

5 BROKEN CAMERAS

a film by

Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi



Sundance World Cinema Documentary Directing Award (USA)
IDFA Special Jury Prize and Audience Award, Amsterdam (The Netherlands)
Grand Jury Award, London Open City Docs Fest
Audience Award, Doc/Fest Sheffield
Best Picture, Traverse City Film Festival (USA)
Louis Marcorelle Award, Cinéma du Réel, Paris (France)
Eurodok Award, Oslo (Norway)
Best Documentary, Jerusalem Film Festival (Israel)
Best Documentary, Durban Film Festival (South Africa), and many more...
France / Israel / Palestine 2011/ 90 mins / Arabic and Hebrew with English subtitles /
Certificate TBC

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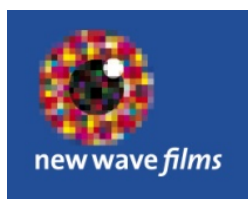
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SYNOPSIS

Filmed from the perspective of a Palestinian farmer (Emad Burnat), **5 Broken Cameras** was shot using six different video cameras – five of which were destroyed in the process of documenting Emad's family's life as well as the Palestinian and international resistance to Israeli appropriation of land and occupation. Emad, who lives in Bil'in, just west of the city of Ramallah in the West Bank, was thrust into global politics when his community peacefully resisted Israeli plans to erect a wall through their land to separate them from the ever growing Israeli settlements.

Initially given the camera to chronicle the birth and childhood of his new son Gibreel, the film captures Gibreel growing up against the backdrop of the many non-violent protests that have become an intrinsic part of life in Bil'in.

With hundreds of hours of video footage covering a period of over six years, Emad started working with Israeli activist and filmmaker Guy Davidi to produce a film. Guy helped shape the material and compose a commentary for the film. Together, they have turned *5 Broken Cameras* into a larger-than-life work that both informs and structures their personal and collective struggles in the West Bank.

5 Broken Cameras daringly meshes personal essay with political cinema, displaying how images and cameras can change lives and realities.

More details and downloads at www.newwavefilms.co.uk

The Story of the 5 Broken Cameras

Emad Burnat presents his five broken cameras. They will tell his story. Every camera is an episode in his life. *"If you are wounded you will always remember your wound, even after it's healed. But what if you are injured again and again... you forget your scars. But the camera remembers and so I film to heal"*.

First Camera

In February 2005 when his fourth son Gibreel is born, Emad, a Palestinian farmer, gets his first camera and starts to film his son and family. At the same time, the villagers of Emad's village Bil'in (west to Ramallah and a few miles from the international Green line) discover that the separation barrier route will pass through and confiscate more than 50% of the village's cultivated land. Moreover, the existing settlement Modi'in Ilit is planned to expand on these lands, and the construction of new building will start rapidly. The villagers start to resist this decision by marching every Friday after their prayer in a peaceful march. Israeli and international activists join them to show support.

Emad starts to follow this resistance, filming the demonstration with his new camera. The reaction of the army to this resistance is harsh. The soldiers react with tear gas, physical violence, and even rubber-coated bullets. The demonstrators try to come up every week with creative ways of drawing the attention of the Israeli and international media. They also use new types of direct non-violent actions like demonstrators tying themselves to the fence, and two of Emad's friends are always in the first line.

Adeeb is a tough looking guy. He is angry for losing his land behind the fence, so he expresses his anger in almost every demonstration in front of the soldiers. He also likes to make a scene and to be filmed.

Phil is a very different guy. He always hangs around in the village, many times with children around him. They like him because they find in him a hope which is rare to find in other adults. The army starts to arrest people and Emad's brother Riyadh, is the first to be arrested by Israeli soldiers disguised as Palestinians. And then Emad's first camera is being shot and broken by soldiers.

Second Camera

The separation wall is built, but people decide not to give up, and so Emad gets another camera from his Israeli cameraman friend Yisrael. Emad is filming his baby boy Gibreel grow. He also films his wife Soraya. She is Palestinian and was born in Brazil. The entire family likes to pick olives together in the autumn. More than just feeding the people, the land connects the people. Bil'in's struggle becomes a symbol worldwide for non-violent popular resistance.

