

# SHELTER

A Film By Eran Riklis

Starring Golshifteh Farahani, Neta Riskin and Lior Ashkenazi



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**Two women trapped in a safe house where nothing is safe  
and no one can be trusted.**

**Based on “The Link” by Shulamit Hareven**

A subtle thriller set in Germany involving Mona, a Lebanese woman (Golshifteh Farahani), and Naomi, an Israeli Mossad agent (Neta Riskin) sent to protect their informant while recovering from plastic surgery for her new identity. Mona and Naomi - together for two weeks in a quiet apartment in Hamburg. A safe house. A shelter.

No one saw what was coming, no one knew that this supposedly quiet fortnight would turn into an abyss and that shelter would need to be found elsewhere. The intimacy of the relationship that develops between the two women is exposed to the threat of terror that is engulfing the world today. In this game of deception, beliefs are questioned and choices are made that are not their own. And yet their fate takes a surprising turn in this suspense-laden, elegant neo-noir.



**Official Selection**  
**Haifa International Film Festival - 2017**  
**Palm Springs International Film Festival - 2018**  
**Warsaw Film Festival - 2017**



Starring:

**Golshifteh Farahani** (*PATERSON, PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 5*)

**Neta Riskin** (*SHTISEL, SAVING NETA*)

**Lior Ashkenazi** (*WALK ON WATER, NORMAN*)

**Haluk Bilginer** (*WINTER SLEEP*)

**Yehuda Almagor** (*PLAYOFF*)

**Mark Waschke** (*BARBARA*)

Year of Production: 2017

Language: English, Hebrew, Arabic

Length: 93 minutes

**Directed by Eran Riklis** (*The Lemon Tree, The Syrian Bride*)

Produced by: Heimatfilm, Riva Film, Eran Riklis Productions and MACT  
Productions in co-production with ARTE France Cinema, ZDF-ARTE

## Director's Statement

Two women.

NAOMI. She's Israeli. She's tough. She's fragile. She's trying to have a baby. She's a Mossad agent.

MONA. She's Lebanese. She's tough. She's fragile. She works for the Mossad. She has to pay the price.

Naomi is like a Japanese Haiku. Mona is like a Muslim Hafiz.

Two women take us into a complex, multi-dimensional labyrinth of trust and mistrust, of honesty and deception, of loyalty and betrayal.

I love them both, the same way I loved Amal in *The Syrian Bride*, Salma and Mira in *Lemon Tree*, Edna in *Dancing Arabs*. These are women who are the emotional core, the emotional force, the emotional drive that take me and my audience on and in to their journey. This is a meeting between my long term and continued attempts to further represent, understand, investigate and face the complexities of the Middle East, each time with a fresh view and now with a touch of mystery, a framework of a thriller wrapping an intimate story set in a safehouse. A safe house.

Nothing is safe. Nobody is secure. No one is immune. Everyone is searching for SHELTER.

-Eran Riklis





## Eran Riklis



Born in Jerusalem (1954), raised in Montreal, New York, New Haven, Rio de Janeiro and Beer Sheba (Google it...). In the film world since the age of 13 and more seriously after at 21 I went to study cinema at Tel Aviv U and then at the National Film School in Beaconsfield, England.

Randle McMurphy (*One Flew over the cuckoo's nest*) was always my moral compass, enhanced by Jean Renoir, Kurosawa, Antonioni, Tarkovsky and many other fine people. My first film – *On a clear day you can see Damascus* (1984) – was a declaration, followed by *Cup Final* (Venice 1991 and Berlin 1992) which took my attempt to say something meaningful a step further.

