

SOUSANNA

an independent feature film

Adapted from the book, *Sousanna: The Lost Daughter*



A YOUNG GIRL'S
INTENSE
BRAVERY &
STRENGTH OF
WILL TO
REMEMBER
HOME





THE PROJECT

TYPE	Narrative Feature
GENRE	Drama Faith
LENGTH	120 – 150 minutes
LOGLINE	In post-war 1950s Greece, young Sousanna is torn from her family by a deceitful American lawyer promising a better future, beginning a lifelong journey through loss and the search for home.
SHOOTING LOCATION	Greece & Texas
COMPARATIVE FILMS	<i>Lion, The Kite Runner, Echoes of the Past</i>
PRODUCTION CO.	Pipeline Films

ABOUT THE FILM

Based on a true story and adapted from the book, *Sousanna: The Lost Daughter*, this story is a poignant exploration of family, sacrifice, and the haunting legacy of war, set against the backdrop of a war-torn Greece in the late 1950s.

At its core, this film showcases real historical events that echo across generations, speaking to the universal struggles of those impacted by war and the longing for a sense of home. In a world increasingly divided, the story of Sousanna and her family resonates with contemporary audiences, illustrating the multifaceted nature of sacrifice and the lengths to which a parent will go to protect their child.

As we follow Sousanna's journey of disconnection and the longing for roots felt by many adopted children, we are reminded of the enduring power of love and the hope for a brighter future, making this story of familial sacrifice both timely and timeless. The impact of this film lies in its ability to provoke thought and evoke empathy, ensuring that the voices of those affected by war and loss are heard and remembered.



SYNOPSIS

In post World War II Greece the Demetriou family struggles to rebuild their lives. Poverty and trauma weigh heavily on Niko, the father, who is haunted by wartime atrocities. When a predatory American lawyer, Peter Bakas, arrives with promises of salvation, he convinces Niko to surrender his five-year-old daughter, Sousanna, with assurances that she will be educated abroad and later returned.

But Sousanna never comes home. Taken to America, she is renamed Nita Brown and forced to abandon her language, faith, and heritage. Raised in a foreign household that demands assimilation, Sousanna endures bullying, cultural isolation, and the constant pressure to deny her roots.

Back in Greece, her oldest brother Marios vows to one day find her. His promise becomes the emotional heartbeat of the family, who refuse to forget the daughter torn from their arms.

As Sousanna grows up, she wrestles with a loss of identity – the carefree child who once twirled in the Pyrgos sun now struggles to remember the sound of her real name. Yet amidst all the pain in her life, a miracle blossoms: she meets Robert, a young man whose love sees beyond the imposed identity of "Nita" and into the soul of Sousanna. Through him, she begins to reclaim her voice, her culture, and her identity.

Years later, her journey comes full circle when she receives a letter from her brother Marios – he has found his baby sister. In reclaiming her heritage, she finds the courage to embrace the name stolen from her. Not Nita. Not the girl America tried to mould. But Sousanna – daughter, sister, survivor.

SOUSANNA is a sweeping story of loss and resilience, of family bonds stretched across continents, and of a woman's ultimate triumph in rediscovering love, belonging, and her true self.

THE CHARACTERS



SOUSANNA DEMETRIOU // NITA BROWN



Sousanna, later known as Nita in America, is a vibrant and spirited five year old girl with blonde hair and bright blue eyes. She is caught between two worlds – her life in Greece and her new existence in America.

As she is maliciously uprooted from her Greek home and placed in an American family, her internal conflict arises from feelings of isolation and confusion about her identity – longing for her biological family while trying to adapt to her new environment.

