



Malibu Mutt Studios Presents

It's Complicated

2026 | 17 minutes and 35 seconds

A transformative friendship between Yara and Hana is forged through online Arabic tutoring sessions in early 2023. After Oct 7, Hana disappears from Yara's screen and her life, compelling Yara to face diasporic guilt and embrace stories that refuse silence.

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SYNOPSIS

Inspired by a true story, *It's Complicated* follows Yara, a Palestinian American screenwriter in Los Angeles, whose online Arabic lessons with Hana, a poet and teacher in Gaza, blossom into a bond of language, humor, and shared ambition.

When war erupts and Hana vanishes from her screen, Yara is left refreshing her phone as Gaza descends into chaos. Wrestling with grief and survivor's guilt, she turns to her Amo Zu, whose dream of opening a Palestinian restaurant falters under political pressure. They become each other's refuge.

As Hana's silence persists, Yara walks away from the job that muted her voice to honor Hana and her community through her writing. By holding space for grief alongside love and resilience, *It's Complicated* invites audiences to see the Palestinian struggle not as a distant political abstraction, but as a lived human reality.

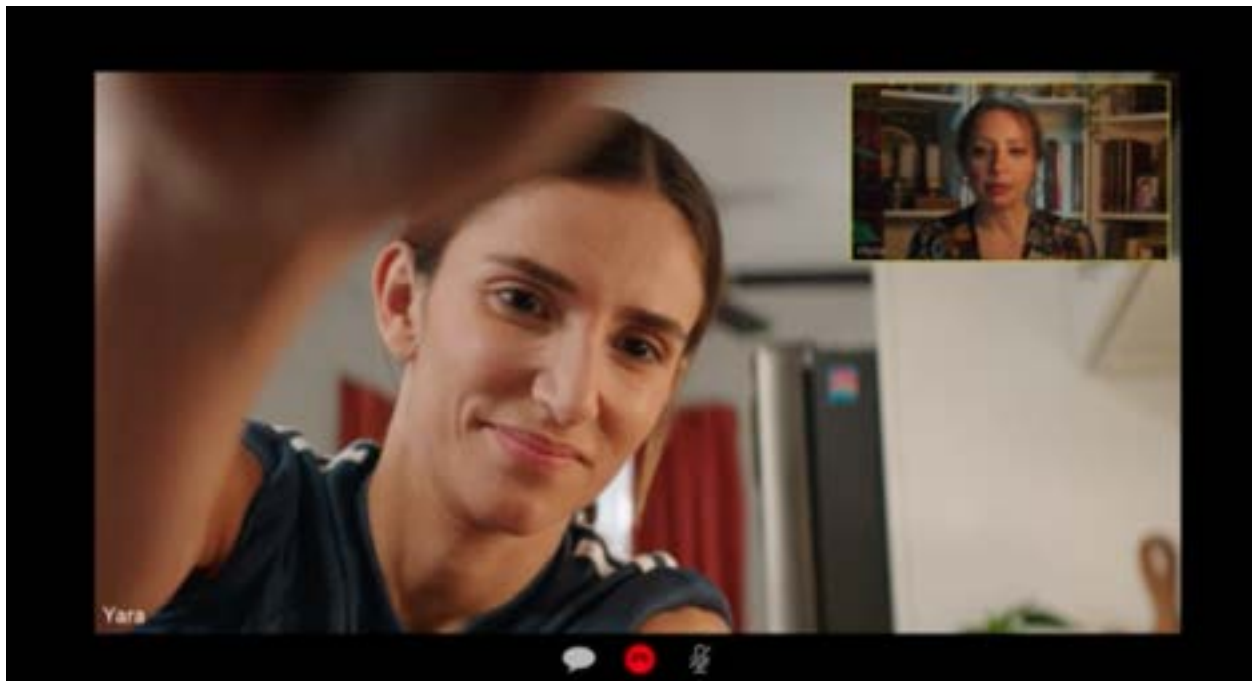


WRITER/ PRODUCER'S STATEMENT:

It's Complicated is inspired by my personal narrative and the deep connection I've formed with my language tutor, Hana, from Gaza. I began working with Hana in 2022. Although she relocated to Turkey with her husband shortly before we met, her family remains amidst the ongoing genocide in Gaza. This film is an homage to her resilience, celebrating the indomitable spirit of Gaza's women, who are often misrepresented by the mainstream media as subdued individuals awaiting liberation from the West.

