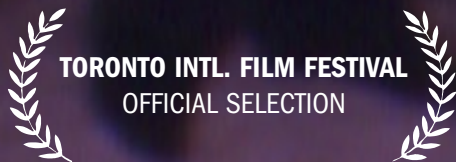




**IDFA**  
SILVER CUB COMPETITION



**TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL**  
SHORT DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION



**TORONTO INTL. FILM FESTIVAL**  
OFFICIAL SELECTION

# BAGHDAD TWIST

A NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA PRODUCTION





# BAGHDAD TWIST

## THE FILM

It could be anywhere. A mid-1960s' wedding reception captured on Super-8 film. Narrow ties. Bouffant hairdos. Flickering images of a joyful couple and smiling guests. A band plays and people fill the dance floor to do the latest craze: the twist.

But this is Baghdad. And for the city's Jewish community, it is an evening of joy during a prolonged period of persecution. Within a few years, most of the wedding guests pictured in the film will have fled the city, never to return. Within a decade, the community, which has existed since Babylonian times, will be all but gone.

For filmmaker Joe Balass and his mother, Valentine, a memory is recalled, shared, constructed, from the fragments that remain.

"You were just a little kid. We left the house. You should see it. It's like someone is still living there. The beds, the tables, the furniture, the food in the fridge—everything. You thought it was a game. You were not even four."

**Baghdad Twist** is a visual memoir of one family's life in Iraq before escaping to a new home in Canada in the fall of 1970. Featuring a never-before-seen collection of archival images, home movies and family photographs from Baghdad, the film pulls back the curtain on Iraq's once thriving Jewish community, its perilous final years and its remarkable ability to find solace in the shadow of fear.

Running time: 33 min 36 s

**C 0107 252**

## THE FILMMAKER



Joe Balass is an independent filmmaker working in fiction and documentary. He lives in Montreal, where he operates the film production company Compass Productions Inc. He also works as a freelance editor, photographer and cameraman.

Balass was born in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1966 and after escaping with his family at the age of four, he eventually settled in Canada. He has produced and directed a number of award-winning films and videos, including *The Devil in the Holy Water* and *Nana, George & Me*. He expresses a very spontaneous blend of seriousness and humour in his approach to filmmaking. At present, Joe Balass is working on a number of documentary projects as well as a fiction feature.

**DIRECTOR JOE BALASS**  
**PRODUCER GERMAINE YING GEE WONG**  
**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS RAVIDA DIN, SALLY BOCHNER**  
**EDITOR ANNIE JEAN**  
**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER AISLING CHIN-YEE**  
**SOUND RECORDING DAVID BALLARD**  
**SOUND EDITING DON AYER**  
**ORIGINAL MUSIC DINO GIANCOLA, JANET LUMB**

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