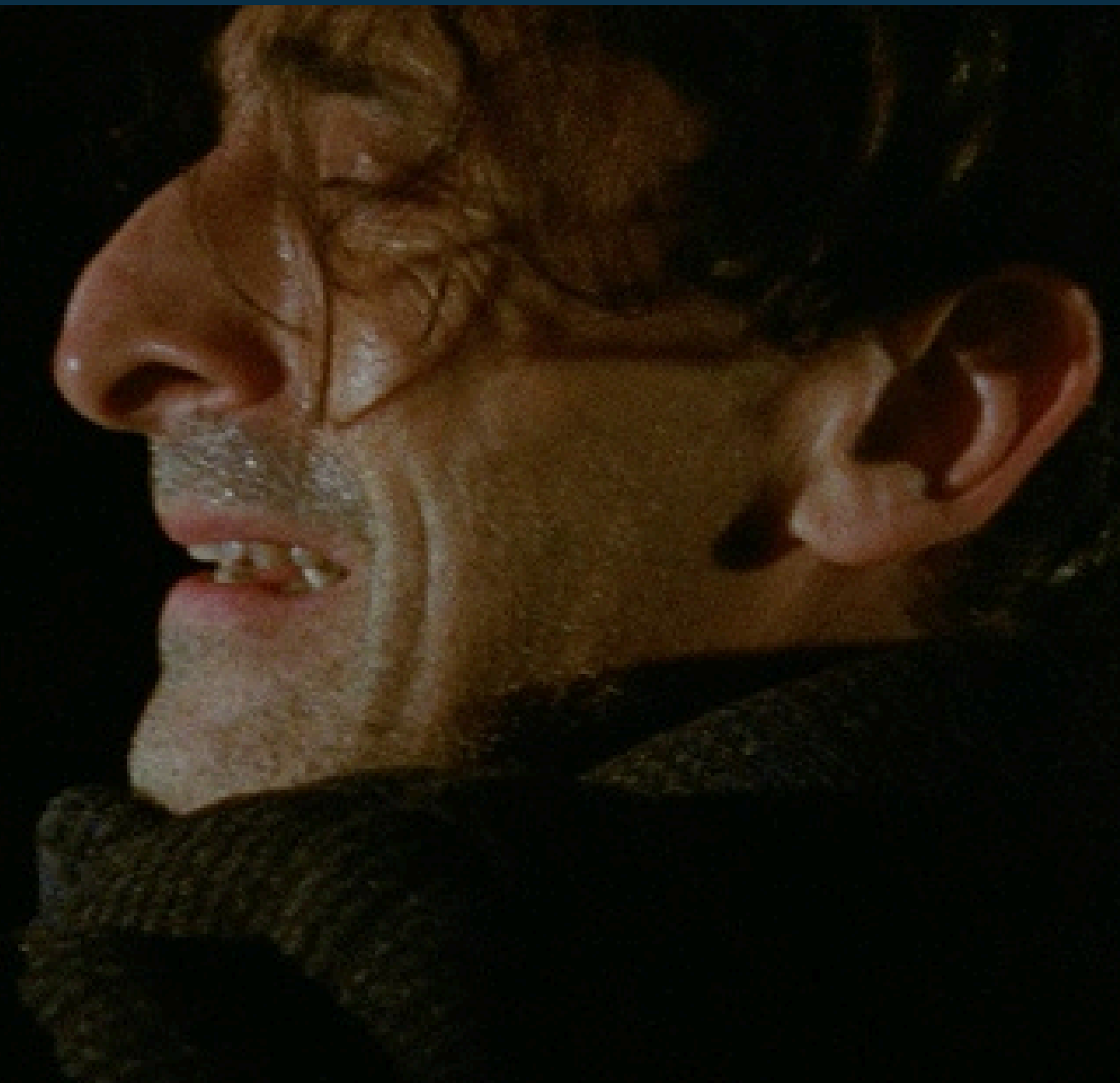
She struggles to reconcile her Greek heritage with her new life in America, while holding onto the hope of being reunited with her biological family.

Her relationships are complex, as she navigates the love and loss of her Greek family and the expectations of her American adoptive parents.

Niko is a complex character burdened by his past experiences as a resistance fighter during the Nazi occupation. At 43, he is slender and stooped, with blonde hair and striking blue eyes.

He grapples with PTSD, poverty, and the emotional toll and moral dilemma of sending his daughter, Sousanna, to America for adoption to ensure her survival. This decision haunts him, contributing to his depression and sense of failure.

He lives with his wife Katerina and their children in a small house in Pyrgos. Always haunted by past traumas and marked by the scars of war and poverty, he desires to protect his family and secure a better future for them.



