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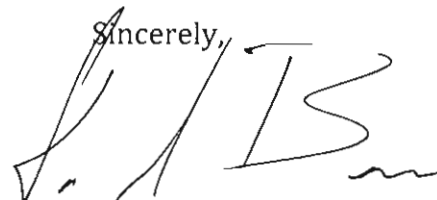
"Nawal's Feast": a documentary by Jean Marie Offenbacher

To Whom It May Concern:

Jean Marie Offenbacher visited the University of Rochester last fall where I am an Associate Professor of Arabic. She came at the invitation of my department Religion and Classics and the department of Film Studies to screen her documentary about Syria "Tea on the Axis of Evil." Her film was very well received here, and subsequently she and I have kept in contact about that documentary and her current work, a documentary about Iraq called "Nawal's Feast." Her concept for this documentary strikes me as both highly original and very worthwhile. As befits the name of her company "Reorient Films," this documentary proposes to reorient people's ideas of Iraqi society and culture using the idea of a feast whose blend of dishes and guests represent various aspects of Iraq's history and its present.

In my opinion, Jean Marie Offenbacher's work provides a valuable antidote to the so-called new reports of the Arab World in the corporate mass media that are little more than propaganda pieces. It is no surprise that the "understanding" the average American has of the Middle East bears almost no resemblance to reality, and as a result the mass media can fob off the most preposterous lies as "facts," with often disastrous results for both the Middle East and America. This film of Jean Marie Offenbacher shows again both her courage and her imagination and is eminently worthy of your support. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss Ms Offenbacher's work at greater length.

Sincerely,



Daniel Beaumont
Associate Professor of Arabic
Associate Professor of History