

COHEN MEDIA GROUP
PRESENTS

JUNE ZERO



A FILM BY JAKE PALTROW

WRITTEN BY TOM SHOVAL & JAKE PALTROW



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USA/Israel - Historical Drama - 1.66 - 105 min



Head of Marketing,
Distribution & Publicity
JUSTIN DIPIETRO
Justin@cohenmedia.net



PRESS CONTACTS

NY/LA PR:
Fusion Entertainment
ADAM KERSH
adam@fusion-entertainment.com
EMMA MYERS
emma@fusion-entertainment.com



SYNOPSIS

The 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann, architect of the mass murder of the Jews during World War II, is revisited in a gripping and surprising new vision from American filmmaker Jake Paltrow (*The Good Night*). This Hebrew-language drama—based on true accounts—tells its story from the intertwined perspectives of three largely unrelated figures: Eichmann’s Jewish Moroccan prison guard; an Israeli police investigator for the prosecution and a Holocaust survivor; and a 13-year-old Jewish Libyan immigrant. Largely shot on 16mm film, Paltrow’s vividly textured work uses these disparate points of view to paint an image of the diasporic Jewish people and, in its unorthodox narrative approach, reminds us that the same histories are experienced differently by people all over the world, and we are connected through shared traumatic pasts.

CAST

Noam Ovadia
Tzahi Grad
Yoav Levi
Tom Hagi
Joy Rieger
Ami Smolarchik
Rotem Kainan
Adam Gabai
Koby Aderet

CREW

Director	Jake Paltrow
Screenplay	Jake Paltrow, Tom Shoval
Cinematographer	Yaron Scharf
Music	Ariel Marx
Editor	Ayelet Gil-Efrat
Art Director	Eytan Levy
Producers	David Silber, Miranda Bailey, Oren Moverman
Production companies	Metro Communications, Cold Iron Pictures, The Film Arcade
Coproduction company	United King Films

DIRECTOR & CO-WRITER
JAKE PALTROW



JAKE PALTROW was born in Los Angeles, California in 1975. His narrative fiction films are *Young Ones* and *The Good Night*. He co-directed the documentary *De Palma* with Noah Baumbach. He has directed several successful television shows including *Boardwalk Empire* and *Halt and Catch Fire*. He was nominated for an Emmy Award for *The First Ones* (a film commissioned by the New York Times Magazine). His films have screened at Sundance, Venice, New York, Karlovy Vary, and several other A-class international film festivals.

FILMOGRAPHY *(SELECTION)*

June Zero - 2022

De Palma (Feature Documentary) - 2015

Young Ones - 2014

The Good Night - 2007

CO-WRITER**TOM SHOVAL**

TOM SHOVAL was born in Petah Tikva, Israel in 1981. He studied at the Sam Spiegel School of Jerusalem. He is a director and scriptwriter TV series and feature films, including Youth that won the Best Film award at the Jerusalem International Film Festival in 2013, and that has screened at the Berlinale, Karlovy Vary and CPH:PIX, among many other festivals.

FILMOGRAPHY *(SELECTION)***Shake Your Cares Away** - 2021**Youth** - 2013

INTERVIEW WITH **JAKE PALTROW**

Can you tell us about the genesis of this film and why you chose this particular moment in time?

My father passed on his deep interest in World War II and Jewish history to me. It became a shared thing from when I was very young – a place where we connected and a subject we could explore and discuss together. I stumbled upon this detail – the Israeli authorities for various legal and political reasons chose to cremate Eichmann after he was hanged. How this was accomplished in a culture and religion with no cremation seemed fascinating to me and became the first step in building a story. There was very little information about it and in the process of researching it we found this man's claim that when he was a young boy he worked at the oven factory where this one-time-use crematorium for Eichmann's body was built. The rest followed through choosing to open the story through a child's perspective of this new country he had just moved to from Libya and all the challenges of that integration and finding his identity in a young country that is also in the process of defining itself.

What was it like writing this film with another writer-director, Tom Shoval?

Tom is the element that made the whole script work. He is an exceptionally gifted writer. Before I met Tom I had an idea in my head of what the story would be like, but as I started the research and visited Israel to interview some of the living participants surrounding this event it was clear that to access some of those depths there was a cultural and historical layer I wouldn't be able to penetrate on my own and I set out to find someone to write it with there. I was very lucky to find Tom.



Why did you decide to tackle the trial of Adolf Eichmann through these three separate characters and their interweaving stories?

We in fact don't touch upon the workings of the actual trial at all. Our film starts at the news of Eichmann's death sentence. My feeling was the trial itself has been explored many many times in all mediums and there was nothing new to reveal about that particular part of this history.

