

BORN IN CAPTIVITY - Treatment

The filmmakers discover the reality of black Saharawis in the refugee camps in Algeria through the prism of Fetim's family. Discovering, that ironically, slavery remains an institution in this supposedly socialist society, hidden behind the word 'culture'.

The pivotal event of the film is the reunion between **Fetim** and her mother **Ambarka** after 30 years of separation. Getting to this point takes many months of negotiation with the UN. A week before the reunion **Leil**, Fetim's oldest daughter reveals that black people are still slaves in the camps pointing out that her own cousins **Matala**, Decala and Aisha are slaves. Mohamed Salem their Moor master doesn't want to liberate them and refuses to allow them to get married. Matala, Decala and Aisha don't wear chains. Their slavery is a state or condition in which they are the property of their master like real estate or livestock.

The tension within the house rises as the day of the reunion gets closer. **Deido**, the 'white' woman who took Fetim to the refugee camps 30 years earlier, starts to become very controlling and uneasy. Fetim is caught between the reality of having a black mother who looks like her and her desire to be accepted by Deido as a daughter. Fetim was born into slavery and doesn't know what freedom is; she believes she can't change the condition she was born into.

Matala goes through a different journey; he is a strong man with a lot of charisma, works in construction like most black men within the camps. He is unwilling to accept his destiny as a slave and wants to change the situation for him, his sisters and his people. He and his friends are very angry and ready to fight.

On the eve of the reunion everyone is excited and the preparations begin in earnest. The camel has to be bought and killed. Killing a camel is a great honour reserved only for a Moor. At this point the filmmakers involvement becomes a crucial turning point in the character's lives. They give Matala and his friends the chance to kill the camel. This infuriates Deido's family who try to stop it. The black Saharawis grow in confidence and begin to believe they can speak out against slavery.

The meeting between Fetim, her mother and sister opens many wounds and hidden truths. Fetim's separation had nothing to do with the Moroccan invasion. Rather, she was taken from her mother. It is common practice for children of slaves to be taken away by their master or relatives. Fetim's oldest sisters are the result of a sexual abuse by Deido's father. The masters hold the right to have sex with their slaves whenever they want. Fetim's story is just one of thousands of black Saharawis.

Its at this point that the filmmakers become unmasked. The very process of discovering the presence of slavery in the camps suddenly makes their personal safety precarious. Their hosts, the Polisario officials, become aware that they are capturing material that is politically sensitive. They detain the filmmakers and interrogate them. The UN intervenes and provides them with a safe passage out of the country.

A month later their tapes are smuggled to neighbouring Mauritania. Matala and his friends come to Nouakchott to further their fight. They meet with prominent Mauritanian

anti-slavery campaigners who encourage them to raise their voice in order to alert the world.

“My name is Matala Magluf X. I am a slave, my mother is a slave, my sisters are slaves, my entire family are slaves. I am asking the international community to help us. We don't care about the political situation anymore. We have the right to be free.”

STYLE

“**Born in Captivity**” is a character-based film shot in an observational style driven by events that build on each other like a domino effect. It's a tale of discovery that unfolds in front of the camera.

We will be confronted with our characters' lives as slaves feeling the impotence of being ignored for so long, the pain of mothers and children being torn apart and the passion in the ones who want to fight the system. We will laugh, cry, feel anger and gradually understand that slavery is more than chains. It's not just a physical condition but also a mental one.

CHARACTERS

Fetim is 33, the mother of four and a kindergarten teacher. She married another black Saharawi Baba when she was 16. (Baba currently lives in Spain). Fetim is a quiet character who invokes compassion, she is gentle and an extremely caring parent. She is intelligent but too afraid to challenge her fate as a slave. As her friend describes her, Fetim is a black woman who's had her heart painted white.

Leil is Fetim's eldest daughter; she is 15. After living in Spain for three years, she returned to the camps couple of years ago. Leil doesn't go to school and helps Fetim look after Mosia and Monina. Leil is well spoken and expresses herself freely. She struggles with her identity. Leil is the voice of Fetim, she is torn between speaking out and conforming.

Matala is 33; he is Baba's nephew. He has three sisters and lives with his parents. Matala is a reserved character who is not afraid to speak out; he is a very protective of his family and friends. Matala is in love with a slave who's master will not allow them to marry. We find him at a crossroad in his life. Through the film he discovers his power and begins to express his anger against their fate as slaves. Matala is ready to fight. Perhaps we are seeing the birth of a leader?

Deido is 65; she is the daughter of Ambarka's master. She is the mother of three with whom she lives. Her husband was killed during the war. She has the typical attitude of a white Arab. She likes to be the centre of attention and manipulates everyone around her. Deido is a fervent supporter of the Polisario and nothing makes her happier than money. She lives next to Fetim. Deido is the antagonist to Fetim and her black family.

Ambarka is 56; she is Fetim's mother. She has six children, four to her master and his brother and two with her black husband, Fetim's father. Ambarka lives in the occupied territories of Western Sahara. As a result of the invasion Ambarka now lives in her dead master's house where with Fatma her eldest daughter. Her only grandchildren are Fetim's kids. Ambarka is a victim of this society, only her eyes can express her pain.