



Zayed University's College of Communication and Media Sciences

**PRODUCTION OF SHORT FILM:
*"And The Desert Smiled"***

TENTATIVE BUSINESS PLAN

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Zayed University's Video production students from the College of Communication and Media Sciences, with their instructor Dr. Alfred N. Mutua, are embarking on a professional production of a short motion picture. The film, based on the fictional life of a U.A.E. national woman's experiences is to be produced using high-end digital equipment in keeping with the international technological shift towards digital technology.

The film, with the working title, "And the Desert Smiled," will be filmed entirely in the cosmopolitan city of Dubai and its environs. The film's goal is to showcase the beauty and advancement of Dubai and the businesses and organizations that have participated in Dubai's growth. The film will give a U.A.E. perspective on social issues and provide an interesting story that will be offered for screening at the new Dubai Film Festival next year. The film will feature issues of U.A.E. culture and historical perspectives that have led to the unity and development of the nation.

The film will also provide U.A.E. national women an opportunity to produce a film and usher in a new wave of U.A.E. and Arab filmmakers. The students participating in the production are some of the brightest in the college and have advanced skills in video production.

The film features well-known professional U.A.E. and Arab actors with Mr. Bilal Abdullah, Ms. Shaikha Alkhayyal, Mr. Mohammed Amri and Mr. Ala Al Noami playing the key roles. These actors are donating their skills and talent for free because they view the project as the foundation of what may be a growth of filmmaking and filmmakers in the country.

1.1 PRODUCTION PROCESS AND SPONSORSHIP NEEDS

It is anticipated that the film will be screened in various places including: U.A.E. film theatres, universities, television stations, international and regional film festivals and made available to learning institutions and libraries.

1.2 BENEFIT TO SPONSORS

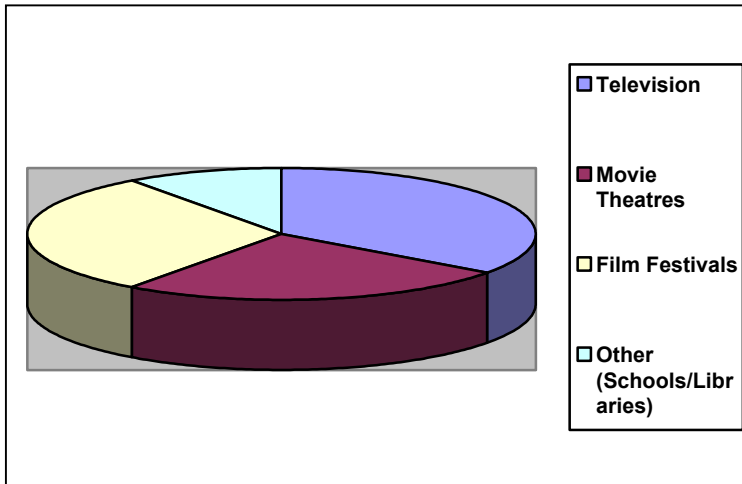
The filmmakers would like to collaborate with U.A.E. businesses and organizations to make the production a success. The production seeks to employ economical and inexpensive ways of making films. This will contribute to a new wave of filmmaking where use of digital cutting edge technology is giving power and a voice to people who would otherwise not have the financial ability for expensive film production. However, there is still need for sponsorship so as to make the production much better and a success.

The idea is to seek sponsors and collaborators for the production. **In return, sponsors names will be acknowledged and with a memorandum of understanding, products may be featured in the film's storyline.** That way, a sponsor will gain publicity as well as the opportunity to support what may be the beginning of a major filmmaking industry in the United Arab Emirates.

The film will also teach students the process of filmmaking, from fundraising and filming to marketing and sponsors will be contributing directly to the empowerment of Emirati women to tell their stories their own way.

2.0 MARKET POTENTIAL & STRATEGY

As indicated above, the film will be made available to a wide-ranging marketplace. Sponsors' and supporters' names and products will be screened nationally and internationally, enhancing name recognition and advertising benefits. Below is a chart providing an estimated marketplace breakdown.



