



AN ENGLISH DRAMA PRODUCTION BY THE G.C. SCHOOL OF CAREERS

AN OLD MAN AND A SEA

BY MARIA CHRYSANTHOU

*"For if no one is found to tell your story,
it is as if you have never lived it."*



The GCS Play-Act Club would like to extend
its warmest welcome to its audience.

For the enjoyment of others around you,
please refrain from talking and/or making
other disruptive noises during the performance.
Please remember to switch off all mobile phones.

The show's duration is 1 hour and 10 minutes
approximately.

There will be no interval.

THANK YOU AND ENJOY THE SHOW!



DEDICATION

This play is dedicated to all those “numbers” who are names and whose lives did and do matter, but especially dedicated to Mohammad Ramiz Bakr, 11, Ahed Atef Bakr, 10, Zakariya Ahed Bakr, 10, and Ismail Mahmoud Bakr, 9, killed by an armed Israeli drone while playing ball on Gaza beach in June 2014.

A WORD FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT: MARIA CHRYSANTHOU

Inspired by Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, this play tells the story of an old fisherman also dreaming of catching a big fish. He sits alone on a shore, a strip of land not so far away from where we live, and tells his story, of what his land was and what it has become. And as he does, the stories of other people living on this forgotten strip of land come alive. They are people who live just across the sea from us, but we act as if we don't see them; people who gaze at a sea promising and inviting them to freedom and hope, only to act as a barrier which they can only cross risking their life.

They are,
a young fisherman with "small dreams" shot dead by frigates while trying to fish;
a Jewish woman, who empathises with pain because she has lived it;
a young man who wants to escape death and live his big dreams and flees "illegally";
a mother who tries to save her children from war and sees them drowning;
a man who is seeking a better future for his family but drowns;
a wife who has no news on whether her husband made it to the better life he promised them;
two little girls dreaming of the sea they have never seen, even if it is only a few kilometres away, because of the huge wall that surrounds them.

Unlike Santiago, the old fisherman in this story has no name just like none of the other characters of the play because they represent the generations of victims of war and refugees of people "cursed" to remain without faces and names and to remain just "numbers" only to be forgotten as if they have never been, unless someone is found to tell their story.

This is why I decided to write this play, based on true stories of people who once lived in the land across our shore.

A tribute by Israeli artist Amir Schiby to the four Palestinian children killed on a Gaza beach by an Israeli air strike while playing football.



WITNESS TO A SHELLING: FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF DEADLY STRIKE ON GAZA PORT

The first projectile hit the sea wall of Gaza City's little harbour just after four o'clock. As the smoke from the explosion thinned, four figures could be seen running, ragged silhouettes, legs pumping furiously along the wall. Even from a distance of 200 metres, it was obvious that three of them were children.

Jumping off the harbour wall, they turned onto the beach, attempting to cross the short distance to the safety of the Al-Deira hotel, a base for many of the journalists covering the Gaza conflict.

They waved and shouted at the watching journalists as they passed a little collection of brightly coloured beach tents used by bathers in peacetime.

It was there that the second shell hit the beach; those firing apparently adjusting their fire to target the fleeing survivors. As it exploded, journalists standing by the terrace wall shouted: “They are only children.”

(By Peter Beaumont, *The Guardian*, 16 Jul 2014)

ISRAEL EXONERATES ITSELF OVER GAZA BEACH KILLINGS OF FOUR CHILDREN

Israeli investigation says the missile attack that killed boys aged between nine and 11 was a ‘tragic accident’ in findings contradictory to journalists’ reports from the scene. Although the attack was witnessed by a Guardian reporter, no attempt was made by the Israeli military investigators to seek a statement.

(By Peter Beaumont, *The Guardian*, 12 Jun 2015)



CAST

THE OLD MAN

Sophia Gavrielidou, Form 3

In Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, the old fisherman has a name, he is called Santiago, and his story is perhaps one of the most well-known world-wide. This novel earned Hemingway the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, while it was the only work explicitly mentioned when he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. This is how the anonymous fisherman of this story was inspired: "For no one would have known Santiago's story, had it not been for the writer who wrote it. For if no one is found to tell your story, it is as if you have never lived it."



THE YOUNG FISHERMAN

Leonidas Pafitis, Form 3

Based on the story of Tawfiq Abu Riala, 32-year-old fisherman from Gaza, who was shot dead by Israeli naval forces in March 2015 because, as they claimed, he "deviated from the designated fishing zone" imposed by the Israeli state which limits the fishing area to 6 nautical miles.

