

BROTHERS

A FILM BY **ÖMÜR ATAY**

Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival
Official Selection – Competition





REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

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film

SYNOPSIS

Yusuf, who has obeyed the family elders' decision and set his sister up for an honour killing, and his brother Ramazan who committed the murder, come together after 4 years when Yusuf is discharged on probation from the detention center. Instead of Ramazan, the family has turned in Yusuf, as he was younger than 18 at the time of the murder and would get a reduced sentence. Coming out of prison, Yusuf ends up marooned at the family-run trailer truck park on the highway leading to Iran, where he struggles with his guilty conscience and regret for what he did. Surrounded by the cruelty of traditional moral and religious rules that can turn a child into a murderer, every move he makes is watched over by his family.

Entering the lives of two brothers who end up condemned to one another's destinies, Yasemin becomes the unwilling witness to the honour killing that is kept as a family secret. As Yusuf and Ramazan reckon with their past and their conscience, Yasemin becomes another threat for the family, just like Yusuf.




PACIFIC



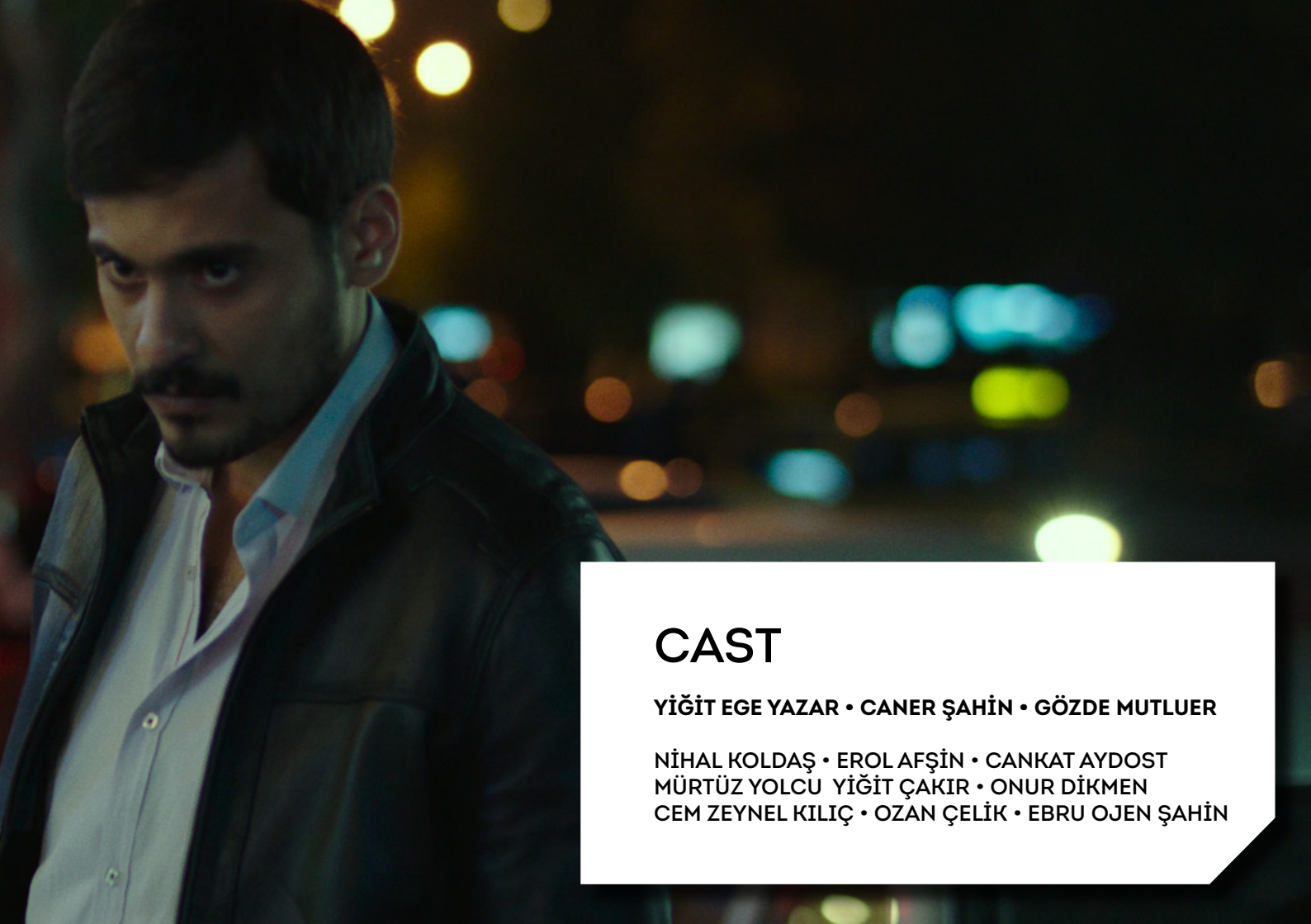
DIRECTOR

ÖMÜR ATAY began his cinema education at the Faculty of Fine Arts of 9 Eylül University and completed it at the Film Direction Department of the Faculty of Fine Arts of Marmara University in Istanbul. He directed several short films while still a student at film school. “Necropolis”, a film he directed in 1998, won the first prize at Ifsak Short Film Competition. His short films have been screened at numerous national and international film festivals. In 2006, he directed the “Little Red Riding Hood” segment of “Anlat Istanbul / Istanbul Tales”, a feature-length film comprised of five intertwined tales.









