

**PRESS KIT:
FOR A
BETTER LIFE**



FOR A BETTER LIFE SYNOPSIS

LOGLINE

Sold for \$100 at the age of five, Fekri seeks to forgive the birth family he believed abandoned him.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Sold for \$100 at the age of 5, Fekri suffers through years of abuse before his plight is discovered. After almost a year of hospitalization and therapy, Fekri moves into a group home where he finds support, mentorship, and eventual forgiveness towards the birth family which sold him.

LONG SYNOPSIS

On his 5th birthday, Fekri runs through the local market in Tunisia, swiping some food from a local vendor. The shop owner catches him stealing and threatens to chop off Fekri's hand; but he is spared such brutality when a seemingly altruistic French tourist, Florence, catches sight of the events and offers to pay for the food before following Fekri home.

Fekri lives in an abusive home with few financial resources. His mom fears she cannot protect him from dangers at home or in the streets, so when Florence offers to buy Fekri for \$100 his mom acquiesces, believing she is giving Fekri an opportunity for a better life.

However, Florence demonstrates no affection towards Fekri and for the next four years she is physically and sexually abusive. It is not until the abuse is discovered that Fekri moves into a group home where he finally finds support, mentorship, and forgiveness towards the family which sold him.

TECH SPECS

10 minutes, 16:9, Stereo Sound Mix

SOCIAL MEDIA:

<http://fostercarefilm.com/for-a-better-life>
<http://facebook.com/fostercarefilm>
<http://twitter.com/fostercarefilm>
<http://vimeo.com/fostercarefilm>
<https://www.youtube.com/user/FosterCareFilm>

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TRAILER:

<http://fostercarefilm.com/for-a-better-life>

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW DOES THIS FILM FIT INTO THE LARGER SCOPE OF YOUR WORK WITH KIDS IN FOSTER CARE?

The initial concept was to create an animated documentary short, but once we started going through our footage we realized we had way more material than could possibly fit into one film. We realized all the other stories we collected were too important to end up on the cutting room floor so we decided to make a series of films, each profiling one particular youth's stories. We are using these short films to promote education and awareness about foster care, and we have developed a program called the Foster Care Film and Community Engagement Program (FCFCEP). "For A Better Life" is the fourth film in this series.

WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR THIS FILM?

After three years working with a developmentally-delayed child, I picked up my phone to hear a little voice saying, "Mama." This was Ana's first word and her foster mother had called me, her Court Appointed Special Advocate, to share the experience. As a CASA volunteer, I have spent years working with children, their families and the court system to help find kids a permanent home, good educational opportunities and needed medical and social services. As I heard Ana find her voice, I wondered how, and whether, other foster youth ever truly found theirs. So I decided to answer this question using the tools I knew best, animation and film, to give foster youth a chance to be heard.

HOW DO YOU FIND YOUR SUBJECTS/INTERVIEWEES?

I reached out to foster youth via social media and received an overwhelming response. It became even more apparent to me that foster youth wanted to be heard. After a few months, I had collected far more stories than I could possibly fit into a single film. So, as interest grew, the project grew with it.

HOW ARE FOSTER YOUTH PARTICIPATING IN THIS FILM AND THE PROJECT AS A WHOLE?

We are not just helping youths' voices be heard through film. We're giving foster youth the opportunity to work behind the scenes as camera operators, production assistants, writers and more. We're also giving foster youth an opportunity to speak to social workers, lawyers, judges and other change-makers in the foster care community by having them be key participants in our community screenings and presentations.

WHAT TYPE OF IMPACT DO YOU HOPE TO HAVE WITH THIS FILM?

By giving Fekri a vocal platform, we hope to help him continue his passion for foster care advocacy. Through the filmmaking process, our goal is to give foster youth the confidence and skills to become a voice for the voiceless.

With this film, we plan to educate general audiences about child abuse, child trafficking, and unique family structures. Among caseworkers and advocates, we hope to reinforce the importance of mentorship for older youth in foster care.

FOR A BETTER LIFE SOUNDBITES

"Dear Mom, I'm sorry if I ever caused you pain. The memory of me leaving you is still in my brain through the times I figured out you did not love me because if you did, you would not give me up for money. I cry from my heartbreak of not having a home, now I'm in a cold world all alone, with no one to call my mom, everyday my anger builds up and I might blow up like a bomb."

- Fekri Kram

"Being in the foster care system... saved my life because it gave me the ability to expand my horizons, to basically get away from the cycle of abuse and work with social workers and therapists."

- Fekri Kram

"I don't look at the price 'oh that's how much I'm worth,' no. No, my mother didn't know that I would go through the abuse. She wanted me to have a better life. I can't fault her for that. I still love my mother. You can't really allow what happened in your past to control where you're going. ""

- Fekri Kram

"I use my story to motivate others, to let them know that you don't ultimately allow what happened in your past to control your outcome or where you're gonna go."