Over the course of the demonstrations, a great bond develops between Emad, Adeeb and Phil. The soldiers shoot Adeeb in his leg, and Phil is so angry he shouts at the soldiers and gets arrested. He is, however, released on the same day.

Gibreel and Phil develop a strong connection between them. Like other children, Gibreel finds in Phil a hope that other adults do not possess. In order to make sure the lands beyond the barrier won't be taken, the protesters try to be present there as much as possible. There is an idea to put trailers on the lands the same way the settlers are doing to keep their lands. Emad and his friends do this several times but the army removes them again and again. So they build a concrete outpost. But that, too, is destroyed. The villagers rebuild it, and this time it remains standing. It becomes a place for the village meetings. In retaliation, the settlers burn the olive trees. The construction of the settlements continue. Emad films Daba, Phil's brother, when he climbs over a crane trying to stop the work. Daba is arrested, and that day a settler breaks Emad's second camera.

Third Camera

Gibreel is now three years old. With the new camera that Emad buys, he takes Gibreel to see the demonstration by himself. This way, he will be able to see things through his own eyes. He sees people he knows get arrested, including another of Emad's brothers. The soldiers are entering the village more and more frequently. They start taking people from their houses.

At one point, Emad films his brother being taken in a jeep, with his father and mother trying to block the jeep from taking him. Emad films all this with frustration. He is hopeful that these images will mean something.

At night, soldiers enter the village and arrest children in their homes for throwing rocks in the demonstrations. In the morning, all the kids march in protest, crying: "We want to sleep". But the violence continues, and an Israeli activist is hurt by a bullet in the head. In his house, the kids speak about brochures the army has distributed to warn people against demonstrating. Soraya explains to them that they have to continue and resist. And the soldiers continue to look for children to arrest.

One night they come into Emad's house while he is filming and take him to the police. He is imprisoned for a few weeks before being placed under house arrest. In a house far from Bil'in, Emad is held alone, ostensibly for throwing rocks -- in reality, this is his punishment for filming. In the end the army drops all charges, citing a lack of evidence. Once freed, Emad immediately resumes filming, despite Soraya's pleas for him to refrain from doing so. His third camera is shot at and hit. The bullet caught inside is like a reminder of how fragile life is.

Fourth Camera

By 2008, many other villages have followed in Bil'in's lead, staging demonstrations as the separation barrier route begins to enter their lands. In the neighbouring village of Nil'in, the violence is extreme, and there is a fear that these demonstrations will turn into a wider, popular resistance – a third Intifada. Thus, the actions of the army become extremely harsh - an 11 year-old boy is shot by snipers in Bil'in, after the funeral of another 17 year-old youth who was shot dead. In the middle of the chaos, Daba, Phil's brother, is shot in his leg.

With death all around, it is hard for people to hold on to their ideas of non-violence. But just as things begin to look desperate, the Bil'in villagers find out that they have won their court case: the court has ruled that the existing barrier should be dismantled and erected closer to the settlement buildings. This is a small victory for some villagers as they will get back part of their lands, and celebrations ensue. However, time passes, and the ruling is not carried out.

Emad goes to the other side of the barrier to work the land and discovers the remains of trees burned by the settlers. On his way back to the village, the truck he is driving crashes into the separation wall. The images of this accident are the last to be filmed by the fourth camera.

Fifth Camera

Emad is brought into an Israeli hospital where he remains unconscious for 20 days. He has suffered some serious injuries and is on the verge of dying. When he first wakes up, it's late 2008. Israel starts its attack on the Gaza strip. His recovery in the Tel Aviv hospital is a drop in the sea of violence.

When Emad gets back there is no big welcome, as people are in grief over Gaza. He is recovering in his house, without support and with the knowledge he won't be able to work physically again. Bil'in's struggle gains worldwide attention, and politicians from all over the world come to visit to show their support. But Adeeb looks at all this and doesn't like this charade. Inside the outpost, he hopes for a small retreat. For him, that would be success. In the meantime, new settlers are entering the empty houses that will not be returned to the villagers.

