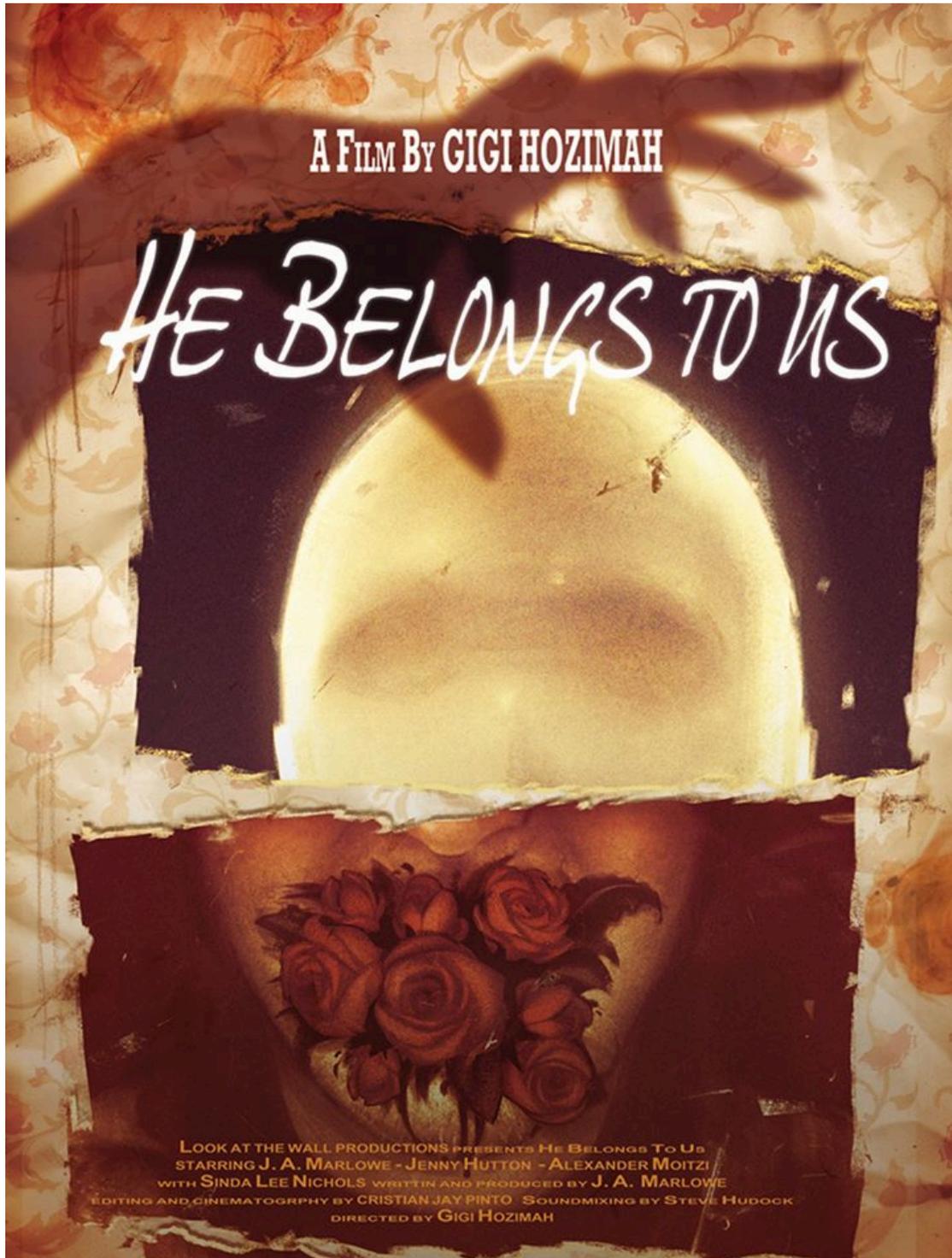


Look At The Wall Productions Presents:

He Belongs To Us

Press Kit



A FILM BY GIGI HOZIMAH

HE BELONGS TO US

LOOK AT THE WALL PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS *HE BELONGS TO US*
STARRING J. A. MARLOWE - JENNY HUTTON - ALEXANDER MOITZI
WITH SINDA LEE NICHOLS WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY J. A. MARLOWE
EDITING AND CINEMATOGRAPHY BY CRISTIAN JAY PINTO SOUND MIXING BY STEVE HUDOCK
DIRECTED BY GIGI HOZIMAH

Director – Gigi Hozimah
Scriptwriter/Producer/Lead Actor – J.A. Marlowe

Country of Origin – Saudi/US co-production

Language – English

Running Time – 1:37

Rating – To Be Classified

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He Belongs To Us is a psychological art-horror film influenced by Roman Polanski's Apartment Trilogy (Repulsion, Rosemary's Baby, The Tenant) and Ingmar Bergman's Hour of the Wolf.

Synopsis:

One Line – Remy must find the key to defining the blur between the real and spiritual worlds.

He Belongs To Us is a psychological horror drama that tells of Remy – a lonely and neglected New Yorker who is haunted by evil spirits. Coming to terms with both the death of his mother and depression, Remy's vivid nightmares begin to take a sinister hold of his very existence.

Director's Statement: Gigi Hozimah

The journey to make this film was tumultuous and devastating at times. We had very limited resources and little support. Those closest to me helped me to complete this film. The production itself took about two years. We relied on imagination and determination. I consider myself very lucky to have finished *He Belongs To Us* and hope that people enjoy it.

He Belongs To Us is a story about a young man that is alone in a world full of confusion and hauntings. Remy is haunted by his childhood neglect. We sometimes overlook the effects of childhood, especially regarding our relationships with our mothers. Even as adults, it is like a thinly veiled door in our minds. Remy's emotions form evil hauntings in his mind and push him from reality. We meet Remy while he is grieving and never know him before this period. I relate to him in some level. I think a lot of people will do as loneliness is a deep-rooted nature on human but somehow we shy of admitting it. The film is very personal to me I wanted the audience to think of Remy as a metaphor of the uncertain times we living in.

As an immigrant, there is a certain longing for family that nestles deep inside you and when you're cut off from your family it affects you. I haven't seen any of my family for 18 years. My relationship with them is through Skype. Not having closure from your loved ones is very complex and adds to that sense of belonging. For Remy to get this closure, he had to pay a price.

This is my first film, but I'm sure that this film will remain very close to me in years to come. With all the limited resources and numerous obstacles, I was still able to make this film true to my vision. I'm thankful to my cast and crew that were able to help make *He Belongs To Us* happen.

My hope is that when the audience sees this film is that they feel that something is alive in it and that they see a glimpse of things to come from me.

Gigi Hozimah – The Director

He Belongs To Us is the first feature film directed by Gigi Hozimah. Gigi was born in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Her interest of film was sparked when she moved to England as a young adult. She received an MA in Filmmaking from Kingston University where she made several short films. Currently resides in New York. Loves surrealism and the autumn season. Goes to sleep every night watching the Twilight Zone. She always asks herself what would Polanski do?

J.A. Marlowe – (Scriptwriter, Producer & Remy)

Forward thinking and controversially minded, his sense of humor keeps him grounded amidst the chaos. As a British/American, James grew up in England where he received a BA in Film Studies. Loves the works of Ed Brubaker and Grant Morrison. Lives in New York and dreams of moving to Galway.

F and Qs

- **How did *He Belongs To Us* come to be?**

Gigi: The story of how *He Belongs To Us* came to be is interesting. I came up with the idea back in 2010 and the story has changed so much. The supernatural experience that is the root of the story remains the same, however the story itself, the drama, has changed completely. My own experiences and travels have impacted the film in ways that I could not predict when we first set out to make it. The first draft was written in London and was set in England. The producer, J.A. Marlowe and I moved to Louisiana for a very brief period where we thought we would film it there. The script was rewritten, but we ran into so many problems in Louisiana that we packed up and moved to New York.

