

TIR CELF PRODUCTIONS presents in association with
ROCKHOPPER PRODUCTIONS, FIRE LILY STUDIO AND ONETRIBE TV

A PLACE CALLED WELCOME

A film about migration, kindness and belonging

DIRECTED BY
NOAH BAKOUR

Running time: 90 minutes

www.aplacecalledwelcome.com



SHORT SYNOPSIS

Grounded in his personal experience as a displaced person and shaped by her perspective as someone raised in rural Britain, the film follows their unlikely friendship, reveals uplifting stories of welcome and challenges the negative media narrative. The film invites us to stories rarely seen on screen.

LONG SYNOPSIS

26-year-old Syrian filmmaker Noah has formed an unlikely friendship with Claire, a retired teacher from rural Devon. Noah was forced to flee the war in Syria after his work documenting the conflict put not only his life, but the lives of his family, in danger. A chance meeting with Claire during a community holiday for asylum seekers brought together two people from very different worlds and united them in a shared mission.

Together, they set out to challenge the fear and division that dominate discourse around refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. Travelling through Wales, England and Scotland to film refugees and asylum seekers alongside ordinary British people and communities who have chosen to welcome them, they discover an uplifting story of courage, kindness, and connection. Through Noah's and Claire's dual perspectives, the film gains access to stories rarely seen on screen, revealing both the realities of displacement and the warmth within communities across the UK.

Filming stories of refugees, Noah reflects on his own struggles, uncovering more about why he had to leave Syria, why he ended up in the UK, and what it has meant to try to build a new home. The film opens with an animated swallow tracing its migratory route from Africa to the UK, gently transitioning into live-action storytelling. This recurring motif becomes a visual witness to Noah and Claire's exploration of migration and belonging.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I was 17, I became immersed in film and television, especially journalism. I documented the Syrian war, lived through displacement, and later arrived in the UK seeking safety. Over time, I learned not only how to survive, but how to belong, and eventually how to tell stories from within that experience.

A Place Called Welcome is my first documentary feature film, told from a refugee's perspective. At its heart, the film asks: What happens after the door is opened and refugees arrive? It explores welcome not as a single gesture, but as something lived over time: shaped by shifting policy, challenged by uncertainty, and sustained by everyday acts of kindness.

I am not interested in portraying refugees as victims, symbols, or statistics. I want to show people as complex individuals navigating real lives, people rebuilding home, identity, trust, and community in unfamiliar places. By filming others as they search for belonging, I am also reflecting on my own journey.

The need to make this film now is because the public conversation around refugees is increasingly shaped by fear and division. Migration is one of the defining issues of our time, yet refugees are often reduced to numbers, threats, or burdens. This film offers another way of seeing: through real lives, real communities, and real moments of kindness.

The film is rooted in reality. Through the unfolding journeys of the people Claire and I meet, the wider context of migration, policy, legality, and public perception is gently revealed.

Insights from professionals and academics challenge common misconceptions and media narratives that overestimate the number of migrants in the UK. In fact, Britain hosts a small percent of the world's displaced people. Migrants are often labelled illegal, but seeking asylum is a legal right under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.

Stylistically, A Place Called Welcome is poetic, observational, life-affirming, and uplifting. It blends intimate vérité scenes with reflective narration, symbolic imagery, natural light, and handheld cinematography.

The story begins with an animated swallow, Alina, tracing her migratory route from Africa to the UK. More than a visual motif, Alina becomes a quiet witness, curious, fragile, and resilient, travelling alongside Claire and Noah's journey.

She reflects the movement, uncertainty, and hope at the heart of migration, reminding us that home is not always a fixed place but a delicate, ongoing search. The animation gently dissolves into live action, grounding the film in the physical landscapes of Britain's high streets, coastlines, cities, towns, and countryside.

The music in the film gently shapes the emotional landscape, cultivating sensitivity and compassion. Much of it is performed by refugees and asylum seekers themselves. Their songs, voices, and rhythms carry an emotional truth that words alone cannot express.

Directing while being within the story is a rare and complex experience, one not many directors face. I wasn't only making my first feature documentary film; I also opened up my own story of displacement, using vulnerability to foster understanding and help audiences connect with the realities behind these experiences.

It's a strange duality, both deeply vulnerable and profoundly empowering. In this cinema space, where we usually stand behind the lens, I found myself stepping through it, reflecting on my journey as I guided others' stories, all merging into one filmic act of discovery.

For me, this film is an act of witnessing, connection, and hope. It is about what happens after arrival, after survival, and after the first welcome. It is about the long, fragile, and beautiful process of making a place feel like home. As the director of this film, I see A Place Called Welcome as a way to generate empathy and understanding around migration. Seeing through the eyes and experiences of individuals, we begin to care about those whose lives have been improved by the kindness of others.

Migration is not just a label, a policy, or a headline. Migration is older than borders themselves, and it lives within all of our stories.

CREW REFLECTIONS

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ANYA SITARAM

As a producer and storyteller, this film is an opportunity to tell one of the most important stories of our time. The resilience and courage of people whose lives have been uprooted, and the warm welcome they receive from ordinary people, is a reminder that humanity prevails.

PRODUCER KAREN WALSH

It made me feel that there is no easy solution for what is happening at the moment. This is a huge and very challenging topic but I realise few try to understand the bigger picture. It's a difficult and complex situation.

EDITOR CHRISTOPHER STITCHMAN

It is a real privilege to help shape and bring to life Noah & Claire's powerful story of human migration. Through their thoughtful and creative vision bring together individual journeys that feel both moving and deeply human. Showing how these simple acts can make a profound difference.

