



Presents

# UNIDENTIFIED

**A film by Haifaa Al Mansour**

101 mins, Saudi Arabia, 2025

Language: Arabic

## **Distribution**

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## **CAST**

Noelle	MILA ALZHRANI
Majid	SHAFI ALHARTHI
Ali	AZIZ GHARBAWI
Jude	OTHOUB SHARAR
Podcaster	ADWA ALASIRI
Mishal	ABDULLAH ALQAHTANI
Amina	AOUHOD ALJADAAN
Dania	SOMAYA ALSHAREEF
Principal Two	NOUF AL ABDULLAH
Police Chief	MESHAL ALMUTAIRI
Amal	AMAL SAMI
Arif	MISHAL ALEANZI
Mohammed	BADER MOHSIN
Bushra	FEA ALSHAEA
Noelle's Mother	FATMA ALSHAREEF

## **CREW**

Directed by	HAIFAA AL MANSOUR
Written and Produced by	BRAD NIEMANN
	HAIFAA AL MANSOUR
Executive Producers	RENA RONSON
	ROSALIE
	SWEDLIN
Director of Photography	MONTY ROWAN
Production Designer	MARTIN SULLIVAN
Edited By	RAFAEL NUR
	STEVE COHEN
Music By	AMELIA WARNER and SAM THOMPSON
Costume Designer	SARAH AL AQEEL
Line Producer	KHALID AMESKANE
Production Supervisor	YOUSSEF JABER
Casting By	HANAN AL DAHLAWI
World Sales	MEMENTO
North American Sales	UNITED TALENT AGENCY
Middle Eastern Sales	AL MANSOURESTABLISHMENT

Saudi Arabia, 2025, 101 min, Digital, Dolby Digital, Arabic

## Director's Statement

I see “Unidentified” as the completion of my “Saudi trilogy” which includes “Wadjda” (the first film ever shot in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and “The Perfect Candidate.” The three films are connected by female protagonists that step out of their expected roles and identities to challenge a system that is stacked against them (*and they all share the same fictional surname- Al Safan*).

In crafting this story, I wanted to explore the layers of identity that define women, particularly in the Middle East, where our identities are predefined and laid out for us from a very early age. I wanted to confront the implicit violence at the heart of these predefined roles, and expose the dangerous consequences of gender inequality in every society. When our lives as women are valued at a disproportionately lesser status, it is so much easier to dismiss, conceal, trivialize, or condone the violence perpetrated against us. In many cases, women feel so trapped within these patriarchal systems that they feel they have no choice but to engage in the same dehumanizing violence the society perpetuates against them. I wanted to tackle these realities in a way that felt authentic and true, without judgment or prescription. I want my characters' actions to speak for themselves.

This story is about the masks of expectation women wear, both externally- in our makeup, veils, abayas and niqabs (face coverings), and internally - through the social, religious and tribal expectations that form the rest of the picture the world sees of us. I hope this film challenges those expectations and shows that, when all of these layers are stripped away, we are far from anonymous or “unidentified.” We are complicated, contradictory, living and breathing souls who are every bit as unique and undefined as those who live without the same cultural encumbrances. We have stories worth telling.

But ultimately, I want this film to be entertaining! It is first and foremost a mystery thriller that aims to take the viewer on an exhilarating journey into the mysterious and hidden world of modern Saudi women. What I want the characters of “Unidentified” to do is introduce my unique and unknown country to the rest of the world through a cast of universally relatable characters that bring us along with them on unpredictable journeys.

- Haifaa Al Mansour

## **Synopsis**

Twenty-nine year old Noelle Al Saffan moves to the city to start a new life after her divorce. She's obsessed with "true crime" podcasts and takes a clerical job in a police station digitizing their old files. The work is mundane but, everything changes when a teenage girl's body is discovered in the desert. The officers need a female present when they investigate the body, and Noelle jumps at the chance to participate in police work outside of the copy room. With no clues to who the girl was or where she came from, and no missing persons' report filed, it seems that the victim's family is ashamed of the circumstances surrounding her death and don't want their personal issues aired in public.

