The Precious Quarter

Into the Silence

A feature length documentary



Logline

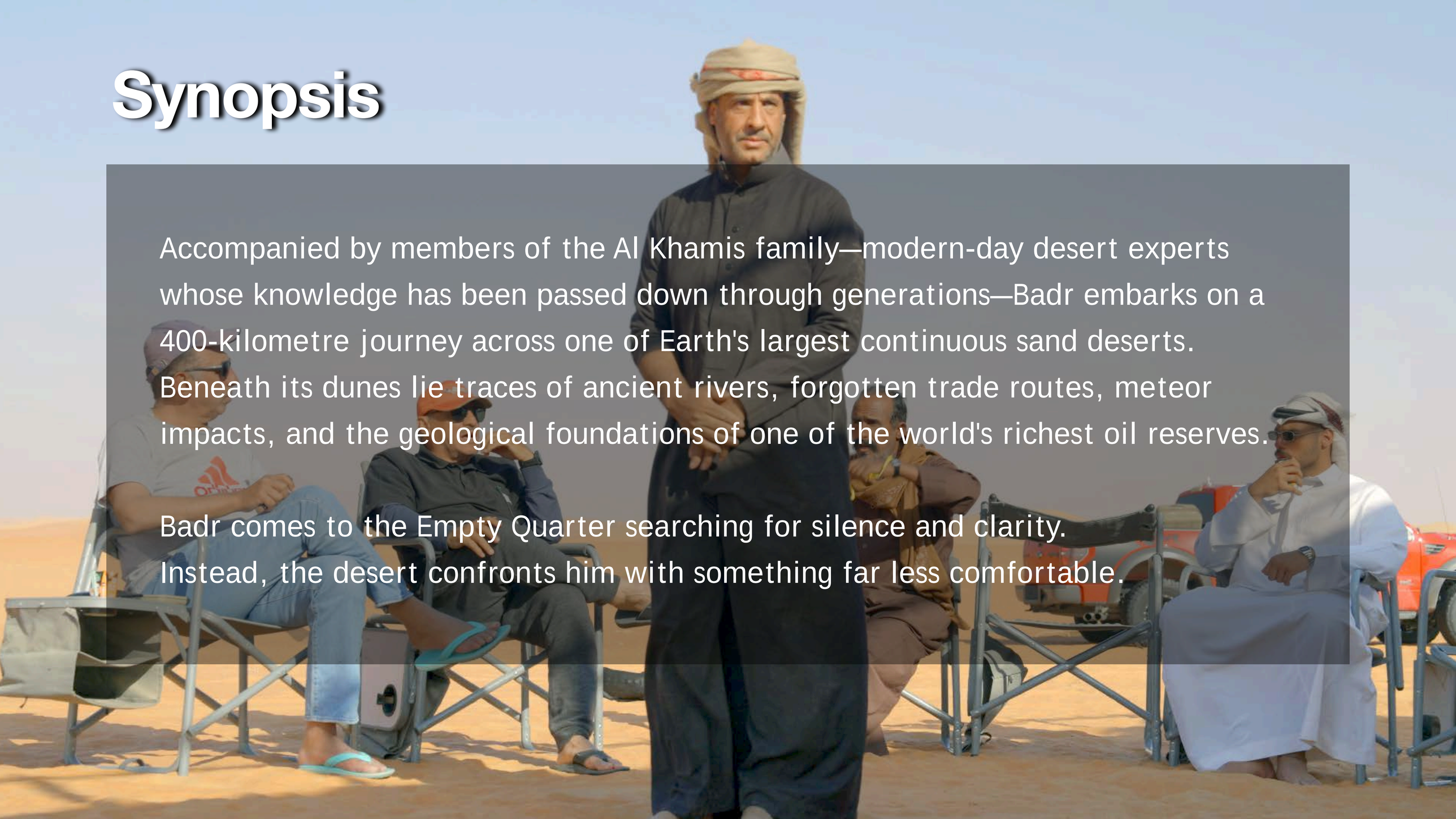
After conquering the world's highest mountains, Saudi adventurer Badr Al Shibani embarks on his most personal expedition yet—a 400-kilometre crossing of the Empty Quarter on foot—not to conquer the desert, but to confront the silence within himself, while rediscovering the land that shaped a nation.

Synopsis

After climbing the Seven Summits, reaching the polar extremes, exploring some of the world's deepest caves, and retracing the historic Hijrah route across Arabia, Saudi adventurer Badr Al Shibani is confronted with unexpected news: years of pushing his body to the limit have taken their toll, and his doctor advises him to stop pursuing extreme expeditions.

Faced with the possibility that this chapter of his life may be coming to an end, Badr turns towards the one place that has always called him home—the Empty Quarter.

Synopsis



Accompanied by members of the Al Khamis family—modern-day desert experts whose knowledge has been passed down through generations—Badr embarks on a 400-kilometre journey across one of Earth's largest continuous sand deserts. Beneath its dunes lie traces of ancient rivers, forgotten trade routes, meteor impacts, and the geological foundations of one of the world's richest oil reserves.

Badr comes to the Empty Quarter searching for silence and clarity.
Instead, the desert confronts him with something far less comfortable.

Documentary Treatment

The Precious Quarter - *Into the Silence* is a feature-length documentary that blends observational storytelling, human-centred documentary, and natural history to explore the profound relationship between people and place. While the film follows Badr Al Shibani's 400-kilometre crossing of the Empty Quarter, its true journey lies in the conversations, encounters and quiet reflections that unfold along the way. Moving seamlessly between adventure, science, culture and poetry, the film reveals the Empty Quarter not simply as a landscape to be crossed, but as a living force that shapes those who travel through it.



