

A NORUZ FILMS PRODUCTION

AHMAD RAZVI
LETICIA DOLERA

MAN PUSH CART

DIRECTED BY RAMIN BAHRANI

Please contact Noruz Films: info@noruzfilms.com www.noruzfilms.com
MAN PUSH CART is Not Rated and runs 87 minutes.

CAST

Ahmad	AHMAD RAZVI
Noemi	LETICIA DOLERA
Mohammad	CHARLES DANIEL SANDOVAL
Manish	ALI REZA
Duke	FAROOQ "DUKE" MOHAMMAD
Noori	UPENDRAN K. PANICKER
Father-in-Law	ARUN LAL
Mother-in-Law	RAZIA MUJAHID
Ahmad's Son	HASSAN RAZVI
Pakistani Driver	MUSTAFA RAZVI
Altaf	ALTAF HOUSSEIN
Final Customer	BILL LEWIS

WITH

Friend at Bar	ABDELRAHMA ABDELAZIZ
Newsstand Worker	RONAK "RICKY" PATEL
Club worker	SHAANA DIYA
Ahmad's Wife	BHAVNA TOOR
Ahmad's Baby	ADRIAN QUEZADA
Atif the Stab Victim	ATIF MUHAMMAD MIRZA
Veterinarian	RN RAO
Push Cart Garage Owner	ISSAM ABDELKADER
Guys in Karaoke	QAMAR BUKHARI
	ASIM MUJAHID
	MOUSA KRAISH
Customers	MARIAM SOLOGASHVILI
	THOMAS RUSSO
	MARCUS BONNEE
	PAUL ROSS
	DARRYL MEADOWS
	LINDA K. ALEXIS
	DAMITA SPENCER
	KATHERINE & DAVID BOYLE
	EDWARD HARPER
Girl outside Club	ANA BRZOVA
Karaoke Waitress	KATHARYN YEW
Girls in Limo	CYNTHIA MARTIN
	SYBIL PRINCE
Falafel Customer	NICHOLAS ELLIOTT

FILMMAKERS

Written and Directed by	RAMIN BAHRANI
Producers	RAMIN BAHRANI PRADIP GHOSH BEDFORD T. BENTLEY III
Co-Producer	BRIAN BELL
Executive Producers	VINAY JAYARAM SCOTT BOOTH STEVE SABBA SANJAY MOTWANI LISA MUSKAT
Director of Photography	MICHAEL SIMMONDS
Original Music	PEYMAN YAZDANIAN
Assistant Director	NICHOLAS ELLIOTT
Editor	RAMIN BAHRANI
Sound Mixer	CHRISTOF GEBERT
Costume Designer	ELENA KOUVAROS
Assistant Camera	KATHARINA ROHRER
Gaffer	MARK KOENIG
Art Director	CHARLES DAFLER
Production Manager	NICHOLAS FRAYN
Production Assistants	ADEN HAKIMI JESSE LEHRHOFF
Still Photographer	JON HIGGINS
Interns	SYBIL PRINCE HIMKAR TAK
Noruz Films Manager	HOOMAN BAHRANI
First Assistant Editor	JOHN WU
Assistant Editors	CHRISTINA KELLY BENJAMIN STARK
Titles	DAVID FRISCO
Post Production Supervisor	JOHN FREUND
HD Online Editor	JOHN REHBERGER
Color Correction	MIKE MAGUIRE
VP of Video Operations, DuArt	JOE MONGE
DuArt Account Executive	MATT LUXENBERG
Sound Supervisor/Re-recording Mixer	TOM EFINGER
Sound Designer	ABIGAIL SAVAGE
Music Supervisor	SANDRA TRUJILLO
Assistant Sound Editor	JOHN MOROS
Foley Artist	BRIAN VANCHO
Additional Foley Editor	DAVID CRABB
ADR Editor	NICHOLAS SCHENCK
Audio Assistant	GREG BITTAR
Audio Post Facility	DIG IT AUDIO, INC.
Additional Original Music	DUAL

MAN PUSH CART

The life of a former Pakistani rock star who now sells coffee and donuts from his push cart on the streets of Manhattan.

* * *

MAN PUSH CART tells the story of Ahmad (Ahmad Razvi) a former Pakistani rock singer who ekes out a living selling coffee and donuts to morning commuters from his push cart in Midtown Manhattan. Ahmad supplements his income by selling bootleg porn DVDs, carefully saving his money to afford a place where he might be able to live with his estranged young son.