Noelle is haunted by the girl's senseless and mysterious death, and despite her lack of a badge or any authority to do so, she launches her own investigation to identify the victim and solve her murder. Using her knowledge about the hidden world of Saudi women, she pieces together a picture of who the girl was. She befriends a group of young women who seem to have inside information on the case and, following the advice of her favorite podcast, investigates everyone who might be connected to the crime. Despite repeated warnings from the Police Chief to stay off the case, Noelle doggedly pursues the mystery, putting herself in danger and challenging her preconceived notions about women in the Kingdom, the threats they face, and even the motivations that connect her to the victim.

## **Extended Synopsis – SPOILER WARNING!**

After her divorce, 29-year-old Noelle Al Saffan leaves her family home to begin a new life in the city, determined to prove her independence despite her brothers' objections. She rents a bare apartment, finds comfort in a favorite true-crime podcast, and takes a clerical job at a police station. There she bonds with her boss Majid, who shares her fascination with unsolved mysteries.

When the body of an unidentified schoolgirl is discovered, Noelle is shaken by the indifference surrounding the case. The body goes unclaimed, because families often refuse to claim missing daughters to avoid the negative reaction from the community towards behavior they deem "inappropriate." Noelle becomes obsessed with ensuring this girl's life is not erased.

Her search through schools and neighborhoods is met with silence and resistance. Finally, she finds a lead in an unexpected place: one of the better schools in an affluent neighborhood. It doesn't start out promising- the principal is indignant that her school would even be considered as the source of such a scandalous death. But on her way out she connects with two rebellious students, Dania and Jude, who hint that the girl who vanished was from their school.

Later that night she gets a text. It is a video of the missing girl smoking shisha with her friends. Noelle decides to visit the shisha place in the video, and sees Dania there with a friend. Dania explains that a lot of girls are 'burned out' by how much control their families have over their lives, and often get caught up with the wrong people when looking for adventure. She finally reveals a clue to Noelle as she is leaving: the girl was named "Amal."

A teacher at the school cautiously tells Noelle that the girl was from the Sulmania neighborhood. There, Noelle finds a teenager named Mishal, making handmade religious signs to hang around the neighborhood. She confronts him, but he says he does not talk to strange women. Before she can press him she is confronted and rebuked by a police officer from her precinct investigating the case. She knows she will now face consequences with her superiors.

Majid chastises Noelle for continuing to meddle in the case. She is adamant that she needs to continue and shows him text messages between "Amal" and a boy named "Noah." Someone sent her screenshots of the conversations. They suspect a male relative found out about her illicit activities and "took matters into his own hands." Majid tells her she is acting crazy and needs to stop asking people about the case.

Noelle refuses to give up. She concocts a plan to follow the girl's family home from an abaya shop where Amal had an abaya being tailored. After following them home from the mall, Noelle talks her way into the house to meet the girl's mother, Amina, saying she moved into the building next door. Amina becomes agitated when the conversation turns to her family and quickly asks Noelle to leave. As she departs, Noelle sees one of Mishal's religious signs right outside the house. Later at the office, Noelle goes through Amina's social media and finds a connection to Mishal! He is a cousin of the girl that died.

Noelle goes back to the mosque where he she first saw Mishal and discretely searches through his car. She pushes back a blanket to reveal a huge bloodstain. When she returns with Majid to arrest Mishal, he makes her wait outside. She ends up finding him on her own, and pursuing him through a series of abandoned houses. She finds him terrified, with a gun to his head, mumbling "I left her!" Noelle convinces him to put down the gun and turn himself in.

The next day Noelle comes out of her house to find her car has been completely destroyed by fire. We can only assume it was retribution from Mishal's family. Fearing he will be released on a technicality, Noelle goes to talk with Mishal in his cell. She taunts him saying most people will think what he did was right, that Amal deserved it. Mishal fumes, until he finally snaps and tells her how close he was to Amal, and how devastated he was by her death. She isn't sure what to believe.

Back in the office Majid shows her the security camera footage of the woman that burned her car. She is furious with Mishal's family and decides to put an end to it all. She shows up at Jude's school, and the principal lets her talk with Jude in the hope of avoiding a

scandal. Jude admits that Amal was going to meet with a boy when she was struck by a car and killed. She signs a statement saying that she didn't see the car that hit Amal, and Mishal was only called to help get rid of the body.

