



## “Amal” Press Kit

Poor Man's Productions Ltd.  
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## **SYNOPSIS**

Amal, a simple humble man, is content with the small but vital role he plays serving his customers in his modest autorickshaw. Driving students to school, worshippers to the temple, and people to work, Amal is impervious to any hardships, and never deviates from his sense of faith as he winds his way around the chaotic capital of New Delhi. But when he's presented with an unexpected twist in fate, Amal's sense of purpose is challenged against everyone's wildest dreams.

Based on a short story by Shaun Mehta, and set in the bustling streets of New Delhi, "Amal" is a story about dreams being lived by the unlikeliest of people.

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

### **Technical Specs**

Shooting Format:	24p Digital Video
Screen Ratio:	1.66
B&W / Colour:	Colour
Language:	Hindi / English (English Subtitles)
Category:	Dramatic Short
Running Time:	18 minutes
Country of Production:	India
Year of Production:	2004



### **Directors' Notes**

While the film unfolds in a simple narrative, complex themes concerning wealth and power in India are presented from a Western point of view. Amal, a character who's oblivious to concepts of greed and control, and subject to notions entrenched within Hindu doctrine, has accepted his duty in the world. Every incident and character in this film reflects his attitude, and shows the friction that this type of attitude can generate.

### **Visual Treatment**

Amal was shot in New Delhi, India, in December 2003. While the style of the film is gritty and real, the story is a fable, and the realism will emphasize the power of the fable.

Since it follows the life of an autorickshaw driver, the visual style of the film reflects the bustle of the streets of the chaotic capital in a guerrilla-style. Saturated colours reflecting the sun-soaked country, and dirty, gritty environments juxtaposed with images of Amal doing his job, his duty, and meeting colourful characters drives the story, and the theme of beauty and harmony driving a place as spiritual as India.

## **Sound Treatment**

The sound also reflects the fast paced environment of New Delhi, mixing in real location sounds of autorickshaws, crowds, and activity. The music is a beautiful mix of Indian-cultures. Since Amal is a Punjabi-born driver, his theme derives from Punjabi music. A choral element representing Amal's rickshaw, and his love of his duty, juxtaposes with the often grim reality of India - that money is an issue in everyone's life, as they strive for riches and resources. A character like Amal, oblivious to the concept of greed, navigates through this unpleasantness and holds onto what is important to him. The music reflects this perseverance. A cross between traditional instruments such as tabla, the santoor, and flute, mixed with modern elements, the music also bridges the gap between traditional and modern beliefs presented in the film.

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Richie Mehta, Writer / Director**



A versatile writer/director with many years of experience in a wide variety of video and film projects, Richie Mehta's most recent work has been screened at such film festivals as Reelworld, Montreal, Telluride, Atlantic, New York Independent, Filmi South Asian and Dallas South Asian. Trained as a painter, sculptor, and videographer, he comes from an extensive creative background, and has focused his career on the emerging South Asian culture in Canada. Richie has been exposed to a variety of creative influences, from Modern Western art and architecture, Eastern philosophy and literature, Hollywood, Bollywood, and everything in between.

### **Rupinder Nagra as "Amal"**



Rupinder has had the pleasure to work with a number of prominent directors over the years such as Deepa Mehta, Kelly Matkin and Andrew Howell. He has appeared in a considerable number of features *The Goddess Method*, *Bollywood/Hollywood* and *Mitsen*, television series *The Associates*, *Spy Net*, *Sue Thomas FB Eye*, as well as taking a strong interest in short films, theatre and comedy. For his work in the film *The Goddess Method* he won the Best Actor award at the German Film Festival. Rupinder's most recent work includes the lead role in Richie Mehta's dramatic short *Amal*.

### **Dr. Shiva as "G.K. Jayaram" / Music Composer**



Dr. Shiva has been an active singer and musician both on stage and studios since childhood. Hailing from a family of musicians, he spent an enormous amount of time studying eastern and western music. With music directors like Satish Bhatia, Anil Biswas, and MB Srinivasan, Shiva has recorded for **over 150 films** during a ten year period for the **Films division of Delhi, Television films** and **All India Radio**. He has composed and conducted several **Classical Indian** presentations blending over 50 musicians and singers with western pop and jazz. He is currently based in a studio outside Toronto and is an active composer, actor, singer and graphic designer.

## Manjit Bumrah as “Ms. Agrawal”



For as long as she can remember, Manjit Bumrah has loved to perform. She had a role in Deepa Mehta’s *Bollywood/Hollywood*, and then studied Improvisation for a year at the Second City Training Centre and acting at Equity Showcase. She has written and acted in countless sketch comedies for the past four years. Last year she was actively involved in the Regent Park Film Festival in its inaugural year. Recently, she threw caution to the wind and agreed to head out to India to co-star in *Amal*.

## Hans Sachdev as “Raju”



Indian-based actor Hans Sachdev is actively pursuing a career in Mumbai’s prolific film career. Having acted in independent theatre productions, *Amal* is his first venture into films. He hopes to continue a long collaboration with Richie in India, and pursue his film career in Indian musical films.

## CREATIVE KEYS

### Yale Massey, Director of Photography



Yale Massey directed his first short film in 2002 entitled *Self Portrait*, which premiered at The Montreal World Film Festival. Yale is currently directing a television sitcom, *Annex Scope*, which will premiere on Rogers Television in the fall of 2004. As a DOP, his films have been broadcasted on television and premiered in film festivals all over the world, including the Berlin Film Festival, The New York Independent Film Festival, and The ReelWorld Film Festival. In addition, his photographs have been published in The National Post and Saturday Night Magazine.

### Bob Gundu, 1<sup>st</sup> AD / Location Sound / Camera Operator



Bob Gundu has been working in the computer graphics industry since 1993. He began at a simulator ride company, SimEx, where he helped establish the art department. He continued his pursuits in the digital arts at GVFX as a visual effects artist for film and television. For the next 5 years he would combine his graphic design and post-production skills at the software company Alias|Wavefront. Here he developed learning tools for the Oscar winning 3D animation software called Maya. He currently has his own multi-media and consulting company called 10 Frame Handles.

## **CREDIT LIST**

### **Cast**

Amal - Rupinder Nagra  
G.K. Jayaram – Dr. Shiva  
Ms. Agrawal – Manjit Bumrah  
Raju – Hans Sachdev  
Priya – Priya Pasricha  
Beggar Girl – Supriya Ambwani

### **Crew**

Screenwriter / Producer / Director / Editor – Richie Mehta  
Based on short story by Shaun Mehta  
Co-Producer – Steven N. Bray  
Co-Producer – Rupinder Nagra, Neeta Tandon  
Cinematographer – Yale Massey  
1<sup>st</sup> AD / Location Sound / Camera Operator – Bob Gundu  
Locations Manager – Hans Sachdev  
Still photography – Jag Gundu  
Production Manager – Neeta Tandon  
Music by Dr. Shiva  
Sound FX / Sound Mix – Mike Boyle  
Dialogue Editor / Foley Artist – Steven N. Bray  
Visual FX – Bob Gundu

## PRODUCTION STILLS



*Amal and GK. Jayaram discuss the fee in the New Delhi marketplace.*



*Director Richie Mehta shoots with Dr. Shiva (as G.K. Jayaram) inside the tiny autorickshaw.*



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