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## THE LAST DAY

A FILM BY

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# SYNOPSIS

On the evening of Saturday, November 4, 1995, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is shot down with three bullets at the end of a huge political rally in the center of Tel-Aviv. His killer apprehended at the scene turns out to be a 25-year-old student and observant Jew. Investigation into this brutal murder reveals a dark and frightening world that made this tragic deed possible. A subculture of hate fueled by hysterical rhetoric, paranoia and political intrigue. The extremist rabbis who condemned Rabin by invoking an obscure Talmudic ruling. The prominent right wing politicians who joined in a campaign of incitement against Rabin. The militant Israeli settlers for whom peace meant betrayal. And the security agents who saw what was coming and failed to prevent it.

This tribute to Nobel Peace Prize winner Yitzhak Rabin on the 20th anniversary of his death sheds light on an ever-growing crisis of the impunity of hate-crimes in Israeli society today. Acclaimed filmaker Amos Gitai (KADOSH, KIPPUR, FREE ZONE) masterfully combines staged re-enactments with actual news footage of the shooting and its aftermath to create a thought-provoking political thriller.

# YITZHAK RABIN

Yitzhak Rabin has become a symbol of the Israeli–Palestinian peace process. The Israeli politician, statesman and general served two terms as Prime Minister of Israel, 1974-77 and 1992 until his assassination in 1995.

During his second term, Rabin played a leading role in the signing of the Oslo Accords, which created the Palestinian National Authority and granted it partial control over parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Prior to the signing of the accords, Rabin received a letter from PLO chairman Yasser Arafat renouncing violence and officially recognizing Israel, and on the same day, 9 September 1993, Rabin sent Arafat a letter officially recognizing the PLO.

After the announcement of the Oslo Accords there were many protest demonstrations in Israel objecting to the Accords.

The Accords divided Israeli society, with some seeing Rabin as a hero for advancing the cause of peace and some seeing him as a traitor for giving away land they viewed as rightfully belonging to Israel. Rabin also signed a peace treaty with Jordan in 1994.

Rabin won the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize together with fellow Israeli Shimon Peres and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. In November 1995, he was assassinated by right-wing Israeli radical Yigal Amir, who was opposed to the peace process.

Rabin was the first native-born prime minister of Israel and their only prime minister to be assassinated. Many cities and towns in Israel have named streets, neighborhoods, schools, bridges and parks after Rabin. Outside Israel, there are streets and squares named after him in Bonn, Berlin, Chicago, Madrid, Miami, and New York and parks in Montreal, Paris, Rome and Lima.

2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin - the man who, more than anyone else, symbolized the will for peace in the Middle East.

# THE SHAMGAR COMMISSION

The hearings of the Shamgar Commission play a central role in Amos Gitai's RABIN, THE LAST DAY. The Shamgar Commission was set up to investigate the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The commission was chaired by Supreme Court president Meir Shamgar, and included Major General Zvi Zamir and Professor Ariel Rosen-Zvi. Among others, the Commission interviewed Rabin's personal security agents, police officers, Rabin's driver and hospital doctors.

The Shamgar Commission held its first meeting on November 19, 1995, and submitted its partially confidential report on March 28, 1996. The public transcript revealed security arrangements divided between various groups (General Security Service, police, Special Patrol Unit), and a description of the crime scene, the assassination, evacuation and medical treatment. The confidential segments described the work of GSS agent Avishai Raviv, which involved a connection to right-wing elements in Israel. Upon Meir Shamgar's recommendation, director Amos Gitai was allowed access to the transcript of some of the commission's hearings. The Israeli State Archives complied, allowing the director to read the hundreds of pages that sought to investigate how a prime minister was murdered in the heart of Tel Aviv in a city square packed with people.

# COMMENTS FROM AMOS GITAI

### ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

I was interested in dissecting what led to Rabin's murder. Twenty years have passed. The prospects of peace have vanished with the 90s dreams of normalcy. But the men that made possible the killing of our prime minister are still around. In fact, some of them are now in power. I am alarmed by the growing existence of a violent Jewish religious underground in the heart of Israeli secular society. This is a disease that could very well destroy the democratic idea that Israel was founded on. In my mind Israel in its origins was a political endeavour, not a religious one, a political conclusion of a long history of suffering by the Jewish people.

