

How to Read a Film: *Case #1 Case #2*
ORIAS Viewing Guide

Kiarostami

- Kiarostami was born in Tehran in 1940.
- He was trained as a fine artist and worked as a graphic designer before transitioning to making commercials.
- He joined Kanun (the Centre for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults) in 1969. His job was to make films about children's education.
- Kiarostami continued working at Kanun until 1989. His last film there was *Homework*.

About Kanun, where Kiarostami worked from 1969 to 1989: "In 1969, he joined Kanun. "We were supposed to make films that dealt with childhood problems," says Kiarostami. "At the beginning it was just a job, but it was the making of me as an artist. The important thing is that I didn't work in commercial films. I look at these 20 years as the best period of my professional life." Iranian film historians Shahzad Rahmati and Majid Sedqi argue: "Film-makers who worked at the centre faced no financial restraints or problems, and thus could easily engage in experimentation with audacity, vigour and intellectual innovations." Especially during the final years of the last Shah's reign, when the Iranian film industry was subject to restrictions, this was a creative oasis." ([The Guardian, April 16, 2005](#))

Timeline

1978 – 1979	Kiarostami creates first version of Case #1, Case #2
February 1, 1979	Ayatollah Khomeini returns to Iran; filming was almost complete
1979 – 1980	Kiarostami reorganizes film into current moral dilemma form; conducts new interviews with members of various Revolutionary factions and parties.
1980	Film is released and wins a prize at the Tehran Festival of Films for Children and Young Adults; soon thereafter film is banned.

Post-Viewing Discussion Questions:

1. How does Kiarostami make use of the film-within-a-film? Does it affect your sense of intimacy or distance from his interviewees? Does it affect your sense of the passage of time? Does it make the film feel more or less real?
2. How would you describe the mood of the film? Are the interviewees being interrogated with you, as viewer, in a position of power over them? Or is your relationship to them intimate with you, as viewer, invited to reflect along with them? What is it about the cinematography that makes you feel this way?
3. Why identify some speakers before they talk, others mid-conversation, and others after they've spoken? How does this choice make use of the political context in which the film was created?
4. Do you note any connection between an interviewee's title and his or her point of view?

Interviewees

Case #1, part 1

Noreeddin (*Nooreddin*) Zarrin Kelk (father of one boy)

Mohammad Hossein Gharavi (father of Farhad, eventual informer)

Ali Mafkheri (father of boy)

Karim Zarrineh (father of boy)

Ali Barati (father of Mohammadreza, boy who gets reported)

Mehdi Azadbakht (father of boy)

Case #1, part 2

Kamal (*Kharrazi*) Kharazi

Gholam Hossein

Nader Ebrahimi

Gholam Reza (*Gholamreza*) Emami

Ehteram Boroumand (woman)

Ali Mousavi Garmaroudi

Masoud Kimaiei (*Masud Kimiai*)

Ezzatollah Entezami

Jaleh Sarshar (woman)

Abdolkarim Lahiji (*Lahidji*)

Rob (*Rabbi*) David Shoft (*Shofet*)

Bishop Ardok Manoukian

Iraj Jahanshahi

Sadeegh Ghotbzadeh (*Sadegh Qotbzadeh*)

Mahmoud (*Mahmood*) Enayat

Ebrahim Yazdi

Noureddin Kianouri

Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali

Case #2

*seen here for the first time

Iraj Jahanshahi

Gholam Hossein

Kamal (*Kharrazi*) Kharazi

Gholam Reza (*Gholamreza*) Emami

Nader Ebrahimi

Ebrahim Yazdi (not named when shown this time)

*Hojjatoleslam Ali Golzadeh Ghafouri

Rob David Shoft (*Rabbi David Shofet*)

Ali Mousavi Garmaroudi

Masoud Kimaiei (*Masud Kimiai*)

Ezzatollah Entezami

*Hedayatullah Matindaftari (*Hedayatollah/Hedayat Matin-Daftari*)

Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali

Sadeegh Ghotbzadeh (*Sadegh Qotbzadeh*)

Jaleh Sarshar (woman)

Abdolkarim Lahiji (*Lahidji*)

Noureddin Kianouri

Hojjatoleslam Ali Golzadeh Ghafouri

Mahmoud (*Mahmood*) Enayat

Who's Who (up through 1979)

Ezzatollah Entezami – One of the most prominent actors in Iranian cinema, went to film school in Germany. By the time of this filming, he had already been in at least 13 films and TV shows.

Abdolkarim Lahiji (Lahidji) – Lawyer and human rights activist. Lahiji was a member of the Confederation of Iranian Students, a set of political organizations that opposed the Shah. They were made up of student groups outside Iran. In the 1960s he was also in the National Front, the political organization originally founded by Mohammad Mossadegh. By the mid-1960s, the National Front was largely dismantled by SAVAK (the state intelligence agency).

