

✦ A RUNNING GUIDE TO BECOMING YOUR OWN HERO ✦

FINISH LINE



A Documentary by Eliana Abravanel

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Epiphanies usually come when you least expect them. Mine came when I read “What I talk about, when I talk about running” by Haruki Murakami, chosen for its intriguing title as much as its convenient size at the airport bookstore, right before a transatlantic flight. Approaching middle age, with three fast-growing children and a family business that had to be sold, I had already taken the first leap towards change by going to film school at the ripe old age of 48.

The book - a non-fiction reflection on running and the life of the writer - seemed to highlight the urgency to push for more change, putting everything into a new perspective. So I started running...

“Finish Line” is the story of three vintage marathoners who caught my attention in various races, breaking the mold of your average long-distance runner. I’m not sure whether it was their blissed-out expression or the look of recognition as they turned and nodded in my direction, indicating I was one of “them”. So I started documenting their lives, hoping to understand what bound us together. Our worlds were light years apart, yet running unlocked every door, until I was finally able to put my finger on it. We had all somehow managed to nab that perfect pace that renders the finish line irrelevant. Since then, every finish line has become a new starting point and this documentary is a homage to every late bloomer out there who found the strength to start fresh.



SYNOPSIS

Crisscrossing between the lives of three dedicated 65+ marathon runners living in opposite corners of Greece, this documentary covers a lot of ground but is never in a hurry to get anywhere. Idomeneas is a robust Cretan who runs the Athens Marathon barefoot, wearing a full suit of armor. Andonis is a shepherd who discovered his talent for long distances after he accidentally outran a wolf. At 85, Stelios is the oldest marathoner in Greece. The older he gets, the more races he runs, chasing after his own version of immortality. They all share a unique running philosophy, that's intricately entwined with their inner lives. Every time they cross the finish line, they're one step closer to becoming their own heroes.



THE CHARACTERS

IDOMENEAS

Idomeneas, a robust 65-year-old Cretan, first made an impression when he passed director Eliana Abravanel on the Athens Authentic Marathon course wearing a full suit of armor and no shoes. Idomeneas started running barefoot in 2006, after he woke up from a 22-day coma, right when his family had emptied out his apartment and ordered his casket. The only reason he survived, is because nobody wanted to take responsibility for pulling the plug. Idomeneas shuns competition and only takes part in one footrace every year. His armor is a nod to the selfless discipline of Ancient Greece and he's a paradigm of simplicity, teaching everyone around him to always expect the unexpected.

STELIOS

Stelios is an old savant. At 85 he's the oldest Greek athlete to take part in the Athens Authentic Marathon and his approach to long-distance running is completely transcendental. The older he gets the more races he runs, as if he's rehearsing for his grand exit. Somewhere inside his head he has already conquered that final frontier and is running full speed ahead towards eternal freedom. He's a gentle, thoughtful man, who's likely to convince you that marathon running is the closest thing to immortality, without even trying.

ANDONIS

Andonis had his 15 minutes of fame when a local TV station discovered his unlikely penchant for long-distance running. At 69, he and his wife Thodora live in a rural community, where people only run when chased. He's an old-school shepherd who can recite the names of each and every one of his sheep and only discovered his latent sports talent when he accidentally outran a wolf who had seized one of his younglings. The people in his village think he's soft in the head, but he thinks nothing of hitchhiking his way to the nearest race on a whim. If there's one lesson to be learned, it's staying true to yourself against all odds.



ΜΑΡΑΘΩΝ



2500 ΧΡΟΝΙΑ

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Eliana Abravanel is a filmmaker, visual artist and long-distance runner. Born in Greece, she divides her time between Athens and Tel Aviv. After completing her studies in Economics and History in England and Greece in the 80s, she went back to school and graduated from the film studies department of the New York College in Athens in 2009. Her first feature documentary "Roughcut", premiered in competition at the Thessaloniki Documentary Festival in 2013, shortly before receiving a commercial release. Her latest non-fiction project "Finish Line" is an alternative sports documentary for late bloomers, like herself, who watched their lives change with every race.

2016 Finish Line (feature doc)

2013 Roughcut (feature doc)

2010 The Switch (fiction short)

2008 Cake (fiction short)

CREW

Cinematography and Sound by **Dimitris Kasimatis GSC**

Editing by **Dimitris Peponis**

Sound Design and Mixing by **Leandros Ntounis**

Associate Producer **Despina Pavlaki**

Produced, Written and Directed by **Eliana Abravanel**



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