An Observational Journey

Into the Silence is an observational documentary that unfolds in the present, while the narration takes a reflective tone. Rather than relying on interviews, the film allows the audience to experience the expedition alongside Badr, discovering the desert through observation, conversation, and lived experience. Voice-over is used sparingly, revealing Badr's inner reflections while allowing the landscape and its people to tell the larger story.

A Human Story

At its heart, this is not a film about crossing a desert, but about a man searching for silence at a turning point in his life. Following a medical diagnosis that threatens the adventurous life he has always known, Badr turns to the Empty Quarter in search of clarity. What he finds is something far less comfortable.



The Al-Khamis Family

Sharing the journey is the Al Khamis family, whose deep connection to the Empty Quarter offers a second narrative perspective. Rooted in Bedouin heritage yet fully engaged with modern Saudi Arabia, they represent a generation that carries ancient knowledge into the present. Through their stories, humour, poetry and practical understanding of the desert, they reveal a culture that continues to evolve without losing sight of its origins.

Science, Culture and Poetry

The film blends natural history with cultural storytelling. As the expedition progresses, the changing geology of the Empty Quarter, and the science behind its landscapes are woven naturally into the narrative. Arabic poetry—shared by both Badr and Khaled Al Khamis—becomes another language through which the desert is understood, connecting the physical landscape with memory, identity and belonging.

Dreams and Memory

Alongside observation, the film occasionally enters Badr's inner world. A recurring dream, shared by Badr during production, is brought to life through a stylised cinematic sequence, offering a glimpse into the subconscious questions driving his journey. These moments deepen the emotional narrative without departing from the authenticity of the documentary.

The Empty Quarter

The Empty Quarter is more than a setting; it is a central character. Its ever-changing terrain shapes the rhythm of the journey, moving from hard desert plains to towering dunes, each landscape presenting new physical and emotional challenges. The film treats the desert as a living force that gradually strips away distraction, leaving both Badr and the audience alone with silence.

Director's Statement

When I first travelled into the Empty Quarter, I believed I knew the film I was going to make.

On the surface, it was an expedition film: a celebrated Saudi adventurer attempting a 400-kilometre crossing of one of the world's most unforgiving deserts. Naturally, I imagined a story driven by endurance, distance and achievement.

I was wrong.

— Samer Arzouni

Director's Statement

The Empty Quarter has a way of stripping away assumptions. As filming progressed, I realised the real journey wasn't unfolding across the landscape—it was unfolding within the man walking through it.

Rather than forcing the expedition into a predetermined narrative, I chose to embrace an observational approach. I wanted the desert to surprise us, and to allow the story to reveal itself naturally. During the edit, the question that kept returning wasn't *"How do we make the adventure more exciting?"* It was *"What is Badr truly searching for?"*

That question changed the film.

Director's Statement

Throughout my career, I have been drawn to people operating in extraordinary environments. I have come to believe that landscapes are never simply backdrops—they are active participants in the story, quietly stripping away comfort, challenging identity, and revealing truths that everyday life often conceals.

With *The Precious Quarter - Into the Silence* I wanted to tell a different kind of adventure story. One where the greatest challenge is not the landscape itself, but what happens when all distractions disappear. Badr begins this journey searching for silence and clarity. Instead, the desert confronts him with something far less comfortable.

Director's Statement

Equally important was portraying a side of Saudi Arabia rarely seen by international audiences. Through the Al Khamis family, the film presents a generation deeply rooted in Bedouin knowledge while fully engaged with the modern world. Their presence reflects a Saudi Arabia where heritage and progress are not opposing ideas, but parts of the same identity.

Ultimately, this film is about what the Empty Quarter removes:
the noise and the certainty.

And in that silence, all that remains is the person we have been trying not to hear.

Director's Biography

Samer Arzouni is a documentary filmmaker with over fifteen years of experience directing, producing and editing factual content. A former Head of Production at NatGeo Channels MENA, he founded Spotlife Films to create cinematic documentaries that explore the relationship between people, culture and the environments that shape them. His work has taken him across the Middle East and beyond, focusing on character-driven stories set in extraordinary landscapes. His films have received regional and international recognition, including a Silver Cannes Lions, while his feature documentary Human Tide -which he co-directed- premiered at the Red Sea International Film Festival. *Into the Silence* continues his exploration of stories where extraordinary landscapes become catalysts for deeply human journeys.

Production Companies

Millimeter KSA - Production

Founded in 2008, Millimeter is one of Saudi Arabia's pioneering production companies, delivering feature films, documentaries, television, branded entertainment and commercial productions across the Kingdom. Based in Jeddah, the company combines extensive production capabilities with local expertise, playing a key role in facilitating both Saudi and international productions. For *Into the Silence*, Millimeter leads the production within Saudi Arabia, providing local production, logistics and access that enable the film to authentically capture the Empty Quarter and its people.

Production Companies

Spotlife Films - Post Production

Founded by filmmaker Samer Arzouni, Spotlife Films is an award-winning Dubai-based production company specialising in cinematic documentaries and factual storytelling. The company develops and produces documentaries, reality formats, branded content and commercial films for regional and international broadcasters, agencies and brands. On *Into the Silence*, Spotlife Films leads the creative development and post-production, overseeing editorial, sound design, colour grading and final picture finishing to bring the film to completion.

Director’s Previous Works

Mission Everest

https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/455849484

Human Tide

https://vimeo.com/1174707824?fl=pl&fe=sh

The Peak of Kuwaiti Ambition

https://vimeo.com/527170949?fl=pl&fe=sh