### YITZHAK RABIN

Looking at the current Israeli reality, it seems the person who sketched out some kind o political alternative to the reality we're in was Rabin. His simplicity, his integrity and direct talk, his ability 20 years ago to offer an alternative political thesis – and essentially his understanding that making peace means also that the «other» exists, all these could have offered a governmental alternative today. You cannot make peace unilateraly. Making peace is like creating any relationship. The «other» is there and should be accounted for. This is the radical difference between the Rabin/Peres project and the current state of affairs, which is based only on power struggles. Rabin's way to reach real peace, as imperfect as that may be was a sincere attempt. So I decided that I would make this film not just as a director, but as an Israeli citizen. I think this is a voice of a memory that needs to be heard.

### BEING A WITNESS

When Rabin and Peres decided immediately after they won the elections in 1992 to start courageously to try and reach an agreement with the Palestinians, it made me decide myself to end my volontary absence of 10 years from Israel, which lasted from the first Lebanon war in 1982 until 1992. I thought that we were witnessing a great moment of statemen who decided to change the path of history. After the sclerotic years of

the post-Lebanon war, ARTE commissioned me to film Give Peace a Chance, a broadcast evening dedicated to the peace negotiations. For this project I conducted several encounters and interviews with many of the partners of the peace negotiation, Israelis and Palestinians. With Rabin, I flew to Washington and to Cairo and I had several encounters and conversations with him. I was also witnessing some of the vicious attacks against him, which I filmed. On the night that he was shot, on November 4, I went to Haifa to visit my mother who just had a major accident, being hit by a truck. She was starting to regain her senses, and she told me about the friendship of her mother, my grandmother Esther, with Rosa Cohen, the mother of Yitzhak Rabin. That same evening was the event that no Israeli can forget!

## RESEARCH

Our film is completely factual; it is based entirely on existing documentation. For every line spoken in this film, we have the relevant documents with the words as they were originally spoken. We started researching about two years ago. We went through documents, video footage and photos from the period that preceded Rabin's murder to the months after it. It was difficult to avoid the harsh statements and accusations made against Rabin at the time by rabbis, politicians and public figures.

## MAKING RABIN, THE LAST DAY

The methodology that I have often used in several films is to involve the actors and the technical crew from the start and throughout the process of writing. As soon as an advanced draft of the screenplay was written by Marie-José Sanselme and myself, we started the process of casting with Ilan Moskovitch (we needed to cast some 70 actors and hundreds of extras). Also the selection of sets with art director Miguel Merkin, producers Laurent Truchot and Michael Tapuach, as well as cinematographer Eric Gautier. Eric came to Tel Aviv early on for us to scout and discuss the main parameters of the set. We studied video archives and contemplated how to transpose them into a narrative cinematographic form. We shot the re-enactment

sequence of the killing in the same square where Rabin was shot. The editing process and the work of Yuval Orr, Tahel Sofer and Isabelle Ingold was longer than I am accustomed to because of the integration of all the archival footage.

### THE SHAMGAR COMMISSION

Though the Shamgar Commission was a state commission of inquiry, its letter of appointment instructed it to investigate only the operational failures that enabled the murder, not the incitement that led up to it. This film was also made to help correct this injustice by creating a kind of cinematic commission of inquiry to investigate the incitement. In a way, this film is the commission of inquiry that never happened. This is a film dealing not only with a brutal event 20 years ago, but with a longlasting shadow still very present in contemporary Israel.

### THE RIGHT MIX

The challenge of making this film was finding the right mix of staged scenes with real archival material. We included portions of televised speeches. They have such archival power that it was neither desirable nor worthwhile to recreate them. We also included sections of interviews that were videotaped during this research for the film, including those with Shimon Peres (who was Rabin's foreign minister) and Rabin's wife Leah.

### PHYSICAL PRESENCE

The goal wasn't to create a personality cult around Rabin, neither to replace him by an actor. Rabin had an aura of his own and my judgement was that the film would be constructed around his absence like a big black hole. He is not that physically present in the film. With this in mind, I chose not to focus on the killer. In today's Israel, we are already confronted with daily violent events. I did not think that it was right to mythify history. I preferred to deliver the components which led to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, and with it, the shattering of hopes. I chose understatement in order to hopefully promote a better future.

# AMOS GITAI

**1950** • Born in Haifa on 11 October, son of Efratia Munschick Margalit, scholar and intellectual, born in Tel Aviv in the year of the city's foundation, and the architect Munio Gitai Weinraub born in Silesia, formed by pupil of Mies van der Rohe and Hannes Meyer at the Bauhaus, Dessau, who fled from Nazi Germany in 1933.

