

**C-WEATHER PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS:**

# Worth a *Thousands* Words

Genre: Family Melodrama  
U.S. Release Date: May 11, 2015  
Running Time: Seven Minutes  
Place: King Center (CENIFEST)  
University of Colorado Denver (UCD)  
Cast: Tony Catanese & Raquel Matthews  
  
Writer/Director  
& Producer: Christina Weathersby

## ONE LINER:

Journalist Lila Cohen lands an interview with her biological father, however, Lila's father has yet to recognize that she is the same daughter that he gave up for adoption twenty-seven years ago.

## PLOT SYNOPSIS:

C-Weather Productions presents *Worth a Thousand Words* a story that is submerged with compassion, a desire for the truth and a hope for a better future. This drama is a reflection of the emotional experience when a grown woman meets her parent for the first time.

Lila Cohen never had the chance to meet her biological father, so, when she lands an interview with him, she chooses to put on a professional face to find out the truth behind why he gave her up. The account behind her adoption comes to life the moment that Lila's probing questions trigger Yusif's enthralling past.

*Worth a Thousand Words* stars Raquel Matthews (as Lila) and Tony Catanese (as Yusif). This short film was written, directed and produced by Christina Weathersby.

This thought provoking drama is about the search for acceptance, love and the desire to know of family, *Worth a Thousand Words* on May 11, 2015.

Worth a Thousand Words  
an original screenplay by  
Christina Weathersby

FINAL DRAFT

FITV 1550-003

DEC 9, 2014

FADE IN:

EXT. YUSIF'S HOME - AFTERNOON

LILA, 30s, is Israeli and Ethiopian decent with long thick wayward tresses. She loves meeting new people, especially for her journalism job, but has a challenging time with keeping her opinions under control.

YUSIF, late 50s, has a unique clothing choice and warm olive skin to reflect a traveler's appearance. His carefree spirit becomes silenced while under high levels of stress.

Lila's eyes allude confidants as she grabs a large PURSE from her car and makes her way to the front entrance of YUSIF's home. Lila reads the name YUSIF COHEN on the DOOR PLAQUE. She rings the door bell.

INT. INSIDE HOME - AFTERNOON

Yusif opens the door, shakes Lila's hand and welcomes her inside.

YUSIF

Lila! The voice of the Youth. I have heard a lot about you. Pleasure to finally meet you.

Yusif shows Lila into his living room and points to an end-table where she can lay her stuff down.

LILA

Oh... the media has a knack for hyping things up.

Yusif walks towards the kitchen as Lila sets up her TAPE RECORDER and takes out her NOTE-PAD. Yusif speaks before entering the kitchen.

YUSIF

Would you like some tea?

LILA

Yes please...

Yusif walks into the kitchen.

YUSIF (O.S.)

I have some chai tea already made, is that okay?

LILA

Sounds great!

Yusif walks back into the living room carrying a cup of tea in one hand and a small plate of cookies in another.

LILA

Thank you!

Lila takes a polite sip of her tea.

LILA (CONT'D)

I'm going to start the interview if you don't mind.

Yusif nods his head and smiles as Lila presses play on her tape recorder and smiles back.

LILA (CONT'D)

As I mentioned on the phone, my story is about owners of non-profits who overcame some sort of personal grief. So why don't you tell me a little bit about yourself and the beginnings of your organization?

Yusif sits relaxed in his chair and gives a confirming nod.

YUSIF

Uhhh...Let's see... where do I begin. My parents are both Israeli jews... very religious. As a teen I became secular in their eyes. So... I moved out of my parents home when I was doing my time as an I.D.F. soldier. I witnessed my European family move to Israel after experiencing anti-semitism... So I like to think that I have experienced discrimination on a very personal level. Because of my heritage and because of marrying my late wife....

LILA

That's very insightful. But Mr. Cohen, may I pause you there for just a sec?... So... what turned you to photography?

YUSIF

When I was 27 I experienced a traumatic event of my own. That's when I turned to photography. I searched to find the beauty beyond the sorrow... Like my mother always told me growing up.... It didn't help.

(MORE)

YUSIF (CONT'D)

So friend of mine suggested that I support those who experienced loss. Kinda cathartic you know?

Lila nods her head as she finishes jotting down notes.

LILA

Interesting. So what made your younger-self turn towards building a non-profit? Safe Haven? Isn't that what it's called?