CAST

YİĞİT EGE YAZAR • CANER ŞAHİN • GÖZDE MUTLUER

NİHAL KOLDAŞ • EROL AFŞİN • CANKAT AYDOST
MÜRTÜZ YOLCU YİĞİT ÇAKIR • ONUR DİKMEN
CEM ZEYNEL KILIÇ • OZAN ÇELİK • EBRU OJEN ŞAHİN



CREW

CASTING DIRECTOR EZGİ BALTAŞ
HAIR&MAKE-UP ÇİĞDEM UZUNDAĞ
SOUND BORIS TRAYANOV
SOUND DESIGN ELİ HALİGUA / FATİH RAĞBET / BLAGOMIR ALEXIEV
COSTUME DESIGNER MERAL EFE YURTSEVER
EDITOR DORUK KAYA / AMON GUILLIARD
ART DIRECTOR EMRE YURTSEVEN / MERAL EFE YURTSEVEN
MUSIC ERDEM HELVACIOĞLU / VICTOR CHOUCHKOV
CINEMATOGRAPHER A.EMRE TANYILDIZ
CO-PRODUCERS STEFAN GIEREN / BORISLAV CHOUCHKOV / ÖMÜR ATAY

STORY AND SCREENPLAY ÖMÜR ATAY
PRODUCER FUNDA ÖDEMİŞ
DIRECTOR ÖMÜR ATAY



TURKISH • GERMAN • BULGARIAN CO-PRODUCTION

ATAY FILM • OFF FILM • FICTION 2.0 • CHOUCHKOV BROTHERS

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MOVIES

'Brothers' ('Kardesler'): Film Review | Karlovy Vary 2018

3:57 PM PDT 7/3/2018 by Boyd van Hoeij

THE BOTTOM LINE
A promising debut, despite a storytelling flaw.

Turkish writer-director Omur Atay makes his feature debut with this austere drama set in a roadside family run motel.

A taciturn teenager is released from the Turkish equivalent of juvie at the start of *Brothers (Kardesler)*, the promising debut feature from writer-director Omur Atay. Mostly set in the rundown motel owned by the boy's family, on a desolate stretch of land next to a highway to Iran, this is an unadorned and, visually speaking, impeccably controlled feature. Though the narrative lacks any major surprises, the film compensates with both a solid sense of place and two young lead actors who give stubbornly lived-in performances as the titular siblings whose relationship grows increasingly frayed. After its bow in the Karlovy Vary competition, this will be in demand at festivals and on the world-cinema VOD and SVOD circuit.

