethiopian origin, was shot dead by police in a place ironically named the “Valley of Life” (Kiryat Haim). The Ethiopian community took to the streets in protest. Yet support from the broader Jewish population, especially the Ashkenazi majority, was minimal. Media coverage was scarce. Online support even scarcer.

Less than a year later, George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis. This time, many white Israelis expressed public outrage. They posted black squares, they shared hashtags, they spoke up.

The contrast is striking, and revealing. It points to something unresolved, a profound racial contradiction within Israeli society, even among its most progressive voices.

The Israelites wandered forty years in the desert before reaching the Promised Land. That myth has become central to the Jewish imagination. In Israel, it is constantly invoked, in the Haggadah of Passover, in Torah verses, in holidays, as a symbol of unwavering faith and the triumph of redemption. A story over 2,000 years old.

By contrast, the journey of Ethiopian Jews through the deserts of Sudan in the 1970s and 80s, though just as harrowing and courageous, has been largely forgotten. Their dream was the same: a homeland that would recognize and protect their Jewish identity. But their story was pushed to the margins of history.

That silence, our silence, is where this film begins.

Gigi Betito



Producer’s note

Black Slaughter is a film that takes a position. Not from a distance, not in abstraction, but from within a fragmented, unequal, and deeply political reality.

At a time when Israel has become a highly sensitive territory on the international stage, we chose not to neutralise the film. We refused to soften it. We made it as it needed to be. The film is rooted in the experience of Ethiopian Jews, a community structurally marginalised within Israeli society. This is not subtext. It is the starting point of the film.

The story is inspired by the lived experience of co-producer and co-writer Gili Yalo, an Ethiopian Jew who immigrated to Israel by foot with dreams of belonging and Jewish brotherhood, only to grow up facing a painful paradox: while the state rejected certain ancestral Ethiopian Jewish traditions, within the dream of joining his Jewish brothers, it was his Muslim brothers who made it possible to continue the traditions carried from Ethiopia, to eat kosher, preserve faith, and maintain a connection to his ancestors.

Director Gigi Betito, a close childhood friend of Gili, chose to approach this story not from the outside, but through friendship, intimacy, and shared history. From the beginning, we made the deliberate decision not to accept funding from the Israeli government or aligned private entities. This was not a constraint, but a political choice essential to preserve the integrity of the script, film, and its perspective.

Black Slaughter is an organic collaboration between French, Ethiopian, Israeli, and Palestinian artists and producers. A fragile and real convergence that reflects the territory itself. Part of the film takes place in Palestine and we chose to shoot it there, as both a narrative necessity and a political gesture.

At its core lies a simple, almost forbidden movement: Ethiopian Jews seeking help from Muslims, and being helped. Beyond dominant narratives, the film reveals something quieter but essential: forms of cooperation between marginalised communities, operating in the margins despite systems that divide them. Although the story is set in 1996, it resonates strongly today and shows without masks the broken and racist reality of Israeli society.

The director did not ignore the reality of the region. When Hailu crosses the border, the choice was made to name it Palestine , a deliberate gesture, carrying an idea of coexistence, dignity, respect, and justice. When Hailu enters this space, he encounters the raw and immediate presence of Palestinian children surrounding his car, disrupting the frame, fully alive. A Palestinian song carries this moment, extending that reality.

At its heart, Black Slaughter remains the journey of a young man. Hailu is sent to perform a ritual rooted in tradition and inheritance. What begins as obedience becomes a confrontation with identity, violence, and the possibility of choosing his own path. In the end, he makes a choice: not to live by the knife, to step away from violence, and toward a different future.

The film is political because the reality it depicts is political. But above all, it remains an act of cinema, embodied, intimate, and driven by a character. It is a film to be carried as it is: direct, uncompromising, and fully aware of its position. Black Slaughter does not ask for permission. It asks to be seen.

Alcatraz Films





Cast

Hailu	Teddy Neguse
Osher	Lia Elalouf
Yariv	Mariano Eidelman
Dolev	Naveh Tzur
Ahmed	Ahmed Abu Sager
Kes Berko	Mekonent Negse





Production companies

Alcatraz Films

Alcatraz Films is a Paris-based independent production company led by producers Olivier Théry-Lapiney, Jean-Alexandre Luciani and Julien Favre. Together, they develop and produce bold, director-driven films with a strong international reach.

The combined credits of these producers include Abdellatif Kechiche's Palme d'Or-winning Blue Is the Warmest Color, Claire Denis' High Life, Gaspar Noé's Enter the Void, Cristi Puiu's Sieranevada, Diao Yinan's Night Train and Laurent Cantet's Foxfire. Their combined credits also include Roberto Minervini's The Damned, winner of the Best Director Award at Cannes 2024 (Un Certain Regard), and Pia Marais' Transamazonia, selected at Locarno, NYFF and TIFF.

Betito Films

Founded by brothers Roy and Gigi Betito, Betito Films builds on more than a decade of collaboration across narrative film, documentary, music and visual culture.

Their work includes the award-winning short E.W.A, selected at AFI FEST and winner of Best European Film at Encounters, alongside films and music videos for artists including Future, Meek Mill, SAINt JHN, Lil Baby, Paris Hilton and Suki Waterhouse.

Credits

Director	Gigi Betito
Written by	Gili Yalo, Gigi Betito, Julien Favre, Roy Betito
Story by	Gili Yalo, Gigi Betito
Produced by	Jean-Alexandre Luciani, Olivier Théry-Lapiney, Gigi Betito, Roy Betito
Producers	Romy Halkin, Julien Favre, Gili Yalo
Co-Producers	Ahmed Abu Sager, Yossi Reich, David Danesi
Executive Producers	Eran Arieli, Tomer Mecklberg, Sean Glass
Director of Photography	Clément de Hollogne
Editor	Gaetan Hugnet
Sound Design	Sylvain Malbrant
Re-recording Mixer	Olivier Guillaume
Colorist	Marc Boucrot
Original Score	Gili Yalo and Yonatan Gat
Line Producer	Romy Halkin
Title Design	Tom Kahn
Legal Counsel	Beatrice Roig
International Sales	The Pool Films
Production companies	Alcatraz Films / Betito Films
In co-production with	Digital District
In association with	The Pool Films
Special thanks	RVZ / Kodak / API Corp / Andec Filmtechnik GmbH Berlin



BLACK SLAUGHTER, A FILM BY GIGI BETITO. STARRING TEDDY NEGUSE, LIA ELALOUF, MARIANO EIDELMAN AND NAVEH TZUR. WRITTEN BY GILI YALO, GIGI BETITO, JULIEN FAVRE AND ROY BETITO. STORY BY GILI YALO AND GIGI BETITO. PRODUCED BY JEAN-ALEXANDRE LUCIANI, OLIVIER THÉRY-LAPINEY, GIGI BETITO AND ROY BETITO. PRODUCERS ROMY HALKIN, JULIEN FAVRE AND GILI YALO. CO-PRODUCERS AHMED ABU SAGER, YOSSI REICH AND DAVID DANESI. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ERAN ARIELI, TOMER MECKLBERG AND SEAN GLASS. CINEMATOGRAPHY CLÉMENT DE HOLLOGNE. EDITOR GAETAN HUGNET. SOUND DESIGN SYLVAIN MALBRANT. RE-RECORDING MIXER OLIVIER GUILLAUME. COLORIST MARC BOUCROT. ORIGINAL SCORE GILI YALO AND YONATAN GAT. LINE PRODUCER ROMY HALKIN. TITLE DESIGN TOM KAHN. LEGAL COUNSEL BEATRICE ROIG. ALCATRAZ FILMS / BETITO FILMS, IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH DIGITAL DISTRICT, IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE POOL FILMS. INTERNATIONAL SALES THE POOL FILMS. SPECIAL THANKS TO RVZ, KODAK, API CORP AND ANDEC FILMTECHNIK GMBH BERLIN.