KATERINA DEMETRIOU



Katerina, 33, is Niko's devoted wife and the mother of their children. She is small in stature, with long dark hair and soft brown eyes.

Psychologically, she is resilient and nurturing, striving to keep her family together despite their hardships. Her objective is to support her husband and children, maintaining hope for a better future.

Katerina's resilience is tested as she navigates her children's needs while facing her own despair as she yearns to reunite with her daughter Sousanna, who was taken to America.

Her relationship with Niko is strained by the loss of Sousanna, but she remains a pillar of strength for her family.

PETER BAKAS



Peter Bakas, a tall, well-dressed American lawyer in his mid-60s, known for his white suit and fedora. He is involved in facilitating adoptions from Greece to America, often through questionable means.

Motivated by greed, his conflict lies in the moral corruption of exploiting vulnerable families. He is a manipulative and opportunistic character, driven by profit rather than the welfare of the children.

Peter's interactions with the Demetriou family are transactional, marked by deceit and manipulation. He is a threat to their unity.

MARIOS DEMETRIOU



Marios is the eldest son of Niko and Katerina, a young man with rugged good looks and a strong sense of responsibility.

His relationship with his father is strained, as he struggles to understand Niko's decisions and the impact they have had on their family. He struggles with feelings of betrayal and anger towards Niko for agreeing to send Sousanna away.

His journey is one of perseverance and hope, as he battles against the odds to reunite his family. He is determined to find his sister Sousanna and bring her back to Greece.

JACK BROWN



Jack Brown is the adoptive father of Sousanna/Nita, a decent but plodding man in his mid-30s, living in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with his wife Margaret.

He is caught between his wife's demands and his own sense of compassion for Nita. His objective is to keep the peace within his family, often at the cost of his own happiness.

His relationship with Nita is more understanding than Margaret's, but he is ultimately unable to protect her from Margaret's influence.

He struggles with alcoholism and is often dominated by his wife. His relationship with Sousanna (Nita) is distant, as he is preoccupied with his own issues.

MARGARET BROWN

Margaret Brown, 32, is Jack's domineering wife, and the adoptive mother of Sousanna/Nita, characterized by her strong-willed and eccentric nature.

She desires a perfect family image and is often critical of Sousanna (Nita). She is determined to shape Nita into the perfect American daughter, disregarding Nita's Greek heritage.

Her objective is to maintain control over her family and ensure they conform to her ideals.

Her relationship with Nita is fraught with tension, as she struggles to understand and accept Nita's true identity.



ROBERT STREET

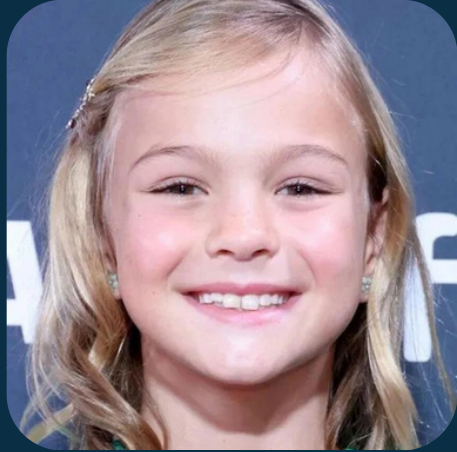


Robert is a popular and easygoing teenager who becomes Sousanna's (Nita's) American love interest.

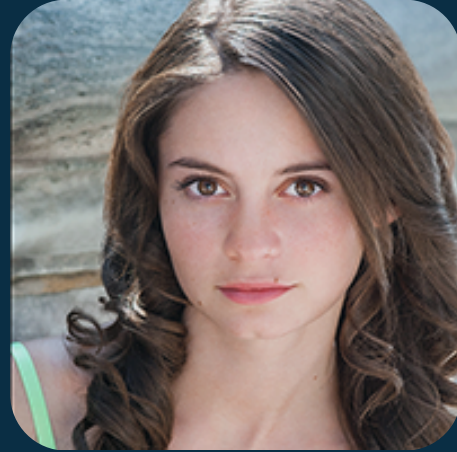
He supports and helps her navigate her quest for identity and reconciliation with her past.