*Zohar* (1993) was a major domestic hit and after some years in the world of television series and drama I made *Vulcan Junction* (1999), my tribute to my sort of lost generation. 2004 brought about another international breakthrough – *The Syrian Bride* – winning numerous awards including Locarno's audience award. In 2008 *Lemon Tree* was loved around the world (and won the audience award in Berlin) and I followed with my Ophir Awards winner (and Locarno again) *The Human Resources Manager* (2010). Busy years with *Playoff* (2011) – an emotional look at Germany, *Zaytoun* (2012) – an emotional look at war and friendship (Toronto), and *Dancing Arabs* (2014) touching yet again sensitive issues in a fragile world (Telluride, Locarno). 2017 brought *Shelter* which is now starting its life. Married to Dina (a film director too) and proud father of Tammy (a devoted journalist) and Yonatan (jazz pianist and film composer). I believe in honesty, truth, respect, I believe in love. I hope my films convey that to people around the world and will continue to do so as long as possible.

## Take 'Shelter' with these two women

By Hannah Brown  
January 24, 2018 22:07

*Shelter is fun because, like Naomi, the audience gets seduced by Mona*

Eran Riklis's *Shelter* is an enjoyable, suspenseful and at times moving film that combines a spy thriller and that kind of psychological drama where two women, isolated from the outside world, bond, flirt and begin to merge identities, each becoming more like the other.

These two-women movies depend on a strong cast and *Shelter* works because of the talent of the actresses who star in it. Neta Riskin plays Naomi, a Mossad agent who has quit after the death of her husband, also an agent, in an operation she was involved with. When her former handler (Lior Ashkenazi) comes to her with a supposedly easy assignment – to watch over a Lebanese informer in Germany who has just had plastic surgery to conceal her identity – she hesitates. We know it won't be as simple and straightforward as he tells her it will be, but if she refuses, there won't be a movie, so she goes.

Mona (Golshifteh Farahani), the woman she's protecting, has some bandages on her face, but they don't really obscure her beauty or expressiveness. Dressed in a short red silk robe, Mona is demanding, petulant and very seductive. She bosses Naomi around and Naomi lets her. The Israeli agent, dressed in drab clothes, glasses and even a cross to be inconspicuous in the quiet neighborhood in Hamburg where Mona is hidden, provides a sharp contrast to the woman in red.

You may think you can imagine where it goes from there, and some of the time, you'd be right. But Riklis, a veteran Israeli director with a long list of credits, including *Zohar* (1993), *The Syrian Bride* (2004), *Lemon Tree* (2008), *The Human Resources Manager* (2010) and *Dancing Arabs* (aka *A Borrowed Identity*, 2014), has a few tricks up his sleeve.

The film is loosely based on a short story, "The Link," by the late Shulamith Hareven, a writer who published the story under a pseudonym and whose husband was said to have worked for the Mossad. While the thriller plot about Mona's terrorist lover (Doraid Liddawi) and the attempts by his organization to find and kill Mona, as well as the machinations of Israeli, German and American

intelligence agents, is pretty similar to many other movies, it's the drama between the two women that makes the movie rewarding. It recalls such films as the touchstone of this genre, Ingmar Bergman's *Persona*, as well as Bob Rafelson's *Black Widow*, David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* and Barbet Schroeder's *Single White Female*.

Golshifteh Farahani is an extraordinary actress on her way to becoming an international star. Iranian-born, she left her home country years ago and has recently appeared in the latest installment of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise and Jim Jarmusch's *Paterson*. She is soft spoken but has a commanding presence and turns Mona into a flesh-and-blood woman and not just a type. A speech she gives about how she has been cheated all her life is particularly affecting.

Neta Riskin, one of the busiest and most consistently interesting Israeli actresses, is best known for playing Giti, the abandoned wife, on the television series *Shtisel*, and has appeared in such movies as Joseph Cedar's *Norman* and Nir Bergman's *Saving Neta*. In *Shelter*, she is convincing and affecting as an all-business Mossad agent who finds herself drawn by Mona's aura in spite of herself. Both of these roles could have been cliched, but in the hands of these actresses, they are compelling and entertaining.

In spite of the occasional flaws in logic and familiarity of some of the plot, *Shelter* is fun because, like *Naomi*, the audience gets seduced by Mona.

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Culture/Take-Shelter-with-these-two-women-539739>