

PRESS KIT

The remarkable journey of a british football team
in the heart of the Arab Spring

A WALKS OF LIFE FILM



OVER THE WALL

FOOTBALL BEYOND BORDERS

'It's a revelation, brave and deeply moving'

- Elizabeth Wood, Director of DocHouse

'One powerful, inspiring film'

- Benjamin Zephaniah

'A tour de force that everyone should see'

- Carol Ann Duffy, Poet Laureate

OVER THE WALL

FOOTBALL BEYOND BORDERS

WEBSITE: www.walksoflifeilm.com

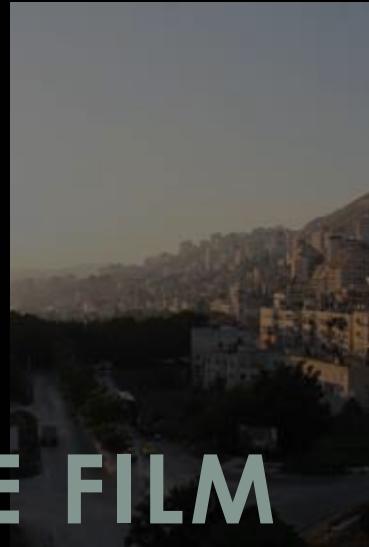
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ABOUT THE FILM



Over The Wall is about the journey of a British University football team who are transformed by the events they bear witness to in the Middle East. They play their way through Egypt, travel into Israel and attempt to become the first British sports team to ever play in Palestine.



In the year of the Arab Spring, a diverse London based team, head to Egypt armed with a football and a desire to engage with local communities.

International news unfolds around them. With events ranging from the siege of the Israeli embassy in Cairo to bombings in Gaza the boys quickly see that this tour is about more than just football.

The worsening situation forces the team to rethink their agenda. Do they carry on with their journey into Palestine? The outcome of their decision and the subsequent events that follow force them to realise that there is a greater goal in life.



CHARACTERS



Alex Williams, 23, mixed-race raised on a council estate near Brixton. Highly competitive and uncompromising, he reacts aggressively to losing matches early on. His hostile attitude towards other members of the team, particularly Omar, correlates with his worldview as a 'pessimistic realist with little faith in humanity'. However, going to Palestine offers glimmer of hope as experiences in Palestine force him to reconsider his philosophy both on a personal and societal level.

Juan, 25, Uruguayan, comes from a 'place of Revolutions' and has extremely high expectations of the tour. He soon becomes disappointed by the initial attitude of the team in Egypt and acts as a catalyst, encouraging a greater political awareness. Juan ultimately is content and satisfied as the team's focus shifts and their consciousness is increased and more profound..

Omar, 21, A devout Muslim originating from Lebanon and Turkey but identifies himself as being a 'Londoner'. The team's decision to lie to the Israeli border guards in order to enter Palestine leaves Omar morally divided. Williams loses his temper at Omar's uncertainty. Omar decides to go with team consensus and is subsequently subjected to seven hours of interrogation at the Israeli border. After successfully entering Palestine Omar witnesses the first hand effects of the occupation and is full of admiration for the Palestinian people and what they endure..

Lucas, 19 is half Bosnian & **Timmy, 20**, moved to England from Uganda as a child. The two youngest members of the team initially see the tour as a chance to go on holiday with a group of friends however the trip has a huge impact on them. They both leave Palestine more mature, having reassessed their values and approach to life.



FILMMAKING APPROACH



The pair travelled on a very low budget, with the essential equipment and a determination to capture this incredible journey that transformed all those involved. From interviewing Egyptians in the heart of Tahrir Square amidst the protests, to filming Palestinian children in a rural village singing their national anthem with passion, the trip was full of extraordinary experiences every step of the way. They developed close bonds with the team, as well as locals who engaged with the camera both as a means of expression as well as a point of reflection.

In order to enter Israel the cameras, as well as the nature of the documentary, had to be hidden. The recorded footage was smuggled through the border in the players' suitcases. As a result the two filmmakers became inextricably linked to the tour and attached to the issues they experienced.

Five months of editing has resulted in a 55 minute feature length film which has been submitted to several film festivals with the aim of ultimately making it onto television.

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Last August we were researching, preparing and gearing up to go out and shoot in the Middle East, when London was hit by the riots. The youth were demonized, rounded up and processed through the criminal system in record time as the calls for the army grew louder. Our main characters came from many of the same communities that were going up in flames; they all knew some of the people involved and could easily have been lumped together with the perpetrators.

Similar elements of individualism could be seen in many of the characters in the early stages of the trip. Immersed in their own worlds with headphones on, prone to bouts of anger, they weren't really achieving what they had set out to : 'to engage with local communities using the power of football'. Fiercely competitive, macho and driven by their own self-interest, there was little space for reflection, little space to articulate any anxiety whatsoever.

However, the power of discussion began to shift the dynamic, as the inside of the minibus which crawled through Cairo traffic (taking the team from one destination to the next) became the forum for reasoned discussion. True democracy began to emerge as everyone was offered a platform to articulate their opinion on decisions which would affect the whole tour. The players were coming to realise that they were part of something bigger than just themselves.

Through their intense experience in Palestine it was clear that the focus had shifted and the team now had a genuine desire to try and create change, however big or small that might be. Discussion was not judged in a cynical manner nor was expressing fear or hesitation seen as the weakness it once was. Collective solidarity had triumphed over individual will, which did not necessarily reflect the sign of the times.