YUSIF

Well.. It took time but after a event I needed something to hold on to. It had to be more than photography. I explored different options related to terrorist attacks... Through the help of a friend I landed on helping kids through art.

Yusif's tone changes

YUSIF (CONT'D)

Kids, who had seen or experienced terrorism up close, like I had.

Yusif is in a trance now. His eyes seem to fade away, reflecting deep sorrow. Lila clears her throat.

LILA

And what did that do for you?

Yusif snaps back into reality. Throughout the interview Yusif continues to slip into a trance every now and then, a result of all that he has been through all these years.

YUSIF

Well, for one I wasn't drinking as much

Yusif chuckles with a hint of sadness.

YUSIF (CONT'D)

Then of course, it helped me to look at life through a different lens. How shall I say it, therapeutic. It was therapeutic for them and for me. You see?

LILA

So let me backtrack a little, Mr. Cohen... Could you describe that traumatic experience that was the decisive moment for you?

SILENCE.

Yusif's face expression changes to showing a hint of sadness. He takes a quick sip from his water glass and shifts his body to signify a transition in conversation.

YUSIF

She was just five days from her due date... Rachel that is. We decided to not have an ultrasound... our relationship was a bit of a game. She wanted a girl and I said I wanted a boy... even though I secretly agreed with her. We had bought the bassinet... she named the child Natalie...

Lila shifts her body and makes eye contact with Yusif.

YUSIF (CONT'D)

Within minutes .... everything blew to ashes. 12 children. 15 women. All dead in one blow. By this suicide bomber on a bus heading to Jerusalem. One of the victims was my Rachel.

BEAT.

YUSIF (CONT'D)

But God revived my baby. I know she is somewhere out there doing good.

PAUSE.

Lila's expression changes now. She sifts her stance. As if to get more serious. Peers into his eyes, seeking answers.

LILA

(sarcastic)

Must have been hard being single dad right?

YUSIF

I'm confident to say that God spared her life for something amazing. But unfortunately I did not raise her.

(MORE)

YUSIF (CONT'D)

I was not able to function appropriately because of my mental state... So, I gave her to a family that could take better care of her.

LILA

I see... So you chose an outside source... more convenient than asking a family member I guess.

YUSIF

I tried to...

LILA interrupts

LILA

You just gave her away...

YUSIF

Well, it's not like I just gave her away to a stranger. I did what was best under the circumstances.

LILA

Except for the child.

YUSIF

Well it was all FOR the child. I would drink all day! I blew away Rachel's savings. I was not good as a man. Let alone as a father... Babies are huge responsibilities!

Lila looks around

LILA

Nice house. So obviously, money wasn't an issue.

Yusif snaps. His anger is surfacing. As he feels judged.

YUSIF

Wait... So how old are you? 25? 26? That's how old I was when all this happened to me. Do you understand?

Yusif starts coughing as he talks. He can barely finish his sentences.

LILA

Yes I do. I also understand that it's a biological father's.

YUSIF

Don't patronize me! I did what was best under the circumstances. Have you ever experienced a terrorist attack? Experienced your life end within seconds? All you do is sit in a fancy cubical and write stories that you have never experienced. Never felt first hand your body trembling from news of death! Do you have any idea what's its like to have PTSD?

Yusif gets a hold of his chair-rest. Refuses Lila's help. Goes into the kitchen for water.

INT KITCHEN CONTINUOS:

Yusif is coughing. He pours himself a cup of water.

INT LIVING ROOM CONT:

Lila is frustrated so she stands up to grab a PICTURE ALBUM from the far end of the room. She sits down as she flips through the pages. Lila lands on a photo of a baby girl wearing a bright BLUE DRESS. She pauses as her gut wrenching feelings show up on her face.

INT KITCHEN CONT:

Yusif is leaning against the kitchen counter attempting to calm down. He quickly opens his kitchen cabinet and takes his medication. He slowly sips his glass of water and then walks towards the living room with a deep hint of sadness.

INT LIVING ROOM CONT:

Yusif comes back into the room to see Lila gone. He notices two pictures - identical on the table. And a BUSINESS CARD of Lila. He sits down and reads the business card.

YUSIF

Lila Natalie Cohen... Natalie? My  
Natalie?

Tears form around Yusif's eyes. He walks towards the door.

EXT. YUSIF'S FRONT HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Lila turns around and looks at Yusif right before she gets into her car. Yusif looks at her through the screen door. They make eye contact.

FADE OUT: