



KINDNESS FILMS

Two Cultures. One World.

A Muslim Reaches Out to the People Who Fear Him and Urges Them to 'Leave Their Baggage Behind' in the Profoundly Revealing & Life-Changing Documentary.

Free Trip to Egypt

In Theaters in May/June + Available on Cinema on Demand

LOS ANGELES — March 26, 2019 — For Immediate Release — Seeking to build a bridge of mutual understanding and friendship, a Canadian-Egyptian entrepreneur of Muslim faith, now living in Switzerland, decides to reach out to the very people who fear him. Traveling across the United States to find Americans concerned about an Islamic threat, Tarek Mounib makes them an intriguing offer ... a Free Trip to Egypt.

Following a one-week theatrical run in New York City (May 31) and Los Angeles (June 7), Free Trip to Egypt will enjoy a one-night event premiere (Fathom) June 12 in 500 theaters across the country; and is also available for viewing in theaters on Cinema on Demand via Tugg.



The June 12 premiere event (7-9:30 p.m.) is the highlight of the #PledgeToListen Day of Unity. Immediately following the screenings, a 30-minute panel discussion led by celebrities and thought leaders will be streamed into theaters to launch a discussion about how to listen and bring more kindness to the world — and asking everyone to take the online #PledgeToListen and to look beyond that which divides us and to bring authentic conversations to their community. To find a theater near you, reserve a ticket and take the pledge, visit www.FreeTripToEgypt.com

About Free Trip to Egypt ... With initial reactions ranging from suspicion to hostility, Mounib — accompanied by YouTube celebrity and racial activist Adam Saleh, a Muslim born in New York City to Yemeni parents — embarks on a mission, traveling from sunny California to a Trump Rally in Kentucky, a small town in the heart of Georgia, Union Square in NYC ... and a variety of locales in between. Eventually, they cobble together a diverse group of people, including a school teacher, police officer, Marine Corps veteran, single mom, preacher and beauty pageant queen.

All have preconceptions and misgivings but are open and courageous enough to embark on the adventure of a lifetime, arriving in Cairo, Egypt, in July 2017. The Americans spend 10 days paired with locals just as diverse as them ... and possibly with just as many misconceptions.

What happens when a retired teacher and her husband are united with a young Egyptian revolutionary? Or when a Christian missionary and a born-again, former Miss Kentucky are housed with an orthodox Muslim family where the mother wears a burqa? Or when a police officer faces off with a radical, left-leaning journalist?

The answers are provocative, surprising, funny, magical, emotional, revealing, enlightening and ultimately life-changing — in other words, all things human — in this profoundly original and inspirational feature-length documentary. When people look beyond their ethnicity, political affiliations, religious beliefs, economic status and connect at a human level, it's a transformative and universal message for everyone to come together and join the global #PledgeToListen_initiative, a social media revolution of acceptance.

From Kindness Films, *Free Trip to Egypt* was created by Tarek Mounib; directed by Ingrid Serban, an award-winning, Romanian-born filmmaker who splits her time living and working in San Francisco and Paris; and produced by Mounib, British-Egyptian filmmaker Yasmin Kamal and San Francisco-based singer-songwriter Forest Sun, who composed the soundtrack.

Embarking on the journey were ...

Katie Appeldorn — Originally from Norfolk, Neb., where she “grew up in the Bible belt and there wasn't a whole lot of diversity,” Appeldorn now lives in Casa Grande, Ariz. (moving soon to Palo Alto, Calif., for her work). A former Corporal in the Marine Corps, working as a photojournalist, the 38-year-old is now a single mom of two boys who works as a proposal specialist to secure government contracts for the California-based Electric Power Research Institute. “My mom thought this was some kind of ploy to sell me into sex slavery,” she recalls. “My brother told me I was going to be beheaded.” HOSTED BY: Asmaa Gamal, a freelance photo journalist in Egypt.

