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Oscar-Winning Producer Gareth Unwin Sets Up First U.K./Israel Co-Production

5:01 AM PST 12/6/2011 by Stuart Kemp

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Eran Riklis to direct "Zaytoun" penned by Palestinian scribe Nader Rizq.

Unwin (*The King's Speech*) is aiming to be the first U.K.-Israel co-production treaty between the two countries is up and running.

Unwin and Riklis, director of *Lemon Tree* and *The Way, Way Back*, will make *Zaytoun*, a script penned by the Palestinian scribe **Nader Rizq**.

The film tells the story of a 10-year-old Palestinian refugee who meets an Israeli boy in 1982. Their initial distrust develops into friendship as they travel through Lebanon on a journey to a place they both call home.

The film, which is in pre-production, is casting now and aims to shoot next year.

Unwin is taking full advantage of the newly ratified U.K.-Israel Film co-production treaty.

Unwin is a partner in the U.K. to "mutually support and encourage co-productions."

The treaty gives projects eligibility to apply for public funding in the U.K. such as U.K. Film Tax Relief and the BFI Film Fund.

French-speaking territories and international sales rights are being handled by Pathé Films, United King is handling Israeli distribution rights, while Prominent Pictures, H.W. Buffalo, BUF in Paris and British Film Company have joined as equity partners.

The project also garnered support from the BFI Film Fund and British Film Company during its development stage.

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Unwin said: "Multi-party co-productions are notoriously difficult to structure, with the new treaty we have a great template for how we might all collaborate to bring this amazing story to life. We are incredibly excited to be working with such outstanding Israeli and Palestinian talent."

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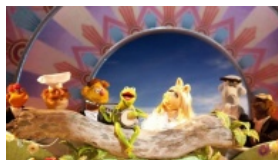
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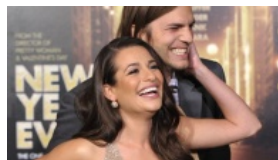
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