

INSHA ALLAH DEMOCRACY

“MUST-SEE
POLITICAL
DOCUMENTARY”

LISA FRANCESCA NAND
HUFFINGTON POST



WHO WOULD YOU VOTE FOR?

THE CROOK, THE TALIBAN SYMPATHIZER... OR THE FORMER DICTATOR?

64TH STREET MEDIA AND MIGHTY ENGINE PRESENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH IMPACT PARTNERS A FILM BY MOHAMMED ALI NAOVI
MUSIC BY TONI MARTIN DOBRZANSKI ADDITIONAL MUSIC BY NICKLAS SCHMIDT EDITED BY HEMAL TRIVEDI, CHRIS MCCUE, SHIRAZ MEHBOOB CO-EDITORS SKY GEWANT, MARIAM AZIZ
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DAN COGAN, VAJJI KHAN CO-PRODUCER JENNY RASKIN ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS HINA ALI, SYED MUSHARAF SHAH, SAAD KHAISHGI LINE PRODUCER ABID JADOON
WRITTEN BY MOHAMMED ALI NAOVI PRODUCED BY JARED IAN GOLDMAN, MOHAMMED ALI NAOVI DIRECTED BY MOHAMMED ALI NAOVI

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Insha'Allah Democracy

Insha'Allah: pronounced **In-SHAH-lah**.
Arabic language expression meaning "Allah willing."



"Amidst global political turbulence and seismic movements of democratic leadership, Mo Naqvi's film personalize our fundamental relationship to power and governance. This is a film that questions the very basic human values of democracy: trust and safety."

-- Luke W. Moody, Director of Film Programming,
Sheffield Doc/Fest

LOGLINE

Former Pakistani President Musharraf, despite having a legacy as a dictator and being charged with treason, returns to Pakistan and runs for president.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In Insha'Allah Democracy, filmmaker Mohammed Naqvi chronicles his journey as a first-time voter in Pakistan. When Mo was 19, General Pervez Musharraf staged a coup d'etat that saw him in power until his exile in 2008. With the country growing increasingly unstable and sectarian, Mo chose to back Musharraf and his supposedly secular liberal platform. But as this wry satire explores, backing military dictatorship is never a good idea. Gaining remarkable access to former dictator Musharraf, the film questions if democracy is truly possible in Pakistan. Through moving first-person accounts and vivid footage, the film offers a compelling portrait of the contradictions and complexities of a nascent democratic process in a country recovering from a long history of military rule.

Presented by 64th Street Media, Mighty Engine and Impact Partners

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WORLDWIDE SALES

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[Mo Naqvi Films](#) 

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AWARDS



FESTIVALS



FULL SYNOPSIS



Growing up as a Shia Muslim minority in Pakistan, I saw members of my family and community being targeted by right-wing Islamist extremists. When my uncle was murdered in the 1990s, my family began hiding in the U.S. for long stretches of time until things calmed down back home. I wanted Pakistan to be a modern democratic state, but I also wanted to feel safe and secure - free to be a kid. When military dictator General Musharraf came to power in a coup in 1999, I was a teenager. His rule meant safety and secularism. I saw things change. For me, Musharraf was a hero. I wasn't going to let the fact that he was a dictator mar that image.

Soon after he resigned and went into exile, Pakistan was plunged into chaos. It was one of the most dangerous times in our country's history. The democratically elected government that followed him proved woefully incompetent to deal with some of our most pressing issues, including

terrorism and security. So when it became known that the former military ruler was running for election, it was impossible to ignore. All other candidates lacked any firm stance on the growing religious extremist element. As far as I was concerned, they were giving voice to an ultra orthodox, bigoted version of Islam - a version that cast me, a minority and a liberal, as unworthy of protection. Supporting Musharraf was only natural.

But then I spent four years with him and got to know him personally. I witnessed major turning points as he campaigned in the lead up to the first civilian-to-civilian transfer of power in our country's history. When troubling news reports surfaced, he confessed to me his own role of covertly supporting militancy as a means of fighting a proxy war with our enemies. I realized that he didn't think he owed his people the truth. Despite his liberal and secular outlook, he was a dictator at heart - a dangerous flaw in a leader.

My eventual realization could not have been possible without the unique position I was in. I got to vet candidates up close, well beyond the scope of any news coverage. I spent one-on-one time with them and got to know them personally.