When he was in law school, in the 1950s, Lahiji was twice arrested and imprisoned for asserting rights to free speech. In the early 1970s, he worked internationally to publicize human rights abuses in Iran under the Shah's government and then worked as a lawyer in defense of political prisoners. In 1978, Lahiji was bombed and physically attacked by state security agents.

After the fall of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1979, Lahiji declined offers to become justice minister and minister of education in PM Barzagan's new government. At government request, he drafted a democratic constitution for Iran, but it was not adopted.

Rob (Rabbi) David Shoft (Shofet) – In 1979, David Shofet's father was the chief rabbi of Tehran and the Jewish community's liaison to the Shah, then (when he came to power) Ayatollah Khomeini.

Sadeegh Ghotbzadeh (Sadegh Qotbzadeh) – As a student in the 1950s, Ghotbzadeh was active in the National Front (like Lahiji). He left Iran in 1959 and lived abroad until 1979. During that time he stayed connected to anti-Shah political activities and activists in and out of Iran. He attended the Foreign Service School at Georgetown University, but had to leave the US before he graduated because of his anti-Shah activities.

After leaving the US he lived in and established anti-Shah organizations in various places in the Middle East, including Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq (where he met Ayatollah Khomeini). In 1978 he joined Khomeini in Paris, then returned to Iran with Khomeini in 1979. He served as spokesman for Khomeini and also ran National Iranian Radio and Television, from which he purged women, royalists, and leftists. Women protested his actions and two women attempted to kill him.

Ebrahim Yazdi – As a student in the 1950s, joined the National Resistance Movement of Iran (which opposed the Shah). He traveled to the US to study in 1961, and was a member of the Freedom Movement of Iran, along with Sadeegh Ghotbzadeh. Like Ghotbzadeh, Yazdi went to the Middle East in 1963 to help establish anti-Shah movements, but in 1967 he returned to the US and earned his PhD in biochemistry at Baylor University (Texas). He was tried in absentia by Iran in 1975, so he stayed in the US until 1977. When Khomeini went to Paris in 1978, Yazdi joined him and Sadeegh Ghotbzadeh there. He returned to Iran along with Khomeini and became minister of foreign affairs in the interim Bazargan government, as well as head of the *Kayhan* newspaper.

When the US embassy was taken over and the hostage crisis began in November of 1979, Yazdi broke with Khomeini over his support for the takeover. He resigned his post and additionally publicly objected to the actions of the Revolutionary Courts, which were engaged in secret trials and executions of members of the former government under the Shah.

Noureddin Kianouri – Kianouri earned a PhD in construction engineering in 1939, in Germany. He returned to Iran, where he worked as an architect. He and his wife, the feminist and activist Maryam Firouz, both joined the newly formed communist Tudeh Party. The party gained in popularity during the 1940s, but was blamed for an assassination attempt against the Shah in 1949 and banned, though members managed to continue some operations under a different name. After the 1953 ousting of Mossadegh, the party was effectively dismantled and former members rooted out, arrested, and in some cases executed. Kianouri was jailed for two years and then he managed to escape to Italy, then East Germany.

Kianouri and Firouz returned to Iran in 1979, at which point Kianouri became general secretary of the newly reconstituted Tudeh Party.

Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali – A Shi'a cleric with ties to Khomeini from the 1950s. In February of 1979, Khalkhali was selected by Khomeini to be the head judge for the new Revolutionary Courts. The Revolutionary Courts (the courts Lahiji opposed) were used to try former government officials, generally without lawyer or jury. Khalkhali had a reputation for favoring execution and exceptionally cruel rhetoric.

Khalkhali also persecuted Iranian Bahá'ís, stripped the institution of its properties, and orchestrated the execution of many Bahá'í leaders. Other targets included Kurds (because of activism in favor of federalism) and drug dealers.

Hojjatoleslam Ali Golzadeh Ghafouri – A Shi'a cleric and progressive politician. Ghafouri was a member of the Assembly of Experts for Constitution, the group that met from August to November of 1979 to draft a new Iranian constitution. Ghafouri opposed the inclusion of the Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist provision, which is the provision that gives Islamic clerics the power to approve or reject candidates, legislation, etc. adopted by the secular parts of the Iranian government.

In 1980 he won election to parliament.

Hedayatulah Matindaftari (Hedayatollah/Hedayat Matin-Daftari) – The grandson of Mossadegh, the Iranian leader who was deposed in a 1953 coup. According to [de-classified American State Department documents](#) Matin-Daftari earned a degree in law and economics from Cambridge University in 1956. When he returned home, he held posts as faculty at Tehran University and Director of Information and Public Relations at the Ministry of Justice. After 1960 he became a practicing lawyer working on behalf of human rights.

In 1979, Matin-Daftari co-founded a political party called the National Democratic Front, which aimed to form a coalition of left-leaning groups to oppose Khomeini and his Islamic Republic

Party. In April of that year, the [*Washington Post*](#) described Matin-Daftari as, “the leading critic of the revolutionary committees’ summary trials and executions of officials who served the shah.” The National Democratic Front opposed the Revolutionary Courts and advocated for individual rights and freedom of press.