The standoffish looks and strongly angular face of Yusuf (Yigit Ege Yazar) suggest he's someone who's learned to be on his guard while projecting an image of leave-me-alone strength at a young age, qualities that no doubt served him well in the juvenile detention center in Ankara where he's held when the film opens. But very quickly, Yusuf is released and taken home by his older brother, Ramazan (Caner Sahin), who is in his mid-20s. It turns out the younger sibling spent four years in the facility and there hasn't been much contact between the brothers, as Ramazan doesn't even remember how old his brother is exactly.

This detail surfaces organically in a well-written sequence in which Ramazan, right after Yusuf's release, takes his younger brother to a bar, where they drink and he's arranged for a prostitute for Yusuf — only to discover he's just 17 and his actions could have landed his brother, technically still a minor, in jail only hours after his release. Only in hindsight does it become clear that this straightforward scene, which just seems to establish the characters and their newfound dynamic, is, in reality, all of their history and relationship in miniature,

foreshadowing not only what will happen in the future, but also what will be revealed about their shared past.

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(Spoilers in the following paragraph only.) However, the offhand way the scene is incorporated into the overall narrative arc doesn't make it clear whether Atay, who also wrote the screenplay, and editors Doruk Kaya and Amon Guillard were even aware of the metaphorical possibilities of the moment. Instead, they have put all their energy in slowly unveiling that Ramazan executed an honor killing of a third sibling and that it was decided that Yusuf, who was only tangentially involved, had to take the fall because, as a minor, his sentence would be much shorter. The film's careful peeling back of this information, however, feels a little bit disingenuous or at least unnecessary, as the characters themselves are all fully aware of this from the start and the film itself is not a mystery or a thriller. (On top of that, the reveal isn't all that hard to guess.)

Instead, Atay has crafted a familiar but engaging psychological family drama that plumbs the depths of Yusuf's increasingly divided loyalty as he comes to realize that the man he took the fall for isn't necessarily the dream brother Yusuf thought he was, and that traditional codes of conduct and a personal sense of justice and morality might be incompatible. This slow realization is the real if initially hidden motor of the narrative, which would have worked just as well without the unnecessary withholding of information, which keeps the audience outside of the story for much of the first act.

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Thankfully, the striking Yazar, who has a background in voice work for animated characters, reveals himself to also be an intensely physical actor who doesn't need any words to convey what his character is thinking or going through. One of the film's strongest scenes sees Yusuf visiting his devout mother, who never leaves the family abode anymore. Yusuf's look of horror and devastation when it is revealed his mother didn't actually get him the suit

Ramazan told him she'd picked out for him, speaks volumes. When she dismisses his claims of innocence as unimportant, he realizes he has lost his mother to the unspeakable tragedy that occurred, as her thinking has become warped by trying to justify what happened in her mind. On the opposite end of that, he also has to face the fact that his brother simply told him things he knew to be untrue but thinks he wants to hear. It is moments such as these, at the intersection of the story, the characters and their complex psychologies, that the film really shines.

The small supporting cast, led by Sahin as the older brother and also including Gozde Mutluer as a female guest at the motel who becomes single after a quarrel with her boyfriend, is strong, with the rookie director opting for a vein of subdued realism that often relies more on actions and glances than words.Technically, Atay, who comes from Turkish television, goes for an austere widescreen elegance that complements the overall tone of this art house drama set in the bleak Turkish hinterlands. Using a lot of shallow focus and the occasional tracking shot, the director paints a bleak and largely inhospitable picture of the nondescript locales and region against which Yusuf's realization about where he truly belongs slowly becomes clearer.

Production companies: Atay Film, Off Film, Fiction 2.0, Chouchkov Brothers
Cast: Yigit Ege Yazar, Caner Sahin, Gozde Mutluer
Writer-director: Omur Atay
Producer: Funda Odemis
Director of photography: A. Emre Tanyildiz
Production designer: Emre Yurtseven, Meral Efe Yurstseven
Costume designer: Meral Efe Yurtsever
Editors: Doruk Kaya, Amon Guillard
Music: Erdem Helvacioglu, Victor Chouchkov
Casting: Ezgi Baltas
Venue: Karlovy Vary Film Festival (Competition)

In Turkish
No rating, 103 minutes

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