It is a harsh, often humiliating life, but Ahmad carries on with a stoic dignity and sensitivity, seemingly determined to find his way. Then the dull routine of his life is brightened by two developments: the arrival of a young Spanish woman (Leticia Dolera) working down the street in a newspaper kiosk; and an offer of assistance from a wealthy fellow Pakistani (Charles Daniel Sandoval), who remembers Ahmad's former life as a rock star.

While Ahmad strives to pursue these two new possibilities at a better life, the film returns regularly to the act of him setting up his cart in the early morning darkness: his preparations for opening, the other immigrants who prepare the city in middle of the night, his exchanges with his customers as they buy coffee, tea and bagels from him. This gives **MAN PUSH CART** a deliberate rhythm as it explores the complex and hidden depths of the character, who we learn is desperately hanging on to his small dreams in the midst of grief and despair.

The denouement of the film is utterly heartrending, yet inevitable. Ahmad's momentary glimpse of an escape from a circumscribed world closes down again and he has to pick himself up and focus on the same things he started with.

Beautifully observed, **MAN PUSH CART** is a subtle and technically accomplished film, wholly original in subject, location and characters. It is a haunting and insightful feature that gives a revealing picture of a rarely depicted community in the Big Apple and is highlighted by strong central performances and stunning photography.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

“Ahmad works with a quiet dignity and humility to survive. This is the fate of countless workers in cities around the world.”

-- Ramin Bahrani

In January 2002 Ramin Bahrani began working on **MAN PUSH CART**, which evolved over two years of research with push cart vendors of New York. The idea for the film, inspired in part by the true story of Ahmad Razvi (a former push cart vendor), was shaped with Bahrani's interest in Albert Camus and Persian poetry.

“Ahmad dragging that cart on New York's streets is why we made the film,” says Bahrani. “That evocative image, which is so real, seems to me to be what life is about.”

Together with his team, Bahrani sought out to bring new characters, locations and story to the often-filmed city of New York.

“I'm interested in whatever we don't see in cinema” says Bahrani. “For me, the story must come from reality, a sense of location and character that is rooted in today's society, the way American films were in the 60s and 70s or current East Asian and Middle Eastern cinema is today.”

MAN PUSH CART is set on the streets of New York, and focuses mainly on the South Asian immigrant workers that populate the city. Bahrani has lived on and off between Manhattan and Brooklyn for nearly a decade. He has witnessed many changes in the city, especially since 9/11, and says that living overseas for three years after college helped him see America with fresh eyes.

He finds it “unfortunate” when New York City is used as a backdrop in films, but never actually incorporated into the stories. “There are such amazing films like Raoul Walsh's “Regeneration” and of course “Taxi Driver” [Martin Scorsese], where New York City is a character that impacts the people living in it. In NYC you will always see something new. So why keep making the same movie again and again?”

In fact, searching for location is how Bahrani first met Ahmad Razvi, the star of the film, who had actually worked as a push cart vendor for one year. After one year of talking with Razvi about his life and past, and seeing how and where he lived, Bahrani revealed to Razvi that he had written the main part based on his life and asked him if he would like to play the role. “I had a feeling he might ask me that. I was pretty excited and said, yes!” says Razvi.

Bahrani explains, “I know so many push cart vendors in New York. I have been to their homes, met their families, had meals together. One was a journalist, the other an engineer, one had worked in TV in Afghanistan. Some had wives, others had several girlfriends. There is more to them than just selling us coffee and donuts. And everyone who looks like them, or like me or Ahmad in a post 9/11 world are not terrorists.”

Simmonds is quick to add, “I knew Ahmad walking with that gas tank might be a problem, but not as bad as it was.” He explains that on six occasions passers-by called Razvi a terrorist or accused him of “funding a Bin Laden training camp! We were even forced out of one location it became such a problem,” says Simmonds. Nicholas Elliott adds, “I remember how upset it made Leticia [Dolera]. She was surprised something like that would happen.”

“The character of Ahmad is not fazed by such things,” says Bahrani. “Despite the global politics surrounding us today, Ahmad picks himself up day after day, gets back in his cart, and works with a quiet dignity and humility to survive. This is the fate of countless workers in cities around the world.”

