



# NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL

A film by Richard C. Ledes

**Running Time**.....60 minutes 45 seconds

**Year**.....2018

**Languages Spoken**.....Arabic, English, Greek, Kurdish and Spanish

**Subtitles**.....English

**Format**.....2.35 (SCOPE)

**Sales/Distribution**.....assistant.richardledes@gmail.com

**Trailer Online:** <https://youtu.be/U3veXg5YL8g>

**Feature Online:** <http://bit.ly/nhiifilm>

**Website:** [www.nohumanisillegalfilm.com](http://www.nohumanisillegalfilm.com)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/nohumanisillegalfilm>

**IMDB:** <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt5876990/>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/NHIIFilm>



## SYNOPSIS

Completed in 2018 and filmed entirely on the Greek island of Lesbos, **NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL** is a documentary about one of the darkest and most seminal political historical events of the start of the 21st century: the founding of a zone of exclusion within the Eurozone. The spring of 2018 marked the second anniversary of the European Commission, the ruling body of the Eurozone, radically revising its policy regarding undocumented migrants arriving on the Aegean islands of Greece. At that time the European Commission declared undocumented migrants be sent back to Turkey, the last country from which they traveled to reach Greece and hence Europe. Filmmaker Richard C. Ledes and his small crew arrived a few weeks later on the island of Lesbos—the main point of entry from Turkey into Europe. They began interviewing asylum seekers, mainly from Syria but from elsewhere as well, experiencing for the first time being detained indefinitely in Europe, many of them in horrendous conditions of overcrowding. The filmmaker connects his own family's experience as Pontian Greeks who left Turkey for the United States as refugees in the 1920s to the current situation of asylum seekers on the island. Through stunning cinematography of the island's natural beauty and archaeological ruins shot by Italian cinematographer Valentina Caniglia, Ledes connects the island's literary and historical importance in ancient Greece to the current conditions of refugees and the importance to Europe of what is happening to these people detained on its borders. These poetic and political leaps combined the compassion of the volunteers, the conflicting responses of the people living on the island and the testimony of the refugees themselves create a vital record of this major confrontation between Europe's ideals and its current choices.



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

**NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL**, completed in 2018, is a documentary I began “on the fly” in 2016. It is about the people who managed to cross from Turkey to the Greek island of Lesbos, as the nearest point of entry into Europe, and who, at the time of this writing, are still held indefinitely on the island. Quickly do a search using Google and the search terms “refugees on the the island of Lesbos” and you will see that the conditions of the undocumented immigrants on the island represent a level of dehumanisation rarely seen in Europe. My grandparents left Turkey for the United States in the 1920s as Pontian Greeks in the wake of a genocide. Most of the inhabitants of the island of Lesbos are descended from the same wave of ethnically Greek refugees as my grandparents. The island is also both where Sappho was born and wrote her poems and where a revolt in the 5th century BC took place that is described in detail by Thucydides in his History of the Peloponnesian War. This confluence of personal and historical associations made me feel I might offer a perspective to what is happening to people currently referred to as “refugees” or often as “undocumented migrants” that could do more than just reinforce conventional wisdom.

By chance, when I and my small crew arrived on the island in April of 2016, it was just after Europe had radically revised its policy towards the people arriving on the island from Turkey in overcrowded boats controlled by smugglers. Less than two weeks earlier the European Council had published its new policy, beginning: “All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey into Greek islands as from 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey.” Although the rest of the proclamation by the European Council offers many legal qualifications to this statement, the spirit of the new policy is contained in this opening sentence. Because of this change in policy, most of the people we met are detained on the island, in facilities not constructed for this purpose. This has continued to be the story of these people ever since; most of them are held in the main camp which can only





## ...CONTINUED

be described as a concentration camp; individuals and, in some cases, entire families, including young children, are held in horrendous conditions of contagious diseases, lack of sanitation, lack of potable running water and with hyper-overcrowding that at this time continues to grow worse. We listened to what people forced to leave their homes and come to Europe had to say about their lives, their families and their goals. The film aims to promote the agency of the refugees by speaking with them and listening to them. It further aims to connect its audience to the refugees as people deserving of respect, compassion and of solidarity.

In closing I want to thank my extraordinary collaborators that came from many countries, including France, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Romania and the United States. In particular, I want to single out the work of cinematographer Valentina Caniglia and the composers François and Louis Moutin. Caniglia's work in Cinemascope underlines that what is referred to as the crisis of the refugees is not about physical space but about the values of Europe. Rather than speaking without translation in languages most Europeans and Americans don't understand, we wanted to give the people space, both literally and figuratively, to tell their personal stories.

The jazz score composed by the Moutin brothers and played by the Moutin Factory Quintet beautifully illuminates the film's multiple cultural resonances. On the lives of people forced to flee their homes and cross national borders in search of safety, NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL provides an historical perspective that is also a personal one.

Richard C. Ledes  
October, 2018

# FILMMAKERS



**Ricard C. Ledes**  
DIRECTOR & PRODUCER

His first feature film *A HOLE IN ONE* (2004), starring Michelle Williams, about a woman who wants a lobotomy, originated in a piece of performance art he did based on the psychiatric records of his mother's brother who died while a patient at a V.A. psychiatric hospital. Ledes holds a doctorate in comparative literature from NYU, where he wrote a dissertation on the cultural significance of the rise of mental healthcare in the U.S. based on their treatment of veterans after WWII. During his research he volunteered at a center for severely mentally ill, assistant-directing their theater program. This combination of a personal connection to a film's theme with research into its broader significance remains a cornerstone to his work.