Phil is the only one who is still optimistic and who still believes in repairing the world. Gibreel is now 4 years old, and must be prepared for the worst. The level of violence is escalating, and during a demonstration, Phil gets hit in the chest by a gas grenade. He dies instantly.

At night, Daba puts up posters of his dead brother. The village is in shock. Gibreel and the rest of Emad's children kiss the posters. They are the only ones who have not yet understood what has happened. It will take weeks before the anger and hate surfaces, leading Gibreel to ask Emad, "Why did they shoot my Phil? What did Phil do to the soldiers?"

Phil's funeral is followed by an angry demonstration. Adeeb is furious in a subsequent demonstration and gets arrested and sent to jail. His kid shouts at the soldiers "release my father!"

Emad gets a letter saying that he, too, will be arrested. When he tells Soraya, she gets agitated, demanding that he stop filming and attending demonstrations. But her demands fall on deaf ears, and as Emad proceeds to film yet another demonstration, his fifth camera is shot and broken.

Epilogue – The Sixth Camera

A year passes and Adeeb is still in jail. In 2010, Israel begins to remove the old barrier and to put up a new concrete wall closer to the settlement. There are no big celebrations. Gibreel's 5th birthday comes and he turns from a baby into a young boy. It's a sad and poignant moment. For his last treatment in Tel Aviv, Emad takes Gibreel and Taki-yadin to see the sea in Tel Aviv for their first time.

CREW

Directed by	Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi
Written by	Guy Davidi
Producers	Christine Camdessus, Serge Gordey, Emad Burnat, Guy Davidi
Camera	Emad Burnat
Editors	Veronique Lagoarde-Segot, Guy Davidi
Sound Editing and Mixing	Amélie Canini
Music	Le Trio Joubran (Composers: Samir, Wissam, and Adnan Joubran)
Additional Photography	Yisrael Puterman, Guy Davidi, Jonathan Massey, Alexandre Goetschmann, Shay Carmeli Pollak, Heitham Al-Khatib, David Reeb, Islam Amira, Bassam Hamad
Production	Guy DVD Films, Burnat Films Palestine, Alegría Productions

2011, colour / black and white, video, 90'

Filmmakers' Personal Statement

When we started this project, we knew we would be criticized for working together. Emad would be asked why he chose to make the film with an Israeli, and Guy would be asked why he chose to make the film with a Palestinian. Still, the actual differences between us were something we could not avoid: we have different cultural backgrounds and different privileges, and we had to learn to use them in a constructive way. There are also different expectations for us as a result of our identities.

When we finally decided to make the film, we decided it had to be as intimate and personal as possible. That was the only way to tell the story in a new and emotional way. For Emad, this was not an obvious or simple decision. Exposure can be flattering, but it can also be risky. On the other hand, the film had to focus on Emad's narrative, with Guy taking the role of storyteller. We hope that people come to see the film with open minds and without foregone conclusions.

When watching a film that deals with such a painful controversy, we know that people tend to shut down. Most of us divide the world into right and wrong, good and bad, Palestinian and Israeli. We immediately take a side that corresponds to our identity, life experience, or ideology, even though these loyalties prevent us from fully experiencing the world. Reality is wonderfully complex, and we become frustrated when people fight to look at it with only one or two filters.

5 Broken Cameras was made to inspire, and not just to be interpreted as part of the political discourse – although it is, of course, an important part of it. We made the film with sincere initiative, trying to challenge our own assumptions and avoid cliché. In the end, we hope everyone will come away with open hearts.

Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi

The Background

When the demonstrations against the wall started in 2005, Emad Burnat got his first video camera and started filming what was happening in the village. He also filmed his personal life and family, not thinking that this footage would become part of a feature film. For the next years, Emad's purpose wasn't to make a film. Instead, filming was a way to participate in public demonstrations while also protecting others in and outside of court (his footage was often used as evidence in trial). When Emad's footage was also picked up by international news agencies or posted online, it became a rare inside-look at one of the most remote and under-reported parts of the Middle East.

Other filmmakers made films around the resistance in Bil'in and many of them utilized Emad's footage, as he was the only cameraman in the village. Among other things, he was one of the few who filmed the soldiers and raids at night after other cameramen left. These events were sometimes violent, and Emad was often in great danger for capturing these moments on camera.