**1968-1971** • Compulsory military service.

**1970** • Death of his father Munio.

**1971** • Enrolment in the Faculty of Architecture and Urban-planning of the Technion in Haifa, where he graduates in architecture in 1975.

**1972** • Receives a Super-8 camera from his mother Efratia and uses it to make his first experimental films.

**1973** • Yom Kippur War. Amos Gitai interrupts his architectural studies to serve in a rescue unit. His helicopter is shot down by a Syrian missile on his birthday and he is nearly killed.

**1975-1979** • Studies at Berkeley in California, where he obtains a PhD in architecture.

**1980** • Makes **House** (**Bait**), a full-length documentary film for the Israeli television corporation, which refuses to show it. The film, which describes the attachment of Palestinians to their land, is the first of a trilogy of works on the same house in West Jerusalem. The others are **A House in Jerusalem** (1998) and **News from Home / News from House** (2005).

**1981** • Makes **Wadi**, the first of a documentary trilogy that continues in 1991 (Wadi, Ten Years After) and 2001 (**Wadi Grand Canyon**).

**1982** • Marries Rivka Markovizky. Field Diary on the West Bank before and after the invasion of Lebanon by the Israeli army. Beginning of work with the cinematographer Nurith Aviv.

**1983** • Birth of his daughter Keren. Amos Gitai moves to Paris.

**1985** • Makes **Esther**, his first full-length nondocumentary film, presented at the International Critics' Week of the Cannes Film Festival and the first part of the "exile trilogy", followed by **Berlin-Jerusalem** (1989) and **Golem, the Spirit of Exile** (1991). Beginning of work with the cinematographer Henri Alekan and the actors Juliano Merr and Mohamed Bakri. First retrospective of his films at the British Institute Film in London and the Cinémathèque Française in Paris. Birth of his son Ben Ori.

**1987-1989** • Retrospectives in Madrid, Chicago and Washington. The choreographer Pina Bausch is involved in the making of **Berlin-Jerusalem**, his second full-length feature film, which is shown in competition at the Venice Film Festival and wins first prize at the Istanbul Festival. Beginning of work with the producer Laurent Truchot and the sound engineer Antoine Bonfanti.

**1991** • Retrospectives in Moscow by Nahum Kleiman and Jerusalem by Lia van Leer.

**1992** • Member of the jury at the Locarno Festival. Retrospective in Turin. Amos Gitai creates and films Metamorphosis of a Melody, a stage production performed at Gibellina in Sicily with Samuel Fuller and Hanna Shygulla and subsequently at the inauguration of Venice Biennale (1993).

**1993** • Oslo Accords signed by the Israeli government and the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Election of Yitzhak Rabin as prime minister. Amos Gitai returns to Israel, where he makes the "city trilogy": **Devarim** (1995) in Tel Aviv, **Yom Yom** (1997) in Haifa and **Kadosh** (starring Yaël Abecassis and produced by Michel Propper, shown in competition at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival) in Jerusalem.

**2000** • **Kippur**, a film based on his memories of the Yom Kippur War, is shown in competition at the Cannes Film Festival. Beginning of work with the screenwriter Marie-José Sanselme.
Awarded the distinction of Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres.

**2003** • The Centre Pompidou presents the first complete retrospective of Amos Gitai's work with an exhibition of 88 still from his films designed by the filmmaker. Complete retrospectives in the film libraries of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa.

**2004** • Death of Efratia Gitai. **Promised Land**, shown in competition at the Venice Film Festival, is the first film of the "frontier trilogy", which continues with **Free Zone** (2005) and **Disengagement** (2007).

**2005** • **Free Zone** is shown in competition at the Cannes Film Festival and Hannah Laslo receives the prize for the Best Actress. Amos Gitai is member of the jury at the 62nd Venice Film Festival. Awarded the Roberto Rossellini Prize for his work.

**2006** • The documentary **News from Home / News from House**, the third part of the "house trilogy", is presented at the Berlin Film Festival with a complete retrospective and an installation in association with the Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art.

**2008** • Awarded the Leopard of Honor at the 61st Locarno Festival. Retrospective of documentaries entitled Amos Gitai: Not Fiction at the MoMA in New York. Beginning of work with Jeanne Moreau in **One Day You'll Understand**.

**2008-2009** • Munio Weinraub / Amos Gitai Architecture und Film in Israel: exhibition with catalogue held at the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich and then at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

**2009** • Video installation Citations at the Bordeaux submarine base (1st edition of the Evento biennial). Beginning of work on the family archives with the films Carmel (2009) and Lullaby to my Father (2011).