From early on Bahrani and Simmonds decided to reveal Ahmad’s character very slowly. “These workers, we see them everyday, but we don’t really see them,” says Bahrani. “So Simmonds and I decided to show only Ahmad’s hands, part of his face or his back early in the film.” Simmonds adds, “We wanted to know how long we could go before revealing Ahmad in what was already such a minimal film. It was a risk for both of us, but Ramin and I agreed from day one to risk as much as possible. We wanted the film to reveal itself as life does.”

* * *

“The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart.”
-- Albert Camus

Bahrani often cites Albert Camus’ important work, “Myth of Sisyphus,” as an inspiration. Bahrani explains, “Camus has taken that myth, of a man whose eternal fate is to push a rock up a hill only to have it roll back down again, and used it to encapsulate his philosophy of the absurdity of life. The image of a lone man, a middle-eastern man in a post 9/11 New York, dragging that cart along the streets, seemed to be a modern day version of that myth.”

“Camus says that, ‘The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart.’ And he also writes in the last sentences of his book that, ‘he leaves Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain, where one always finds one’s burden again. But that one must imagine Sisyphus happy.’ This vision of the world always seemed to make sense to me. I have never been able to accept false hope. But I do not see life as dark, or despairing. We are all trapped by our fate *and* our own limitations. I am still trying to accept my fate, yet struggle to ‘reach the heights’ at the same time. And in struggling to make this film I have learned how to be hopeful nevertheless.”

* * *

“Ramin would yell at me, ‘Stop acting cool! This is not a Bollywood film!’ He always wanted me to do less, to be still...”
-- Ahmad Razvi

Bahrani explains the way he casts actors by saying, “I try and find the most interesting people and build the character around them. If they resemble what I have written, so much the better. If not, then I change the character to better match the person. Above all it must be honest.”

Razvi adds: “He showed me a draft of the script a few months before shooting, but never again. We talked about it for a couple years, but he refused to show me the final script. In fact, other than Elliott, nobody was allowed to have a script on set.”

Razvi laughs, “Sometimes Ramin would yell at me, ‘Stop acting cool! This is not a Bollywood film!’ He always wanted me to do less, to be still.”

In fact Razvi did more than just star in the film. He also helped find extras, load and unload the truck, secure locations, vehicles, arrange for food in his neighborhood. “I knew I needed Ahmad’s help with those things,” says Bahrani. “But really I didn’t want him to have a spare moment to think about his role. I gave him as much physical work as possible. I wanted him to look more and more beaten as shooting progressed.”

“I slept about two hours a night,” says Razvi. “Ramin will tell you, because he made me sleep on his sofa the entire shoot! He wouldn’t let me go home.”

Working with trained actors was a new experience for the director, who had made all his shorts and his first feature with non-professional actors. “I really want to begin working with trained actors, so I mixed it up with this film. I found it to be a great pleasure and a challenge,” says Bahrani.

Leticia Dolera, who was cast in the part of Noemi, is a rising star in Spain. She came to prominence with her co-starring role in “Imagining Argentina” with Antonio Banderas and Emma Thompson, and stars in the hit new comedy, “Semen: A Love Story,” which opened in Spain in July 2005.

Bahrani did an extensive search before he found Leticia Dolera to play the role. “I was lucky to find her,” says Bahrani. “She really adds a warmth to the film, and gave such a natural performance.”

* * *

“The movie is about people working inside boxes, so we shot with a fairly tight frame.”

- Michael Simmonds.

“With **MAN PUSH CART**, we were trying to avoid relying too heavily on story and dramatic clichés,” says Bahrani. “Those elements can be useful, but for this film they seemed less important. I wanted to use Ahmad’s character, his face, his actions, and the specifics of his daily routine to create the feeling of the film, instead of back story, or love story.”

“I love dramatic story telling in films, but sometimes poetry can be good too,” says Bahrani. “When I see films by Robert Flaherty or Abbas Kiarostami, they make me look at my everyday surroundings in a different way. I think that is something very important and part of the job of poetry.”

A big part of accomplishing this task is the look and sounds of **MAN PUSH CART**. The film’s unique and absorbing look developed from Bahrani’s collaboration with cinematographer Michael Simmonds. “Ramin and I agreed that we had no interest in shooting New York as a tourist. We live it, we are a part of the city,” says Simmonds.