In 2006, he was arrested and accused of throwing rocks. As a consequence, he spent weeks in jail and under house arrest, and one of his cameras was broken soon after that. It was both peace activists and supporters who helped Emad get new cameras so that he could continue filming and documenting what was happening.

Right from the start, Israeli and international peace activists helped and participated in the movement against the separation wall. Filmmaker Guy Davidi came to Bil'in in 2005 as a sympathizer and media activist in the Indymedia group. He knew Emad, as several others did, because he had become an important figure in the Bil'in movement.

After making short films in the village, Guy started making his first feature documentary on the politics of water. *Interrupted Streams* was shot in Bil'in from 2005 to 2008, and it was finished in 2010.

During his work on *Interrupted Streams*, Guy stayed for several months in Bil'in, and it was during this time that he became closer to the villagers under occupation. At night, when soldiers would come to invade the village, he was the only Israeli around. The villagers would call Guy and ask him to bring his cameras and film what was about to happen; the cameras were being used, once more, to protect people from the violence. During these nights both Emad and Guy found themselves filming side by side.

Throughout this time Emad wanted to make his own film on the Bil'in resistance. He often thought of making a personal film but the events happening in the village always drew him back to documenting what was going on with his people.

Teaming up to Make the Film

In 2009, Emad Burnat approached Guy Davidi with the idea of making a film together. The idea was to focus on two characters: Adeeb and Phil. Phil was killed during the resistance and Emad wanted to create a film that would memorialise Phil. The film was developed through the Greenhouse Program, with Dutch filmmaker John Appel as a mentor. During the Greenhouse sessions, the script was written telling Emad's story from a personal perspective.

“When I first looked at the footage,” said Guy, “I wasn’t sure I wanted to make another film on the subject of the resistance. I knew Emad had a natural visual talent, but I wasn’t sure how we could create a new story. Then I saw an image of an old man climbing on a military jeep and blocking it from moving. I asked Emad who that was and what he was doing. Emad explained that the man was his father, and that he was blocking the jeep from taking his brother to jail.” “Then it struck me,” Guy continued, “that from this moment, we had the making of a new film that would tell the events the way Emad experienced them as a cameraman. We could use all of his home video footage to include his perspective as a family man.”

“Making a personal film was a very difficult decision for me,” said Emad. “This is not something people easily understand. It means exposing some difficult moments, like my arrest or my accident.”

Making *5 Broken Cameras* Together

In the following two years, Emad’s footage (700+ hours) became the base for the creation of *5 Broken Cameras*, along with supplementary footage, some of it by other cameramen (e.g. Phil’s death, Dab’a getting shot in the leg, and new scenes that were shot by Emad).

The first editing sessions were held in a little room in Bil’in; it was an inspiring way to start the editing process. In the evening, Emad and Guy had conversations that served as inspiration for the first draft of the film’s narration. The next year, the two of them worked to add new scenes to strengthen the delicate balance between the film’s various dimensions, and Trio Joubran’s music was soon added to the film’s soundtrack as well.

In 2009, producers Serge Gordey and Christine Camdessus, of Alegria Productions, started a creative dialogue with Guy and Emad. In 2010, Serge and Christine got involved in the film’s production strategy and convinced France Télévision to join in.

In the summer of 2010, Guy and Emad attended the IDFA Academy with a first edit of the film. Together with Italian-Dutch editor Menno Boerema, the film developed even more through the editing process. In 2011, the film was discussed and edited again in Paris with the Alegria team and French editor Véronique Lagoarde-Ségot. After weeks of cutting, the film blossomed to become what it is now.

Chronology

In **2002** Israel begins the construction of a ‘separation barrier’ that would separate most of the West Bank from areas inside Israel. Since **January 2005**, weekly protests against the construction of the wall in Bil’in begin. The protests have attracted media attention and the participation of many international and Israeli organisations. They take the form of marches from the village to the site of the wall with the aim of halting construction and dismantling already constructed portions.

