



The Main Feature

Season 42 – Issue 4 – Screening 27 October 2022

Flee (Flugt)

Sweden 2021

90 mins Certificate 15

Director	Jonas Poher Ramussen
Screenplay	Jonas Poher Ramussen and Amin Nawabi
Music	Uno Helmersson
Animation	Kenneth Ladekjær
Director	

Cast (voices)

Daniel Karimar	Amin (aged 9-11)
Fardin Mijdzadeh	Amin (aged 15-18)
Milad Eskandari	Saif (aged 8)
Belal Faiz	Saif (aged 13-19)
Elaha Faiz	Fahima (aged 13-18)
Zahra Mehrwarz	Fahima (aged 28)



This year, One World Week (23 – 30 October) has climate change as its principal theme. The subsidiary themes, given the war in Ukraine, are peace and refugees.

The filmmaker Jonas Poher Ramussen and the subject of his animated documentary, 36 year-old Amin Nawabi (a pseudonym), have been friends since they were teenagers when Amin arrived in Ramussen's small village in Denmark from Afghanistan as a refugee. Amin had not previously shared the full story of how he came to be in Denmark, which is told through animation accompanied by Amin's riveting testimony. The director was interviewed in *The Queer Review*.

Q: You've been friends with Amin for a long time, so when did the idea of making *Flee* come about?

A: I have a background in radio documentary and about 15 years ago I asked Amin if I could do a radio documentary about his story. He said that he didn't feel ready, but he knew that he would have to share his story at some point and when he was ready he would like to share it with me. So I had it at the back of my head that this was something that we could do, we just hadn't found the form yet.

Eight years ago, I was invited to a workshop in Denmark where they bring together animators and filmmakers to develop ideas for animated documentaries. They asked me if I had an idea and I thought, 'Okay, maybe this is the way to tell his story'. Amin said that he felt ready, that he actually felt the need to share his story. The fact that he could be anonymous in the animation freed him to share his story because what you hear in the film is the very first time that he told his story. The fact that he wouldn't meet people in the street who would know his inner most secrets and his traumas and would want to small talk about it was really helpful too.



Q: How about for you as a filmmaker, what did using animation open up for you and how did it surprise you in the way that you were able to tell the story?

A: As a documentary filmmaker you are always searching for

how to you create presence—how do you make it feel alive again?—especially when you deal with things that happened in the past, and animations really do that. We can recreate Afghanistan in the 80s and his childhood home, show it and put him there. This is really a story about memory and trauma, and with the animation we could really be a lot more expressive and be more honest towards his emotions than we could have been with the camera.

Q: Just as you were saying that Amin being a refugee isn't something that's a completely defining feature, similarly him being gay—even though it's an important part of him—doesn't entirely define him either. Give me an insight into portraying his sexuality, guided by the way that he spoke with you about it.

A: Amin came out to me when we were both 16, so to me, him being gay was a very natural part of who he was and I thought, 'this needs to feel the same in the film'. In the process of making the film, I realized that in his childhood, all the way until he arrived to Denmark, he had to hide his sexuality and then when he arrived in Denmark he had to hide his past. He's always had to hide a part of himself. The story is called *Flee*, and it is about a flight going from Afghanistan to Denmark, but it's really a story about a guy who has had to flee from himself all of his life and is looking for a place where he can be who he is with everything that that entails with his sexuality and with his past. I wanted to show what it does to someone to have to hide parts of themselves.

In another interview, with Variety, Jonas Poher Rasmussen said 'a lot of refugees are just described by what they need. People tend to think that being a refugee is an identity, but it's not. And if this film gets audiences to see that every refugee is an individual with a complex psyche – like all of us – then that's amazing.'

Michael Hipkins

<https://thequeerreview.com/2021/12/02/interview-jonas-poher-rasmussen-on-his-remarkable-documentary-flee-refugee-lgbtq/>; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6R6N_vTjaY



We thank Red Eye for subsidising the cost of printing these notes. Red Eye Print, Unit 2D, Lansbury Estate, 102 Lower Guildford Road, Knaphill, GU21 2EP Tel: 01483 772111

Dame Angela Lansbury died on 11 October aged 96

Angela Brigid Lansbury was born in London, on 16 October 1925. Her father Edgar was a former mayor of Poplar and a leading light in the Communist Party of Great Britain, while her paternal grandfather, George, was a radical politician who became Labour Party leader in 1932.