“I remember a couple weeks before shooting, Ramin and I went to see “Pickpocket” [Robert Bresson] at Anthology Film Archives. I know it is one of Ramin’s favorite films. That really informed how we shot Ahmad’s apartment. He talked a lot about Hou Hsiao Hsien; then together we looked at “Kes” [Ken Loach], “Killing of a Chinese Bookie” [John Cassavetes], and some stuff by Alan Clarke. The lighting in those films has always struck me as so real. Obviously we were very interested in the night scenes, and the use of available light. I wanted to capture what night really looks like to a naked eye, rather than a ‘lit’ nighttime scene.”

“The movie is about people working inside boxes, so we shot with a fairly tight frame,” says Simmonds. “We wanted Ahmad to feel trapped in the frame, like he is in the pushcart.” “Our camera is very objective,” Bahrani adds. “There aren’t that many POV shots, even though it feels like the entire film is from Ahmad’s perspective. Really the camera is indifferent, like life.”

* * *

“I look at people, especially those who were once “invisible” to me, differently.”
- Lisa Muskat

Though it is used sparingly, music is an important part of **MAN PUSH CART**. After production wrapped, Bahrani was quick to call Peyman Yazdanian, Iran’s leading film composer. Bahrani and Yazdanian first collaborated on Ramin’s debut, “Strangers,” which he made in Iran in 2000. Yazdanian has also worked with master Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami.

“Peyman’s music doesn’t force you to feel one way or another,” says Bahrani. “His music manages to be both sad and hopeful. It makes you think, and fills you with a sense of nostalgia which I find to be a very tragic emotion. His score is open to interpretation, which is what I like in music and in film.”

“Most folks I know who start out in independent film have this ideal notion that they will change the world- or at least some aspect of it,” says Muskat. “I know that since working on **MAN PUSH CART**, when I walk the streets of New York, my senses are heightened, my attention to detail and the people around me is greater. I look at people, especially those who were once “invisible” to me, differently.”

ABOUT THE CAST

Ahmad Razvi (Ahmad) - Over the last decade, Ahmad Razvi has been involved with a number of businesses in Brooklyn including a construction company, a Pakistani restaurant, and a pastry shop. After the events of September 11, 2001, Ahmad co-founded **COPO**— *Council of Pakistan Organization*. Based in his Midwood Brooklyn community, **COPO** has already taught tens of thousands of South East Asian immigrants ESL and basic computer courses as well as provided them with pro bono legal services and counseling. In 2002, Razvi initiated a youth basketball program for young adults of all races, religions, and ethnicities. But before all this, Ahmad worked as a push cart vendor on the streets of New York. “Man Push Cart” is his acting debut. He also features prominently in Bahrani’s new film shooting this summer.

Leticia Dolera (Noemi) – Born in Barcelona, Spain, Leticia Dolera is one of the most promising stars in the Spanish film panorama. After training in several acting academies, she has gone on to appear in many films and television serials. Her professional career combines Spanish box office successes such as “The Other Side of the Bed” (Emilio Martinez Lazaro, 2002) as well as international productions like “The Emperor’s Wife” (Julien Vrebos, 2003) and “Imagining Argentina” (Christopher Hampton, 2003) in which she worked alongside Antonio Banderas and Emma Thompson. This also marked her first appearance in the Venice Film Festival. This year she was seen in the hit Spanish comedy, “Semen, a Love Story” (I.Paris & D. Fejerman, 2005).

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Ramin Bahrani (Writer/Director/Producer) - Ramin Bahrani was born in North Carolina to Iranian parents. After receiving his BA from Columbia University in New York City, Bahrani moved to Iran for three years and made his student thesis film, "Strangers" (2000). He then spent some time in Paris before returning to the states to begin work on his first feature film, "Man Push Cart." Bahrani has made several short films, and has received various awards, grants and fellowships for his films and screenplays. He is currently shooting his second film in NYC. Bahrani is also an avid photographer. His new film shoots the summer of 2006 in Queens.

Michael Simmonds (Director of Photography) - Michael Simmonds studied cinematography at The School of Visual Arts in NYC where he received his BFA. Simmonds has shot many features and short films. Most notable is *Man Push Cart* (2005) with Ramin Bahrani. He also collaborated with world-renowned filmmaker, Amir Naderi on *Marathon* (2002) and *Sound Barrier* (2005). Simmonds' photography has been highly praised by numerous publications. Since *Man Push Cart*, Simmonds shot a Discovery Channel documentary with director Christopher Quinn (winner of 2006 Sundance documentary grand prize) and also a new comedy starring Sean Williams Scott (*American Pie*) and Gretchen Moll (*The Notorious Bettie Page*). He also plays banjo and guitar, and is an avid surfer. Currently he is shooting Bahrani's new film.

