

London Film Academy presents

# LONDON, PUNJAB

*"Reader of misery, Writer of Hope"*

## Press Kit

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Directed by Ritvik Tyagi

A British / Danish / Indian Co-Production

# logline

At a turning point in Punjab's history, a *Sikh* Royal Mail postman becomes the herald of bad news for the girl he is infatuated with.

# short synopsis

Gurdas, a young *Sikh* postman, discovers a letter addressed to Firoza, the *Muslim* girl he is enamored with. After reading the letter to Firoza and her grandmother, Nadira, Gurdas is overcome with fear for his family's safety upon learning of the tragic news. With his community at odds with Firoza's, Gurdas makes the difficult decision to leave behind his life in London and retrace his steps back to his family.



# long synopsis

Set in late 1940s London, the short film follows Gurdas, a Sikh postman who works for the Royal Mail Office. While stamping letters and getting ready to leave the office for his deliveries, he comes across a letter addressed to Firoza, a Muslim girl he has seen before at a railway station. The memory of Firoza's face sticks with Gurdas as he sets out to deliver the letter.

When he arrives at Firoza's house, he is asked to read the letter to her and her grandmother, Nadira. The room falls silent as Gurdas reads the letter, realizing that it was written by Nadira's younger sister, who has suffered a terrible tragedy while attempting to migrate to another country. The news of the tragedy sends shockwaves through Gurdas, and he begins to fear for the safety of his own family, who are also trying to migrate.

In an act of defiance, he decides to leave his job behind and steal a package meant for an important councilman of London to fund his journey back to his homeland in search of his family. He also gives a portion of the stolen money to Firoza and her grandmother to help them bring Nadira's sister safely to London. The film is a portrayal of the power of human connection and empathy in the face of tragedy and violence.



# technical details

## CAST

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**Gurdas**  
Mohit Mathur

**Firoza**  
Jasdeep Shallon

**Nadira**  
Surinder Matharu

**Gurdas' Boss**  
Trevor Murphy

## KEY PRODUCTION CREDITS

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**Executive Producer**  
Daisy Gili  
Anna MacDonald

**Producer**  
Annizette Jensen

**Writer**  
Deven Ahire

**Director**  
Ritvik Tyagi

**Cinematographer**  
Abhilash Megalai Madhan

**Production Designer**  
Juliette Joy Anquetil

**Editor**  
Aishwarya Das  
Ritvik Tyagi

**Music Composer**  
Tushar Lall

## FILM SPECIFICATIONS

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**Film Type**  
Narrative Fiction / Short Film

**Genre**  
Drama

**Runtime**  
13 minutes 52 seconds

**Completion Date**  
2022

**Country of Production**  
England

**Film Language**  
Punjabi and English

**Subtitles**  
English (burnt in)

**Shooting Format**  
Digital (2k) on Arri Alexa Classic

**Screen Ratio**  
1.85:1 (with 1.33:1 crop)



# director's notes

The existence of divisions among people extends far beyond specific identities. These divisions permeate our society as a whole, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries. So, we don't have to be Indian or Pakistani or Sikh or Muslim to understand human divide. It's all around us.

When I first encountered the script for "London, Punjab," I was immediately struck by its narrow focus on the lives of three immigrants residing far away from the epicenter of the conflict. The film does not indulge in beyond surface-level depictions of external conflicts like migration, partition, and physical violence. Instead, it aims to delve deep into the internal conflict that arises when news of this external tumult reaches the characters. At its core, the film derives its power from the dynamic between two individuals who, in all likelihood, were never destined to cross paths or unite. Yet, tragedy weaves their fates together, forming the bedrock upon which their love story is likely to unfold.

My intention with this film was to capture a speck of the human spirit; its unyielding ability to seek and find beauty even in the face of adversity. Our innate desire to heal and recover from the devastating aftermath of human violence, refusing to let it define us. Within the narrative of "London, Punjab," Gurdas, initially an observer of misfortune, becomes the author of harmony and unity.

# key crew biographies

## ANNIZETTE JENSEN / Producer

Annizette Jensen is a Danish, short film Writer, Director & Producer. Anni started her career in filmmaking as an Assistant Art Director in 2020, working for high-end clients such as *LEGO* and *The Danish Health Authority*. In pursuit of her passion as a storyteller, she moved to London where she graduated with a Master of Arts in Filmmaking from the London Film Academy. This journey added numerous short film credits to her CV including Writer, Director, Producer and 1st AD. She aims to continue her creative path as a Director and Producer in short-form content together with gaining experience in HETV and Feature films.



## RITVIK TYAGI / Director and Editor

Ritvik Tyagi is an Indian filmmaker who has honed his skills in cinematography and directing while working with clients like *Universal Music*, *Times Group*, *Corning Gorilla Glass*, *Playing for a Change*, and *Red Bull Media House*. In 2022, Ritvik completed his Master's in Filmmaking at the London Film Academy. Ritvik is dedicated to crafting emotionally resonant stories with visually-driven, simple, and clear storytelling. He also has acting experience, with a notable lead role in the Indian-American feature film "*Meghdoot - The Cloud Messenger*" (2022), which was screened at esteemed film festivals such as *BFI London Film Festival*, *International Film Festival of Rotterdam*, and *Sao Paulo International Film Festival*.