She studied music and dancing before enrolling at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in 1939. With the onset of the Blitz her mother decided to move the family to New York, where Lansbury won a scholarship to the Feagin School of Dramatic Art. "Those of us who were 12 or 13 when the war started," she later said, "were absolutely thrown into the mainstream. We had to grow up instantly, and take care of ourselves." When her mother joined a touring theatre company in Canada, Lansbury secured a job at a nightclub as an entertainer after telling the management she was 19 when she had only just celebrated her 16th birthday. In 1942 she joined her mother, who had moved to Hollywood and where, at a party, she was noticed by an MGM executive who cast her as the saucy maid in the 1944 film *Gaslight*. She was an instant success, winning an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actress in her first film appearance as well as a valuable contract with MGM. But the studio failed to make the best use of her. "I don't think I was quite hot enough in the looks department. Quite frankly, I was all talent and no looks."

Often cast as a character older than her own age, Lansbury enjoyed success in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* - securing a Golden Globe Award and a second Oscar nomination - and in *State of the Union*, with Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn.

By the beginning of the 1960s she was a veteran of 24 films. One high point was her role as Laurence Harvey's mother in the political thriller *The Manchurian Candidate*, despite being only three years older than the actor. One critic described her performance as "the strongest, the most memorable, and the best picture she

ever made... she gives her finest film performance in it". The film won her a second Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actress and yet another Oscar nomination.

By the age of 40, she had decided that she was not going to achieve superstar success in the cinema. Instead she accepted the part of Madame Dennis in the musical version of *Mame*, which launched on Broadway in 1966 to ecstatic reviews. The New York Times opined: "Miss Lansbury is a singing-dancing actress, not a singer or dancer who also acts." Her performance won her a Tony award. Her role as the gruesome Nellie Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* sealed her reputation as a grand dame of Broadway. She didn't abandon the cinema completely. There were Golden Globe nominations for *Something for Everyone* and *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*. "Someone always came along with a suggestion and unless I had a good reason to say no, I generally said yes." But she turned down other roles including that of Nurse Ratched in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

She appeared in more than 20 films in the 1990s, the decade in which she reached 70, including a performance as Granny in Neil Jordan's cult fantasy *A Company of Wolves*. After a break of 22 years she was back on Broadway in 2007 in a production of *Deuce*. She followed this up with her role as the clairvoyant Madame Arcati in the Broadway revival of Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit* in 2009, winning her fifth Tony Award. Her reprise of the role in London won her an Olivier.

In 2014 she was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for her services to the theatre and the various charities she supported.

Angela Lansbury married twice. In 1945 she eloped with the matinee idol Richard Cromwell, who was 16 years her senior but the relationship failed after less than a year after he revealed he was gay. In 1949 she married the British actor and producer Peter Shaw. It was a union that would last more than 50 years until his death in 2003.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-19884667?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=KAR-ANGA

Comments and reactions to: **Mandela and de Klerk**

No of reaction slips received = 15

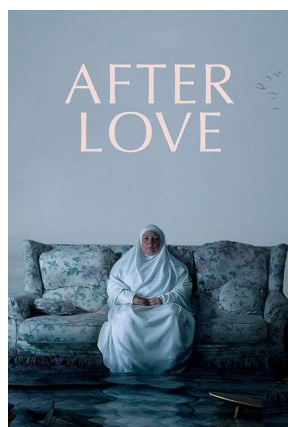
Average score = 7.47

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	~	~	~	~	~	3	6	3	2	1

What a wise man ... RIP Nelson Mandela. What a great actor ... RIP Sidney Poitier
Power film and acting. Serious film well portrayed – Poitier excellent
So interesting; so powerful; so moving. A very well presented and constructed film
Interesting way it told the story. Sidney Poitier was excellent as always. Not so sure of
Michael Caine as a South African Splendid performance by Sidney Poitier
An ambitious – perhaps over-ambitious – film held together by Poitier’s powerful
performance. Poitier excellent
Brilliant acting by Sidney Poitier. Well-told bit of history
Michael Caine needs to work on his SA accent

Position	Film	Average score
1	The Duke	7.75
2	Mandela and de Klerk	7.47
3	Day for Night	6.57

Forthcoming attraction: 10 November 2022 – **Double Bill: After Love and Seven Chances**



Set in the port town of Dover, Mary Hussain suddenly finds herself a widow following the unexpected death of her husband. A day after the burial, she discovers he has a secret just twenty-one miles across the English Channel in Calais. *It's a beautifully restrained yet devastating exploration of love, loss, grief and identity wrapped up in a story that's not just gripping but also -- prepare yourself for a shock: ready? -- wholly original.* Deborah Ross, The Spectator



Struggling stockbroker Jimmie Shannon (Buster Keaton) learns that, if he gets married by 7 p.m. on his 27th birthday – which is today – he'll inherit \$7 million from an eccentric relative. But after Mary Jones (Ruth Dwyer), whom he's mooned over for years, turns him down, he has only hours to find a woman who'll marry him. When his friends try to help by placing an advertisement in the afternoon newspaper, the shy Jimmie finds himself chased through the streets by hundreds of marriage-minded women.