Motivated by love and understanding, his conflict is external, dealing with the societal pressures of their relationship.

CAST IDEAS



Lexi Venter
Young Sousanna



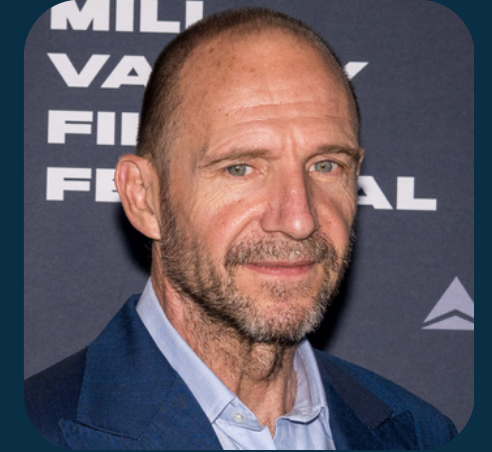
Jordyn DiNatale
Teenage Sousanna



Oscar Isaac
Niko



Jamie-Lynn Sigler
Katerina



Ralph Fiennes
Peter Bakas



Noah Jupe
Older Marios



Anastasis Laoulakos
Older Ilias



Zachary Levi
Jack Brown



Brianne Howey
Margaret Brown



Lucas Till
Robert Street

CREATIVE TEAM

SOUSANNA & BOB STRATMANN

Executive Producers

Sousanna Stratmann was born in Pirgos, Greece. As a young child she was taken from her family and brought to the U.S., where she was adopted by an American couple. At age nine she became an American citizen. She attended Texas A&M University, and became a dance instructor, a profession she continues. Sousanna is also an inspirational speaker, sharing her story around the country. She lives with her husband near Austin, Texas.

ANDREW SHEBAY

Producer // Director

Andrew is an award-winning director and producer based in Austin, Texas. His notable credits are: Writer/Director/Producer for 100 Miles to Redemption, distributed on Amazon Prime; Producer for Odessa, an award winning short film; Producer for Frank & Penelope, a feature film with Kevin Dillon and Sean Patrick Flanery; Director/Producer for The Empty Chair, an award winning short film currently being shopped by Gersh for a limited TV series. With 12 years experience in the film and commercial industry, Andrew strives to express complex characters in a realistic and cinematic style to his audience. He has brought this honest style of visual storytelling to all of his projects and top brands worldwide.

JOHN SEMANDER

Screenwriter

John is a freelance writer and independent producer who has worked consistently in the entertainment industry since moving to Los Angeles in 1993. Over the years, he has been repped by CAA, Kaplan/Perrone Management and The Gersh Agency. He has worked in both film and television on numerous projects, and has been actively involved in development meetings at NBC, Warner Bros, Sony, Fox, Universal, and many other companies throughout his career. John's screenplay for "The Empty Chair" earned him Best Writer honors in the Independent Pilot Competition at SeriesFest 2023.

CREATIVE TEAM

JOSH PICKERING Cinematographer

Josh is a rising cinematographer based in Dallas, TX. Having worked in the camera department for such films as Hit Man (2023), A Ghost Story (2017) and The Old Man & the Gun (2018), Josh has become an emerging talent. Growing up, his passion for film was ignited in the mid-1980s after watching Raiders of the Lost Ark on VHS, a cinematic experience that sparked a lifelong pursuit of visual storytelling. Josh went on to receive his B.A. in Film and Digital Media from Baylor University. He started working on corporate, commercial and narrative projects soon afterwards. He joined Local 600 in 2016, which opened a whole new avenue of jobs, and his career has grown ever since. With a deep love for the craft, Josh is constantly evolving his skills and staying immersed in the art and technology of cinematography.

CARSON AUNE Composer

Carson is a self taught multi-instrumentalist and composer who is always experimenting in new ways to achieve unique scores. Working with highly notable directors and producers like Peter Berg, he has scored over 100 episodes of television for major networks. His work has been featured in films premiering at Cannes, Sundance, SXSW, Tribeca and Venice film festivals.

PIPELINE FILMS
CREATIVE FILM CO.

CONTACT:
Andrew Shebay, Producer/Director
andrew.shebay@gmail.com