



## King Khat (Melech HaHagigat)

Animation, 74 minutes, Israel-Portugal, 2023

Israeli chemist becomes the 21st century's most notorious drug baron after inventing a legal psychoactive drug from Cathinone. As his empire grows, he must constantly navigate legal and ethical challenges while maintaining his power and influence.

Director & Writer: Uri Marantz

Producer: Haggai Arad, Aharon Peer, Elad Peleg

Production Company: Daroma Productions

Co-Production Company: Spamflix, Haven

Co-Producer: Ronen Menipaz, Oshri Cohen, Markus Duffner

Cast: Oshri Cohen, Hadar Diamond

Cinematography: Ido Berlad

Editor: Yoav Harel

Script Editor: Doron Tzabari

Animation Producer: Liran Koren, Doron Suliman

Animation Concept & Animator: Nir Matarasso

Productions Designer, Animation & Background design: Dafna Englander

Composition & Aftereffects: Pan Animation- Ariad Shiknagi & Maor Ishay

Line Producer: Amit Eran & Hadar Kostizky

Art Director: Nitzan Zifrut

Costume Design: Rona Doron

MakeUp: Michal Bartov

Music: Stav Levy & Noam Vardi

Sound Design: Nil Gibs

Online: Aharon Peer

### **Synopsis 1:**

Gabi is an impossible combination of a mad genius, a drug baron, and a junkie. With a Ph.D. in biotechnology and a kind of scientific enlightenment, he embarks on a journey that takes him from the world of high-tech and academia to the development and distribution of new amphetamines. Amidst all this chaos, he tries to maintain a normal family life. Meet the scientist who turned the drug discovery field into a startup.

### **Synopsis 2:**

Gabi, a young Israeli scientist became fascinated by the psycho-active influences of the Khat plant. After a thorough study of the Israeli law of illegal substances he was surprised to find that Cathinone - the active substance in Khat- was not listed as an illegal drug. Following this revelation, he decided to try and synthesis the molecule by himself. What began years ago, as a non-harmful local home experiment developed into a full-blown international operation that changed global approach toward drugs in a profound way. His synthetic Cathinone became known as Hagigat, the famous legal drug that conquered the streets of Tel-Aviv. Later, applying the same principals he created more than 30 new psycho-active molecules, and distributed them all around the globe.

### **Director Biography**

Uri was born and raised in Beer Sheva, Israel, and later graduated from Tel Aviv University. Known for his work as a television writer and creator, he is best known for the hit series "Daddy," which aired on HOT. "King Khat" marks his debut as a filmmaker.

### **Directors Statement:**

This film was born following a strange Tel Aviv night in 2011, during which I met 'Gabi' (a pseudonym), someone I had known for years (or so I thought). That night, I discovered that Gabi is a prominent figure in the world of "party drugs," a role he continues to play to this day.

"King Khat" began as a documentary film, but life circumstances and the evolution of the script took it in a very different direction. While the story told here is true, the dramatic narrative took precedence over the documentary aspect (though we still wanted to preserve some of it, which is present in the script).

"King Khat" is a feature-length film with a dominant animated component based on this true story. The film tells the story of an Israeli chemist who became an international drug baron. The choice of animation initially served to conceal Gabi's true identity but quickly justified itself as a cinematic choice that serves central themes in the film, such as the portrayal of psychoactive experiences.

The film is told from Gabi's perspective, and the use of animation allows me, as the director, to incorporate an external interpretive dimension. Gabi's personal story is also a story of a phenomenon, and he is one of its central contributors. This "phenomenon," as society perceives it, casts Gabi as a negative hero according to conventional notions. Hence, the film's central conflict: Gabi is torn between his desire for recognition in his scientific work and the life circumstances that force him to remain in the shadows.

The issues mentioned above float and intertwine throughout the film, but above all, I aim to tell a good story. It's a "psycho-active" narrative about a non-normative character who transforms from an outcast to a drug lord and guru.

Uri Marantz

**Material:**

- Trailer- <https://youtu.be/NLX26ZrV52s>
- Poster: <https://nx38585.your-storageshare.de/s/Lqj4XBLYDiX5Nqc>
- Pictures: <https://nx38585.your-storageshare.de/s/ynHfRTjjR3Ft2Rj>