

FARAWAY PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS

داستان فہیمہ
Fahimeh's Story



Feature Documentary, Australia 2004
Directed by Faramarz K-Rahber

Duration: 83 mins

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SYNOPSIS

Fahimeh's Story is an observational documentary about a vivacious 47 year old Iranian woman who migrated with her children to Australia after fleeing an unhappy, arranged marriage to a husband who she could not divorce under Iranian law.



Five years on she has fallen in love with and married John, a 77 year old Australian ex-army officer and RSL member.

John is now converting to Islam in order to better relate to his young wife. Both John's and Fahimeh's children are unhappy about the marriage.

A few months later, Hossain, the Iranian ex-husband, arrives in Australia looking forward to seeing his wife and family again. He does not know his wife has remarried....

Written & Directed by..... FARAMARZ K-RAHBER
Editor & Line Producer AXEL GRIGOR
Producer..... IAN LANG
Cinematography SHING FUNG CHEUNG
Composer FARAHSHEED GOLBARANI

FULL CREW CREDITS ON PAGE 7.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Fahimeh's Story marks the feature directorial debut of Queensland-based Iranian-Australian documentary filmmaker Faramarz K-Rahber.

Having graduated from Griffith University's Bachelor of Screen production in 2000 together with filmmaking partner Axel Grigor, they completed an award-winning short documentary in 2001 before embarking on *Fahimeh's Story*.



As a friend of Fahimeh and her family ever since she and her sons migrated to Australia, Faramarz was amazed by the turns her life took in 2001. He had just completed a short course in documentary production at the Australian Film, TV and Radio School in November 2001, when the events in her life led him to approach her with the idea of capturing her unusual drama on camera. She agreed and Faramarz borrowed a camera and began filming.

After editing some early footage into a short promotional tape together, Faramarz and Axel enlisted the support of local producer Ian Lang and subsequently pitched the project to SBS Independent. Two weeks later they had a pre-sale.

Principal photography of *Fahimeh's Story* began early 2002 and was to continue for 18 months – almost 6 months longer than first expected. Originally slated as a 52-minute film, the story quickly grew in scope and SBS, along with the film's investors (AFC, PFTC, Griffith University) made the rare decision to expand the film duration to that of a feature-length documentary.

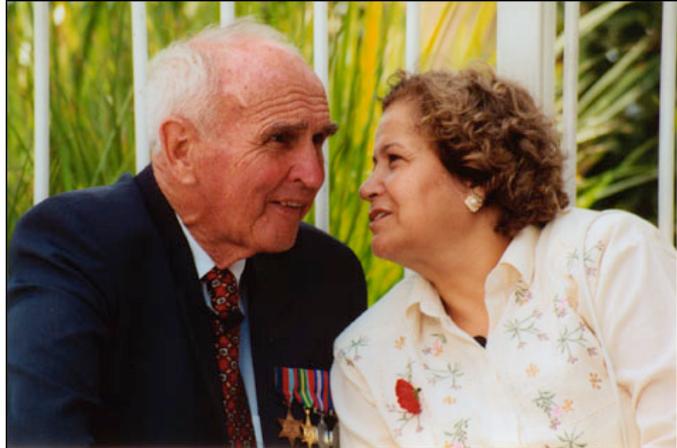
Given the unpredictable nature of the subjects' lives and the verité documentary format, the filmmakers spent much of the filming period on constant "Fahimeh-alert", ready to capture the latest twist and turns as they happened. This close relationship with the subjects' lives allowed Faramarz to establish a respectful and intimate bond with Fahimeh, John, Hossain and their families, which enabled the crew to be present at the most emotional of times.

Shortly after the film's completion, *Fahimeh's Story* screened to great acclaim at the 2004 Australian International Documentary Conference, where industry peers chose it as the only Australian feature doc to be previewed at the event.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I met Fahimeh for the first time in 1996, I never thought I would one day make a film about her life.

I will never forget the day in winter 2001 when she called me and told me that she had met someone special at a bus stop. After meeting 77 year-old John later that night, I began to wonder what was going to happen when the rest of her family found out.



Since I knew her family and her kids quite well, I felt that a huge drama was beginning to unfold. Especially when they decided to get married a short time later.

I approached Fahimeh and asked her if she would let me make a film about her life – and interestingly she agreed. I knew that by agreeing to my request she was going to face some tough challenges from her family and the people close to her.

So my journey following Fahimeh and John began. It turned out to be a very emotional and challenging journey for me as well. I wanted to tell a story without being unfair to anyone involved in the film.

I knew that I would come across unexpected twists and turns, but I was speechless when she told me she was sponsoring her ex-husband Hossain to come Australia and that he wasn't aware that she had remarried. Why on earth would she do that? Wasn't he the reason she left Iran in the first place? I had to find out more.

