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POV's 'A World Not Ours' Is a Humorous, Bittersweet Memoir of Life In a Palestinian Refugee Camp, Airing Monday, Aug. 18, 2014 on PBS

What Happens When a Refugee Camp Becomes a Home to Generations? Filmmaker's Yearly Visits Paint a Picture of Family Affection, Political Turmoil and World Cup Fever.

"A doc that flips storytelling and Mideast-Arab clichés on their heads, while weaving an irresistible mood of amused melancholy. . . . the viewer . . . is entranced, entertained and informed."—John Anderson, *Variety*

MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET

National Dates: Mahdi Fleifel's **A World Not Ours** has its national broadcast premiere on **Monday, Aug. 18, 2014** at 10 p.m. (check local listings) on the award-winning PBS series POV (Point of View). The film will stream on POV's website, www.pbs.org/pov/aworldnotours/, from Aug. 19-Sept. 17, 2014.

The Film: **A World Not Ours** is a passionate, bittersweet account of one family's multi-generational experience living as permanent refugees. Now a Danish resident, director Mahdi Fleifel grew up in the Ain el-Helweh refugee camp in southern Lebanon, established in 1948 as a temporary refuge for exiled Palestinians. Today, the camp houses 70,000 people and is the hometown of generations of Palestinians. The filmmaker's childhood memories are surprisingly warm and humorous, a testament to the resilience of the community. Yet his yearly visits reveal the increasing desperation of family and friends who remain trapped in psychological as well as political limbo.

A World Not Ours, an Official Selection of the 2013 Berlin International Film Festival, is a production of Nakba FilmWorks in association with SANAD and Screen Institute Beirut.

Embed a trailer, download press materials and learn more at www.pbs.org/pressroom.

Online: POV's website for **A World Not Ours** – <http://www.pbs.org/pov/aworldnotours/> – offers a broad range of exclusive online content to enhance the PBS broadcast. Watch the full film online for free for a limited time following the broadcast (Aug. 19, 2014 – Sept. 17, 2014), learn from the filmmaker in an extended video interview, view photos from the film, download a discussion guide and other viewing resources, and find out what's happened to the characters since the cameras stopped rolling.

The Subjects: [Mahdi – the filmmaker](#)
While he was born in Dubai and mostly raised in Denmark, Mahdi has always felt that Ain el-Helweh is his home. When he would return from summer holidays spent in the camp, he found himself unable to explain what this place was like to the other children in his class. This left him with a compulsion to tell the stories of his family and friends who still live there. Over the years, he picked up his father's obsession with recording. Through the camera, Mahdi found he could put the camp in better context, and better understand the lives of those living there.

[Abu Iyad – the friend](#)

A close friend who met Mahdi during the World Cup, Abu Iyad has been a member of Fatah since the age of 7, and his life has been dedicated to “the cause.” Increasingly, Abu Iyad has grown tired of his life in the camp—“No jobs, no education, no future, no nothing”—and is convinced that a corrupt PLO elite siphons off most of the aid and other resources. Mahdi’s visits remind him of what life outside the camp could be like, while his own day-to-day existence makes him reflect on the values of revolution and question the sacred notion of a return to Palestine. Abu Iyad wants out, and he reveals a surprising exit strategy.

Abu Osama – the grandfather

Mahdi’s grandfather Abu Osama, 80, settled in Ain el-Helweh in 1948, when he was 16, and has lived there ever since. Since his wife passed away, he has led a quiet life, mostly living between the mosque and his home, where he prays, watches the news and sits in the alleyway outside his front door, observing life and shooing away the neighborhood’s boisterous kids. He has an open invitation from Mahdi’s family to join them in Denmark, but he refuses to leave.

Said

Mahdi’s uncle Said, on the other hand, would love nothing better than to get out the camp, and resents that relatives won’t help him. A loner and neighborhood eccentric, he breeds pigeons on his rooftop and collects aluminum from the streets to earn a living. In times gone by, he and his brother Jamal became local legends during the civil war in the 1980s, but when the Lebanese army entered the camp and Jamal was killed, part of Said seemed to die with him.

Filmmaker’s Statement:

“My film is about memory and the need to remember,” says director Mahdi Fleifel. “Forgetting for us Palestinians would simply mean ceasing to exist. Our fight throughout history, and still today, is to remain visible. Making this film is a way of reinforcing and strengthening our collective memory. But most important, it was a way to make a record of my own family history.

“I guess, having grown up in Ain el-Helweh before moving to Denmark, I have coped with transition in my life by seeing the world in a rather comic and cynical way. I believe that my stories reflect my history, while at the same time being influenced by London, the place where I currently live and work.”

Filmmaker Bio: Mahdi Fleifel, Director/Cinematographer

Mahdi Fleifel is a Danish-Palestinian filmmaker and visual artist based in London. He was born in Dubai and raised first in the Ain El-Helweh refugee camp in Lebanon and later in the suburbs of Elsinore, Denmark. He graduated from the British National Film and Television School in 2009. His short films have screened at numerous festivals around the world and have won many best film awards. **A World Not Ours** is his debut feature film. He has been developing his second feature at the Cinéfondation residence program affiliated with the Cannes International Film Festival.

Related Stories: “Dozens of Fatah militants deployed in Ain al-Hilweh,” by Mohammed Zaatari, *The Daily Star* (Lebanon), June 16, 2014. <http://bit.ly/1m75KUO>

“Impact of Syrian unrest on Ain Al-Hilweh camp,” by Patrick Sykes, *The Middle East Monitor*, April 22, 2014. <http://bit.ly/1rEIUqK>

“Life in Ein El Helwe Camp,” by Hiba Issawi, *Journalists in Exile*, Jan. 22, 2014. <http://journalistsinexile.com/2014/01/22/life-in-ein-el-helwe-camp/>

“Property rights scarce for Palestinians in Lebanon,” IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Dec. 24, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1n6jDCU>

“The Palestinians’ Long Wait in Lebanon,” by Josh Wood, *The New York Times*, March 2, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/03/world/middleeast/03iht-m03-lebanon.html>

Outreach: POV works with educators, public television stations and national and community groups to present more than 650 free screenings nationwide. In addition, POV and nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow develop discussion guides with background information to help event organizers facilitate conversations. The discussion guide for **A World Not Ours** includes information on Palestinian refugees, prompts for dialogue and a list of further educational resources, along with a lesson plan with free streaming clips. Join POV’s Community Network to borrow the film for free from the POV Lending Library in order to host your own screening. The [A World Not Ours Partner Toolkit](#) has everything you need to get involved with the film, from spreading the word to hosting a screening and discussion. For a list of upcoming events, visit www.pbs.org/pov/outreach.

Credits:

Director/Cinematographer:	Mahdi Fleifel
Producers:	Mahdi Fleifel, Patrick Campbell
Editor:	Michael Aaglund
Original Music:	Jon Opstad
Running time:	86:46

POV Series Credits:

Executive Producer:	Simon Kilmurry
Co-Executive Producer:	Cynthia López
Vice President, Programming and Production:	Chris White
Associate Producer:	Nicole Tsien
Production Coordinator:	Nikki Heyman

Pressroom: Visit POV’s pressroom, www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom, for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

POV: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 27th season on PBS, the award-winning POV is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today’s best independent documentary filmmakers. POV has brought more than 365 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide. POV films have won every major film and broadcasting award, including 32 Emmys, 17 George Foster Peabody Awards, 12 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards® and the Prix Italia. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today’s most pressing social issues. Visit www.pbs.org/pov.

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