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**SCREEN**DAILY

## Alpha Violet boards 'Abu Omar' starring Kais Nashif, releases first image (exclusive)

BY **MELANIE GOODFELLOW** | 18 JUNE 2020



Paris-based Alpha Violet has acquired sales rights to Israeli director Roy Krispel's debut feature *Abu Omar*, starring Palestinian actor Kais Nashif as a man attempting to smuggle the body of his dead son back into Palestine from Israel.

Nashif won best actor in Venice's Horizons competition in 2018 for his performance

**SOURCE: ALPHA VIOLET**  
**ABU OMAR**

in Sameh Zoabi's *Tel Aviv On Fire* and is soon to be seen in Ben Sharrock's Cannes 2020 selection *Limbo*. He originally broke out internationally in Hany Abu Assad's 2005 Oscar-nominated drama *Paradise Now*.

In *Abu Omar*, he plays the father of a two-year-old child who dies in an Israeli hospital during a flare-up in the Middle East conflict that leads to official border crossings being closed.

Against the odds, he attempts to transport the body in a sports bag to Palestine for burial. Along the way, he is helped by a young woman (Shany Vershik), pregnant with an unwanted child.

"All the distributors of *Tel Aviv On Fire* and *Paradise Now* in which he starred are very interested in the film," said Alpha Violet co-chief Virginie Devesa. "It's a drama but there is also a quiet, deadpan humour in the vein of the films of Elia Suleiman."

Krispel's previous features comprise documentaries *Football In The Valley* and *Broken Hearts Club*, about Ethiopian children being treated in an Israeli hospital for heart defects, which served as inspiration for the fiction feature.

Itai Tamir and Ami Livne at Tel Aviv-based Laila Films, whose recent credits include *The Cakemaker* and *Red Cow*, lead produced in co-production with Fred Bellaïche's Paris-based Da Prod.

Other buzzy new titles on Alpha Violet's slate include Greek director Christos Nikou's *Apples*, which is expected to premiere at autumn festivals, and Turkish director Baris Sarhan's stylish thriller *The Cemil Show*, about a failed actor who incarnates a fictitious evil character he auditioned for but failed to get the part.

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