A few months into the shoot, Fahimeh's oldest son decided to pull out of the film as he couldn't see any benefit in being involved in such a twisted story about his mother. This represented another challenge for me, to tell the story without an important part of Fahimeh's family being present on screen. But I respected his decision.

As we reached the end of the production period I discovered that Hossain was beginning to lose his faith in the possibility of reconciling with Fahimeh and their kids. I went down to Sydney again to see him and told him that his continued presence in the film would help explain the situation between him and Fahimeh. He agreed to be filmed but didn't want to talk about his feelings on camera.

I decided early on to work with local director of photography Shing Fung Cheung and we experimented with various visual styles. The film was shot mainly with a small DV camera with minimal crew in order to be as unobtrusive on the subjects' lives as possible.

Axel Grigor, the film's editor and my business partner, cut the film with Apple's Final Cut Pro. He demonstrated creativity and ingenuity as well as great patience and constant commitment during a process that took over six months. Pro-Cam DigiPost in Brisbane did the online picture cutting and the audio post was completed with generous help from sound designer John Willsteed at Scope Post-Production.

As I reflect on a personal journey that started over two years ago, I can only say that making "Fahimeh's Story" was not so much about making a film as it was achieving a great life experience.

I hope the film offers a rare glimpse into a type of life story seldom told on screen. However, I don't want to claim that this film or anybody appearing in the film represents a type of nationality, religion or lifestyle. All I wanted was to present a story about life, love and family.

Faramarz K-Rahber
February 14, 2004

RECOGNITION FOR "FAHIMEH'S STORY"

2004 Australian Film Institute Awards

Nominated: Best Achievement in Documentary Direction
(Prize presentation late October 2004)

Film Critics Circle of Australia Awards

Nominated: Best Documentary
(Prize presentation late October 2004)

Official Selection: 2004 Brisbane International Film Festival, July 31

National Broadcast: SBS-TV Australia, June 3rd (Storyline Australia)

Industry Screening: Australian International Documentary Conference,
Fremantle, Western Australia, February 27

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Faramarz K-Rahber – Writer/Director

This groundbreaking film about Islam and Western relations is the feature debut of Iranian-Australian filmmaker Faramarz K-Rahber, a graduate of Griffith University and recipient of several Queensland New Filmmaker Awards.



Axel Grigor – Editor & Line Producer

Swedish-Australian filmmaker Axel Grigor graduated from Griffith University in 2001. A recipient of the best director award at Queensland New Filmmaker Awards in 2001, “Fahimeh’s Story” marks Axel’s debut as feature documentary editor.



Dr Ian Lang – Producer

A Swinburne graduate, multi-award winning veteran Queensland documentary maker and Griffith Film School educator, 'Fahimeh's Story' is Lang's fifth documentary for Australia's SBS.



FULL CREW CREDITS

Written & Directed by..... FARAMARZ K-RAHBER

Editor & Line Producer AXEL GRIGOR

Producer..... IAN LANG

Associate Producer FARAMARZ K-RAHBER

Cinematography SHING FUNG CHEUNG

Camera & Sound FARAMARZ K-RAHBER

Additional Camera AXEL GRIGOR

Narration..... FARAMARZ K-RAHBER

Production Assistant..... NAOMI HOMEL
MELODY K-RAHBER

Composer FARAHSHEED GOLBARANI

Musicians SALAR AYOUBI-AMIRABAD
HAMID REZA DOURAN

Additional Music ROSS MCLENNAN
JOHN WILLSTEED
SUE CROWLEY

Stills Photographers RUPINDER SINGH
LUKE HAYWARD
MAN FUNG CHEUNG
FARAMARZ K-RAHBER
SAMI TOLPPI

Translation..... RHAMATOLLAH KHAAMI
FARAMARZ K-RAHBER

Subtitling..... SBS TELEVISION, AUSTRALIA

Technical Assistance..... DONNA & TONY HAMILTON

Tape Duplication..... MELODY K-RAHBER

Online Facility PROCAM DIGIPOST

Online Editor & Grading..... CHRIS SANDERS

Graphics JOHN MENLA
KYLIE SMITH

Calligraphy SHOHREH K-RAHBAR

Sound Post-Production..... SCOPE POST PRODUCTION

Sound Design & Mix JOHN WILLSTEED

Narration Coach WAYNE MURRAY

Post-Production Advice MARIA RITA BARBAGALLO
PAT LAUGHREN
ALAN ROSENTHAL
TOM ZUBRYCKI

Archive Footage JOZAN FILM INC.

Production Accountant BRIAN QUINN

Legals..... CAROLINE VERGE – Verge Whitford & Co

PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Fahimeh's Story was commissioned by SBS Independent for "Storyline Australia".