



2-3-2014

The Green Prince

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Recommended Citation

Ramji, Rubina and McDavid, Jodi (2014) "The Green Prince," *Journal of Religion & Film*: Vol. 18 : Iss. 1 , Article 29.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol18/iss1/29>

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The Green Prince

Abstract

This is a film review of *The Green Prince* (2013), directed by Nadav Schirman.

Author Notes

Rubina (Ruby) Ramji is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Cape Breton University. After serving as a Chair of the Religion, Film and Visual Culture Group for the American Academy of Religion and then the steering committee, Rubina continues to serve on the Executive Committee for the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion as President and is the Film Editor of the *Journal of Religion and Film*. Her research activities focus on the areas of religion, media and identity, religion in Canada, and religion and immigration. Jodi McDavid is an instructor in Folklore and Gender & Women's Studies at Cape Breton University. She earned her BA at St. Thomas University (New Brunswick) and her MA and PhD from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Her PhD dissertation was on anticlericalism in folk and popular culture. Her current research interests include vernacular religion, the folklore and folklife of children and adolescents, and gender and women's studies.

The Green Prince

(2013)

Directed by Nadav Schirman

[World Documentary](#)

Audience Award: World Cinema: Documentary



The political and religious struggle between Israel and Palestine takes on a new vantage point when a member of the Shin Bet (Israeli secret

service) turns a seventeen year old Palestinian youth into an Israeli spy. *The Green Prince* is a documentary that provides the viewpoints of the Israeli handler, Gonen, and the young Palestinian whose father is a leader in Hamas, Mosab Yousef, and how their relationship evolves over time.

Although religious ideology plays a large part for Hamas in Palestine, Mosab is not angry at Israel for its Jewish roots, but for constantly arresting his father during his childhood. Mosab eventually buys a gun, and is caught by the Israeli secret service. Gonen convinces Mosab that Hamas is a corrupt organization and must be stopped. Mosab is tortured, sent to jail and eventually led to believe that his course in life is to help the Israelis. Mosab develops his own sense of morality to explain how he betrays his father, a deeply religious man who believes in the right of Palestinian independence.

The Green Prince delves into the psychology behind recruiting young men to spy for Israel and how “the game” is played. Gonen is very forthright about the game he plays with Mosab in turning him against his own country. Eventually Mosab comes to see himself as acting on God’s behalf, and loses his “shame” in place of “responsibility.” After ten years of spying on his father and Hamas, Mosab finds himself without a high school education, a college education, friends and family. He leaves Ramallah and goes to the United States. Eventually Mosab writes a memoir, *Son of Hamas*, on which the documentary is based. This leads to further political issues when Mosab is almost deported from the US because of his ties to Hamas. Gonen comes to the US and aids Mosab in his quest to remain in the US, and they become “family” to each other. Although it’s almost impossible to understand how a Shin Bet agent and a young Palestinian man forge such a bond, *The Green Prince* provides insights into the religious and personal struggles of two men who must deal with the tragic results that ensue from their ten year association: Mosab loses his family and homeland, and Gonen “adopts” the now grown-up man who he tortured and recruited as a young man. Both men made their decisions based on personal morals and judgments. The question remains: when is torture considered moral? --Rubina Ramji and Jodi McDavid