

# Saudi's Red Palm Pictures launches with development deal with 'Norah' director Tawfik Alzaidi

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**SOURCE: RED PALM PICTURES  
PAUL CHESNEY**

Former Universal Pictures executive Paul Chesney has launched Riyadh-based Red Palm Pictures and has agreed a multi-picture development deal with Saudi writer and director Tawfik Alzaidi whose debut feature *Norah* world premieres at the Red Sea International Film Festival next week.

The production company will develop and produce original feature film, TV and documentary content for theatrical and streaming in MENA and around the world.

Chesney will head up Red Palm Pictures as CEO, in addition to the **recently launched distribution company TwentyOne Entertainment** which is releasing Alzaidi's *Norah*. The new production and distribution businesses will operate together under one roof.

Chesney is a former EVP of global operations at Universal Pictures who has also management roles at Disney, Warner Bros. and Arts Alliance Media as well as technology start-ups and new studio developments.

Alzaidi's first project for Red Palm will be the feature film *Thuraya*, an action and adventure drama. The film is currently in development and scheduled to start shooting in late 2024.

"There is a new wave of filmmaking in Saudi Arabia right now and remarkable undiscovered talent, both behind and in front of the camera," said Chesney. "Our goal is

to be at the forefront of this growth and transformation and to nurture those filmmakers and give them local stories from within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as international co-productions.”

- **Riyadh-based distributor TwentyOne Entertainment launches into MENA market**