

a film by Ravi Bharwani


27 STEPS OF *May*



BIFF
BUSAN International Film Festival
2018

 Göteborg
Film Festival
2019

SHANGHAI
INTERNATIONAL
FILM
FESTIVAL
2019



LOGLINE, THEME, SYNOPSIS

THE FILM

A 90 minute drama made for the cinema.

THE LOGLINE

A woman's desire to make peace with her dark past through an encounter with a stranger.

THE THEME

Alienation and Liberation.

SYNOPSIS

Loosely based on the mass rapes of Chinese Indonesian women during the May 1998 riots in Indonesia, this film tells the story of May (14) who was gang-raped 8 years ago. Traumatized by the event, May imprisons herself in her father's house, blocking out all emotions by constructing a protective bubble around her. While May lives her life in silence, without contact or emotions, her father is trapped by guilt, devastated that he failed to keep her safe. With May, he is tender and gentle. He will sacrifice anything for her. But in the boxing ring, he fights to channel all his anger and guilt. After 8 years, a magician creates a small crack in May's protective wall. He stirs May's sense of wonder and in doing so awakens her once lost emotions. Eventually May faces her trauma and frees herself from her crippling past.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My childhood experience of being a Hindu of Indian origin living in a Muslim dominated Indonesia has led me to an on going obsession with the theme of isolation and alienation. I have explored this theme extensively in my previous films; a man's relentless obsession in "The Rainmaker," and a son's longing for his estranged father's acceptance on a fishing platform in the middle of the sea in "Jermal." Yet, I sense that I still have not exhausted the topic and subsequently feel the need to tell more stories on the subject.

Another starting point for this film is the May 1998 riots, where incidents of mass violence, rapes and looting of a racial nature occurred throughout Indonesia that eventually lead to the resignation of President Suharto. The main targets of the violence were ethnic Chinese Indonesians. At least 168 cases of rape were reported while thousands others died.

Since we wanted to avoid making a political film, we focused the drama on just one family. I wanted to illustrate how the pain and wounds, which happened in a flash, had devastating effects that can last a lifetime for the victims and their family. Though this film ends with hope, I believe there are millions of other Mays and their families who have not taken the first step towards healing and recovery, or are still struggling to make any kind of progress.

The May 1998 tragedy is at risk of being buried forever without the facts ever being revealed, unless a worthy government comes to power in Indonesia with the courage to uncover the truth. Not one President since the atrocities has publicly apologized to the families of the victims or provided them with compensation.

Presently this film finds its relevance in unraveling these dark events of the past. However, on a more urgent note, we would like to pressure the current government to pass the Elimination of Sexual Violence (RUU PKS) bill that is still being discussed in parliament. While this bill remains stuck, statistics show that every two hours, three women in Indonesia experience sexual violence, and these are only the reported ones.

It is our hope that "27 Steps of May" can play a role in raising awareness and empathy for victims of sexual violence. But more importantly, we would like to not let this film remain just a film. This theme should become a larger movement where we can help push the agenda to uncover the truth of May 1998 and to finally pass this law, so we never have to discover other Mays in the future.

THE CAST



RAIHAANUN
MAY



LUKMAN SARDI
FATHER



ARIO BAYU
MAGICIAN



VERDI SOLAIMAN
COURIER

STILLS







THE FILMMAKERS



RAVI BHARWANI
DIRECTOR / PRODUCER

RAVI BHARWANI graduated from the Jakarta Institute of the Arts (IKJ) in 1990. After directing several commercials, documentaries, short movies and made-for-TV movies, he made his feature film *The Rainmaker* which premiered in Busan International Film Festival - Asian New Current. This film was later selected to the Bangkok, Jakarta, Rotterdam, Barcelona, Shanghai, Vladivostok, Cinemanila international film festival. It won the best film in the Asia new talent award in Shanghai, China. *Jermal*, his second feature, where he worked with two other directors - Rayya Makarim and Utawa Tresno, was selected for screening in Pusan, Rotterdam, Melbourne, Montreal, Vancouver, Edinburgh, Copenhagen and numerous other International film festivals and has received several awards.



RAYYA MAKARIM
SCRIPTWRITER / PRODUCER

RAYYA MAKARIM has been a scriptwriter since 1998. Through the years she has worked as a film curator, organizing discussions and screenings of world cinema as well as banned films at Teater Utan Kayu; a cultural pocket dedicated to the freedom of expression. She has also been regularly involved in the Jakarta International Film Festival since its founding in 1999. Graduated with a Bachelors of Art in Film from Vassar College, NY; Rayya was granted the British Chevening Award Scholarship to do her Masters at Goldsmiths College, University of London. Currently she is working on a number of scripts tackling subjects including corruption, religious pluralism, and bureaucracy.



WILZA LUBIS
PRODUCER

WILZA LUBIS has been working in production for almost 15 years. Starting off as one of the most sought-after line producers in Indonesia, Wilza is now a prolific producer who has made several feature-length films, TV commercials, music videos for respected local production houses such as Miles Productions and Kalyana Shira Films, and also international co-productions such as MM Productions (Denmark) and Margate House Films(USA).

CAST & CREW

CAST : Raihaanun, Lukman Sardi, Ario Bayu, Verdi Solaiman

DIRECTOR : Ravi Bharwani

WRITER : Rayya Makarim

PRODUCERS : Wilza Lubis, Rayya Makarim, Ravi Bharwani

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY : Ipung Rachmat Syaiful

ART DIRECTOR : Vida Sylvia

EDITORS : Wawan I Wibowo, Lilik Subagyo

MUSIC COMPOSER : Thoersi Argeswara

SOUND DESIGNER : Satrio Budiono

TECHNICAL ASPECT

112 Min / 4K / 2018 / Feature / Drama

Indonesian with English sub-title / Color / 1 : 2.39 / 2K DCP

Production Company : Green Glow Pictures in association with Go Studio

Country of Production : Indonesia

Contact persons :

John Badalu, johnbadalu@gmail.com, +62 812 85325864

Ravi Bharwani, rbharwani2004@yahoo.com, +62 815 6014555

Web : www.27stepsofmay.com