GUY DAVIDI

Born in Jaffa, Guy Davidi is a documentary filmmaker who has been directing, editing, and shooting films since the age of 16. He also teaches film in high schools, and to artists and activists. His short documentaries include *In Working Progress*, *Keywords*, and *Women Defying Barriers*; his first feature film, *Interrupted Streams*, premiered in 2010 at the Jerusalem Film Festival.

Filmography

Feature-Length Documentaries

2011	5 Broken Cameras
2010	Interrupted Streams

Documentary Shorts

2010	Keywords
2010	Women Defying Barriers
2009	A Gift from Heaven
2006	In Working Progress

EMAD BURNAT

A lifelong inhabitant of the central West Bank village of Bil'in, Emad Burnat is a freelance cameraman and photographer with experience filming for Al-Jazeera and Palestinian television. He has contributed to several documentaries, including *Bil'in My Love*, *Palestine Kids*, *Open Close*, and *Interrupted Streams*.

Filmography

2011	<i>5 Broken Cameras</i>
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Interviews conducted during the festival New Directors/New Films, posted on the Lincoln Film Centre's website on 30 May 2012 (NY release day)

Interview With Guy Davidi

Posted by Jonathan Robbins on 30.5.2012

How did you and Emad [Burnat, co-director] come to work together?

I came to Emad's village, Bil'in in the beginning of the demonstration in 2005, quite early. I was already following what was going on in other villages. In Emad's village they began to find out that the [Israeli army] was going to take their land and they started to initiate this movement...There were really strong relationships between the Israeli activists and the Palestinian villagers. And I started to do what I could, which is making films. I made four films. One of them was spread all over the world and then I made a feature-length documentary about the water issue in the West Bank. And for that film, I stayed in Bil'in for two to three months. So during this period of time, I really got to know the village from the inside, and to know emotionally what it means to live under the occupation. And it also allowed me to work on the text of *5 Broken Cameras*. I had known Emad from the start. He was very important, because he was a villager who had a camera. I mean, there were hundreds of journalists from all over the world...But Emad was the only one who stayed there during the week, after the demonstrators left. When soldiers came during the night or made arrests, he was the only one to film that.

At the time, he didn't want to make a movie. He wasn't a filmmaker, he didn't have training. But as time went on and other films were made about the village, he began to think how long he'd been filming and how much important footage he had. He thought that he should make his own film. In 2009, he approached me and said he wanted to make a film about Bil'in....The only way we could do it, I thought, was to go through his personal experience of what happened in the village.

...

Would it be fair to say that much of the footage was filmed before the idea for the project began?

Yes, completely. I knew that as an Israeli, to participate with Emad, a Palestinian, on this film...I would need to be empowering his voice, to put him in the film as the protagonist. Using his material was very comfortable for me. Even when we shot new scenes from 2009 on, I tried not to be present when Emad was filming. Sometimes we used other people's footage as well. For instance, Phil died, and we tried to get any footage we could of Phil. But 80% of the film is Emad's footage.

...

When it came to the finished project, the editing and voice-over, would you say that was mostly your doing? And what does it mean to direct a film when you weren't around while it was being filmed?

When I first met with Emad, there were seven or eight hundred hours of footage. So we had to build a script and focus on storytelling. It wasn't easy for Emad to accept [the idea of] a personal film. But I think I was needed there, as a filmmaker—when we decided to make a personal story, it made my presence, I think, even more important. Because even the voice-overs, even the way they were written, this is from a kind of internal point of view, but it is impossible for a person to have this kind of view of himself, really, without someone from the outside analyzing it...

In the beginning of the process, we sat on a rooftop in Bil'in and had a conversation, and out of this the text was born. I wrote it. The poetic style is a bit my way of speaking; Emad is not a talker. But Emad admits that I know things about him where he agrees [after he hears them] and says it's completely right. He needs me to have this reflection about his experience...

After 2 years, I just could not do the editing by myself, and we worked together. And then we decided to do a last editing session in Paris with a French editor, which lasted a month. Her sensibilities had a tremendous influence on the film... For me... it was hard to choose what information we needed [in order] to tell the story to an international audience. Her input was very important for that.

