

Title: Steadfast

Author: Nikos Kopsidas

Treatment By: Julie Tosh

Mission Statement:

Steadfast by Nikos Kopsidas tells the true story of Odysseas Andronikos and the events that led to his defection from Greece in 1973. When adapting the novel into a screenplay, some compression of content was necessary to clarify the hero's journey and to transform this literary work into a fully realized visual story. These changes help to increase the momentum as the plot progresses and heighten tension as Odysseas's defection becomes imminent.

As with any story based on real events, some portions of the novel were more illustrative of the central message than others. Initially, Anna's background does not inform the hero's present circumstances, so portions of this have been minimized to keep the focus on Odysseas. Also, the prologue and epilogue were useful in the book to set up the world and provide closure. In a feature film they pull the audience away from the dramatic action by giving away some of the mystery. Because the prologue is set in Oregon, it tells the audience that Odysseas will be successful with his mission. Likewise, the epilogue can be handled with a few closing subtitles to tell the fate of Melina and others. This is a story with a great emotional center, so the focus remains there.

Although a true story, some actions have been eliminated or minimized to increase momentum. For example, although Odysseas actually travels to America three times, his middle trip is not shown in the screenplay since it did not directly impact plot progression. Instead, the long separation is addressed and the story moves on. Because it is so close to the actual defection, the first marriage is not shown in order to increase tension leading up to Odysseas walking off his ship for the last time. Finally, the journey of his half-sister Arianna has been cut to keep the focus on Melina and Odysseas.

In telling a true story for the screen the tale must still advance through a series of increasingly tension-filled complications to the end. Choosing the most visual moments to represent and compressing the action make the story more viscerally thrilling and, ultimately, more emotionally satisfying. Although this is a love story about a man's steadfast devotion to his one great love, it is chiefly the story of a man who, dissatisfied with life, goes on a journey that leads to his ultimate happiness. *Steadfast* by Nikos Kopsidas brings this story to life and will make a compelling feature film.

Logline:

Defeated by his loveless marriage and the decline of his country into military rule, a Greek sailor finds the love of his life in America and risks deportation and torture to renounce the country of his birth for the country where his heart is.

Treatment:

1950, Greece. Two ten-year-old boys man a small sailing skiff. One, NIKOS GRAVIAS, scans the coastline for bathing beauties. The other, ODYSSEAS ANDRONIKOS, faces the sea. Far off, a military vessel lifts its anchor. He waves at the sailors on board.

1955. Odysseas shaves his head then signs up, underage, for the Royal Hellenic Navy. In uniform he knocks on a door. It is opened by ANNA, Odysseas's mother, who greets him with joy.

1967. A montage of the military junta in Greece. Indoctrination speeches. Marching soldiers. Citizens taken from their beds in the dead of night. Men, women, and children thrown into cells. Screams during torture and rape. In Crete Odysseas lies next to his wife of four years. He reaches out to touch her. She stiffens.

Odysseas, now twenty-nine, sits at his mother's table trying to hide his unhappiness. He's come to say goodbye before heading on a mission to the United States to learn welding and steel construction in San Diego and Rhode Island. Anna counsels him to think about his options while he is away. He agrees to do so but reminds her that in Greece, there is no divorce and there is no escaping military rule.

Odysseas squints into the San Diego sun as he crosses the airport tarmac to meet a waiting jeep. Master Chief ED BATES tosses Odysseas's suitcase in the back then gives him a tour of the base. They end at the Chief's Club where Odysseas is cautioned to remove his hat or he'll be expected to buy everyone a round.

After each day of training, Odysseas explores Southern California: the colorful Borrego Desert, Hollywood Boulevard, a baseball game. On his last day he climbs a hillside and watches a freighter backlit by a beautiful Pacific sunset. As the shadows of sailors on board prepare the ship for sea, Odysseas turns with a heavy heart to head back to the base.

1970, North Kingstown, Rhode Island. A beautiful blonde, MELINA SPENCER, takes her anger out on the accelerator as she speeds down tree-tunneled roads in her

convertible. Echoes of the argument with her husband GEOFFREY play in her head, ending with a SLAP, as Geoffrey strikes their middle child Kristine. Melina asks for a divorce, but he laughs as he grabs his duffle for a five-month cruise at sea. He says they will talk when he gets home from duty. Melina shakes off the memory and pulls the car into Quonset Point Naval Air Station. She wipes away a tear before heading into work.

Odysseas arrives at the Navy Seabee Center in Davisville, Rhode Island and is driven to the office of COMMANDER NASS, head of the base. He learns he has a week to kill before training. Pissed that he had to leave San Diego early, he heads to the Chiefs' Club for a beer. He meets a good many friendly chiefs and officers, but the club is missing music. He saunters to a jukebox in a back room past a group of boisterous women holding their monthly gossip meeting.