THE JEWISH WOMAN

Kyriaki Ierodiaconou, Form 5

Based on Hedy Epstein, a German Jew holocaust survivor saved by Kindertransport, that evacuated approximately ten thousand Jewish children from Nazi occupied countries. Both her parents perished in the Auschwitz concentration camp. She dedicated her life to human rights and was an active member of the Free Gaza Movement.



THE YOUNG MAN

Stavros Philippides, Form 4

Based on the life of Mohammed Rujailah, a 19-year old from Gaza who, together with Spanish director Alberto Acer, made the documentary *To shoot an Elephant*, an eye witness account of the December, 2008 Operation Cast Lead attack on Gaza. The documentary is an eye-witness account shot from inside an ambulance.

THE MOTHER

Emily Ioannou, Form 4

Based on stories of surviving mothers who lost their children trying to flee to safety. According to UNICEF Global Lead on Migration and Displacement, Verena Knaus: “The number of children who have lost their lives while attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe has doubled in the first half of this year (2023) compared to the same period last year...” and it “is equivalent to about 11 children dying each week – far beyond what we hear in news headlines...”



THE MAN AND WIFE

Fotini Achilleos, Form 4 &
Olga Salidou, Form 5

Based on the stories of men who have to flee their countries to seek a better life for their families and their women left behind. According to ILO figures, in 2018 “in Gaza, almost every second a

worker is unemployed and almost two thirds of women workers are jobless. The blockade (imposed since 2005) has paralyzed much of the economic activity, and per capita incomes have fallen behind the levels of the early 1990s”.

THE GIRLS

Annie Iacovidou, Form 3 &
Marilia Charalambous, Form 2

Based on stories of West Bank children surrounded by a concrete 8-metre tall wall, built by Israel in 2002 and forbidding communication between the West Bank and Gaza, as well as access to the sea. Works of famous elusive British street artist Banksy can be seen on the wall, which according to him “essentially turns Palestine into the world’s largest open prison.”



SINGER

Marcia Mourouzidou, Form 4

The song by Dire Straits: “Brothers in Arms” deals with the senselessness of war and the powerful message it carries is that we all live in one world but end up being pawns fighting someone else’s war. The song’s touching depiction of comradery and stinging criticism of war-mongering are as relevant than ever now.

... AND CREATIVE

PLAYWRIGHT

Maria Chrysanthou

DIRECTION AND SCENOGRAPHY TEAM

Maria Chrysanthou
Francesca Pieri
Constantinos Savva

PROP MASTER

Chrysovalanto Chandriotou
Form 6

BACKSTAGE CREW

Eleni Chrysanthou, Form 5
Danae-Anna Vrachimi, Form 3
Maria-Rafaellia Kashiati, Form 3

STAGE CRAFTSMAN

Theodotos Theodotou

MAKEUP ARTISTS

Andria Athanasiou
Christiana Pieri

LIGHTS PROMPTER

Chrysovalanto Chandriotou
Form 6

VIDEOGRAPHER

Elias Stavrou
(Think Productions)

PHOTOGRAPHER

George Chrysanthou

SOUND ENGINEER

Costas Charalambous
(FX Sound Productions)

MARKETING MANAGER

Andreas Zittis

POSTER AND PROGRAMME DESIGN

Maria Demetriou

MUSIC SCORES

"Mawtini" (My Homeland)
Mohammed Flayfel
"Brothers in Arms" Dire Straits

SPECIAL THANKS

Andria Athanasiou for her
costume contributions
Andreas Narliotis
UNHCR Office in Cyprus and
Universitas Foundation for the
photo exhibition



BANKSY . . . THE PHANTOM STREET ARTIST

Banksy is a pseudonymous England-based street artist, political activist and film director whose real name and identity remain unconfirmed and the subject of speculation. He has been active since the 1990s, and his works of political and social commentary have appeared on streets, walls and bridges throughout the world. He is known for painting on the wall built by Israel to surround the Palestinian areas.

“One of the pictures shows two gleeful children with bucket and spade standing beneath a hole in the wall that opens on to a vista of a tropical paradise... Other pictures show the silhouette of a girl rising through the air clutching balloons.

The barrier, which is made of concrete walls and razor-wire fences, has been cited as illegal by the UN, which has ordered it dismantled, though Israel says the wall protects it against suicide bombers.”

(By Sam Jones, The Guardian, 5 Aug 2005)





