

THE **WRAP**

When Documentaries Become Propaganda: The Case for Rescinding the ‘No Other Land’ Oscar | Guest Column

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If the Academy Awards have any interest in preserving their legitimacy—or even basic credibility—they must consider rescinding the Oscar handed to “No Other Land” for Best Documentary. To do otherwise would not only reward a flagrant distortion of the truth but would confirm what many have long suspected: that the Academy has abandoned even the pretense of valuing journalistic integrity in favor of political pandering.

To understand how disastrous this is, one need only glance at the rules of the Academy’s Documentary Branch, which explicitly mandate that a documentary should be “nonfiction” and provide an emphasis on “[fact rather than fiction.](#)” The film in question is dealing with a nonfiction subject matter, but using historical fiction methodology, which puts it at odds with the Academy definition. It is a masterclass in selective storytelling, omission and outright falsehoods – a piece of propaganda draped in the trappings of journalism.

Let’s start with the facts—or rather, the lack thereof. “No Other Land” presents a heart-wrenching narrative of Palestinian villagers in Masafer Yatta, purportedly expelled by Israeli authorities from lands they’ve inhabited for generations. It’s an emotionally charged story, to be sure, but also a lie. Historical records, from Ottoman-era documents to British Mandate maps and Israeli Supreme Court findings, tell a different tale: [the area was uninhabited state land](#) until [well after it was declared](#) a military training zone by Israel. [Aerial imagery from the 1980s shows no sign](#) of permanent settlement, and yet the filmmakers would have us believe in a historical continuity that simply does not exist.

As mentioned above, the Academy rules stipulate that a documentary must present a case with an eye towards “fact rather than fiction.” “No Other Land” fails spectacularly on this count as well. It carefully curates a story of victimhood, omitting any mention of [the illegal construction in Masafer Yatta](#), the residents’ permanent homes [in the nearby town of Yatta](#), or the offers made by Israeli authorities [to allow them](#) to stay if they agreed not to expand [those illegal settlements](#). The film includes no interviews with Israeli officials, no perspectives from historians or legal experts who might challenge its narrative.

This kind of selective storytelling isn’t just dishonest; it’s dangerous. By omitting key facts and context, the filmmakers have crossed the line from advocacy into outright deception and demonization. The Academy’s willingness to reward such a film raises a disturbing question: is the goal of the Best Documentary award to honor truth, or merely to signal political virtue?

The documentary branch of the Academy has faced scandals before—infamously awarding “Bowling for Columbine” despite clear evidence of manipulative editing and deceptive statistics. But this is different. This is not about a filmmaker stretching the truth to make a point; this is about outright fabrications being rewarded with the industry’s highest honor. If the Academy refuses to act, it sends a clear message: that as long as the politics are correct, the facts don’t matter.

For further evidence of the rot, look no further than the [recent scandal of the BBC pulling](#) “Gaza: How to Survive a War Zone” due to revelations that the film was rife with inaccuracies and unverified claims. Or the disgraceful Emmy handed to Bisan Owda for “reporting” that was little more than a mouthpiece for Hamas propaganda. That the Academy could watch “No Other Land”—a film that shares the same DNA of deception—and respond with applause rather than outrage is a scandal in itself.

Some might argue that rescinding an Oscar would set a dangerous precedent. Nonsense. If anything, it would set exactly the right precedent: that documentary filmmakers are not free to manufacture facts without consequence. The Academy has done it before, quietly revoking the Oscar for 1969’s “Young Americans” when it was discovered the film had been released in a previous year. This situation is far worse; it’s not a matter of timing but of truth. To do nothing now would not only call the Academy’s integrity into question but risk turning the Best Documentary award into a punchline.

The problem runs deeper than one film. By awarding an Oscar to “No Other Land,” the Academy has aligned itself with a growing trend of documentaries that present one-sided narratives as gospel truth, leveraging emotional manipulation and selective editing to push political agendas. The consequences of this are dire. Documentaries, once a vital tool for uncovering uncomfortable truths, are fast becoming instruments of propaganda, eroding public trust not just in the filmmakers but in the entire journalistic enterprise.

It is not too late for the Academy to do the right thing. A full investigation into the film’s claims and its eligibility under the Documentary Branch’s bylaws is the bare minimum required. If, as the evidence suggests, the film was indeed a grotesque distortion of reality, the Oscar should be revoked publicly and unapologetically.

This article is not meant to be a direct and detailed refutation of the documentary, though should the Academy launch such an investigation into the

film's veracity, we are available to provide evidence and documentation to back up these claims.

Failing to act would not only embolden more filmmakers to abandon journalistic standards in favor of propaganda but would make the Academy complicit, cementing its reputation as a partisan echo chamber. At a time when public trust in media is at an all-time low, that's a risk they cannot afford to take.

There was a time when the Oscar for Best Documentary was more than a political statement; it was a recognition of the courage to tell uncomfortable truths. If the Academy wants to reclaim that legacy, it must start by sending a clear message: propaganda has no place at the Oscars, and those who indulge in it should not be rewarded but exposed.

Editor's note: An earlier version of this op-ed erroneously cited the Academy guidelines for a documentary due to errors in translation by the authors. The story has been updated to reflect the correct guidelines.

The full Academy definition is in a document titled [Special Rules for the Documentary Feature Film Award](#) is: "An eligible documentary film is defined as a theatrically released nonfiction motion picture dealing creatively with cultural, artistic, historical, social, scientific, economic or other subjects. It may be photographed in actual occurrence, or may employ partial reenactment, stock footage, stills, animation, stop-motion or other techniques, as long as the emphasis is on fact and not on fiction."

Editor's note: TheWrap reached out to the filmmakers of "No Other Land" regarding the allegations in this piece. They had no comment. The Academy did not respond to TheWrap's request for comment.

Golan Ramraz has been writing and producing for over twenty years. As a writer, Ramraz has written everything from animation to live-action, novels to features, originals to adaptations, collaborating with legends, Oscar winners, Pulitzer Prize recipients, acclaimed novelists and more. Ramraz began his career at Creative Artists Agency before moving on to working with director Doug Liman and as Director of Development for Marvel Studios. As a professor and consultant, Ramraz has worked and lectured all over the world, including Spain, France, The Netherlands, Australia, Chile, Israel, Mexico, Bulgaria, Italy and at colleges and universities all over the United States, including USC, Columbia and UCLA. He currently mentors under-represented writers and creators.

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The post [When Documentaries Become Propaganda: The Case for Rescinding the 'No Other Land' Oscar | Guest Column](#) appeared first on [TheWrap](#).