AMERICA 1979
She didn't know she was different.
OFFICIAL SELECTION SCREEN ACTORS GUILD SHORT FILM SHOWCASE 2014
OFFICIAL SELECTION NOOR IRANIAN FILM FESTIVAL 2014
OFFICIAL SELECTION LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC FILM FESTIVAL 2015
OFFICIAL SELECTION REEL SISTERS OF THE DIASPORA FILM FESTIVAL 2015
OFFICIAL SELECTION INTERNATIONAL PEACE & FILM FESTIVAL 2015
OFFICIAL SELECTION NEW FILMMAKERS NEW YORK 2015
OFFICIAL SELECTION INTERNATIONAL DIASPORA FILM FESTIVAL 2015
OFFICIAL SELECTION PHILADELPHIA ASIAN PACIFIC 2015
LARGESSE MEDIA PRESENTS SOLYA SPIEGEL NICO POLLAK ALI REZA FARAHNAKIAN SORAYA BROUKHIM AND SONDRA JAMES PRODUCED BY GREGORY HOROUPIAN DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ADRIAN CORREIA
PRODUCTION DESIGNER GUY KOZAK EDITED BY LILA YOMTOOB RERECORDING MIXER CHAD BIRMINGHAM
ORIGINAL SCORE LJOVA ZHURBIN WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY LILA YOMTOOB

AMERICA 1979

A 14 minute narrative film about growing up Iranian American
during the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979.

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This Press Kit and other materials for the media can be downloaded directly at
http://america1979.com/press-kit/

Log Line

It's 1979, and the Iran Hostage Crisis is in full force. When an Iranian American girl is teased at school for her ethnicity, her family must come to terms with how world politics is affecting their lives.

Short Synopsis

In November 1979, a group of young Iranian revolutionaries took 63 hostages at the American Embassy in Tehran. This event echoed daily on television sets across America for 15 months, and soon enough Iranians living in the States were singled out because of their nationality. The dream of the American melting pot was over.

America 1979 is a fourteen minute narrative film in which an Iranian American nine year old girl and her teenage brother are coming of age with world politics influencing how they behave, how they are treated, and ultimately who they will grow up to be.

Treatment

It's 1979. Everyday newspapers and television broadcasts are flooded with coverage of the Iran Hostage Crisis. Even Regina's fourth grade "current events" bulletin board has stories of the Crisis on it. Regina, an Iranian American nine year old, is in school preparing for a spelling test. When she reaches into her pencil box, she finds a nasty note degrading Iranians. She looks around the room and sees two boys snickering. The teacher, Ms. Ambrose notices that Regina is using a red crayon instead of a pencil for her test. When Ms. Ambrose scolds her, Regina admits that she did it out of anger, but Ms. Ambrose does not delve deeper. Instead she continues to scold her unnecessarily. But Regina is not finished displacing her anger. When she goes home that afternoon, she steals her older brother Bobby's savings in order to sooth herself with a huge purchase at the school book fair. Later, Bobby notices the missing money, the incident at school comes to light, and her parents must come to terms with the truth that world politics is not only effecting their lives, but their children's as well.

Director's Statement

I was raised in Chicago where there are known immigrant populations: Greek, Polish, Puerto Rican and Indian. My parents were born in Tehran, Iran and immigrated in the late 1950s. By the time the Iranian Revolution and Diaspora began in 1979, they had been in the States for twenty years. When the Iran hostage crisis hit, we went from being viewed as "melting-pot-immigrants" to "terrorists" overnight. I was five years old.

During this time, cultural pride amongst minorities was not a widespread idea. Iranian-Americans, a small minority that is still not federally recognized, did not have a collective voice or any organized vehicle to speak out against the sudden wave of racism that media coverage of the hostage crisis perpetrated.

Now, the Iranian American voice is slowly emerging. However, this drawn-out incident that shaped the lives of millions is rarely explored.

This story is relevant today for Iranians, other Middle Easterners and immigrant families in general. Substitute the main character in *America 1979* with an Afghan girl during 9/11, or a Mexican girl during Arizona's immigration controversy, and you may have a very similar story to *America 1979*. What does it mean to an individual when their ethnic group is being vilified in the media? It adds further complication to a young person's personal narrative – not only are you 'other' but you are a bad person too. I wanted to show what the beginning of that process might look like, from the point of view I know best – my own.

Read the **Muftah.com** interview to learn more about Lila's thoughts on filmmaking and *America 1979*.

In the Press

"A deeply personal story that will resonate with the Iranian-American community at large."

San Khanlari, Muftah.org
Telling Our Story as Iranian-Americans Ourselves: Lila Yomtoob's *America 1979*
http://muftah.org/telling-story-lila-yomtoobs-america-1979/#.VNFcQcbXATt

"One of the few explorations of Iranian-American experiences during the wave of anti-Iranian hysteria and violence that overtook the United States in the wake of the Hostage Crisis."

