



*Barnes and Noble, the biggest book chain of the world that has more than 1000 stores in America, announced the 2006 winners for the prestige and money awards as an extension of “Discover a new big author” program. Zülfü Livaneli has become “the second new big author” with his book, Mutluluk, published under the title, Bliss, in America. The award was delivered to Zülfü Livaneli with a ceremony which will take place on the 28th of February.*

**The novel “MUTLULUK”(“BLISS”) that had huge repercussions in the world IS NOW ON THE SILVERSCREEN...**

**CREDITS**

Sound record	KONSTANTINOS KITTOU
Art director	TOLUNAY TÜRKÖZ
Edited by	LEVENT ÇELEBI – LewQ, ABDULLAH OGUZ
Line producer	SADIK DEVECİ
Music by	ZÜLFÜ LIVANELİ
Director of Photography	MIRSAD HEROVIÇ
Screenplay by	KUBILAY TUNÇER ELIF AYAN ABDULLAH OGUZ
Based on the Novel by	ZÜLFÜ LIVANELİ
Co-produced by	GEORGE LYKIARDOPOULOS
Directed & produced by	ABDULLAH OGUZ
Co-Production	Highway Productions
Production Company	ANS Productions

## **Starring**

<b>TALAT BULUT</b>	<b>IRFAN</b>
<b>ÖZGÜ NAMAL</b>	<b>MERYEM</b>
<b>MURAT HAN</b>	<b>CEMAL</b>
<b>MUSTAFA AVKIRAN</b>	<b>ALI RIZA</b>
<b>EMIN GÜRSOY</b>	<b>TAHSİN</b>
<b>SEBNEM KÖSTEM</b>	<b>DÖNE</b>
<b>MERAL ÇETINKAYA</b>	<b>MÜNEVVER</b>
<b>EROL BABAĞLU</b>	<b>YAKUP</b>
<b>IDİL YENER</b>	<b>NAZİK</b>
<b>ALPAY ATALAN</b>	<b>SELO</b>
<b>LENA LEYLA BASAK</b>	<b>SERAP</b>
<b>ALI ZEYİN</b>	<b>ALI RIZA'NIN ADAMI</b>
<b>UGUR IZGI</b>	<b>ALI RIZA'NIN ADAMI</b>

## **Guest Starring**

<b>LALE MANSUR</b>	<b>AYSEL</b>
<b>EMEL GÖKSU</b>	<b>GÜLİZAR EBE</b>

## **Short synopsis**

17-year-old Meryem is found desolated and unconscious by a lake. Her family who lives in a village in the east of Turkey, thinks that she has willingly had her chastity corrupted, and decides on killing her by the necessity of customs. The task is given to her close relative Cemal. Meanwhile, a well-known sociology Professor Irfan Kurudal sets sail, leaving the life he lived in Istanbul as a result of the identity crisis he has been going through. Meryem and Cemal's path crosses with professor Irfan Kurudal unexpectedly on the journey of death they take. Are these three people, who set out for freedom and a second chance in life, going to be able to overcome their destiny on this journey?

## **Production notes**

<b>Shooting Places</b>	<b>: Marmaris, Bodrum, Karaman Taskale village, Istanbul</b>
<b>Shooting period</b>	<b>: 8 weeks</b>
<b>Number of prints</b>	<b>: 70</b>
<b>Length</b>	<b>: 126 minutes</b>
<b>Theatrical Release:</b>	<b>: 16 March 2007</b>
<b>Distribution (Turkey)</b>	<b>: Kenda</b>

**\*the movie is supported by Eurimages.**

## **DIRECTOR’S NOTE**

### **Abdullah Oguz**

I knew that I wanted to see this story on the screen when I read the book “Mutluluk”(Bliss). The film is moving forward in the axis of a journey that brings both the traditional and modern faces of Turkey together. It tells the story of Cemal, Meryem and Irfan’s search for happiness, who are all coming from different backgrounds. You are going to witness the striking and touching story of three people in “Mutluluk”(Bliss) set against a very impressive backdrop that stretches from Turkey’s natural wonders in the East to locations in the West and South.

## **AUTHOR’S NOTE**

### **Zülfü Livaneli**

Literature shows us very different worlds and lives from ours. By means of literature, we are able to get out of our small worlds and we manage to understand and feel empathy for what is different from us. I think that is the most fascinating characteristic of the novel, “Mutluluk”(“Bliss”). First of all “Mutluluk” (“Bliss”) is a story about personal development, a story of Meryem’s confrontation with customs and her maturing. Mutluluk (Bliss) is also a novel one of whose fundamental themes is cultural differences. It’s a narrative that deals with different faces of Turkey and works with the ongoing argument between tradition and modernity. I saw characters in the movie and therefore I am very happy. I saw Meryem in Özgü Namal’s eyes, Cemal in Murat Han and Irfan in Talat Bulut. I think this is an extraordinary success. Abdullah Oguz has told the story and transferred it beautifully onto the screen.