Hana's life story shatters these clichés, presenting an authentic image of the extraordinary women of Palestine. She is a 27-year-old who holds two degrees, is fluent in four languages, a dedicated teacher, and a loving mother to a beautiful son. Furthermore, she has a supportive husband who encourages all her aspirations. Hana's strength and wisdom have illuminated my path, prompting me to challenge the misconceptions and biases prevalent in the West and our industry.

With this film, I aim to portray the essence of young Palestinian women by sharing our stories in their most genuine form. It offers a glimpse into the life of a woman whose experiences reflect the resilience and depth of character often overlooked in the women of Gaza and how her story transforms an American Palestinian woman in the West on a profound quest for her own identity.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

It's Complicated is a film about displacement, identity, and the emotional toll of witnessing a catastrophe from afar. It is about the impossibility of belonging when your homeland is under siege, when your people are suffering, and when the world around you seems indifferent to their pain. Yara, a Palestinian-American writer, exists between two realities—the relentless, competitive world of Hollywood, where she is expected to play the game, and the world of her loved ones in Gaza, where survival is a daily struggle. This film is about how those two worlds collide and fracture, forcing Yara to question everything: her career, her relationships, her purpose, and ultimately, whether she can continue existing in a place that refuses to acknowledge her people's humanity.





PRINCIPAL CAST



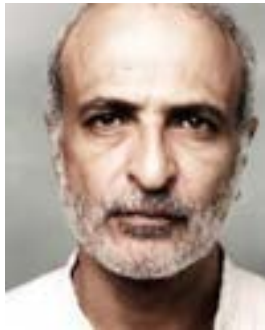
Iman Karim as Yara

Iman Karim recently starred opposite Michael Angarano and Michael Cera in the Tribeca-premiering comedy feature Sacramento. Her work spans Disney Channel, Netflix, FX, and independent cinema.



Dina Shuhaber as Hana

Dina Shuhaber spent several years working in the Middle East before landing a series regular role on the hit sitcom Female Show, filmed in Jordan. She also starred in Degrade, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival.



Nasser Faris as Amos

Nasser Faris is an accomplished stage actor who most recently starred in the world premiere of Two Things You Don't Talk About at Dinner at the Denver Center Theatre and Rafta, Rafta at The Old Globe Theatre. His work in The Shelter contributed to five Ovation Award nominations.



A.J. Mendez

A.J. Mendez is a New York Times bestselling author, professional wrestler and actor. She recently appeared in the Tribeca-premiering feature Sacramento.

WRITER/ PRODUCER



Iman Karram

Iman Karram is an actress, writer, and producer from Washington, D.C., and a graduate of UCLA's Cultural Anthropology and Film programs. She has worked across Disney Channel, the CW, Netflix, FX, and independent film, building a body of work rooted in grounded comedy, emotional specificity, and physical, character-driven storytelling. Most recently, she starred opposite Michael Angarano and Michael Cera in the Tribeca-premiering feature *Sacramento*. She is also attached to star opposite Iain Glen and Antoine Olivier Pilon in the international feature *Anatomy of the Sun*. Iman recently wrote, produced, and starred in the short film *It's Complicated*, with Zoe Saldaña attached as Executive Producer. The film is picture-locked and set for a festival run this year. She is also currently writing and developing a 30-minute comedy series with Mo Amer.