Alex Shams, AjamMediaCollective.com
Filming *America 1979*: Iranian-American Memories of the Year Our Lives Turned Upside Down
http://ajammc.com/2013/08/01/filming-america-1979...

What People are Saying

"A gem, touching and beautifully crafted. I'm smitten by the atmosphere, tension, acting and music, and happy our generation cares about preserving our history."

- Shahrzad Elghanayan, writer and photo editor.

"Very sweet and terribly poignant. With this one incident you were able to show how unfairly affected everyone in the family was to the climate in this country. And the fact that every family member responded differently was so very important."

- Judy Goldring, social worker.

"A beautiful film. You left me aching for more. Truly a gem. Your voice is our voice. Regina's raw innocence, instinct to fit in, to survive. Bobby's determination, maturity and raw adolescence. The desperation and loneliness of the parents and the children. It's truly the reflective puzzle, a piece of the story/history/herstory of our diaspora.

"For my doctoral dissertation I interviewed and wrote about the experiences of Muslim American children in school after 9/11. I saw their stories in your film. In Regina and Bobby's story. In my story and your story."

- Negin Ghaffari, PhD in education.

"It was remarkable to me that a 13 minute film could be so touching and that the family relationships would have time to make such an impression. The actors just did such a nice job, the interaction so natural. I also loved the art direction... it was so spot-on! Even though I lived through this time, I was young and sheltered - had no idea the impact the crisis had in America and on Iranians. Thanks for sharing this story and this gem of a little film."

- Jennifer Naman

"I think that for as many violent hate crimes that happen there are maybe 10 times or 100 times as many subtle aggressions that make the impact of those crimes felt more widely, but are not reported or don't involve outright violence. And unfortunately, I think, we are often afraid (Iranians and everyone else) to share those pains we experience, especially if the aggressions they come from do not qualify as "hate crimes" or "violence," but instead verbal or through attitudes or mocking or teasing. Regardless of the physical violence of our bodies, these are all painful reminders that our bodies and our beings are wrong, out of place, and I don't think they are any less painful than bodily harm (In fact they are perhaps worse because we cannot even show, account for, or hope for justice with them!)."

- Alex Shams, editor-in-chief, Ajam Media Collective

The Cast

Ali Reza Farahnakian - *Bijan*
Ali has been featured in films and television shows such as Inside Amy Schumer, 30 Rock, Louie and The Bourne Legacy. He is a seasoned improvisor and an alumnus of The ImprovOlympic and The Second City in Chicago, Upright Citizen's Brigade, and Saturday Night Live. In 2002 he opened The Peoples Improv Theater (The PIT), where he works and performs. Ali was born in Esfahan Iran, and moved to the United States in the summer of 1969.

Soraya Broukhim - *Roya*
This year alone, Soraya played the lead in three short films, and the independent feature A Pebble of Love directed by award winning filmmaker Hossein Keshavarz. She also played lead in the award winning film An Encounter with Simone Weil. Soraya has worked on over twenty Off Off Broadway plays and collaborated with Judith Malina as Artistic Associate of The Living Theatre for three years.

Sondra James - *Ms. Ambrose*
Sondra is an accomplished character actress that has appeared on the big and small screens for the last 30 years. Recent credits include the tv shows Girls and The Mysteries of Laura and films Sleepwalk with Me and The Dictator. She is a native New Yorker.

Solya Spiegel - *Regina*
Solya is spunky ten year old girl who was born in Hungary and lives in Brooklyn, NY with her adoptive mom. She loves fashion and dancing. "America 1979" is her acting debut.

Nico Pollack - *Bobby*
Nico is an introspective twelve year old boy, born and raised in Long Island, NY where he still lives with his family. He likes reading science fiction and listening to drum and bass. "America 1979" is his acting debut.

The Crew

Lila Yomtoob - Writer / Director, Producer, Editor
Lila is a New York based director and producer. Shortly after receiving her degree from NYU film school, she went on to direct and produce her first feature film, High Life. The "perfectly honed" and"razor sharp" (Variety) micro-budget improv film premiered at San Francisco Indiefest in 2005 and screened at several festivals and non-traditional venues.

In addition to directing, Lila is the executive producer of Largesse Media, a boutique firm specializing in marketing and outreach for independent film. Previously, Lila worked in post production audio on over 40 films by directors such as Spike Lee, The Coen Brothers, Mary Heron, and John Cameron Mitchell. In 2006, Lila received an Emmy Award for sound editing on the HBO documentary *BAGHDAD E.R.*

Lila is a first generation American who was raised in Chicago and Los Angeles. *America 1979* is her first work to address ethnicity. She insists that her worldview, sense of humor, and storytelling is informed by her mix of Iranian, Iraqi, Jewish & American culture.

