



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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THE AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE PRESENTS THE LOS ANGELES PREMIERE OF

Day Break

A FILM BY HAMID RAHMANIAN

Filmmakers in person at the Egyptian Theater

For tickets: <http://www.americancinematheque.com/indexegyptian.html>

TRAILER: <http://www.fictionvillestudio.com/mpgs/preview-daybreak.html>

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Synopsis:

In Iran, capital punishment is carried out according to Islamic law, which gives the family of the victim ownership of the offender's life. Day Break – based on a compilation of true stories and shot inside Tehran's century-old prison – revolves around the imminent execution of Mansour, a man found guilty of murder. When the family of the victim repeatedly fails to show up on the appointed day, Mansour's execution is postponed again and again. Stuck inside the purgatory of his own mind, he waits as time passes on without him, caught between life and death, retribution and forgiveness.

83 minutes, 35mm Fiction Film, In Color, Farsi, with English subtitles
Country of Origin/Production: Iran

Screenings and Awards:

2008

Egyptian Theater, Los Angeles

Movies that Matter, The Netherlands

2007

IF Istanbul Film Festival, Turkey

Amnesty International Film Festival, The Netherlands

2006

- *"Best of the Middle East", Indianapolis International Film Festival, USA, 2006*
- *Nominated for the "Northern European Critics' Award" – Best First Film, 2006*
- *Special Jury Award, Festival of African, Asian and Latin American Cinema of Milan, Italy, 2006*
- *The Jury Award, Annonay Int'l Festival of First Films, France, 2006*
- *Special Award, Fajr Film Festival, Iran, 2006*
- *"Best Leading Actor" Int'l Festival of Cinema and Religion, Italy, 2006*

Kimo Theater and the James A. Little Theater, New Mexico,

Shanghai International Film Festival, China

Facets Film Center, Chicago

Indianapolis International Film Festival

Tribeca Film Festival, New York

Festival of African, Asian and Latin American Cinema of Milan, Italy

Natfilm Festival, Denmark

Cinema Novo, Belgium

Bangkok International Film Festival, Thailand

Annonay Int'l Festival of First Films, France

Fajr International Film Festival, Iran

Hamburg Film Fest, Germany

Film Fra Sor, Films from the South, Norway

International Festival of Cinema and Religion, Italy

Frankfort International Film Festival, Germany

New Zealand International Film Festival, New Zealand

Sao Paulo Int'l Film Festival, Brazil

Swedish International Film Festival, Sweden

2005

International Film Festival of Kerela, India

Reykjavik International Film Festival, Iceland

Festival du Nouveau Cinema, Montreal

Flanders International Film Festival, Belgium

Toronto International Film Festival

Critics' Reviews:

“A powerful work of existentialism, *Day Break* will touch anyone who has ever made the wrong choices in life and been forced to deal with the consequences.
– *Dimitri Eipides, Film Programmer*

“A condemned man's wrenching wait for his own execution works like a ticking timebomb in Hamid Rahmanian's...impressive debut feature, "Day Break."
...Rahmanian takes the basis of an actual Islamic law -- permitting the family of a murder victim to personally carry out the execution of the convicted murderer -- as profound material for a spare and almost unbearably tense drama. Tautness and single-minded focus will serve the picture well as buyers consider it for various upscale territories, possibly including the U.S. The process is guaranteed to shock Western audiences unaware of internal Iranian law, raising yet again the terrible irony that what is certainly backward and repressive for Iranian citizens is dramatic fodder for Iranian storytellers... Little exposition is verbalized, making "Day Break" a fine example of a cinematic investigation of one man's thoughts. There's little doubt Mansour is guilty, but the inhuman torture of postponing his day of decision again and again and again has the effect of upstaging his terrible act. Yari brilliantly humanizes this man trapped between his own sense of guilt and an existential condition that screams out for release – either the family's pardon, or their carrying out his sentence.
– *Variety Magazine, Robert Koehler, October 12, 2005*

“Intriguing cultural document” – *NY Times*, April 27, 2006

Best in Show: The Top 40 Picks of the Tribeca Film Festival: Hamid Rahmanian's assured film begins in faux-documentary mode as a taut consideration of capital punishment in Iran, but it eventually switches gears to become a reticent interior journey, as Mansour's apprehension about his fate slowly transforms into the agony of a living death.
– *Village Voice, Jessica Winter, April 18th, 2006*