DIRECTOR



Darine Hotait

Named on Disney's 2022 list of directors on the Rise, Darine Hotait is an Arab American writer and film director based in NYC. She has written and directed a dozen narrative short films that can be seen on Sundance Channel, HBO, The New Yorker, AMC Networks, BBC, and at international film festivals. Darine has received the New York Council on the Arts Artist Prize, the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, the Jerome Foundation Award, the North Manhattan Arts Alliance Prize, and the 40 under 40 Arab America Foundation Award.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS



Zoe Saldaña

Zoë Saldaña is an Academy Award–winning actress and producer whose work spans global blockbusters and independent cinema. Known for her performances in some of the highest-grossing film franchises of all time, she has also consistently championed character-driven, culturally resonant storytelling. As a producer, she is committed to amplifying underrepresented voices and stories that bridge international perspectives.



Eli Zalava

Eli Zavala is a Mexican actor, filmmaker, and creative executive. After graduating from law school, she traveled through Europe before returning to Mexico to study dramatic arts in Monterrey. She later trained at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles, the Stella Adler Studio of Acting, and the Linklater Center in New York City. Fluent in Spanish and English, with knowledge of French and Italian, Eli serves as a creative executive at Splinter Pictures. She is also a founding member of La Filmadora

and a board member of Cinematográfica y Escénica de México, organizations dedicated to authentic representation and supporting underrepresented storytellers.

PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

Project Type: Narrative Short

Runtime: 17 min and 35 seconds (including credits)

Completion Date: Feb 1st 2026

Production Budget: 75,000

Country of Origin: United States

Country of Filming: United States

Language: English and Arabic

Shooting Format: Digital

Aspect Ratio: 2:35:1

Film Color: Color

CREDITS

Directed by Darine Hotait

Written by Iman Karram

Story by Iman Karram & Darine Hotait

Executive Producers Zoë Saldaña, Eli Zavala

Produced by Iman Karram, Alana Duqum, Zoe Marie Jimenez

Co-Producers Matt Van Tine, HECAT Studios Paris

Associate Producers Kais Karram, Zane Karram, Isabel Schnall

Director of Photography Liz Charky

Editor: Hind Shoufani

Original Music Tarek Yamani

Color Belal Hibiri

Visual Effects By: HECAT Studio Paris

VFX Producer: Chadi ABO

VFX Supervisor : Nasser ABO

Art Director : Yasmeeen Fanari

ASSISTANT EDITOR: ROONEY RIAD

Post-Production Sound Provided By – Gigantic Studios, NYC

Supervising Sound Editor & Re-recording mixer - Tristan Baylis CAS MPSE

Sound Designer - Léa Dessart

Sound Effects Editor - Ai Miyatake

Assistant Sound Editor - Ian Devine

Audio Post Producers - Jeff Spivack, Mehar Gujral

Different logline lengths:

Option 1)

Yara, a Palestinian American screenwriter, forms an unexpected sisterhood with Hana, a poet and teacher in Gaza, through online Arabic lessons. But, when war erupts and Hana suddenly disappears, Yara is forced to confront grief, diasporic guilt, and the responsibility of using her art and her voice to carry Hana's story forward.

Option 2)

Inspired by a true story, *It's Complicated* follows Yara, a Palestinian American screenwriter in Los Angeles, whose online Arabic lessons with Hana, a poet and teacher in Gaza, blossom into a bond of language, humor, and shared ambition. When war erupts and Hana vanishes from her screen, Yara is left in Los Angeles, refreshing her phone as Gaza descends into chaos. Wrestling with grief and survivor's guilt, she turns to her Amo Zu, whose dream of opening a Palestinian restaurant falters under political pressure. They become each other's refuge. As Hana's silence persists, Yara walks away from the job that muted her voice to honor Hana and her community through her writing. By holding space for grief alongside love and resilience, *It's Complicated* invites audiences to see the Palestinian struggle not as a distant political abstraction, but as a lived human reality reflected in the relationship between two Palestinian women.