## **COMMENTS ON THE MOVIE IN TURKISH PRES**

### **WHO SAID WHAT**

#### **Ahmet Hakan- Hürriyet newspaper**

“It was the best Turkish film that I have viewed. lately.”

#### **Ali Saydam- Aksam newspaper**

“After watching the movie I felt , I would give anything to run into the blue waters of the Mediterranean ?”

#### **Alin Tasçıyan- Milliyet newspaper**

MUTLULUK, deservedly stands out form the latest local offerings”

#### **Atilla Dorsay- Sabah newspaper**

“It’s like a magnificent dance of love and death” ....”Another pinnacle in the current surge of the Turkish cinema “

**Can Atakli- Vatan newspaper**

“...If you watch this film with five other friends, afterwards all five of you will be talking about totally different parts ..”

**Cengiz Semercioglu- Hürriyet newspaper**

“MUTLULUK is very good”

**Ebru Drew – Vatan newspaper**

“Welcome to Murat Han”

**Güneri Civaoglu- Milliyet newspaper**

“MUTLULUK, emerges as film that can be viewed throughout the world .”

**Hincal Uluç- Sabah newspaper**

“MUTLULUK, the best Turkish film I have viewed to date...”....

**Mehmet Y. Yilmaz- Milliyet newspaper**

“MUTLULUK is a film that must be viewed”... “ A crisp film that doesn’t have the florid technique that’s frequently encountered in Turkish Films”

**Mustafa Mutlu – Vatan newspaper**

“Solidly directed, wonderful imagery, fabulous music, and acting that takes your breath away.”...

**Selahattin Duman- Vatan newspaper**

“When this film hits Europe it will create an empathic impact...”... “Abidin couldn’t do it but Abdullah Oguz did...” ... “ At the end we saw that Picture”...

**Onur Bastürk- Hürriyet newspaper** “It touches so many people, and its “so unlike a Turkish film”, but with a story line that’s elegantly weaved, and with characters that reflect the spirit of this country’s soil...”

**Ömür Gedik- Hürriyet newspaper**

“We can safely say that Abdullah Oguz has achieved *happiness*”... “ Its the deep character study that comes to the fore, not the honour killings and fanaticism, western oriented, modern...”

**Reha Muhtar-Vatan newspaper**

Can a film have more impact than real life itself?...”

**Ruhat Mengi- Vatan newspaper**

“I would like to congratulate .....Producer and Director Abdullah Oguz for creating a film whose every second is phenomenal ”... “I was still under the influence of the film the next morning when I woke up”

**Tuna Kiremitçi-Vatan newspaper**

“...MUTLULUK SEEMS to be a candidate for international success that has escaped all other Turkish films...”

## THE SUCCESS OF THE NOVEL MUTLULUK (BLISS)

- Livaneli's book that published the 39th print, stayed on top of the lists for weeks.

### “Mutluluk”(Bliss) Abroad / Places where it became a bestseller:

- The book was selected as the “the book of the month” in April 2006 in France.
- St Martin's Press, the biggest bookstore of New York, published “Mutluluk” under the title, “Bliss” on 17th of October. The book was selected as the “fall period” book in America.
- “Bliss” was put on the “Listmania” among the most prestigious books. It was critiqued as a “lyrical and impressive work of art.”
- The biggest book chain of the world that has more than 1000 stores in America, Barnes and Noble selected “Mutluluk”(Bliss) as the discovery of the November 1-January 31 holiday season.
- The book was presented as the “bestseller of the publishing world in autumn” in the literature news website Buzz Girl.
- Blackstone published “Bliss” in the form of 8 cassettes, 9 CDs and an MP3 audio book. “Bliss” is among the “most ordered” list on the Barnes and Noble's website.
- Barnes and Noble, announced the 2006 finalists for the prestige and money awards as an extension of the “Discover new big author” program. Zülfü Livaneli has become one of the three finalists with his book “Mutluluk,” published under the title, “Bliss” in America. The award will be delivered to Zülfü Livaneli with a ceremony which will take place on the 28th of February, 2007.
- The book is now being released in Italy in Italian.

### Foreign Prints



### Comments on the book Mutluluk(Bliss)

“The intersecting destinies of the three heroes present a portrait of Turkey at once tender and compassionate. I am sure they will have a deep influence upon French readers just as they have conquered the hearts of more than a hundred thousand of your compatriots.”

## **President Jacques Chirac of France**

This novel that Livaneli takes up with courage and in such depth has the intensity of a Shakespeare tragedy.

**Yasar Kemal**

‘A man of multiple talents: author, composer Livaneli is an humanist and a man of action. In “Delivrance (Bliss)”, he discusses the most urgent problems of Turkish modernity.’

**Jack Lang, April 2006.**

‘A brutal rape and the subsequent death sentence on the defiled girl draws one into the disparate worlds of traditional and modern Turkey. This exciting, sensitively written novel educates and illuminates not only the plight of women but also a society in conflict.’

