



STARTUP EMBASSY

This captivating verité documentary follows three high-tech entrepreneurs who, like thousands of others worldwide, are pouring into Silicon Valley with visions of the triumphs of icons like Steve Jobs and Elon Musk. Their chances of success are minuscule and each of them suffers painful disappointments, gambles with financial ruin and endures extended separations from family. This moving story is about the human cost of pursuing your dreams.

These visionaries often show up without any contacts or any ideas about what to do once they land. Many end up at one of the Valley's hundreds of hacker houses, where each resident pays fifty dollars per night to share a bunk bed—outfitted room with seven other people in a suburban house. The film follows three such risk-takers: **Carlos de la Lama-Noriega** (Madrid), who founded Startup Embassy, a very special hacker house that offers an affordable, welcoming community to hopeful residents like **Habibe Turfan** (Istanbul) and **Lucas Gozávez** (Seville).

Carlos quit an imagination-crushing engineering job in Madrid and came to Silicon Valley ten years ago because he craved the freedom to solve problems creatively through computer programming. His first, overwhelming impression of the U.S. was that this country did not want him. When, through a convergence of circumstances, he founded Startup Embassy, entrepreneurs loved the empathetic hospitality he offered and the house quickly became one of Silicon Valley's top ten hacker houses. Carlos's optimistic plan to open another house in the Bay Area is on hold because of the coronavirus. But when the time is right, he will swing back into action.

Lucas found his way to Startup Embassy from Seville four years ago with little more than an idea, residing there on and off while he sought connections and capital for his creation, a miraculous artificially intelligent app that allows businesses to build their own apps. He has had successes and he has had failures, but he perseveres. Money isn't important to him, he is seeking a kind of immortality.

Habibe, a stylish, confident twenty-five-year-old Uyghur Chinese Turkish prodigy in material science, invented a nano fire extinguisher and Startup Embassy has frequently been her home when she's looking for partners and capital. She made deal after deal where the funds never materialized and she was forced to close her Istanbul lab. At last, in February 2020, she successfully closed a deal. Even with the pandemic, her lab in Istanbul is operating – with some accommodations – one worker is sleeping there, the rest are working from home. With true entrepreneurial spirit, Habibe recently told us, “This pandemic is just a whole new chapter. But when there's a problem that means it's a problem to solve.”

STARTUP EMBASSY is in the first rough cut stage with one final shoot to go. When it is safe, we will travel to Istanbul to film an exultant Habibe as she readies her nano fire extinguisher for the world market. Then STARTUP EMBASSY will head toward the finish line and world premiere.

Final budget: \$245,000 **Funding gap:** \$141,222 (includes \$40,000 for distribution and promotion)

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Trailer:

<https://vimeo.com/387066567>