- Fekri Kram

*"a **must-watch** for young people in the foster care system"*

- Kim Phagan-Hansel
Fostering Families Magazine (Jan. 2018)

*"I was **moved and inspired** and now I care more"*

- Anonymous

*"It **definitely opened my eyes...** we need more dialogue on helping kids in the system."*

- Anonymous

FOR A BETTER LIFE

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

YASMIN MISTRY, *Director/Producer*

Yasmin Mistry is an Emmy-nominated animator and filmmaker. Her work has been displayed worldwide including recent showings at the White House and United Nations, as well as at film festivals world-wide. She is the recipient of the Puffin Foundation's 2013 and 2017 film grants, the Brooklyn Arts Council's 2014 – 2018 film grants, the Riverside Sharing Fund, and the Jessie Streich-Kest Memorial Grant. When not working as an artist, Yasmin dedicates her time to the foster youth of New York City. As a Court Appointed Special Advocate, she received the 2012 Advocate of The Year Award for her dedication to obtaining services for foster care children with special needs. Yasmin was inspired to create this film when she realized the voices of the children she worked with were not being heard and their stories never told.

MAXINE TRUMP, *Editor/Writer*

Maxine is a director, story producer, and co-owner of Hitman Productions. She directed the New York Times Critics' Pick feature documentary "Musicwood," and is set to release her latest film, "To Kid or Not to Kid" in 2018. Prior to this, she worked at the BBC in London as the development executive for non-fiction and scripted programs. She is the winner of several BDA & Promax awards.

INBAR SHARON, *EXECUTIVE PRODUCER*

Inbar is a development and fundraising consultant. She was previously the Director of Development at Materials For The Arts and the Director of Strategic Fundraising at MZA Events, where she handled fundraising for the Aids Walk and Tour de Summer Camps.

CHRISTINA LINDSTROM, *EXECUTIVE PRODUCER*

Christina has implemented impact campaigns for films such as *The Help*, *Waiting for Superman*, and *Food Inc.* Prior to consulting she was the Senior Director of Strategy and Impact for Participant Media, and she co-built the international media licensing distribution arm of Jupiter Images (acquired by Getty Images) and assisted in the development of the Artists for Amnesty division of Amnesty International, USA.

KIMBERLY DIPRESIA, *PRODUCER*

Kimberly DiPresia is an actress, producer, and filmmaker. She is the co-founder of Hanging Charlie Productions and has worked on shows such as "The Mysteries of Laura" (Warner Bros.), "Billions" (Showtime) and "Red Oaks" (Amazon).

LAURA FONG, *Assistant Editor*

Laura is an associate producer for PBS Newshour Weekend. Her prior work on CNN's episodic series "Inside Man" helped garner CNN a 2013 IDA award for Best Limited Series and a 2014 IDA nomination for Best Episodic series.

HATHAISON GERDPRASERT, *LEAD ILLUSTRATOR*

Hathaison is a freelance digital artist. She previously worked at Kantana Animation Studio, Big Brain, and Babas Company.

AMANDA DE JESUS, *LCSW-R, Social Work Consultant*

Amanda is a psychotherapist at a Queens community health center. She is also an Adjunct faculty member at the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service. Her clinical practice areas include social work with immigrants and refugees, human and labor trafficking, trauma, mental health, and foster care.

FOR A BETTER LIFE PRODUCTION ART



Fekri entering foster home (top left), Fekri on the subway (top right), Florence in prison (bottom left), Fekri suffering from child abuse (bottom right)

FOR A BETTER LIFE

CREDITS

DIRECTED & PRODUCED BY:

Yasmin Mistry

EDITED & WRITTEN BY:

Maxine Trump

PRODUCED & WRITTEN BY

Kimberly DiPresia

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:

Christina Lindstrom
Inbar Sharon

FEATURING:

Fekri Kram

CAMERA:

Rhett DuPont

ASSISTANT EDITOR:

Laura Fong

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT:

Octavia Vaughn

STORYBOARD ARTIST:

Hazel O'Neil

ADDITIONAL ART:

Ana Lozada

LEAD ILLUSTRATOR:

Hathaison Gerdprasert

ILLUSTRATORS:

Noure Zein
Andrea Poretta

ANIMATION & ART DIRECTOR:

Yasmin Mistry

LEAD ANIMATORS:

Nicolas Maglieri
Nivetha Kannan

3D ANIMATION:

Russ Spaid

ANIMATION:

Michael Barnett
Joshua Fleming
Meagan Deiss
Noure Zein
Kalika Sharma
Anthony Faiella

SOUND MIX:

Erich Rettermayer

ORIGINAL COMPOSITION:

William Baird

SOUND MIX:

Erich Rettermayer

VOICE ARTISTS:

Marine Assaiante
Ruba Thérèse Mansouri
Jamil Zraikat

MUSIC BY:

Fekri Kram
Accidental Music
Travis Lloyd
Kevin Macleod
Kai Engel
Nome
TC AndyBeatz
Basement Studios Prod.

SPECIAL THANKS:

Amanda de Jesus
Naeema Torres
James "Rusty" Haner

DEDICATION:

In memory of Linayjah



RIVERSIDE SHARING FUND