Would you give us an example of something in particular?

There was the image of an olive tree cut from the land, and I used it in the beginning of the film, but in this shot we see the houses of the settlements in the background, before we actually visit them. And Veronique said we were crazy not to clarify that the settlement was not part of the village. So these are small, but important details. Because for me it is clear what is the settlement and what is the village. If I see big white buildings, I think it's a settlement immediately.

Would you tell us about your background?

...I studied cinema in high school. ...Until my twenties, it was very hard for me to work in Israel. I felt that it was a very destructive environment, a very violent environment. Everything I tried to create there did not work—at all. I couldn't create a team or an atmosphere. I started studying cinema at the university, but quit after one year. There is a lot of aggression expressed towards the arts in Israel. I connect it completely with the political situation. We created a culture that is very tough to handle. So I left for Paris and I found time to reflect on my life, and to be able to come back to Israel much more determined and a bit wiser...I think when I came back I wanted to go to the West Bank. I could not live in an Israel that was closed off. When I was in Paris, I was walking around the markets speaking with Arabs freely, things that for Israelis are not permitted. You know, 'don't speak with Arabs. You don't know what they'll do to you'. I kind of found freedom in Paris and I wanted to express it as well in Israel. And ever since then my life was connected to the West Bank.

...

Towards the end of the film, Emad in a voice-over says, 'Healing is a challenge in life. It is the victim's sole obligation. By healing, you resist oppression.' Is he describing himself?

Yes, he's definitely a victim. We cannot hide it; it's clear. He is a victim of injustice and a harsh reality. This text is an interesting text. But I think it was written especially for Israelis and for Jews. And for Palestinians, I also think. I think Israelis and Jews are traumatized from what they've seen for many years. Theirs is not a classic hatred that we might have seen in other places in history. I mean, we're damaged and we have to grow from this damage. Emad is taking responsibility as a current victim to say that his kids have to be sane, so he must maintain a kind of normality for them. Because, if not, he will become like the Israelis. I mean, that is my interpretation. I cannot put too many words in his mouth.

You wrote the text?

Yes. It is my interpretation of him in a way. Other people in Palestine told me that... It is difficult for Israelis and Jews to understand, or to accept, that someone who suffered so much becomes an aggressor. And they just are unwilling to confront it. There is something blocked in our humanity that we cannot understand that.

When trauma is not dealt with, then the shadows flourish and hate grows...that is the pessimistic result of Zionism. And Zionism itself is already a racist, colonialist expression. It was a colonialist movement, there was racism to it, but the trauma was completely fresh [for the Jews]. It was the constructive movement of people yearning for a place, so not really classic colonialism.

You and Emad are coming from different backgrounds but you have many of the same goals, it seems.

I'm a filmmaker. My role is to understand the reality and the truth. That is not the role of activists. Well, I am an activist in the sense that when I see something, I act. In that sense. Not just taking the camera to tell the truth. Not just to be in my head, but to do things on the ground. But, my most important role is that of filmmaker, and that role is to open up a subject, to refresh it. This is much more important for me as a filmmaker. When I'm in Bil'in, I have my own perspective. For me the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a psychological one. A conflict between emotions; and every individual has to handle a very complex series of complications, backgrounds and history. And I think most activists are trying to find the solution on the ground. I think for most activists, they are concerned [with] solving the issues on the ground, [so that] then we can repair ourselves of trauma and histories. But to me, I think it's more simultaneous; you cannot just change things from the outside or the inside. People have to confront and analyze their ideas, histories and emotions. For Palestinians they have to confront their emotions as victims—it is very apparent to me that they are victims. I think Palestinians are suffering a great deal, so they have a lot of emotions and anger. That's a challenge they have. For the Jews—the Israelis, we have a lot to repair. We are a people of air—

Did you say "error" or "air"?

Air. The air. You know, if the Arabs are the emotion, the water, for me the Jews are the air. They were always responsible for bringing ideas from place to place. They were not a people of the land like the Palestinians. At one point, not just after the Holocaust, they started to think that living in your head is what creates all the problems for them. And that is Zionism, trying to connect to the land. And they are not very successful with it.

...