Gregory Horoupian - Producer
Greg is an NYC based producer and director from Vancouver, Canada. Other credits include Bayonet (Montreal world Film Festival, Warsaw Film Festival) and the upcoming Swallow directed by Carlo Mirabella-Davis (Swell Season).

Adrian Correia - Director of Photography
Adrian has 66 cinematography credits to his name, including the award winning Junction, Brooklyn's Finest directed by Antoine Fuqua and Melissa Joan Hart's Santa Con. He currently has six films in post production and 3 more films scheduled for 2015.

Guy Kozak - Production Designer
Guy is a graduate for Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and got his start in the art departments for Moonrise Kingdom directed by Wes Anderson and While We're Young directed by Noah Baumbach. America 1979 is his first production designer credit.

Lev "Ljova" Zhurbin - Composer
Ljova is a composer, arranger, violist and violinist from Moscow, Russia. His diverse experience includes working with Francis Ford Coppola, Jay Z, Kanye West, Brooklyn Rider and Yo Yo Ma and The Silk Road. He is founder of Ljova and the Kontraband and composer of "Signal Strength," which was shared by hundreds of thousands worldwide.

Chad Birmingham - Sound Supervisor
Chad has been involved in the New York filmmaking community for the past twenty years. Recent projects include Bennett Miller's "Foxcatcher," Jon Stewart's "Rosewater" and Barry Levinson's "The Humbling," as well as "True Detective" for HBO, and the History Channel mini-series "Sons of Liberty." Chad holds a BA in Anthropology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Complete Cast & Crew

CAST

Regina	**Solya Spiegel**	*Roya*	**Soraya Broukhim**
Bobby	**Nico Pollack**	*Ms. Ambrose*	**Sondra James**
Bijan	**Ali Reza Farahnakian**	*Radio Announcer*	**Robert O'Gorman**

CREW

writer/director	**Lila Yomtoob**	*assistant director*	**Connor Sullivan**
producers	**Greg Horoupian** **Lila Yomtoob**	*script supervisor*	**Laura Gasperini**
		1st assistant camera	**Chris Ungco**
associate producers	**Bill Brissette** **Anna Mace**	*2AC / DIT*	**Zachary Meyer**
director of photography	**Adrian Correia**	*gaffer*	**Brian McCann**
editor	**Lila Yomtoob**	*grip*	**Jordyn Gatti** **John Hannon**
production designer	**Guy Kozak**	*swing*	**Matt Reilly**
colorist	**Shanna Maurizi**		**Yessica Curiel-Montoya**
sound supervisor	**Chad Birmingham**	*production associate*	**Shahed Shajadieh**
composer	**Lev "Ljova" Zhurbin**	*title designer*	**Bill Brissette**
set dresser	**Matthew Park**	*classroom extras*	**Brooke Biletsky** **Isaac Galizio**
wardrobe designer	**Liene Dobraja**		**Andre Gulick**
key hair & make-up	**Caroline Baribeau-Lucas**		**Jesse Peretz**
make-up assistant	**Tracy Raffelson**		**Joelle Schrag** **Toby Schrag**
location sound mixer	**Kathy Lee**		**Ashton Sharinn**
boom operator	**Anne Pope**		**Leah Shutz**
			Sahar Tartak
			Riley Vulpis
			Kelsey Walsh

Photography

Regina (Solya Spiegel) soothes herself by tracing patterns on a Persian rug in the short narrative film *America 1979* directed by Lila Yomtoob.

Download full size original:
http://america1979.com/presskit/1979_full_res_bw_rug_image.tif

Regina (Solya Spiegel) soothes herself by tracing patterns on a Persian rug in the short narrative film *America 1979* directed by Lila Yomtoob.

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Bijan (Ali Reza Farahnakian) consoles his son Bobby (Nico Pollak) in the short narrative film *America 1979* directed by Lila Yomtoob.

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Photography Continued

Regina can't face her family when they find the evidedence in the short film *America 1979* directed by Lila Yomtoob. From left to right: Nico Pollak (Bobby) Soraya Broukhim (Roya), Bijan (Ali Reza Farahnakian) & Regina (Solya Spiegel).

Download full size original:
http://america1979.com/presskit/1979_Regina_and_family.tif

Regina (Solya Spiegel) can't catch a break in the short narrative film *America 1979* directed by Lila Yomtoob.

Download full size original:
http://america1979.com/presskit/1979_Regina_in_class.tif

Director Lila Yomtoob on the set of *America 1979*.

Download full size original:
http://america1979.com/presskit/Yomtoob_on_set.jpg

Lila Yomtoob, the writer/director of *America 1979*.

Download full size original:
http://america1979.com/presskit/Yomtoob_headshot.jpg

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America 1979 - Press Photography

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Yomtoob_on_set.jpg

Director Lila Yomtoob on the set of *America 1979*.

Yomtoob_headshot.jpg

Lila Yomtoob, the writer/director of *America 1979*.