In 2004 *A HOLE IN ONE* was nominated for the Jury Award at the Tribeca Film Festival. In 2008 his feature fiction film *THE CALLER*, with Frank Langella and Elliott Gould, won Best NY Narrative Feature at the Tribeca Film Festival and in 2012 his feature fiction film *FRED WON'T MOVE OUT*, with Elliott Gould and Fred Melamed, was nominated for Best North American Independent Film at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival. His most recent film, *NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL*, is about refugees detained on the island of Lesbos, waiting to learn if they will be allowed to stay in Europe. He serves on the Cinema Committee of BAM (the Brooklyn Academy of Music).



**Valentina Caniglia**  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Caniglia has been credited as cinematographer on over 60 films. She has been the recipient of many awards including the Golden Dagger for Best Cinematography for a film premiered in the US at the Sundance Film Festival (*POMEGRANATES AND MYRRH*), Best Cinematography award at the Louisiana International Film Festival (*MADELINE'S OIL*) and best cinematography award at Hoboken International Film Festival (*SHADES OF LOVE*). Her work as cinematographer on the film *POMEGRANATES AND MYRRH* was recently the subject of an article in the magazine *American Cinematographer*.

# CREW & Participants

## Director and Producer:

Richard C. Ledes

## Director Photography:

Valentina Caniglia, AIC

## Original Score:

François Moutin & Louis Moutin

## Editor:

 Pete Street

Contributing Editor: M. Trevino

## Associate Producers:

Calder Classics

John Kordel Juliano

Lamprini Thoma

Pete Vlachos

## Associate Producer &

Assistant to the Director:

Florina Titz

Narrated by: Richard C. Ledes

## Interviews In Order of Appearance:

Boris Cheshirkov

Milan Vitek

Hamza Alrasheed

Ahmad Ayesh Al-Shaher

Shamshaid Jutt

Stavros Myrogiannis

Talal Al-Haj Ali

Eric Kempson

Hassan Zaheda

Rihad Zaheda

Nour Abed

Ahmad Al-Hamawi

Al-Nada Family

Mohammad Arkam

Nadia Essa Family

Faten Shahoud

Abdul Razzak Zarzur

Orouha Qassim Jabbas

Alkhatib Family

Dimitrios Pappachrysos

Peter Mylonas

Dimitria Kalogiannis

Themis Tsakos

Evangelos Kritikos

Kostas Magnisalis

Andres Duran

Razwan Ashiq

Maria Gavriel

Fani Galinov

Esther Camps

Mania-Maria Bikof

Abdul Ruman Darouich

Ben Mills

Gianna Xenaki

Erik Gehardsson

Talal Shahoud

## Sound Recordist:

 Tammy

Douglas

## Camera First Assistant:

Giuseppe Trudi

## Fixer and Greek Translator:

Otis Doudos

## Driver:

 Babis Konstantidellis

## Substitute Fixer and Greek

Translator: Menelaos

Tzafalias

## Additional Translations:

Despina Lalaki

Rami Rabayah

## Supervising Sound Editor/

Re-recording Mixer: Brian

Langman

## Dialogue Editor:

 Jeff Hinton

## Special FX Editor:

 Michael

Poppleton

## Narration Engineer:

 Chad

Dougatz

## Post Production Audio

Facility: Promedia NY

Recording Studio: Promedia

On-Line Facility: Harbor

Picture Company

Colorist: Erik Choquette

Title Designer: Vasilis Sinanidis

Animator: Ryan Carter

## Legal Counsel:

Pryor Cashman LLP

W. Wilder Knight II

F. Robert Stein

Nir Gozal

## Social Media Team:

Lea Lagan

Sofia Licata

Rafael Pacheco

Robert Pigott

## Music:

Moutin Factory Quintet

Upright Bass: François

Moutin

Drums: Louis Moutin

Guitar: Manu Codija

Alto & Soprano

## Saxophones:

Christophe Monniot

Piano: Paul Lay

## Quatuor Lumos:

Violin 1: Yaoré Talibart

Violin 2: Jeroen Suys

Alto: Anna Sypniewsky

Cello: Jérémy Garbard

Double Bass: Jérémy

Bruyère

## Recording Sound Engineer:

Julien Birot

## Recording Assistant:

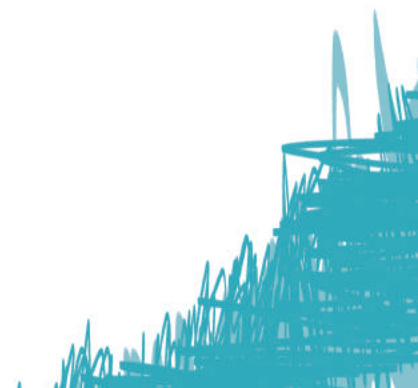
Arthur Gouret

## Recording Assistant:

Antoine Martin

## Mixing Sound Engineer:

Julien Birot



NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL

[www.nohumanisillegalfilm.com](http://www.nohumanisillegalfilm.com)