

THE NILE HILTON INCIDENT

Morocco, Denmark (2017) 111 minutes

Director: Tarik Saleh

Cast: Noredin (Fares Fares); Salwa (Mari Malek)



Screening 16 January 2019 at Swindon Arts Centre

Synopsis

With a backdrop of protest and revolution, as the Arab Spring reaches Cairo, a young singer is murdered in a luxury room of the Nile Hilton Hotel. Noredin (Fares Fares), a routinely corrupt policeman, is assigned to the case. As his investigations unfold he begins to uncover a web of intrigue which implicate the rich and powerful elite of Mubarak's Egypt.

Reviews



Writer-director Tarik Saleh's engaging, textured Cairo crime drama takes place during the build-up to 2011's Egyptian revolution, drawing parallels between the city's rising tensions and his noirish antihero's crumbling personal prospects. Though the film's powerful police officers and political officials have supposed "legislative immunity", it turns out that "no one is immune to scandal". Noredin (Fares Fares) is a craggy, handsome, chain-smoking detective who is called on to investigate the gruesome murder of pop star (and politician's mistress) Lalena, whose body has been found, throat cut, in the titular Nile Hilton hotel. The only witness to the crime is a Sudanese maid named Salwa (Mari Malek). With his prominent, avian nose and inquisitive eyes, Fares is a compelling screen presence, while Saleh's attention to details of life in a country on the brink of change give things a sense of grimy perspicuity.

Simran Hans, The Observer

Proof that classical genres are always ready to be retrofitted for the modern age, *The Nile Hilton Incident* transplants the dark, cynical heart of film noir to the streets of Cairo in the days leading up to the 2011 revolution that would eventually oust President Hosni Mubarak. Swedish writer-director Tarik Saleh's crime drama about a cop investigating the murder of a beautiful singer is a paranoid portrait of individual and systemic corruption that leaves none of its characters unscarred. Blending procedural thrills with politicized commentary, this gripping import (based, in part, on a real-life 2008 case) should attract sizable domestic interest following its premiere at this year's Sundance Film Festival.....

..... By the time it arrives at its showdown amid Cairo's burgeoning uprising, *The Nile Hilton Incident* has indulged in so many grim twists that it's hard not to read it, and its downbeat ending, as a stinging commentary on the venality of the Mubarak era, as well as the futility of the forthcoming revolution to hold the nation's actual villains accountable. Like the finest noir, what springs forth from Saleh's film is the dreary belief that the bad sleep well while the rest are left to suffer in the streets.

Nick Schager, Variety

Film Facts

- Winner of best film at the 2018 Swedish Guldbagge awards.
- *The Nile Hilton Incident* was inspired by the true story of singer Suzanne Tamim's murder by an Egyptian businessman in 2008.
- The director shot the film in Casablanca, Morocco, after Egyptian State Security stopped filming in Cairo.

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