“Deeply affecting” – *The L Magazine*, April 28, 2006

Hamid Rahmanian's "Daybreak" is a powerful and haunting film that addresses some of the most important issues of our time including the treatment of prisoners, torture, and the use of the death penalty. Filmed inside actual prisons in Iran, the film unfolds like a documentary, giving it an eerie reality. The film's characters are nuanced and moving and Rahmanian does not add any ideological coloring or rhetorical bombast to the project. The result is that the film resonates with a universal appeal that will touch audiences regardless of their degree of interest in Iranian politics or human rights.
– *Zahir Janmohamed, Advocacy Director, Amnesty International USA*

With *Day Break*, Rahmanian has developed a compelling story from a simple, single concept and, with his ingeniously limited use of fake documentary technique and beautiful eye for camera placement, maintains its intrigue amidst an existential style that normally results in slow and drearily dull cinema. His capability with the medium certainly makes him a director to watch.

- *Cinematical, Christopher Campbell, April 21, 2006*

"Most North American films about capitol punishment tend to be either didactic (*Dead Man Walking*) or sensationalistic (*Life of David Gate*, anyone?) but this assured first feature from Iranian-born Hamid Rahmanian is neither. Instead, it distends a typical mellow-dramatic narrative - a condemned man (Hossein Yari) awaits his execution in prison - into a meditation on the nature of punishment and the weight of regret. What's most startling is how smoothly the film transitions from being a carefully staged, documentary-style inventory of the legal process (with the actors acknowledging the camera) into an intimate almost impressionistic exploration of its protagonist's scorched physic terrain."

- *AN, Eye Film, Toronto, September 8, 2005*

"...It ends with a marvelous surprise, which provoked one of the most interesting audible reactions from an audience I've ever heard."

- *J. Robert Parks, Long Pauses*

"MATURE TELENT GETS A BREAK. A harrowing tour-de-force with the power to transform its audience, *Daybreak* broaches the catastrophic and philosophically intense territory of a man awaiting execution...A brave feature debut with uncommon emotional depth, *Daybreak* signals the arrival of a mature talent."

- *SB, Toronto FF's The Festival Daily, September 10, 2005*

"A hard-hitting, thought provoking drama that gives a new dimension to a hot topic: the death sentence."

- *International Herald Tribune, February 18, 2006*

The passage of time--finite, limitless--is the psychological center of "Day Break" (2005), Hamid Rahmanian's meditative, often-impressionistic debut feature gem following one man's thoughts as he awaits his execution on Death Row. Wrong choices are seldom as starkly dramatized as in this heartily emotional, spare, documentary-style drama. Without didacticism or sentimentality, Rahmanian proves himself a sturdy storyteller, and there are many worthy turns and surprises in the telling.

- *New City Chicago, May 16, 2006*

Background on Capital Punishment in Iran:

Islamic Law has a category of crimes that modern legal systems do not have. A qasas crime is one of retaliation. If you commit a qasas crime, the victim has a right to seek retribution and retaliation. The exact punishment for each qasas crime is set forth in the Qur'an. If a person is killed, his or her family has a right to seek qasas punishment for the murderer. Punishment can come in several forms and may also include diya, which is paid to the victim's family as compensation. The victim's family may also seek to have a public execution of the offender or, may even seek a pardon for the offender.

Before the offender can be executed, he must complete a physical exam that issues him in health suitable for execution. The accused must also meet with the family of the victim, under supervision of the court, to provide the family one last opportunity to administer a pardon, or exchange diya for execution. The offender cannot be executed until this meeting occurs. If the family pardons the offender, he is absolved of the crime spiritually but will serve jail time, decided by the court. If the victim's family chooses, instead, to proceed with the execution, the victim's next of kin must participate in the actual execution. The role of the courts at this juncture is only to monitor the process of retribution.

The Crew and Cast:

CREW

Director, Producer	Hamid Rahmanian
Writers	Mehran Kashani, Hamid Rahmanian
Managing Producer	Vahid Nikkhah Azad
Production Manager	Hamid Molavi
Director of Photography	Byrom Fazli,
Visual and Sound Editor	Ebrahim Saeedi
Original Score and Performance	David Bergeaud
Duduk Solos Performance	Fred Seldon
Art Director & Costumer	Ahmad Saket
Make Up Artist	Reza Rodmanesh
Sound Recordist	Hassan Zahedi,
Sound Mixer	Tony Volante / Soundtrack, NY
Artist Consultant to the Director	Melissa Hibbard

CAST

Hossein Yari	Mansour
Zabi Afshar	Hashem
Hoda Nasseh	Atifeh
Atash Taghipour	Heydar
Maryam Amirjallali	Mother

Director's Biography:

Hamid Rahmanian is a filmmaker and graphic designer.