Who's Who (post-1979)

Ezzatollah Entezami – Entezami continued his acting career in Iran, completing more than 50 films and TV shows.

Abdolkarim Lahiji – In 1979 and 1980 Lahiji advocated rule of law and fair trials, opposed the Islamic Revolution Courts, and continued to advocate for the rights of political prisoners. In March 1982 Lahiji was smuggled out of Iran to France, where he has lived in exile ever since. He continues to work on behalf of human rights in Iran.

Rob (Rabbi) David Shoft (Shofet) – He left Iran in 1980. Shofet is now a Rabbi in Beverly Hills at the Orthodox Nessah Synagogue.

Sadeegh Ghotbzadeh (Sadegh Qotbzadeh) – In early 1980, as Foreign Minister, he was involved in negotiations over the hostage crisis, but negotiations fell apart. Later that year he ran for president but lost. In November of 1980, he was arrested for plotting to kill Khomeini and for criticizing the Islamic Republic. Khomeini intervened for his release, but in 1982 he was arrested again and forced to make a public confession on Iranian television. He was tortured, tried, and (in September, 1982) executed.

Mahmoud (Mahmood) Enayat – It is not clear when Enayat left Iran, though he was clearly there at the time of filming. He has become a journalist and scholar living outside Iran, with a focus on increasing freedom of press and access to information within and about Iran. “Mahmood Enayat is the founder of Small Media. He is the former Iran country director for the BBC World Service Trust and Iran Media Program of the University of Pennsylvania. Mahmood holds an M.A. in analysis, design and the implementation of information systems from the London School of Economics as well as a B.Sc. in computer science with management from King's College London.” (from a bio on [an event page](#) for the MUNK School of Global Affairs, Toronto)

Ebrahim Yazdi – After breaking with Khomeini, Yazdi and others in his political faction ran for office in the new Iranian parliament (aka the Islamic Consultative Assembly or Majles) and Yazdi served in government from 1980 to 1984.

When Iraq invaded Iran in September, 1980, Yazdi supported the war effort, but he withdrew this support after 1982. Yazdi and other members of the still-existing Freedom Movement of Iran published open letters to Khomeini, criticizing him for continuing the war even though (according to many) Khomeini could have already ended the war on favorable terms to Iran. In 1985 Yazdi's house was firebombed (likely in retaliation for his public critiques of Khomeini).

Yazdi was not able to run for public office again, but he continued his Freedom Movement activities. He was arrested, detained, and questioned several times in his life, including during the protests surrounding the 2009 elections. Yazdi died from pancreatic cancer in 2017.

Noureddin Kianouri – In 1983, Kianouri's political party, Tudeh, was again banned. This time its members were accused of spying for the USSR. Kianouri and his wife, Firouz, were arrested, tortured, and imprisoned. Kianouri was forced to confess to a variety of crimes on television. He

was released to house-arrest in the mid-1990s and was still under house-arrest when he died in 1999.

Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali – Khalkhali was forced to resign from the Revolutionary Court in 1980. He then served two terms in the Iranian parliament as a representative for Qom (the city where Khomeini got his start). In 1992 the Council of Guardians (which approves all candidates for parliamentary office) rejected his further candidacy.

In his 2000 autobiography, Khalkhali wrote, "I killed over 500 criminals close to the royal family, hundreds of rebels in the Kurdistan, Gonabad, and Khuzestan regions, and many drug smugglers...I feel no regret or guilt over the executions. Yet I think I killed little. There were many more who deserved to be killed, but I could not get my hands on them." ([from a NY Times translation](#))

Hojjatoleslam Ali Golzadeh Ghafouri – In 1980 he won election to parliament, but left government in 1981. In that year, both his sons were executed because of their involvement in MEK (the People's Mujahedin of Iran). In 1988 his daughter and son-in-law were also executed. Ghafouri lived until 2010 but did not re-enter politics after 1981.

MEK was a Marxist, anti-Shah, anti-imperialist organization that carried out armed attacks against both the Shah's government and Western government personnel, military, and business leaders between 1973 and 1979. MEK participated in and supported the overthrow of the Shah, but the group split with the Revolutionary government over the new constitutions and elections. In 1981, the new government banned MEK, rooted out, arrested and, executed many of its members.

Hedayatullah Matindaftari (Hedayatollah/Hedayat Matin-Daftari) – Starting in 1979, Matin-Daftari's National Democratic Front opposed the Revolutionary Courts and advocated for individual rights and freedom of press. By the end of 1980 it had been banned and a warrant was issued for Matin-Daftari's arrest. He fled to France and the party joined the National Council of Resistance of Iran, which worked against the Iranian government while in exile. Matin-Daftari's party soon left the National Council over the militant activities of MEK, another member of the Council.