**Barbara Goldsmith, Author and Historian.**

‘Lyrical, poetic, and magical! My dear friend Livaneli is an extraordinary writer and a master of language who describes in this book, an incredibly violent; but at the same time magical, almost surreal world. I like the way he depicts the real and unknown life of the simple people who live deep in the East with their own age-old codes of life... It doesn’t matter if we –the “civilized” people- agree or not with their customs. The important thing is that they show their own “truth” about life and death, their own scale of values, their own views about right and wrong. The moral outcome of this story is that these happenings, although changing in form, keep repeating themselves, and the bizarre human nature scares me to the point that it freezes my blood. You will read this book in one breath, without a pause.’

**Mikis Theodorakis**

**12 June 2005, Greece**

‘Livaneli is an essential force in Turkey's musical, cultural, and political scene.’

**Orhan Pamuk**

Set against a backdrop and culture both foreign and mysterious, Bliss is the provocative story of three lives shattered by the constraints and contradictions of the society in which they live. In Livaneli's artfully written novel, their paths unexpectedly cross, launching each of them on a journey to freedom and a second chance.

The constraints and liberties of life in modern-day Turkey play havoc with the lives of a woman and two men in this artfully written novel.

**Barnes and Noble, Discover Great New Writers**

The Istanbul professor who is a leading character in ‘Bliss’, a lyrical novel by Zülfü Livaneli, imagines the Turkish intellectual as an acrobat swinging through the air. He lets go of his trapeze, sure in the belief that his European partner and inspiration waits on the other side, ready to catch him. Too late, he discovers his mistake.

**Huge Pope, Wall Street Journal, 28 November 2006.**

Told from the alternating viewpoints of these three travelers, who change each other, this novel by an eminent Turkish writer and member of Parliament tells a gripping contemporary story that gets behind stereotypes of exotic Islam to reveal the diversity in individual people and the secrets and lies, cruelty and love, in family, friendship, and public life.

**Booklist, October 2006**

'Livaneli invites the reader very subtly and skillfully, without force, and almost without making him/her realize, to think upon the problems.'

**Sybille Thelen, Stuttgarter Zeitung**

Livaneli offers readers a fascinating look at the diversity of Turkey today in his American debut (Bliss was first published in 2003).

Highly recommended for libraries where readers like to explore other cultures.

**LIBRARY JOURNAL , Debbie Boggenshutz, Cincinnati State Technical & Community Coll. Lib. August, 2006.**

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## **INTERESTING NOTES FROM THE MOVIE**

- **The movie "MUTLULUK"(BLISS) is an international production since Bosnian Mirsad Herović was the director of photography, sound crew was made up of Greek Konstantinos Kittou and Nikos Drakos and 1st camera assistant was Czech Karel Kaliban.**
- **Since the Imam of the village mosque had quite a horrible voice to sing the azan, the helpless movie crew was saved by the camera bus driver Muharrem Ögretici who went up the mosque and sang the azan with his beautiful voice and everybody was relieved.**
- **Talat Bulut became the most entertaining actor of the set, never ceasing to amuse the crew in between takes. As he tried to cross from one boat to another at 3 o'clock in the morning after long hours of shooting in the freezing cold, Bulut fell into the sea. One of the most unforgettable moments of the whole movie was when he tried to hold on to the assistant art director and took him down with him.**
- **The crew spent more than 20 shooting days on the boat.**
- **Özgü Namal's hyperactivity continuously motivated the crew.**
- **This was the only European co-production with a Turkish majority that received support from Eurimages.**
- **As a fanatic Fenerbahçe fan, director Abdullah Oguz, gave the day off to the set on days of Fenerbahçe games, but he didn't give a break on days of the matches of other teams especially Galatasaray.**
- **When Özgü Namal's TV show set collided with her movie set, she had to work long sleepless hours. She even broke a record and worked sleepless for 40 hours.**

- **Author Zülfü Livaneli, who said that scenes in the novel were reflected suitably, visited the set in Bodrum during the shootings.**
- **400 boxes of film were used.**
- **A set was built in the middle of the sea. A ferry that travels to Rodos was turned into a set.**
- **Abdullah Oguz insisted on using Taskale as scenery, which he had used for a commercial 10 years ago and never forgot about.**
- **The crew, that started shooting with 100 walkie talkies, dropped at least 20 of them into the sea during shooting.**
- **Abdullah Oguz, who is known for his actor discoveries in his movies, worked with Murat Han, in whom he saw a rare quality. This is Murat Han's acting debut in a Turkish film. Han has studied acting in America.**
- **Murat Han who came to ANS for a TV show, got the leading role in the movie and according to a lot of people Turkey has found its new leading actor.**
- **Murat Han studied method acting in Stella Adler Conservatory, where many famous actors such as Robert DeNiro, Marlon Brando and Merly Streep have graduated.**
- **After shooting the first audition with Abdullah Oguz, Murat Han got the script and his camera and went to Van in order to do some research. The dialect exercises he made by chatting with young people over there and making them read the script was very helpful during pre-production.**
- **Bilkent University Theater department graduate Murat Han, has acted in a total of 3 movies and 5 theater plays.**