Working with Emad, did you find yourselves rubbing off on one another, or were your lives too different?

For the better and worse, we have different backgrounds, ideas and privileges. I got to have an education, but Emad's was by his own hands. His training in cinema, too. Everything is completely independent. It's very inspiring the way he [has] handled his life, the way he developed during the creation of his film. And from the very beginning, he said, 'Guy, I trust you. Take the footage; let's do the film. I think most of the time I had carte blanche to go ahead and interpret him. And I think the only important difficulty we had in the creation of the film was dealing with the most personal and intimate moments. In the beginning, it was hard for Emad to go that way. He was thinking about how he would be seen by his community for putting himself at the center of what was really a community-wide movement where everyone has their own stories to tell. And the only one who gets paid respect is the one who pays with his life.

Emad was afraid of putting himself in the center, with so many people suffering, and saying 'But me too, I am suffering a lot!' ... He had the luck, in a sense, that I pushed him to do it. And I had the luck to understand that it was possible. When I asked him to shoot footage with his wife in very intimate moments, he was afraid to be judged. And I think the most difficult footage was during his house arrest. That material he was hiding from me. I knew that he was arrested, and I always asked how we could make the point of his house arrest. And then after a long while he came to me and told me he had footage.

...

How did he get five different cameras?

The second and third he got from a French NGO. I think he got one or two from Israeli activists. And I think at one point he bought one, but the money came from an NGO.

Interview With Emad Burnat (Posted by Jonathan Robbins on 1.6.2012)

What is your background as a filmmaker?

... Starting in 2005, I documented all the actions, events, and demonstrations every day, every week. Daily life in the village, my life, my boys. So 2005 was the real start of shooting.

And how did you meet Guy [Davidi, co-director]?

In 2005 he came as an activist to my village. I was filming and he was protesting and I saw him. He came after that many times. Because I was the only cameraman in the village, everyone got to know me. After 5 years of filming and documenting, when I decided to make a film, a project, I called him and asked if he wanted to join the project.

...

Was it the soldiers or settlers who were the bigger obstacle for you?

I think the soldiers, because I spent a lot of time filming the actions of the soldiers. So you can find in my stuff [that] it is 95% dealing with the soldiers, because I was not close to the settlers. It was just when I went to the other side of the wall, to film the construction, the illegal work there; only in those moments I showed settlers.

We hear you saying several times in *5 Broken Cameras* that you have a “permit to film.”

Yes, I had a permit, a press ID, because I was working for Reuters for two years. I gave them footage. But sometimes the soldiers [didn't] care about permits or cameras, but I tried to keep filming and [to] capture everything...

Would you tell us about your accident, where your truck crashed?

It was a tractor, not a truck. We used to go to the land, to cross the gate and go to the land with the farmers. Because the farms are near the settlements. I used to film there and help the farmers. The road [used to be] straight but the soldiers changed it to make the wall. So they changed it and we had to go up the hill and then down. So on the way back when we passed the gate, the tractor lost control and hit the fence...

...

Did you find that the camera could protect you?

In the beginning, I thought the camera could protect me and those around me. I thought I could use it for many purposes. To use it as a strong witness, and to use it in the Israeli court, and to put footage on the internet, and to give the media footage. So, we did use it for many purposes in the beginning. And I felt that I had a strong weapon always, and I felt I was strong enough to do what I was doing. I was not afraid, I was not scared. I was always close to the soldiers and I wanted to capture everything. But, when the camera was hit the first time, it gave me a bad feeling that I was risking my life. When I was injured, and the camera was again broken, I started to feel the camera could not protect me. But, when the camera was hit by two bullets and saved my life, in this moment, the camera was protecting me. [On the other hand], one time at night when the soldiers came to the village and I was filming, I was alone. So they arrested me and

they took the camera and the tape and they beat me and took me to jail. At that moment the camera was no protection...

It is important that I was documenting and filming everything. Because after we finished the film, and it is getting success everywhere, and getting attention, I feel strongly that what I was doing, every moment of it, was very important...

...

What were you up to before you started filming? I know you worked for Reuters.

I was a farmer. Many kinds of other work, too. But I was also filming before *5 Broken Cameras*.