The expectation is that the film's success will generate more interest in Dubai and in the growth of the U.A.E. as well as support for films to be produced here.

The film's pre-production is complete and production has started and will continue until the end of June. Post-production editing will then start and the finished film is expected to be ready for release before the end of the year (estimated months of release - September/October, 2004).

3.0 FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

Zayed University's College of Communication and Media Sciences has provided high-end equipment and time for the production of the film. However, for a successful production we urgently to raise an extra **115,000 Dhs**. The money will be used for facilitating production needs such as transportation, additional crew costs, daily production expenses, editing costs including transfer of the film from video format to 35 mm film for release, marketing and advertising the film and student attendance at film festivals.

Below is a breakdown of the Budget needs.

NEED	Production Cost (in Dhirams)
Transportation	2,000
Extra equipment hire	3,000
Extra crew costs	10,000
Daily productions expenses (food, permits etc)	5,000
Editing & converting to 35 mm film)	50,000
Marketing & distribution	10,000
Film festival attendance for 15 students and two faculty members (Travel costs)	35,000
TOTAL	115,000

4.0 BIOGRAPHIES OF MANAGEMENT TEAM

The production is being done by Zayed University students under the supervision of their instructor, Dr. Alfred Mutua.

4.1 PRODUCER & CLASS INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Alfred N. Mutua is an Assistant Professor at the College of Communication and Media Sciences. He holds a Bachelors in Journalism, a Masters of Science in Communication and a Ph.D. in Communication and Media. Dr. Mutua has been both a print and broadcast journalist for 13 years. He has written for various papers including *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Spokesman Review*, *Billings Gazette*, *The Standard* and served as the founding editor of *The Spokane African-American Voice*. He writes a weekly column for Kenya's *Daily Nation Newspaper*. He has produced award-winning films and worked as a broadcast journalist for television stations in Kenya, Australia and the United States. He recently worked as a foreign correspondent for Australia's SBS TV's *Dateline* international current affairs program. He has produced various documentaries in different parts of the world and interviewed presidents, cabinet ministers and leading scholars. He has also refined the use of a one-person band (a system of convergence where one person serves as a producer, reporter, camera person and editor of a documentary). Dr. Mutua has lectured in Kenya, the United States,

Australia and now in the United Arab Emirates. He is passionate about getting people of a culture to express their views their way and encourages his students to use the strengths of U.A.E. culture in vocalizing their identity and work.

4.2 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS & STUDENTS

The following U.A.E. students will be in charge of most of the production from fundraising and filming to marketing of the film. The students have already taken a previous course in video and film production where they produced outstanding films. The students are:

- Ms. Alunood Ahmad Ghanem Ahli
- Ms. Amal Ibrahim Khamis Salmin Bufalasi
- Ms. Fatima Yousif Khalfan Obaid Binsandal Alali
- Ms. Maitha Mohamed Saeed Essa
- Ms. Marwah Yaseen Abdulla Abdulrahman Alkhaja
- Ms. Sarah Ibrahim Ahmed Abdulla
- Ms. Shaikha Abdulla Mohammed A. Al Raeesi
- Ms. Shaima Saeed Mubarak Khalfan Alreyam
- Ms. Sumaya Mohamed Abdulla Yousuf
- Ms. Yasmin Musabih Ali Dhahi
- Ms. Ayesha Salem Malalla Almas
- Ms. Raja Abdulla Khalifa Aljodar
- Ms. Fatima Saeed Mubarak Saeed
- Ms. Wafa Saeed Mohamed Salem
- Ms. Huda Mahdi Hassan Murad Ahmad