Can you describe some of the themes *June Zero* explores?

The differences between integration and conformity, the struggle to commemorate painful histories without perpetuating the traumas they leave in their wake, how history and memory can simultaneously fight and conspire to make new mythologies and who is allowed to claim authorship and participation in those processes.

Are there any films or books that helped to inspire *June Zero*?

The only movie I remember us returning to in our writing process was Jacques Becker's *LE TROU*. It was a guide for creating a group of characters that are very different from one another, but through their concentration on a single task (in that movie it's digging a hole to escape prison) a kind of familial warmth and trust grows between them. We very much wanted to find that feeling for entering this time and situation through the young boy as he finds his footing in this world of men at the oven factory. Claude Lanzmann's documentaries and particularly *SHOAH* really inspired our approach to stay away from using any archival imagery or recreations of Micha's experiences of the Holocaust. Lanzmann's spirit loomed so large over our process we dedicated the movie to him.

Was there a discussion on if Eichmann should physically be shown in the film?

We were always certain we should avoid making him a character mainly because even if we could accurately depict Eichmann's nature or somehow expose his true psychology where would that get us now. We are telling the story through the experiences of these peripheral characters so we wanted Eichmann to be a figure, something to be gathered around, reacted to and managed, but not understood.

Talk us through the casting process in general, and did you have to do anything different for the role of David?

Tom was certain all along that it should be made in Hebrew and I was uncertain and just felt generally scared by the idea. Only after we finished getting the script in order did I realize he was of course right and it was the only way to do it properly based on what we wrote. From the beginning we knew if we didn't find the right David we wouldn't have a movie and in the casting process Hila Yuval found 11 year-old Noam Ovadia who had never acted before. It was clear from the beginning he had a very natural quality when reciting written dialogue and an instinctual ability to access his emotions. As Noam didn't speak English we created a kind of acting department around him led by Rotem Keinan (who also plays the teacher in the school scenes) and we developed a method of working in rehearsal and on set that brought the best result possible.

What has it been like filming in Israel and Ukraine and what was the process of deciding to film there? How did you go about scouting the locations? Do you have a particular favorite one? And what were the challenges of filming there?

The biggest challenge for a movie of this scale is finding period locations that don't need too much alteration to work. The oven factory was the most important location and we were able



to build it inside of the old Carmel Winery in Rishon Letzion. Israel is developing so much so fast that our two main locations have since been demolished. I've filmed all over the world and find movie making an amazing form of ambassadorship as wherever you go the basic fundamentals of organizing a day of filming are virtually the same. There's a natural sort of paramilitary structure to the proceedings that allow everyone to do their job without having to metabolize a new set of rules. It makes film sets anywhere in the world feel like a kind of home to me. We were in Kyiv for a very short period of time and what then felt like a great adventure today just feels terribly painful.

What made you decide to shoot on Super 16mm film?

I still feel very dedicated to shooting on film. I spent so much time when I was younger trying to learn how to get what I wanted in terms of exposing and processing film that now I feel it is an essential part of the way I like to work. I also find the emulsion itself has a kind of emotion baked into it and I love that. I think an especially positive benefit of using 16mm film for a period movie like this is its natural ability to integrate visual elements that can sometimes look unfinished or not quite right due to resources and time. It can take a lot of attention during filming to get things like atmospheric smoke, certain props, special effects, makeup techniques etc.. to all work in harmony and I find that with very little manipulation

of the negative, film just kind of ‘hugs” disparate things, brings them together, and helps the audience to stay immersed in the era you’re telling them this is taking place.

How does this project differ from your previous films?

I like to think of myself as someone who is working in personal spaces and on the surface this may seem like the least personal movie I’ve made but somehow I feel it is the most personal one.

Can you tell us a bit about your creative team and what they bring to the film?

This was my first time working with every single one of my creative partners. The most important thing aside from their natural talents was feeling like we would have a group that could really support me in an environment where I can’t help source anything except ideas.

What about the cinematographer?

I knew Yaron’s work and was an admirer so when he was available and interested I leapt at the opportunity. Because I don’t speak the language well I also wanted to have someone in that position who I could trust to tell me if things were off in terms of performance that I may not be able to instantly identify.

What do you hope that audiences, both in Israel and across the world, take from this story?

That when it ends they feel they weren’t bored for one minute.

Can you tell us where the title comes from?

There is a tabloid magazine that keeps popping up in the movie. It’s based on a real magazine from that era that was a kind of mix of Charlie Hebdo, Playboy and The New York Post. June Zero is the date printed on the execution issue of this tabloid. An attempt by the editors at an anti-commemoration of Eichmann’s execution that lands more like a commemoration.

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