One lesson I learned in making *Insha'Allah Democracy* directly echoes the recent global shift that has dramatically come to the forefront in events of the last few years. The election of a U.S. president espousing a strongly nationalist, anti-immigrant agenda took the world by surprise. All over the world, there seems to be a wave of nationalist and xenophobic elements coming to power. And that, too, through the democratic process. Many people's faith in democracy itself has been shaken. But what I've learned through making *Insha'Allah Democracy* is that participation in the democratic process is critical to reforming it.

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES



MOHAMMED ALI NAQVI (DIRECTOR/PRODUCER)

Mohammed Ali Naqvi (Mo) is an internationally celebrated filmmaker, whose work has won over forty prestigious awards and honors, including a Special Emmy, two Amnesty International Human Rights Awards, and a Grand Prix from the United Nations Association Festival. He has been nominated for an Independent Spirit Award, a Cinema Eye Honor, and the UNESCO-FELLINI Prize. He is also an alumnus of top festivals including Toronto, Sundance, Tribeca, Berlin, and Busan, and an American Film Institute and National Endowment of the Arts Fellow.

Mo's non-fiction films have been called "explosive" and "chilling", and have been described as having "jaw-dropping" and "unprecedented" access. His most recent documentary *Among the Believers* (PBS World/Netflix), despite being described as "one of 2015's most important films" was banned in its home country Pakistan. The film is an up-close and personal chronicle of ISIS supporter & Taliban ally Abdul Aziz Ghazi as he wages his jihad against the Pakistani state. Other credits include *Pakistan's Hidden Shame* (Channel 4 UK, ABC Australia, NHK, SVT), a stark and disturbing look into the sexual abuse suffered by street children living in the city of Peshawar, Pakistan and *Shabeena's Quest* (Al-Jazeera World), about a remarkable school principal, and her quest to bring education to young girls living in the shadows of the Taliban. Internationally acclaimed *Shame* (Paramount / Showtime Networks) profiles sexual violence survivor and international human rights icon Mukhtaran Mai. *Terror's Children* (Discovery-Times) chronicles the lives of Afghan refugee children living in a post 9/11 Pakistan.

In addition, Mo has produced fiction feature films including *Big River* starring Jo Odagiri and Kavi Raz in production with renowned filmmaker Takeshi Kitano's production company Office Kitano, and *I Will Avenge You Iago* starring Giancarlo Esposito and Larry Pine. Recently he directed *Happy Things in Sorrow Times*, inspired by writer Tehmina Durrani's book of the same name.

After completing a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 2001 and theatre training at the renowned New York conservatory Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute, Naqvi founded B.L.A.H Productions, an off-Broadway theatre company in New York, for which he produced, directed and acted in a number of plays. Originally from Karachi, Pakistan, Mohammed spends his time between Karachi and New York.



JARED IAN GOLDMAN (PRODUCER)

Jared Ian Goldman is a film producer who has already left his creative mark on the cinematic landscape, producing fresh stories with always-affecting emotional authenticity and often a great deal of humor. His most recent credits include *Ingrid Goes West* (Neon/Universal), a dark take on the perils of social media stardom starring Aubrey Plaza, Elizabeth Olsen and O'Shea Jackson, Jr., and *Wilson* (Fox Searchlight), a neurosis-packed comedy that finds a middle-aged man reconnecting with his teenaged daughter directed by Craig Johnson and starring Woody Harrelson and Laura Dern; Jeff Nichols' widely acclaimed *Loving* (Focus Features) and *Little Boxes* (Netflix) starring Melanie Lynskey and Nelsan Ellis. Goldman is also currently in post-production on two adaptations of American literary classics: *Submission*, a re-working of Francine Prose's *Blue Angel* starring Stanley Tucci and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, which will bring Shirley Jackson's novel of the same name to the big screen. He is also in pre-production on a new film with director Craig Johnson, *Alex Strangelove*, which is their third collaboration.

Goldman began his career at Miramax Films before moving to GreeneStreet Films where he worked on titles such as *In the Bedroom* and Robert Altman's *A Prairie Home Companion*. Additional past producing credits include *The Skeleton Twins* starring Kristen Wiig and Bill Hader, *Kill Your Darlings* with Daniel Radcliffe, Rob Reiner's *And So It Goes* starring Michael Douglas and Diane Keaton, *Solitary Man* starring Michael Douglas, *The Wackness* starring Ben Kingsley, the Sundance Grand Jury Prize-winning documentary *Manda Bala (Send a Bullet)*, and many others.