Finally, Noelle goes again to Amina's house. She shows Amina the signed statement from Jude. Amina is still resistant, so Noelle gives it one last shot.. She reveals that she recently lost a baby girl. She tells her that arranging a funeral for her daughter helped her deal with her despair. Amina is touched by her story and finally agrees to claim the body, ending the investigation and closing the case.

Noelle packs up her things in her office and says she has joined the police Academy to become a real officer. Majid says goodbye and gives her a package that was dropped off for her. It is the abaya that Amal had on hold at the shop, a gift from Amina.

Noelle returns to the desert. She nails up the sign that Mishal was painting in his jail cell to a telephone pole. "I Seek Forgiveness from God." At the top of the wadi she unfurls Amal's abaya and releases it, letting it disappear into the strong wind.

It seems like the end right? Wrong! Majid later listens to a true crime episode about a fiancé that killed his girlfriend. It piques his interest. Back at the office he talks with Jude on the phone. Jude says that Noelle convinced her to say that she didn't know what kind of car the killer drove. What? She must be mistaken. As Majid talks with her another officer says the file for Amal's murder is missing. Majid tells him to call the police academy to ask Noelle about it. He then finally asks Jude- did you see the car? She says she did see the car- it was a grey Honda! He looks up at the picture of Noelle's car being burned. It is a grey Honda. He looks closely at the woman doing it- it is Noelle! The officer says that Noelle didn't sign up for the academy, they have never heard of her. Majid looks at the video of the girls smoking shisha. In a reflection he sees the person taking the video. It is Noelle! In a series of flashbacks we see that she was the one that killed Amal, and that she wanted to investigate the murder to make sure she wasn't caught. Amal was supposed to marry her ex-husband, but she lured her into a trap and killed her. We see Noelle driving off into the sunset, tossing papers from Amal's file into the wind, letting them flutter out into the vast desert as she drives away.

## **About The Director**

Haifaa Al Mansour is the first female filmmaker from Saudi Arabia and the most prominent cinematic figure from the Kingdom. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Literature from the American University in Cairo and completed a Master's in Directing and Film Studies from the University of Sydney under the prestigious Endeavor Scholarship Program. Starting with the success of her three short films, as well as the international acclaim of her award winning 2005 documentary "Women Without Shadows", and continuing through her continued work in the International Film and Television industry, Haifaa has influenced and inspired a new wave of Saudi filmmakers.

Al Mansour's acclaimed 2012 film "Wadjda" received numerous awards and accolades at festivals around the world, including winning the Audience Award at the Los Angeles Film Festival, and was nominated for a BAFTA for Best Foreign Language Film. She was awarded the 2016 Kant World Citizen Prize in Freiburg Germany, as well as the German Prize for Children's Literature for her young adult novel based on the film entitled "Das Madchen Wadjda."

In 2017 Al Mansour directed "Mary Shelley," starring Elle Fanning and Douglas Booth, about the love affair between Percy and Mary Shelley as she wrote Frankenstein. She followed that film in 2018 with the Netflix film "Nappily Ever After" starring Sanaa Latham. She later premiered a short film at Venice Film Festival through Miu Miu's "Women's Tales" series entitled "The Wedding Singer's Daughter. In 2019 she directed "The Perfect Candidate," about a female doctor who runs for political office in Saudi Arabia. Throughout that time she directed a variety of episodes for television and streaming services, including "Motherland" for Freeform, "The Good Lord Bird" for Showtime, "The Society" and "Archive 81" for Netflix, "The Wilds " "The Sinner" and "Bosch: Legacy" at Amazon, "Tales of the Walking Dead" and "Mayfair Witches" for AMC, and "City on Fire" for Apple.

## **About The Cast**

Mila is Al-Zahrani (Noelle Al Safan) is a Saudi actress who started her career with the role of Dr. Maryam Alsafan in the 2019 film "The Perfect Candidate." Since that time she has appeared in numerous television series and feature films, including the popular series "Boxing Girls," "The Fates Hotel," "Cello" and most recently "Hobal." She has also built a successful modeling career, serving as a brand ambassador for a variety of brands across the Middle East region, such as Boucheron and Film Al Ula. She graduated from King Abdullah University of Science and Technology with a degree in computer science.