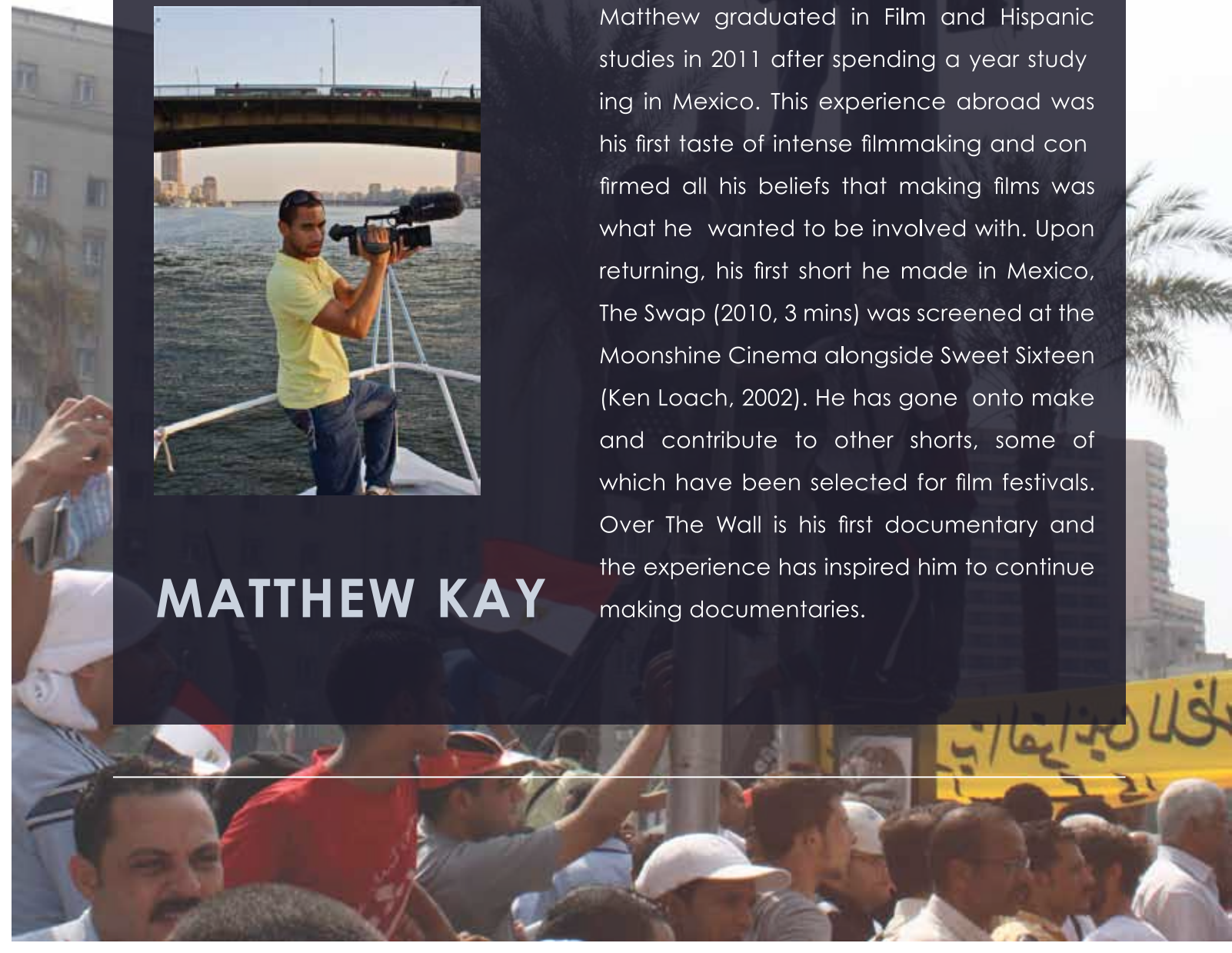
Jasper is a Politics and Social Anthropology graduate from SOAS University, who was president of the Students' Union last year. He has founded several social initiatives including Football Beyond Borders and the SOAS Saturday Club; a programme that seeks to get disadvantaged teenagers into universities. He has worked as a community organiser and a youth worker in South London. He is involved in a number of campaigns in London including the Living Wage and Citizens for Sanctuary. This is his first film.

JASPER KAIN



MATTHEW KAY

Matthew graduated in Film and Hispanic studies in 2011 after spending a year studying in Mexico. This experience abroad was his first taste of intense filmmaking and confirmed all his beliefs that making films was what he wanted to be involved with. Upon returning, his first short he made in Mexico, *The Swap* (2010, 3 mins) was screened at the Moonshine Cinema alongside *Sweet Sixteen* (Ken Loach, 2002). He has gone on to make and contribute to other shorts, some of which have been selected for film festivals. *Over The Wall* is his first documentary and the experience has inspired him to continue making documentaries.



CREDITS

Directed by :

Jasper Kain, Matthew Kay.

Producers :

Matthew Kay, Jasper Kain.

Executive Producer :

Holly Aylatt.

Associate Producers :

Tine Gharavi, Lucy Renton, Gregory D'Aguir,
Ralph Overbeck, Carol Ann Duffy.

Editors :

Ben Wilson, Mike Ho.

Animation :

Sam Barnett.

Camera :

Matthew Kay, Jasper Kain.

Sound Mix :

Scott Jaworski.

Translators :

Batoul El Mehdar, Joseph Watfa, Omar Salha,
Atef Alsher, Matthew Kay, Ghada Alnabusi.



TECHNICAL INFO

Exact Run Time : 56 mins.

Date of Completion : June 2012

Country of Production : UK

Country of Filming : UK, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Jordan

Shooting Format : Mini DV Exhibition format: HDCAM, Digital
Betacam, Betacam SP, DVD

Aspect Ratio : 1.78 / 16:9 Video

Dialogue : English, Arabic

Exhibition / Distribution : Contact Matthew or Jasper -

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