You farmed olives, yes? As we see you doing with your wife in the film.

We use them to make oil and to eat olives. There are many ways of preparing olives. But most people use it for the oil.

There is a point towards the end of the film where you have a voice-over in which you say, 'Healing is a challenge in life. It is a victim's sole obligation. By healing you resist oppression.' Would you talk about that line, and what it means for the film? Would you tell us more about that line? Did you write it together?

It is to use the camera as protection, and as a witness, and to use it also to heal. If you have no job, no money, how do you survive and how do you heal? It became difficult for me. I mean that I used the camera to heal, to survive, and to remember. To remember. Because the camera reminds me of all scenes of the past. To use the camera as a witness. You know, the camera became like my friend. The camera was connected to me, so to leave the camera and put it away was difficult for me. So I felt my responsibility was to take the camera and keep filming. Filming I could heal myself and use the camera as[a] witness and for change. To open people's eyes.

So when you were making the film, you were thinking of a wider audience...

The most important [thing] was to reach the people outside. Because most people don't know what's happening in Palestine. They hear about it and see it on the news, but they don't know the truth. To use the footage and the personal story, and to put all of this in one film is very touching and very strong.

In the film, you heal from your physical injuries. But, in your voice-over, you speak of a different kind of healing. In this text, for you, who are the victims who must work to heal themselves?

Of course, it's very clear we are the victims. The Palestinians are the victims because we have lived under the occupation for so long. And when we met, Guy and I, we met as friends and partners, and not as Israeli and Palestinian. But he went back to his life, after our meetings, back to the beautiful life, the good life, in Tel Aviv. And I stayed, with my problems, shooting and documenting. Living my normal life with my people in the village under bad conditions, under the occupation... [I wanted to show it] by telling the story, and having people understand [through] the story who is the victim.

Would you tell us about the places we encounter in *5 Broken Cameras*?

In my village, it is not like other places. If you see the wall, it is going seven kilometers or more into the West Bank. In my village, when they started the [fence's] construction, some of the village was taken to the Israeli side. The land was confiscated, and then they decided to make a wall between the village and the settlement. The Palestinians were very angry and they said they would not be quiet. They started to organize peaceful movements against the construction, and after five years, the fence was removed. And the Israeli government decided to build a new wall close to the settlements and further from the village. The land was returned to the villagers.

It was a victory, then.

It's not a big victory because it's not all the land. And some people got their land back and some got nothing. It is a victory, but it is not a big victory for everyone in the village. So the people want to continue the resistance against the new wall.

Your resistance was non-violent. Did it make you more positive about the power of non-violent protest?

In general, the Palestinian people have struggled for 50 years against the occupation. Some non-violence was used in the West Bank. In about 2005, Bil'in adopted non-violence, but it maintained the non-violence, as a new way to protest, for resistance. In this way, they were able to bring people from outside; Israelis, Palestinians, and activists from all over the world against the army. And the army always reacts with violence against these people. It was very nice because the media focused on this [means] of resistance. It was not just demonstrations, but it was direct actions against the settlements and the wall... The village [became] a focus for the media, because every week there was another action, another idea... It is important that the village became a symbol of the nonviolent struggle...

...

What do you make of the Arab Spring?

I think the Arab Spring came after seven years of non-violent struggle in the Bil'in village. Everyone knows about Bil'in and knows about the struggle there... And I know many groups from

outside came to participate in the village. People from Egypt, from Lebanon. So I think this way of resistance affected them in these Arab countries. It was effective. And they started their [own] revolutions.

Are you in touch with different protest leaders?

Not [with] leaders from [any specific] organization. You know, for me, after the revolutions in Egypt, in Tunisia, I didn't see big changes in those countries. There was no change in politicians, in the politics, in the relationships and cooperation. There is no real change in these countries. For Egypt, the army replaced Mubarak, and so now it is [even] more difficult for the people.

And one last thing. I say in the film that I am a farmer, but for me every Palestinian is a farmer. The doctor is a farmer, the journalist a farmer, the lawyer a farmer. This is a symbol in Palestine. Everyone is a farmer....