As he walks through, the room gets quiet. He takes a moment to look around then waves at the women before heading for the machine. As he makes his selection, he looks back and sees Melina, the most striking and desirable woman in the room. She stares directly back at him. A shiver runs down his spine, and he walks, weak-kneed, back to join the men in the other room.

Odysseas waits until Friday to go to the club again, hitching a ride with Chief TOM MARTIN. Tom's wife LINDA, a waitress, pours him a beer. It doesn't take long for Melina to show up. Linda brings her over for introductions. Odysseas learns that Melina's married, but they can't resist talking for hours. He brushes her arm with his shoulder, aching to touch her. She notices the interest of others in the club and suggests they get coffee elsewhere. In her car they embrace frantically but she pulls away. It's moving too fast.

They go to a coffee shop for pie. He asks if she believes in reincarnation because somehow he knows her. They stare into one another's eyes then Melina looks away. They can only be friends. Odysseas agrees to this. Alone later, he pours himself a whiskey and curses his rotten luck.

The next night they meet for dinner at the club. Again, people are watching so they head to the coffee shop. He tells he's married. She tells him she's asked for a divorce from her abusive husband. Although they don't touch, Odysseas can't control the way his eyes wander. Melina can't help the way she leans in his direction.

Odysseas begins his training but all he can think of is Melina. He borrows a jeep to meet her for lunch and gets the surprise of his life when a plane hovers over him. He's accidentally driven onto the airport runway. MPs pull him over, but his thick accent and Greek papers convince them that it was the mistake of a "so and so foreigner." Melina laughs when he tells her the story.

On her birthday they meet at the club for a drink. She offers to take him home. Once in the car they embrace. She holds him then drives to a wooded area. Hesitant, they reach for each other and make love. As she pulls into her driveway at home, she sees a neighbor, SANDY OWENS, pull into her own drive and turn to look at Melina. Has she been following her?

Odysseas and Melina sneak out of town for a series of trips: Hyannis, Boston. As they return from Boston, Melina wheezes with a bad cough. She goes to the doctor and discovers she has pneumonia. She's ordered to bed.

Geoffrey's ship returns from its training cruise. He looks for Melina among the crowd. She isn't there. He drives home and finds her in bed. He wants to make love, but she refuses. Angry, he heads to the club. Tom Martin sees Geoffrey's bad mood and comes over to talk. He tells Geoffrey about the rumors that have been going around about his wife. Geoffrey drinks some more.

Hours later, Geoffrey storms into the house. He drags Melina out of bed, ripping off her clothes, and mounts her from behind. When he is done, he heads back to the club. Melina, almost passed out on the floor, prays for her children to still be asleep.

Geoffrey watches Melina the rest of the weekend but she avoids him. At work she mails a letter to her father, explaining what to do if anything happens to her or the children. Then she calls Odysseas and tells him what happened.

On Geoffrey's bowling night Melina and Odysseas arrange a rendezvous. After making love, he asks her to marry him. She says yes.

Odysseas graduates from welding school. In celebration Odysseas and Melina go to a motel to celebrate while Geoffrey does duty aboard his ship. Melina slips out to check on the children at home and doesn't return. Odysseas calls her house, and Geoffrey answers.

The next day Melina takes Odysseas to the airport and tells him about the close call she had. Just after she got home, Geoffrey came home early. She got into a bed, and he never suspected a thing. Heartbroken, they embrace one final time. She gives him an envelope to open later and drives away.

Back in Greece Odysseas sits at his mother's table and tells her everything. He opens the envelope. It's a lock of Melina's hair. He cries. He tells his mother he has new orders to return to Crete where his wife is. He doesn't know what to do. Anna cautions him that the walls have ears. She tells him about her business buying goods at American GI's garage sales and selling them to local folks. Maybe she can

talk to a few friends for him and get him re-stationed elsewhere. He says he'd rather defect and move to America. She, angrily, tells him only after she is dead.

Melina and Geoffrey sit down for a heart to heart. She wants a divorce but what about money and the kids. Geoffrey apologizes for raping her. She lies to him about the affair, telling him that she and Odysseas were just friends. She holds him and blinks back tears.

Odysseas calls Melina at her office but she can't talk long. He's surprised to learn that she still hasn't filed for divorce. At home Melina listens from another room as Geoffrey berates the children, again.

Odysseas gets orders that keep him in Athens. He works and waits for the phone to ring. One day it does. It's Melina. Geoffrey's ship is coming to Athens, and Melina and a few other wives are coming for a visit. Odysseas makes arrangements for them all to meet for dinner.

