



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM IN PRISON

Release Date 2022

Total Running Time 60:02

Appropriate for Ages 12+ Not Rated

Press Contacts

Josh Underhill, Actor/Screening Manager josh@openheartsopenminds.org

Enie Vaisburd, Co-Director, evaisburd@pacificu.edu

Ellen Thomas, Producer ellen.s.thomas@gmail.com

Social Media

Facebook - [amidsummernightsdreaminprison](https://www.facebook.com/amidsummernightsdreaminprison)

Instagram - [@amidsummernightsdreaminprison](https://www.instagram.com/amidsummernightsdreaminprison)

Download the Trailer

<https://vimeo.com/719260812>

Festivals and Awards

WINNER – BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY, LOCAL SIGHTINGS FILM FESTIVAL, Seattle, Washington
AWARD OF RECOGNITION, IMPACT DOC AWARDS, virtual international
HONORABLE MENTION, PARIS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Paris, France
SPECIAL AWARD FOR UNVEILING STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION & RESILIENCE, LOVE & HOPE INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, September 2023, Barcelona, Spain
AUDIENCE APPRECIATION AWARD, EASTERN OREGON FILM FESTIVAL, LaGrande, Oregon
NOMINEE, BERLIN ART INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Berlin, Germany
RED ROCK FILM FESTIVAL, Cedar City, Utah
LEBANESE INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Beirut, Lebanon
MONTANA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Missoula, Montana
SOCIAL JUSTICE FILM FESTIVAL, Seattle, Washington
KLAMATH FALLS FILM FESTIVAL, Klamath Falls, Oregon
SEBASTOPOL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, Sebastopol, California
SOCIALLY RELEVANT FILM FESTIVAL, New York, New York
SANTA FE FILM FESTIVAL, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Log Line

Inside the walls of Oregon's Two Rivers Correctional Institution, adults in custody stage Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and find love, hope, and the beginning of transformation.

Short Synopsis

"It's almost like for three hours we weren't in prison," reflects one of the incarcerated men appearing in an Oregon prison-sponsored performance of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As the theatre-making process unfolds, participants set aside personal barriers to share stories of pain and regret, compassion and hope. With them, we experience the transformative power of theatre and the arts to challenge and heal.

Long Synopsis

Inside the locked walls of the Two Rivers Correctional Institution near Umatilla, Oregon, cell doors slide open, and a group of adults in custody begins work with visiting theater director Johnny Stallings. Over the next few months, as they cast, rehearse, and perform William Shakespeare's comedic tale of love and reconciliation, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Iraqi-born Portland experimental filmmaker Bushra Azzouz is there—among the costume fittings, meals on

plastic lunch trays, and deeply personal side conversations—applying her deft hand as a cultural interpreter and activist storyteller.

Through her watchful eye, in contrast with common societal assumptions about the incarcerated, she finds personas softening, meaningful relationships forming, and life stories being reimagined. As she did in her earlier films about ancestry, war, and pain, she takes us to the roots of our common humanity, celebrating the hopes and dreams we share.

Director Statement (Bushra Azzouz)

We tell ourselves a story about who we are, but we can transform that story. This film is about that re-imagining.

The film was shot over eight days (a series of dress rehearsals and two public performances) and generated 60 hours of footage. Every incarcerated man worked equally hard on the project. No one was minimized or eliminated in the editing.

Fertility is one theme. Life flourishes all around the prison even as the incarcerated men are unable to see the horizon from inside. It is about reconciliation. The play's characters fight and reconcile, just like people do in real life.

I made this film for the incarcerated men and their families, and for the public to know the very deep humanity of these men. Step by step, one foot in front of the other, we can all take on new roles in life.

Director Bio

BUSHRA AZZOUZ (1956-2019) was an Iraqi-born experimental documentary filmmaker and educator based in Portland, Oregon, whose films about identity, transformation, and resilience include *And Women Wove It in a Basket*, *Women of Cyprus*, and *No News*. She was the lead faculty member for the Northwest Film Center School of Film for more than two decades. She conceived the film with Johnny Stallings in 2010.