He was educated in Tehran, Iran where he gained his B.F.A. in Graphic Design and owned a graphic design firm in Tehran for five years. He has received numerous awards for his achievements as a graphic artist and his work has been exhibited in international festivals and competitions

He moved to the United States and earned a M.F.A. in Computer Animation in 1997 from Pratt Institute. He received "The First Place College Award" (an Emmy) from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and was nominated for a Student Academy Award for his animation, THE SEVENTH DAY, among other awards. It was also in competition at Annecy Int'l Animation Festival. In 1996, Mr. Rahmanian was the youngest recipient ever to receive the National Interest Waiver from the U.S. for his outstanding work as an artist. After completing his studies, he was hired by Disney Feature Animation Company as a Look Development Artist where he worked on "Tarzan", "The Emperor's New Groove" and "Dinosaur".

In 1998, Mr. Rahmanian left Disney and established his own production company, Prometheus Cinema. His first 35 mm film, a 19 minute experimental short, AN I WITHIN, received Kodak's "Best Cinematography Award", "Best American Short" from the LA Int'l Short Film Festival and "Special Achievement Award" from the USA Film Festival. It was shown at various festivals. Mr. Rahmanian has made three documentaries on video. BREAKING BREAD (2000) and SIR ALFRED OF CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT (2001) have been well received by the media and worldwide audiences. SHAHRBANOO (2002) first premiered on PBS station WNET where it received the highest rating for an independently produced documentary. As a result, the film has been picked up by stations all over the country and has shown at festivals and conferences all over the world. He has recently completed his first feature length fiction film, DAY BREAK (2005) that premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and for which received several awards. He is now working on a new documentary tentatively entitled OMID E MEHR.

In 2003, Mr. Rahmanian co-established a non-profit organization - ARTEEAST - its mission statement to promote the arts and cultures of the Middle East and its worldwide Diaspora in the United States. He is the artistic director works as the curator of film programs for Cinema East, which is now in its 8th season. He has also continued working as a graphic designer. In the past five years, he has been commissioned to do work for cultural organizations and commercial companies such as The United Nations, GQ Magazine, Pacifica Radio/Democracy Now and Airamex Shipping

Director's Biography – Short:

Hamid Rahmanian is a filmmaker and graphic designer. He holds a B.F.A. from the University of Tehran in Graphic Design and earned a M.F.A. in Computer Animation in 1997 from Pratt Institute in New York City. He received "The First Place College Award" (a student Emmy) from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and was nominated for a Student Academy Award for his animation, THE SEVENTH DAY, among other awards in 1997. His first 35 mm film, a 19 minute experimental short, AN I WITHIN, received Kodak's "Best Cinematography Award" and "Best American Short" from the LA Int'l Short Film Festival. Mr. Rahmanian has made three documentaries on video: BREAKING BREAD (2000), SIR ALFRED OF CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT (2001) and SHAHRBANOO (2002), all of which have been well received by the media and worldwide audiences. In 2003, Mr. Rahmanian co-established ARTEEAST. He works as the curator of film programs for Cinema East, which is now in its 8th season. He has currently completed his first feature length film entitled DAY BREAK and is now working on a new documentary tentatively entitled, OMID E MEHR.

Director's Filmography:

2005 **Day Break** – feature Film, 85 min., 35 mm.

2002 **Shahbanoo** – Documentary, 57 min., dv.

2001 **Sir Alfred of Charles de Gaulle Airport** – Documentary, 29 min., dv

2000 **Breaking Bread** – Documentary, 54 minutes, vd

1999 **An I Within** – Live action/animation, 19 min. 35 mm.

1996 **The Seventh Day** – Animation, 6 min. 1996, Beta SP.

Director's Statement:

When I started working on the story for this film in 2002, the thing that I was most attracted to was not necessarily the character of Mansour and who he was or where he came from but rather the situation that he found himself in. I wanted to make the story communicate universally to the audience. I wanted them to relate to Mansour's dilemma. Not everyone has committed murder but we have all made wrong choices, choices that perhaps were rash and passionate, propelling us into situations that we could not have imagined and for which we have not control over.

It was important that I convey the passage of time and the physical space that Mansour was trapped in while waiting for his execution day to arrive. The psychological intensity of not knowing his fate dragged him through each and every moment of that experience with minute detail. It is the details of Mansour's day-to-day experiences that propel the story along. The struggles inside his mind to come to terms with what he has done are ubiquitously experienced by the audience. It is this commonly understood situation that brings out the universality of the story and makes the film imminently imperative for everyone.