Lisa Muskat (Executive Producer) - Lisa is a New York-based independent film producer whose credits include, David Gordon Green's debut film, "George Washington" (Cowboy Pictures 2000). The film screened at Berlin, New York, and Toronto, among others. It received the New York Film Critics' Prize for Best Debut Feature, and was named one of the best films of the year by The New York Times, Time Magazine, and Roger Ebert, among others. "All the Real Girls" (Sony Pictures Classics), directed by David Gordon Green, which Lisa produced with Jean Doumanian, screened at Sundance and Berlin, among others. The film received The Sundance Special Jury Prize for Emotional Truth and The Jury Prize for Performance (Patricia Clarkson). Lisa also executive produced "Crude" directed by Paxton Winters, and the documentaries "The Worlds of Mei Lnfang", by Mei-Juin Chen (Berlin FF 2000), and "The Rough South of Larry Brown" (2002), by Gary Hawkins. Lisa's latest collaboration with David Gordon Green, "Undertow" (MGM/UA) produced with Edward Pressman and Terrence Malick, stars Josh Lucas, Dermot Mulroney and Jamie Bell. Lisa is the recipient of the Sundance /Mark Silverman Producing Fellowship 2000. Currently she is producing Bahrani's new film.

Peyman Yazdanian (Original Music) - Peyman Yazdanian is a classically trained pianist and Iran's leading film composer. He has scored films for master filmmaker, Abbas Kiarostami ("The Wind Will Carry Us" Grand Jury Prize, Venice Film Festival 1999), as well as Jafar Panahi ("Crimson Gold" Un Certain Regard Jury Award, Cannes Film Festival 2003), and many others. He collaborated with Bahrani on his first film, "Strangers," 2000. Yazdanian has performed piano concerts in Tehran and across Europe. He is currently composing two European films.

Nicholas Elliott (Assistant Director) - Currently based in NYC, Nicholas Elliott is a graduate of Bennington College. Following his studies in film and theater, he spent six years living in Paris where he wrote and directed two short films, “Lost Man” and “Sue’s Last Ride”, which screened in Rotterdam and Amiens, among others. He also appeared as an actor in “Shadow of a Vampire”, and produced concert visuals for the rock band Placebo. His most recent project, “shqurx”, a performance piece which he wrote and was the sole actor in, premiered at the Odense International Theater Festival in Denmark in 2003. He is currently preparing both a short film and a play that will premiere in Luxembourg in spring 2006. He also records music, sings and tours in his band, Turkish Love Circus. Currently he is AD on Bahrani’s new film.

MUSIC

“Down on the Quay”
Courtesy of Clare Fader and the Vaudevillians
Lyrics and Melodies by Clare Fader
Arranged by Damon Carmona

“Aadat”
Courtesy of Atif Aslam
Lyrics and Music by Atif Aslam

“Slow me Down”
Courtesy of sug[r]cane
Melodies and Arrangement by sug[r]cane

“Dil Nachde”
Courtesy of Signia
Lyrics by Jushar Singh Binning
Music by Sanjay Seran

“Daroo”
Courtesy of Movibox/Brian Engel Publishing
Lyrics by Dev Raj

SELECT FESTIVALS & AWARDS

- * World Premiere – 62nd Venice Film Festival *
- * FIPRESCI International Critics Award at 49th London Film Festival *
- * Best Actor at 46th Thessaloniki International Film Festival *
- * Audience Award at 46th Thessaloniki International Film Festival *
- * Special Mention of Jury at 54th International Filmfestival Mannheim-Heidelberg *
- * Official Selection – Sundance Film Festival 2006 *
- * Official Selection – New Directors / New Films Festival 2006 *
- * Special Jury Prize Ahmad Razvi’s Seattle International Film festival 2006 *
- * First Film Award International Film Festival of Setúbal Portugal 2006 *

THEATRICAL SALES TO DATE

USA, France, UK, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg

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Noruz Films



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No animals were harmed in the making of this film.

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