- **Why did you want to make *He Belongs To Us*?**

Gigi: I love surrealist horror and I wanted to tell a story that was very personal to me. I have always been interested in familial relationships in films and explored this in my shorts, so in a way *He Belongs To Us* builds from my earlier work and seemed a natural stepping-stone.

- **The most difficult part of making *He Belongs To Us*?**

Not having money. I made this with very limited resources and support. Filming was easy compared to post-production. Working a full time job and coming home to work on the sound design or to make a press kit was testing. Finding the strength and endurance to complete the film was a lovely experience. I feel like I've lost years of my life, so that I can be on a path to be a career filmmaker.

- **What are you hoping for the audience to feel after the film?**

Gigi: I hope that when people see *He Belongs To Us* that they feel touched and uneasy. If they can walk away and discuss the film for about ten minutes, then that's good for me.

- **Gigi Hozimah on the character of Remy:**

Remy is the victim of loneliness, he lacks familial connections and he lives in New York. The location is integral to the script, because New York is not necessarily a city of landmarks and memories caught on Instagram, it can be a very lonely place. I know people that do not have strong familial connections and there is something very different about a person who did not have a strong relationship with either their mother or father. It is worsened if they had siblings.

- **J.A. Marlowe on the production and writing of *He Belongs To Us*:**

It was a bloody nightmare. We had numerous pre-production difficulties and *He Belongs To Us* is a testament to our determination. The fact that despite our problems we made the film on schedule makes me very proud. We had no support and I was told constantly that the film would never be finished. *He Belongs To Us* was a beautiful experience, because we had no money and all we had was drive. That said, I do have some gray hairs on my head and I've decided not dye them. They'll be a reminder of the journey. I imagine Jim Jarmusch does the same.

Writing it was a different story. I know Gigi and I'm close to her to be able to understand her vision. I've watched her grow as a director from when she was making shorts to where she is now, so I'm probably the closest to knowing what's going on in her mind. All I did was put her thoughts on paper.

- **J.A. Marlowe on acting in *He Belongs To Us*:**

This was my first time acting. As a writer, I never thought about acting. It was Gigi's idea. She saw something in me and I owe my performance to her. Then I listened to Gigi and we went from there.

Remy is a lonely and depressed character with familial problems. I understand Remy and his familial issues. He's alone in a big city, but even if you take away the big city and put him in a village, he'd still be

alone. I've been there. The loneliness is a trap and when you've got that tunnel vision, it feels like game over. Loneliness and depression are a deadly combination as seen in *He Belongs To Us*.

I'm not traditionally trained and I have no school. I looked to actors that I loved and studied them. I'm sure that comes across. That said, I loved it.

- **Gigi Hozimah on making her debut feature film and what you learned along the way:**

The difficulty of making this production started in the very beginning, because *He Belongs To Us* is not about back home in the Middle East, because it is not in Arabic, because it is not about women, therefore no one will want to see it. Thus, I had no support, which made this a film of resources and then everyone said it would never be made. From the beginning, there was an expectation of what type of film I should make, because I am a woman from Saudi Arabia, but I am not defined by gender or nationality. I want to be a filmmaker and therefore I want to tell stories that interest me and that I have full creative control over.

- **Why didn't you choose to make a film that relates to Saudi Arabia and its culture?**

Gigi: I've been asked this a lot. It is what is expected of me. I'm a woman. I'm from Saudi Arabia. People put these two together and expect something else from me. I've been told many times that since I wasn't making a film about women in Saudi Arabia that no one would want to watch it. I guess I'll have to wait and see if that's true! I believe filmmakers should not be dictated to make films about where they were born, what their culture is, or what they believe in. For me, the most important thing is my interest in the story and the artistic value behind the film. If I make a film one day that relates to Saudi Arabia, it will be because I choose to, not because it is what is expected of me. True filmmakers should not compromise.