PRODUCER CLAIRE ASH WHEELER

The conversation began with a filmmaker refugee who carried lived experience. A Place Called Welcome is all about the shared human journey. Making this film has been a privilege, a steep learning curve, tiring, emotional, inspiring, relentless, and hugely uplifting.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY PHIL CHAPPELL

Working on the film has been quietly transformative. It's deepened my understanding of what asylum seekers go through as well as what 'welcome' really means. It's reminded me how much we share when we take the time to truly listen.

CAMERA OPERATOR ANDY BROWN

It was only right to be part of a project that was about inclusivity, belonging and truth when our world is increasingly filled with exclusion, discrimination and untruths. It's so important to counter media narratives about refugees and migration and dig deeper into what life is actually like

SOUND RECORDISTS ANDY HAWLEY

I was really keen to work on this project, as I feel that in our country it is a very divisive topic. I had had no first hand experience of meeting people that have been or are currently going through the asylum process and was glad to have this opportunity to learn more from the people who have experienced it first hand.

SOUND RECORDISTS ANDREW YARME

This was such a rewarding experience for me. I made some new friends and have a much greater appreciation for the lives of the men, women and children that come to this country, often fleeing persecution, violence, and war.

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER JAD CHAPMAN

At a time where the narrative & media landscape are so toxic, it feels hugely important to help tell a different story. One of hope and community, not fear and hatred.

BIOGRAPHIES



Noah Bakour

DIRECTOR

A Syrian refugee filmmaker and visual artist based in UK tells stories rooted in lived experience, dignity, and human connection. His work spans documentary, and socially engaged filmmaking. Noah's work has been recognised across the film, arts, and social-impact sectors in the UK, including the Arts Council of Wales Contribution to the Arts Award (2023) and the KLAT Visual Artist of the Year (2025).

A Place Called Welcome is his most personal and ambitious feature to date.



Claire Ash Wheeler

PRODUCER

A UK-based community organiser and co-founder of Sanctuary Community Holidays, supporting refugees and asylum seekers since 2018. A former teacher, Claire brings a complementary perspective to the film, that of someone who has chosen to welcome others and who continues to reflect on responsibility, care, and solidarity. Her presence grounds the film in lived practice rather than theory.



Anya Sitaram

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

An award-winning journalist and executive producer with extensive experience across international documentary filmmaking. She has overseen hundreds of broadcast documentaries for major global platforms, including BBC, PBS, Discovery, National Geographic, and Al Jazeera. Anya oversees the editorial and creative direction of the project, ensuring the film has maximum impact.



Karen Walsh

PRODUCER

An award-winning producer and director with experience across documentary, factual television, and socially engaged storytelling. Her work is known for combining strong narrative structure with sensitive, ethical approaches to real-world subjects. Karen supports the film's production strategy, working on location with the crew and contributors and helping to shape the narrative.



Phil Chappell

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

A UK-based cinematographer specialising in visually rich factual and documentary storytelling. His work is known for its naturalistic style, emotional restraint, and cinematic attention to everyday detail. Phil's years of experience bring skilled visual craft to the film, supporting its poetic and observational tone.



Christopher Stitchman

EDITOR

A versatile editor with 16 years of experience across broadcast television's creative and technical disciplines. Specialising in crafting compelling and emotionally resonant stories, his work spans documentary, factual entertainment, natural history and true crime, delivering to leading broadcasters such as Netflix, BBC, Disney and National Geographic.

FILM SPECIFICATIONS

PRODUCTION COMPANY

TIR CELF CIC

PRODUCTION LOCATION

United Kingdom

SHOOTING FORMAT

Digital / 4K UHD

TOTAL RUNNING TIME

90 minutes

AUDIO FORMAT

Digital Stereo / 5.1
surround sound planned

LENGTH

Feature-length Documentary

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

English

ASPECT RATIO

16:9 / 1.78:1

EXHIBITION FORMATS

DCP / Digital Projection /
Online Screener

LANGUAGES

English (main), Ukrainian,
Arabic, and Spanish.

SUBTITLES

English subtitles

PRODUCTION YEAR

2026

FIRST-TIME FEATURE DIRECTOR

Yes

GENRE

Feature Documentary

ACCESSIBILITY

Captions and audio
description planned

FILM COLOUR

Colour

CREW LIST

DIRECTED AND NARRATED BY	NOAH BAKOUR
PRODUCED AND SCRIPTED BY	KAREN WALSH
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	ANYA SITARAM
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	PHIL CHAPPELL
EDITOR	CHRISTOPHER STITCHMAN
PRODUCER	CLAIRE ASH WHEELER
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER	RICHARD WILSON
CAMERA OPERATORS	ANDY BROWN
	NOAH BAKOUR
SOUND	ANDREW YARME
	ANDY HAWLEY
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR	VICTORIA KNIGHT
ARCHIVE PRODUCER	INDIGO LOWNDES
RESEARCHER	JANET TAYLOR
EDIT ASSISTANT	BETHANY BARR
COLOURIST	WILL WATSON
CRANC AUDIO POST PRODUCTION	CRANC AUDIO POST PRODUCTION
DUBBING MIXER	STEVE CASTLE
ANIMATION	BEN SINCLAIR
	GABRIELA SATHIE AKITA
SOCIAL MEDIA	JED CHAPMAN
COMPOSER	BENJAMIN MCTOY