Film Team

ENIE VAISBURD (Co-director) is an award-winning experimental documentary filmmaker who is Professor of Film at Pacific University and was previously a lead faculty member for the Northwest Film Center. At Bushra's request, she led the artistic and editorial effort to edit the film to completion. She continues to shape its release in the world. <https://www.evaisb.com/>

ELLEN THOMAS (Producer) directed the Northwest Film Center School of Film and education outreach programs for emerging artists, youth and the film-curious public for more than three

decades. At Bushra's request, she led a collaborative team effort to premiere and circulate the film-to-film festivals. She continues to shape its release in the world.

JOHNNY STALLINGS (Producer) is an actor and director who taught theatre in Oregon prisons from 2006-2019. His collaboration with Bushra on the film began in 2010. As Executive Director of Open Hearts Open Minds, and later The Open Road, he helped make possible the creation of more than 60 hours of footage for the film, and the sourcing of financial contributions from more than 100 individuals.

Additional Credits

Associate Producer

Aysha Ghazoul

Directors of Photography

Richard Blakeslee

Jon Beanlands

Camera Operators

Bushra Azzouz

Tom Chamberlin

Mark Eifert

Trevor Fife

Mario Garza

Aysha Ghazoul

Vassiliki Katrivanou

Michael Poulin-Roberson

Jeffrey Richardson

Brian Yazzie

Landscape Cinematography

Bushra Azzouz

Mark Barnes

Sound Recordist

Patrick Williams

Additional Footage

Laura Dias

Grace Hankins

Zachary Harrington



Chase Hoffman
Rylee Skidmore
Abby Weinman
Miranda Wessman

Editors

Lauren Mueller
Cam Williams
Enie Vaisburd

Additional Editorial

Zsuzsanna Mangu

Original Score

by Elijah Pine

Musical Interludes

David Gilmore

Sound Design & Re-recording Mixer

Wayne Woods

Colorist

Jake Buff

Catering

Nancy Scharbach

Costumes

Nancy Scharbach
Frances Britt

Props

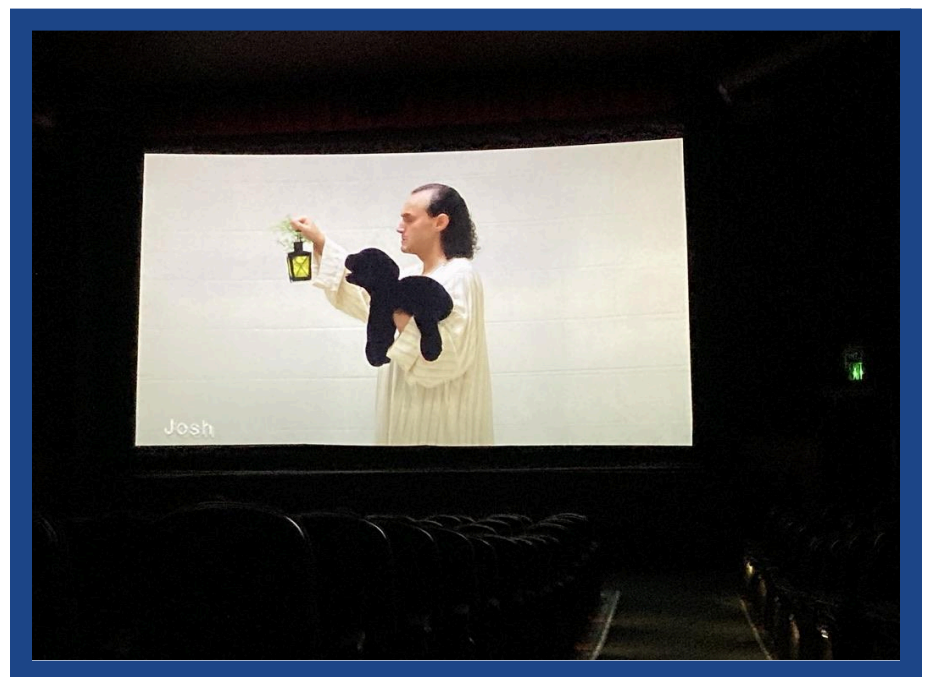
Nancy Scharbach

Poster Illustration

Rick Bartow

Original Poem

Casey Ward



Versions

Closed Caption

English

Spanish

Film Files

H264 with stereo audio

ProRes with 5.1 audio

ProRes with stereo audio

DCP at 23.98fps

DVD

Trailer Files

H264

ProRes