**2010** • The Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe presents The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness, a work staged in the Boulbon quarry, at the opening of the Avignon Festival (July 2009). Amos Gitai publishes the letters of his mother Efratia (Efratia Gitai: Correspondence 1929–1994, Gallimard), which are read by Jeanne Moreau at the Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe and on France Culture.

**2011** • Various publications and exhibitions devoted to his parents Munio and Efratia: Traces at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris), the Bauhaus (Dessau, Germany), the art museum of the Ein Harod kibbutz (Israel), and Kibbutz Kfar Masaryk Dining Hall at the MoMA (New York, 2013). Retrospective and installation at the Museo Nazionale del Cinema in Turin. Amos Gitai inaugurates the Munio Gitai Weinraub Architecture Museum in his father's old offices in Haifa.

**2012** • Installation at the Rencontres de la Photographie in Arles.

**2013** • Awarded the Robert Bresson Prize for his film Ana Arabia, presented in competition at the Venice Film Festival. Amos Gitai receives the distinction of Officier des Arts et des Lettres.

**2014** • His film **Tsili**, inspired by the work of Aharon Appelfeld, is presented at the Venice Film Festival.

Exhibition Amos Gitai at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid (curated by Jean-François Chevrier with Elijah Pijollet); solo show at the Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac (Paris); show and complete retrospective Amos Gitai, Architecte de mémoire at the Cinémathèque française (Paris) and at the film cinemathèque of Lausanne with the Musée de l'Élysée (Lausanne).

Exhibition Strade/Ways at the Palazzo Reale, Milan.

**2015** • **Rabin, The Last Day** is presented in competition at the Venice Film Festival, as well as at the Toronto Film Festival.

# RABIN, THE LAST DAY

## A FILM BY AMOS GITAI

2015 - Israel/France - 153 minutes - color, DCP - in Hebrew

### MAIN CAST

**Yitzhak Hiskiya** Head of the Commission
**Pini Mittelman** Commission Member
**Michael Warshaviak** Commission Member
**Einat Weizman** Commission Lawyer (Woman)
**Yogev Yefet** Rabin's Assassin
**Tomer Sisley** Rabin's Driver
**Ronen Keinan** Commission Lawyer (Man)
**Tomer Russo** Hospital Director
**Uri Gottlieb Attorney** General
**Ruti Asarsai** Police Spokewoman
**Dalia Shimko** Psychiatrist
**Gdalya Besser** Police Officer
**Odelia More** Teacher
**Eldad Prywes** Rabin's Bodyguard
**Shalom Shmuelov** Intelligence Officer
**Mali Levi** Journalist (Woman)
**Liron Levo** Soldier
**Yona Rosenkier Rally** Participant
**Yael Abecassis** Interviewer
and **Shimon Peres**

### MAIN CREW

Directed by **Amos Gitai**
Screenplay by **Amos Gitai**, **Marie-José Sanselme**
Cinematography **Eric Gautier**
Casting **Ilan Moscovitch**
Editor **Yuval Orr**, **Tahel Sofer**, **Isabelle Ingold**
Production design **Miguel Merkin**
Sound design **Alex Claude**
Music **Amit Poznansky**
Sound **Nir Alon**
Costumes **Dany Bar Shay**
Hair & make-up **Ziv Katanov**
Line producers **Gadi Levy**, **Shuki Friedman**, **Benoît Quainon**
Research **Rivka Markovitzky Gitai**

produced by **Cyril Colbeau-Justin** & **Jean Baptiste DuPont**, **Sylvie Pialat**, **Laurent Truchot**, **Michael Tapuach**, **Francesco Di Silvio**, **Amos Gitai** in association with **CINEFEEL PROD/INDIE SALES COMPANY/ORANGE STUDIO/UNITED KING FILMS** with the participation of **CANAL+/FRANCE TELEVISIONS/AIDE AUX CINEMAS DU MONDE - CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINEMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMEE - MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES ETRANGERES - INSTITUT FRANÇAIS** with support from **THE RABINOVICH FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS, CINEMA PROJECT. THE LEON RECANETI FOUNDATION/SUPPORTED BY THE CULTURAL ADMINISTRATION ISRAEL MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORT - THE ISRAEL FILM COUNCIL** production company **LGM CINEMA/LES FILMS DU WORSO/FRANCE 2 CINEMA/ORANGE STUDIO/HAMON HAFAKOT/AGAV FILMS**

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