DAN COGAN (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER)

Dan Cogan is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Impact Partners, a fund and advisory service for investors and philanthropists who seek to promote social change through film. Since its inception in 2007, Impact Partners has financed more than 80 films, including Otto Bell's *Eagle Huntress*, which premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival and will be distributed by Sony Pictures Classics in October 2016; *The Cove*, which won the Academy Award® for Documentary Feature; *How to Survive A Plague*, which was nominated for the Academy Award® for Documentary Feature; *The Hunting Ground*; *The Queen of Versailles*, which won the U.S. Directing Award at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival and *Hell and Back Again*, which won the Documentary Grand Jury Prize and Cinematography Awards at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for the Academy Award® for Documentary Feature.

Cogan co-founded Gamechanger Films, which launched in September 2013. Gamechanger Films is the first for-profit film fund dedicated exclusively to financing narrative features directed by women. Gamechanger's first film, *Land Ho!*, premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival and was acquired by Sony Pictures Classics. Gamechanger's films have premiered or screened at festivals such as Sundance, SXSW, Tribeca, Los Angeles, Locarno, Toronto, and London; have been named on "best of the year" lists; and won numerous awards including a Film Independent Spirit Award.

Cogan received his B.A. from Harvard University, Magna Cum Laude, and attended the Film Division at Columbia University's Graduate School of the Arts. In 2014, he was awarded the Leading Light Award at DOC NYC alongside filmmakers Albert Maysles and D.A. Pennebaker, as well as the America Abroad Media Award in Washington, D.C.



JENNY RASKIN (CO-PRODUCER)

Jenny is the Vice President for Development and Filmmaker Relations at Impact Partners, and is a documentary producer, director and executive producer. She received her B.A. from Barnard College and a master's degree from the Culture and Media Program at New York University.

IMPACT PARTNERS

Impact Partners is dedicated to funding independent documentary storytelling that entertains audiences, engages with pressing social issues, and propels the art of cinema forward.

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PRESS

12 Must-See Documentaries About Current World Politics

Huffington Post UK - May 24th, 2017

"Contemporary in tone, the film succeeds as both as a history lesson and a warning. But it's the footage and memories from Naqvi's own youth in Pakistan that imbue it with far more human insight than most political documentaries can manage."

Radio Times - 2018

"This film about the turbulent recent history of Pakistan is without question the week's best documentary."

The Guardian - July 23rd, 2018

"4 Stars: The insights Naqvi offers into this deeply controversial yet oddly unimpressive figure and his country's faltering democracy are chilling, troubling and acquired at considerable risk."

The Telegraph - July 23rd, 2018

"filmmaker Mohammed Naqvi goes on a very personal search for a leader who he can trust and believe in to keep him safe in the post 9/11 world."

Asian Culture Vulture - June 8th, 2017

"FOR ANYONE interested in contemporary politics in Pakistan this is a must watch"

Asian Culture Vulture - Jun 17th, 2017

"It is a film which that has changed how I see and think about the world, which is the highest praise I can give any film."

Unseen Films - Nov 10th, 2017

"I didn't know that I'd be following him for five years. I was upfront at the beginning and said this is not going to be some propaganda piece."

Filmmaker Magazine - Dec 4th, 2017

"...a tale of unshakable belief in peace and progress.."

Santiago Times - Dec 17th, 2017

"..the filmmaker satirises his fallen idol in a parting critique."

The Friday Times - April 20th, 2018

Insha'Allah Democracy: Mohammed Ali Naqvi on Pervez Musharraf and the changing face of Pakistan's politics

Firstpost - May 9th, 2018

"There's more than one way to be extreme, too, and the knife-edge of Pakistani politics seemed to prove that."

The Express - July 24th, 2018

"Just days ahead of the hearing of a high treason case against Pakistan's former military ruler — which is a litmus test for the new Imran Khan led-government — a critically acclaimed feature documentary on General (r) Pervez Musharraf's rise and fall has brought forward some shocking scenes from the past."

Daily Pakistan - August 5th, 2018

FILM CREDITS

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY

Mohammed Ali Naqvi

PRODUCED BY

Mohammed Ali Naqvi

Jared Ian Goldman

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Dan Cogan

Vajih Khan

CO-PRODUCED BY

Jenny Raskin

ASSOCIATE PRODUCED BY

Hina Ali

Syed Musharaf Shah

Saad Khaishgi

ORIGINAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY

Toni Martin Dobrzanski

ADDITIONAL MUSIC BY

Nicklas Schmidt

EDITED BY

Hemal Trivedi

Chris McCue

Shiraz Mehboob

CO-EDITED BY

Sky Gewant

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