At Melina and Geoffrey's hotel Odysseas, Anna, her husband STAVROS, Geoffrey, and Melina share dinner and conversation. Geoffrey watches Melina and Odysseas closely but can find nothing amiss. Under the table, Melina slips her foot onto Odysseas's lap. Suddenly, Geoffrey looks under the table then storms out. Flustered, Melina follows him.

After seeing Anna and Stavros off, Odysseas rents a room in the hotel on the same floor as Melina and Geoffrey. He finds her in the bar and tells her. Late that night as Odysseas waits in bed, the door opens softly. It's Melina. They make love. In the wee hours Melina wakes. She grabs her things to go back to her room, terrified that Geoffrey will catch her. Odysseas suggests she go to the bathroom on their floor. She does. Odysseas watches from the peephole. Geoffrey opens his door, hung-over. He sees Melina returning from the bathroom. He reaches for her but she pulls away and slips into their room, winking at Odysseas as she does.

Again, Odysseas paces, waiting for Melina to call. Then his mother rushes in from getting the mail. He's gotten a package from America. Inside is a silver ring, engraved with the words, "More than yesterday, less than tomorrow." Odysseas puts it on his ring finger. A letter from Melina tells Odysseas that she is finally divorced from Geoffrey. She and Odysseas are now engaged. Odysseas and Anna rejoice, but she suddenly doesn't feel well. He leads her to the couch then calls the ambulance. She is having a stroke.

When Odysseas and Stavros bring Anna home from the hospital, junta agents are searching the apartment. Someone has reported illegal buying of American goods. Odysseas insists that many of the items were purchased by him in America, but the

military thugs arrest Anna and Stavros. At the trial their attorney suggests they pay a bribe. Stavros gives him the money. He is set free, but Anna is taken to prison.

Stavros visits Anna as she becomes more and more delusional in jail. Odysseas finally gets a release from his military duties to visit and is shocked by Anna's deterioration. She's dying. He visits an official in Megara to beg for her release. He returns as she is moved to a hospital. He tells her that the magistrate has agreed to set her free. As he wipes away her tears, she begs him to throw a black rock behind him and leave Greece. He promises he will, and then she falls into a coma. Though he prays at her side, she slips further away. He touches her forehead. She's cold, and Odysseas weeps, realizing that she has died.

Odysseas requests some vacation time. Looking at a map, he charts a course from his home in Corfu to Italy. From there he can make his way to America. He is called to the office of his supervisor, COMMANDER MATSOUKIS. Fearing the junta knows of his plans, Odysseas sweats as the commander questions him about America. Then the commander admits that he may have purchased items at one of Anna's illegal garage sales. He wants his name erased from the books. Odysseas offers him a deal. If he can get him another trip to America, he will erase the commander's name. The commander agrees to look into it. A few days later Odysseas erases a name from his mother's books. Next to him rest his latest orders. He's headed back to San Diego to refit a ship for service in the Greek Navy.

1973, San Diego, California. Odysseas and his fellow sailors watch as the seamen aboard ship remove the American colors and hoist the Greek flag. Next to him, his friend ANDREAS KALAFATIS listens as Odysseas tells him his plan to defect. They are joined by another sailor, YIANNIS VINNIOTIS, who asks a lot of questions, putting Odysseas and Andreas on guard.

As the Greek sailors take possession of the ship, speeches are made glorifying the junta. A disinterested sailor is dragged below for punishment. Odysseas and Andreas head to a jeep to go to the officer's club. A commander tells Yiannis to keep an eye on them, and Yiannis invites himself along. At the club Andreas and Yiannis meet some cute girls, CYNTHIA and ALICE. Odysseas uses the pay phone to call Melina.

Aboard ship, Odysseas and Andreas try to make plans, but Yiannis watches them at every turn. They hear the news that several sailors have already defected. The commander warns the sailors against trying to leave. The US government is required to return them to the ship by law. He throws a suspected defector in the gun turret as an example.

Andreas, Cynthia, and Odysseas have pizza at her place. Cynthia admits that Andreas told her that Odysseas wants to defect. He's angry until she lets him call

Melina. She's been waiting for reassurance. By the end of the call Melina decides that she and the kids are moving west.

Melina sits down with her children to explain the move. Her two youngest KRISTINE and LANCE are happy. The oldest HOWARD is not. He grumbles while they load a U-Haul.

After leaving the children in Utah with her father, Melina arrives in San Diego. She is meant to stay with Alice. When Yiannis witnesses the lovers tearful reunion, he snubs them. Then Alice probes for information about their plans, but Melina says they have no wish to get married. Yiannis and Alice go out to buy him more of the trinkets she likes to shower on him. Alone, Odysseas and Melina make love in Alice's guest room.

