

# MICA

*Original language: French/Arabic/ Subtitles: English*



**Director : *Ismaël Ferroukhi***

**Genre : *Drama/ sport***

**Country of origin : *Morocco, France***

**With : *Zakaria Inan, Sabrina Ouazani, Azelarab Kaghat***

**Length : 103 mm.**

**14 years and older**

## SYNOPSIS

Mica, 10, lives with his mother and sick father in a slum in the suburbs of Meknes, which is destined for destruction. A friend of his parents', a handyman in a tennis club in Casablanca, takes him as his apprentice. Mica finds himself propelled into a whole new world where a new life awaits him. Mr. Slimani, a rich and cultured man and owner of the club, dreams of making his son Omar a tennis champion. To this end, he hires Sophia, a former French champion, as a private trainer. But Omar has very little talent and no passion for the sport. On the other hand, Sophia will eventually notice Mica and take him under her wing....

## REVIEWS

...[the filmmaker] gives us a pretty little film shaped like a coming-of-age story in a sport context flavoured with social observations. Nothing transcending not revolutionary here but *Mica* is rather pleasant and lets you hear its music for an hour and a half without weakening. (Sens critique – From a viewer's opinion: Rémy Fiers – *Translated from the French text*)

*MICA* proves to be a moving film raising with subtlety everyone's place in the world. The place where one was born and the place that one may dream of getting provided the people capable to change one's fate are put in one's path. (Sylvie-Noëlle – Le Blog cinéma – *Translated from the French text*)

## DETAILS

### LANGUAGE

The language in the film is French and Arabic.

The language plays a significant role because it characterizes the social class of the characters: the poor speak Arabic and the rich speak French.

What is noticeable is the contemptuous tone the privileged children use when addressing Mica and even Mica's boss Hajj. They order Mica to hurry in doing what they ask and to look down when spoken to. They refuse to give Hajj his cell phone and eventually break it.

The scene when these spoiled children treat Mica like a dog underlines their disdain for Mica. They ask him to fetch the tennis balls, to go back to his doghouse and they bark at him like dogs.

They sometimes use familiar words like

*T'as fini de nettoyer les chiottes?* Did you finish cleaning the toilet [chiottes being a slang word in French for toilet]

*Retourne dans ton trou avant* – Go back to your shithole before

Mica, lost in the city of Casablanca, is robbed and kicked by street children: in his anger and despair he screams in Arabic insults translated by “mother....s” and “bastard”

Sometimes, a familiar expletive like “*Putain!*” [damn it!] or an affectionate remark “*P'tit con!*” [show off] are said by Sophia, the tennis instructor.

## VIOLENCE

- ☉ Territoriality: Mica is kicked out of the market where he usually sells his plastic bags by a group of street children. The head of the gang roughs Mica up and hits him on the ground.  
No bloodletting- no tissue damage- a brief scene.  
Mica can get up and walk as soon as they leave.
- ☉ The young tennis members of the club hit Mica with their balls
- ☉ Mica defends his dignity: He uses his fists and arms to hit the children who humiliate him. The violence is implied as it happens outside of the screen.  
Mica throws a ball back on the face of Omar, the club owner's son. No visible trace nor damage. It is very brief: Omar hides his face.
- ☉ Hajj's punishes Mica: Mica is crying and screams his sorry for having thrown the ball. One guesses that he is being hit. It is confirmed by the fact that Hajj comes out of the cabin with a belt. The hitting takes place outside the screen and is implied.  
Hajj locks Mica in his cabin and deprives him of his dinner.
- ☉ The street poverty: Mica is robbed by a gang of street boys who steal all his belongings. The older boy kicks Mica. As it is nighttime and as the scene is brief with no close-up, the violence has no bloodletting nor tissue damage.

## NUDITY

Non-sexual nudity with no close-ups.

When Mica swims into the ocean for the first time in his life, his underwear comes down revealing a bare behind.

Mica lost it all. He goes to Hajj for help. Hajj takes him to the local baths to wash him: men and boys are seen with their underwear and bare upper body.

## SEXUAL ACTIVITY

None

## PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

“Touched by the violence from the social inequalities in this country, I became interested in the destiny of this youth sinking into decline and despair and whose only dream is to escape to Europe” filmmaker Ismaël Ferroukhi explains in a press release.

### ● Social inequalities

They take different shapes in particular the psychological violence shown to Mica by the privileged children

The scenes of humiliation may cause anxiety to children under the age of 14.

Other images describe those social inequalities in a more subtle way. One can imagine what Mica may think when he sees children comfortably seated in the back seat of a nice car or Omar celebrating his birthday with his friends. He also looks at the privileged children playing tennis with an instructor while he is working hard.

### ● Decline and despair

The film points at a kind of cannibalism between the destitute street children who rob each other to survive.

Even the adult smugglers have no pity towards children

### ● Hard labor

Mica is seen working all the time carrying heavy garbage bags, attending plants, washing cars, selling Kleenex boxes. He is forced to improvise and be “the man” of all trades.

### ● Migration towards an imaginary Eldorado

Mica is ready to try anything to get to Marseille thinking he is going to find paradise. At one point he is seen with a friend of his taking dangerous risks.

Sophia tries to convince him that his is going to be cruelly disappointed.

### ● Hope

“We need stories like this to give the young generations their hope back as they only think of migrating towards a mysterious Eldorado, because they feel that the doors are shutting in their faces in this country. Cinema is an inspiring tool that is incredibly accessible nowadays” (Mrs. Chraïbi, the film producer)

In the film Sophia is the young generation that will change the stagnating traditions and possibly the future as she is able to convince Hajj to let Mica train with her.

## FILM PHOTOS



Mica is a child from the slums of Meknès. He is going to work for Hajj at a private tennis club in Casablanca in order to feed his family. As a destitute boy, he will have to face the contempt and humiliations of the privileged children at the tennis club.



Mica likes nature and birds



Mica was robbed of all his belongings included the money he so hardly earned. He goes back to Hajj to ask for his help.



Sophia may bring Mica the break he has been hoping for thanks to her skills as a tennis monitor and ex-champion.