Ellen & Terry Decker — Now living in Conowingo, Md. (recently relocated from Fawn Grove, Pa.), the retired school teacher (who continues to substitute, frequently in special education), 70, is Jewish and was a '60s liberal who “protested everything intolerant” but recalled her post-9/11 transformation before the trip, “I'm so racist now, I can't stand myself”; and her husband, then 69, a retired quality control manager for General Motors, described by one of their sons as a xenophobe. Ellen heard a radio interview with Mounib and submitted a video to be considered as a participant. Both Deckers found the experience life-changing. HOSTED BY: Ahmed Hassan, a cinematographer and an Egyptian revolutionary, a key figure in the Oscar-nominated, Emmy Award-winning movie *The Square* (2013), about a group of Egyptian revolutionaries risking their lives to build a new society of conscience.

Brian Kopilec — Enlisted for the adventure when Mounib encountered him at a Trump rally in his hometown of Louisville, Ky., 28-year-old Kopilec was a Corporal in the Marines – serving over four years on three tours of duty – and is now studying computer animation at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Fla. “On the news you never see the positive, just negative about other countries, but people are amazing.” HOSTED BY: Salma Salem, a motorcycle-riding bar owner, choreographer and performer in contemporary dance.

Jenna Day — Introduced to Mounib by Kopilec, the single, 27-year-old actress and singer from Louisville is a former Miss Kentucky and born-again Christian who moved to Los Angeles since the trip to pursue her career and is currently going on auditions, taking acting lessons at the Art of Acting Studio and working as a communications consultant. Trepidatious before the trip, Day – who has remained in touch with her hosts – says, “The trip taught me a lot about people and about hearing their point of view and why they believe what they believe. You don't have to compromise what you believe, but there's always room to listen and respect a different viewpoint and that's tolerance. If your beliefs can't stand up to a little bit of questioning, then your belief is too flimsy.” HOSTED BY: The orthodox Muslim Madkor family.

Jason Reynolds — Also introduced by Kopilec, the single, 33-year-old from Louisville recalls his former life as a successful entrepreneur earning six figures, an atheist and a drug addict,

saying, “God flipped the script on me six years ago.” Now a church planter and associate pastor at True Believers in Christ church and a Christian missionary, he also co-founded –with New York Giants football player Jamon Brown, a Louisville native – the nonprofit Purpose, Inc., working with at-risk, inner-city kids to transform communities by helping them find their purpose/passion and to give back. “I’m real cautious about what we’re getting into,” said Reynolds before the journey, but who participated because he welcomed the opportunity to “spread Jesus’ love into the Middle East.” HOSTED BY: The orthodox Muslim Madkor family.

Marc Spalding – “My fear is being taken hostage,” said the 46-year-old, African-American police officer – who was patrolling the Louisville Trump Rally when he encountered Mounib – prior to the trip. A single father who raised two children, a son, now 22, and a daughter, 20, Spalding waited until his kids were independent enough for him to finally pursue his dream of being a cop (after years working as a heating & air specialist) and has now been serving on the force for the past eight years. “Learning about a different culture and people benefits me as a police officer,” he says. “People tend to look at everyone [in an ethnic group] all the same way, especially when something bad happens. And that’s just not the way it works. Being a person of color, I got a taste of discrimination early in life. We may all be one human race as a whole, but made up of different ethnicity groups, religious backgrounds, shades of color and individuality, because no two people are the same.” HOSTED BY: Mohamed Ragab, an independent journalist, with radical left-leanings and a unique perspective on American politics.

Documentary. Not Rated. Running Time: Approx. 98 Minutes.

To Find a Theater Near You, Reserve a Ticket and Join the Conversation by Taking the
#PledgeToListen,
Visit us at: www.FreeTripToEgypt.com

About Kindness Films:

With a goal of launching a sincere dialogue and a better understanding of different points of view, Kindness Films is focused on creating projects that contribute to the wellbeing of humanity and bringing people together of various backgrounds and cultures. A successful software entrepreneur of Egyptian heritage who has lived in Zurich, Switzerland, for the past 15 years, founder Tarek Mounib – who recalls being the only Muslim family in his neighborhood growing up in the ‘70s in Halifax, Canada – launched the non-partisan production company in 2017 with the genesis of an idea: A dream to build bridges through kindness and document the journey in a film. What happened next was beyond his wildest dreams ... and resulted in a most unusual journey. Visit us at: www.KindnessFilms.org

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