



LONDON INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL

The Effects of Lying

+ Q&A with director Isher Sahota, producer Jon Tarcy and cast members

The Effects of Lying

Director: Isher Sahota

Production Company: Bonaparte Films

Executive Producers: Elliot Grove, Ash Verma, Kishan Kainth, Bob Singh Kullar

Producer: Jon Tarcy

Co-Producer: Greg Schroeder

Casting Director: Claudia Blunt

Writer: James Hey

Cinematographer: Adam Singodia

Editor: Joshua Whitelaw

Production Designer: Ida Fly Hedkvist

Costume Designer: Jonathan Lipman

Composer: Luis Almu

Supervising Sound Editor: Roland Heap

Intimacy Coordinator: David Thackery

Cast:

Ace Bhatti (*Naveen*)

Laila Rouass (*Sangeeta*)

Lauren Patel (*Simran*)

Navin Chowdry (*Harvinder*)

Shaheen Khan (*Pryia*)

Mark Williams (*Brian*)

UK 2022

85 mins

Director's statement

This is a universal story that has nothing to do with the ethnicity of these characters. That's why we've been able to cast at a level much higher than our micro-budget nature would normally allow. These actors were thrilled to play parts motivated by fear, desire, love and lust, and nothing to do with the colour of their skin. This is why we think this is a watershed moment in South Asian representation on screen, and is something we are very proud of.

Hopefully this film will make people laugh. There's fruit fights, great gags and even a gimp mask. But underneath the comedy is an existential questioning: how should we live our lives? Naveen thinks he's a father, a son, a husband and a brother – that's what he's based his sense of identity on. But all these things – at least in the literal sense that he had understood them – are revealed to be false. So Naveen is knocked back into a state of confusion, to the point where he doesn't know who he is anymore. And from that point, he has to rebuild.

We're confident this film will entertain, but if it really works, it will move audiences. The heart of the film is Naveen's relationship with his daughter Simran. When he is adrift in a sea of existential confusion, that relationship anchors him and gives us hope. The emotional climax of the film between them is really what this film is about, and we're really excited about viewing this with audiences worldwide.

This film is about living authentically – confronting the difficult issue to get to the truth. Taking the short-term pain and heading toward a rebirth, and that's what Naveen has at the end of the film. He's shed himself of the relationships that don't serve him, and he's on track for an authentic, hopeful life.

Isher Sahota and Jon Tarcy on 'The Effects of Lying'

Why did you decide to make The Effects of Lying?

IS: It was so thrilling to read James Hey's script – a universal story about family, relationships and identity that just happened to be British Asian. Not a mention of a chapati, not a sniff of a chicken tikka masala, no reference to the many heads of Brahma. That's what makes this so vitally authentic and needed: these are characters with interior lives. It was a something I wish I had growing up, and something I knew I had to make.

JT: Being part of this moment in representation was a really exciting prospect as a producer, and I absolutely loved the script too. Isher's passion was infectious, and he trusted me to drive the project forwards and bring it to life.

The film was shot on a micro-budget across 12 days, what sacrifices did you have to make on such a tight budget?

JT: This film is an authentically indie British movie – when setting out to make it we were inspired by the filmmakers who just went out to tell their stories, with no backing or traditional industry support. Because of this, we had to adapt traditional methods to find our own solutions. For example, Adam (Singodia, DOP) and Isher's handheld approach created a natural feel whilst also allowing us to shoot the film in 12 days.

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LONDON INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL

LIFF Opening Night: UK Premiere:

The Storyteller + Q&A with director Ananth Mahadevan

Thu 22 Jun 18:00

Too Desi Too Queer + Q&A

Fri 23 Jun 18:00

New Brit-Asian Shorts + Q&A

Sat 24 Jun 20:20

UK Premiere: Max, Min & Meowzaki

Sun 25 Jun 15:00

UK Premiere: Amar Colony

Mon 26 Jun 18:10

European Premiere: Call Me Dancer

Tue 27 Jun 20:30

Preview: The Effects of Lying + Q&A with

director Isher Sahota and producer Jon Tarcy

Wed 28 Jun 18:00

UK Premiere: To Kill a Tiger

Thu 29 Jun 17:50



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IS: Taking on an 18-page day with a single camera was pretty daunting, but the cast were amazing – it was almost like a piece of theatre, and we as a crew were really prepped on how we were going to cover it. It was exhilarating! We knew we could pull off the shoot after that day.

How did you assemble the cast?

IS: This was our chance to assemble an incredible cast of British Asian talent and celebrate talent of South Asian descent in the industry. We knew that we had an opportunity to offer actors the three dimensional, complex roles that they are not normally offered – I've never seen a character like Sangeeta on screen, for example, and Laila Rouass gave her life with such nuance and humanity.

JT: We worked with the brilliant casting director Claudia Blunt to put together this amazing cast: it all built from Ace Bhatti coming on to play Naveen, who is the central figure of the story. From there, we built the Sanghera family, adding Laila Rouass, Navin Chowdhry, Lauren Patel and Shaheen Khan to create a really special ensemble that audiences will hopefully be able to connect to.

What's your hope for the project and how it will be received?

IS: Mike Leigh's seminal *Secrets & Lies* was close to my thoughts when making this film, as it was a groundbreaking moment in representation, rendering working class characters with such humanity, complexity and depth. Hopefully this film can do a bit of that for the South Asian diaspora represented on UK screens. The characters in this film are fully realised with histories, fears, hopes and desires, and are unlike anything I've seen on UK screens before.

JT: Yes, we're hopeful that by telling a new kind of story we will serve audiences in a way that hasn't been done before. Diversity, universality, hope and heart are the values which this film hopes to promote. I also hope on a filmmaking level, that it will inspire more independent filmmakers to get out there and make the projects they feel passionate about.

IS: It's ultimately an audience-facing project that was designed to be enjoyed. I hope it entertains people... and maybe unexpectedly moves them too.

ITVX production notes