The Chief Executive Officer DELIYIANNIS calls Odysseas to his office. He has heard rumors of wedding plans for Odysseas. Odysseas denies it. On his way back to his station he slams Yiannis into a locker. Once for lying to the CEO. A second time for saying that Melina was a whore.

Melina takes Odysseas to a house for rent. Later, they enjoy pizza with Cynthia and Andreas then head out to make love on the beach. Odysseas tells her what happened to his mother then about some of the atrocities aboard the ship. He cries. She promises to help him find an attorney so he can stay in the country legally.

On board ship a sailor, NIKOS GRAFIOTIS, arrives back late from leave. He's searched and a marijuana joint is found. Yiannis has him taken below where he and his henchman beat Nikos with canvas cartridge belts. On deck sailors avoid each other's eyes as they hear the screams. Yiannis drags Nikos back onto deck, looking for a place to hold him captive. The brig is full, and so are the gun turrets. Then Yiannis has him thrown in the forward peak tank. "The pit," as it is called, is an airtight drum. They vent the lid.

Melina and Odysseas enter the offices of Legal Aid Society attorney JOHN SCHUMANN. All cases like Odysseas's have failed but John agrees to take them on.

Odysseas requests leave to take Melina back to Utah for Christmas. Alice, not knowing their plans, gives Melina a wedding invitation. She and Yiannis are getting married. Melina gives the invitation to Odysseas.

Odysseas's leave is granted but first the ship must complete a training run. While Melina worries about his safety, Odysseas cleans out his locker. He leaves Yiannis's wedding invitation behind. When the ship docks several days later, Odysseas and Melina drive away. It's Dec. 22, 1973.

On John Schumann's instructions Melina and Odysseas drive to Canada but are sent back when the attorney they meet learns that Odysseas is a defector. Then John sends them to Reno. He needs time to figure out the next steps; and, if Odysseas were legally married to an American, it may help. To marry Melina Odysseas must get a divorce from his first wife, but he needs to live in Reno six weeks to establish residency. They rent a trailer for Odysseas while Melina returns to Utah to work.

Back in San Diego Chief Executive Officer Deliyiannis screams at Yiannis for allowing Odysseas to defect. The wedding invitation is found in Odysseas's locker. The commander questions Yiannis then deports him to Greece in disgrace.

Afraid of discovery, Odysseas, Melina, and her father MR. JENSSON go to court for his divorce. The divorce is granted. Then Melina and Odysseas have the judge marry them. They go to Utah where Odysseas gets a job as a welder.

Back in Greece the junta government falls. Andreas calls to tell Odysseas that he will still be considered a deserter. He can't return to Greece, and he still isn't safe in America.

Tired of feeling like a man with no country, Odysseas takes the family to San Diego again. They rent a house with Cynthia. When they avoid her questions about Andreas, she gets angry and reports Odysseas to immigration.

Agents take Odysseas away. Melina calls John Schumann. Schumann counsels Odysseas not to tell anyone his name. They can't deport him without official identification. The agents try to use an interpreter to trick Odysseas. He calls their bluff and is sent to a detention center to await trial.

John Schumann comes to see him. He asks Odysseas to return to Greece, which makes him furious. Odysseas looks at his defection papers and sees that the Greek officials have made a mistake on dates. Maybe he can use this technicality. John is reluctant to try, but Odysseas begs him to show the US Attorney the mistake. John takes the document to the immigration office. The official laughs at the error but turns in an appeal, telling John that it's a waste of time. Odysseas and Melina must wait sixty days for the Greek government to make a correction.

Melina and John conduct a campaign to coerce the Greek government into setting Odysseas free. They call and write official after official but no one answers. John pulls Melina aside to tell her the bad news. No Greek sailor has succeeded in gaining legal status in America. She must prepare to let Odysseas go.

Odysseas works in the kitchens of the El Centro Detention Center and waits. Each time the announcer calls the names of those that will be deported, he stills, sure his name will be called.

Melina packs the house. She and the children will return to Utah after she says goodbye. As she prepares to go to the detention center, Melina calls the Greek government official one last time. He slams the phone down, telling her he never wants to hear the name Odysseas Andronikos again. Melina stares at the phone in her hand, but she knows. The Greek government is going to ignore the paperwork, and Odysseas will be set free.

In the hot California desert Odysseas walks out of the gates of El Centro to a waiting car. He gets in, and Odysseas and Melina drive away.

A series of shots:

Odysseas gets a Greek passport.

1980 Odysseas' US Visa is stamped in Canada.

1984 Odysseas applies for US citizenship. US Immigration tries hard to derail it.

1986 Odysseas takes the oath for US citizenship while Melina watches with pride.