5.0 THE FILM'S STORY

And the Desert Smiled

A short film for COM 319 Course
By Dr. Alfred N. Mutua ©2003, Zayed University

FILM TREATMENT

CONCEPT

This is the story of a journalist, Mariam, whose investigations into the disappearance of a female accountant in a multi-national company unravels more than her boss and society are willing to believe. This is also the story of a force or omen in the form of a Bedouin who tries to bring to Mariam a gift that he found left in the desert but is always interrupted by Mariam's modern engagements. Mariam knows what she is doing is right and despite personal problems sets out to prove that the missing accountant is either overseas or her "dirty" company has buried her somewhere in the desert just outside the

city of Dubai – where the Bedouin rides his horses. The thriller, dealing with Mariam’s inability to bear children, and how her life is in danger, reminds us of the power of conviction and the reality that there is more to life than we can ever comprehend. The story seeks to highlight the beauty of the U.A.E., to showcase U.A.E. talent and also support the argument that it is important not to forget the link between the past and the present for this is vital for the future. The story also portrays a female Arab figure as a leader and an inspiration in the quest for truth, justice, peace and harmony in respect of U.A.E. culture.

SCENE BREAKDOWN

SCENE ONE opens with a beautiful view of the rolling dunes of the desert. A **BEDOUIN** going about his business is attracted to the sound of a baby crying. He follows the crying and finds an infant by herself under a shrub surrounded by nothing but the desert. He picks up the baby and rides away in the direction of the setting sun.

SCENE TWO introduces **MARIAM** and the beautiful skyline of Dubai. As she drives down, a doctor calls her and gives her bad news that leaves her sad and dejected. Mariam makes her way to Media City where her broadcasting offices are located. On arrival, she finds out that a story she had aired the previous night has generated a lot of problems. After an animated confrontation, her boss orders her to stop pursuing the disappearance of an accountant because her investigations are unearthing questions of corruption, murder and extortion in the powerful multi-national company where the disappeared woman worked. The boss is afraid of being sued and losing all he has worked hard to develop.

SCENE THREE introduces **AHMAD**, Mariam’s husband. They meet at an open-air restaurant where Mariam informs him that she is still not pregnant. Ahmad is saddened even further when Mariam tells him that the doctors want to talk to him. He leaves to go to the toilet to wash his face. After he goes to the toilet, she senses she is being watched and on turning, sees the Bedouin. The Bedouin starts to approach her but when Ahmad comes back to the table, he vanishes. Mariam receives a phone call from someone who claims to have information on the disappeared woman. Mariam leaves quickly to meet this person. Mariam takes a boat across Dubai’s creek and meets **KHADIJA**, who worked with the missing accountant (**SARAH**). Khadija reveals that the European company she works for is involved in illegal smuggling that Sarah was investigating. As Mariam leaves the meeting, two European-looking men rush after her but are stopped by the Bedouin who appears suddenly and trips them.

SCENE FOUR has Mariam at her villa with her husband. She is in the kitchen when she hears the sound of a horse neighing. She looks outside and there lying on the lawn is a blue scarf. She goes outside and picks it up and is confused by what she is sensing.

SCENE FIVE has Mariam back in her office still working on her story. Her colleagues, **AMEENA** and **YUSUF** provide more damning evidence against the multi-national

company where Sarah worked. Later, Khadija pays her a visit but runs away before Mariam can speak to her. The two bad men show up at Mariam's offices but find she has gone after Khadija. Mariam later receives an envelope with a key to Sarah's office.

SCENE SIX shows Ahmad debating whether he should go for fertility tests. He is seen entering a fertility clinic.

SCENE SEVEN is the suspenseful night break-in and entry to the multinational company by Mariam and her work colleagues Ameena and Yusuf. There they find evidence as to the company's dirty deeds. They are however interrupted by the bad men who come to the company with a bound Sarah. After a scuffle, Mariam, her colleagues and Sarah manage to escape.

SCENE EIGHT concludes the film by showing Mariam at home with her husband watching Mariam's heroic rescue of Sarah on the Dubai TV evening news. As she finds that her husband is infertile and they may never have children, Mariam again hears the neighing of a horse. From her kitchen window, she watches the Bedouin leave a baby for her before riding away. As tears flow down Ahmad's face, they rush out and embrace the gift from the desert.

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