# key crew biographies

## DEVEN AHIRE / Writer

With more than 7 years of experience working as a 1st Assistant Director, Editor, or Writer-Director on several Short Films and Documentaries, Deven Ahire is a filmmaker from Nashik, India. Deven is currently based in London where he has achieved a Master's Degree in Filmmaking from London Film Academy. He now works as a freelancing film writer and director and is an active spoken word poet in the London poetry circuit. He has several published works that includes short stories and poems. His written works, including his book *Pheromones*, have been deliberate and restless attempts at understanding romance in the context of the current world.



## ABHILASH MEGALAI MADHAN / Director of Photography

He is a detail-oriented cinematographer with a passion for developing his vision and executing others. Since graduating from the London Film Academy with a Master's in filmmaking, Abilash has been working in the camera and electrical department, predominantly in electrical roles such as Spark and Gaffer. His cinematography inspirations are Bradford Young, Roger Deakins, and Darius Khonji. Also, a big fan of the Coen brothers and Sean Baker.



# key crew biographies

## AISHWARYA DAS / Editor

Aishwarya Das is a budding film editor and is driven by a deep-seated passion for storytelling and an unwavering commitment to delivering excellence in her craft. Having obtained an MA in Filmmaking from the London Film Academy, Aishwarya has honed her technical and creative skills, equipping herself with the tools needed to bring stories to life. Throughout her academic journey, Aishwarya worked on numerous student films, showcasing her innate ability to capture the essence and emotion of every scene. She draws inspiration from eminent editors such as Thelma Schoonmaker, Bob Ducsay, and Dulal Dutta.



## TUSHAR LALL / Music Composer

Founder of the Indian Jam Project, Tushar Lall has attempted to make Indian Classical Instruments appealing to the young generation on a global level by moulding them with Hollywood scores and English tunes. Featured by Forbes, Rolling Stone, BBC Asia, ABC News and with over 50 million collective views on YouTube, Tushar's work has been called honorary by Emmy and Grammy Nominated entities like 'Michael Price', Imagine Dragons, Mark Hamil and more. Winner of one of India's highest civilian honors - A Dada Saheb Phalke Award, Tushar has also used music to transform schooling in slums of Asalfa to also telling a million people that "If a Sitar is capable of playing Raga Bhairavi it is just as capable of playing StarWars", he's on a mission to take indian instruments on a global level.



# key cast biographies

## MOHIT MATHUR / Gurdas

Mohit Mathur, an Indian actor/dancer and Drama Centre London graduate, has an impressive career in the entertainment industry. He has performed in the West End show "Life Of Pi" and was the lead actor in the musical "Beyond Bollywood." Mohit has also participated in various traveling musicals and worked on TV shows and films as an actor, dancer, and choreographer. In 2022, he made a notable contribution to Welsh National Opera's opera "Migrations." Currently, Mohit is working on a one-person show exploring themes of identity, intergenerational trauma, and immigration.



## JASDEEP SHALLON / Firoza

With three years of training at *Identity School of Acting*, Jasdeep brings a wealth of experience to her characters. In addition to her passion for acting, she is pursuing a diploma in interior design. Her love of travel has taken her to warmer climates around the world, providing inspiration for her creative pursuits.



## SURINDER MATHARU / Nadira

Surinder is a 76 year old stage and film artist with wide experience of theatre, short health and educational films and TV 1 commercials in UK and abroad. She specialises in absorbing herself in the character she plays.



# dialogue list /transcript

01:00:43,840	-	01:00:44,800	Gurdas?
01:00:45,440	-	01:00:46,599	Yes, Sir?
01:00:48,239	-	01:00:49,280	You know what to do?
01:00:49,920	-	01:00:50,719	Yes, Sir
01:00:51,039	-	01:00:52,000	What is it?
01:00:52,840	-	01:00:54,719	I will make sure that Councilman Barrage
01:00:54,719	-	01:00:57,119	receives it by the end of this evening, Sir
01:00:57,440	-	01:00:57,880	Good
01:00:58,360	-	01:00:59,119	Back at it then
01:01:00,239	-	01:01:01,519	Yes, Sir
01:01:08,360	-	01:01:12,159	Have you been in contact with the rest of your <i>Sikh</i> community in London lately?
01:01:13,119	-	01:01:14,039	What do you mean, Sir?
01:01:15,400	-	01:01:16,159	I think...
01:01:16,960	-	01:01:18,280	you should listen to the news
01:01:19,320	-	01:01:23,559	<i>Reports are rising of a downright display of vandalism of London heritage</i>
01:01:23,559	-	01:01:25,159	<i>by Indian workers on the streets</i>
01:01:26,159	-	01:01:28,519	<i>As the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslim communities...</i>
01:01:54,800	-	01:01:55,599	Yes?
01:01:56,519	-	01:01:57,519	Nadira Rehman?
01:01:59,239	-	01:02:01,159	That is my grandmother's name
01:02:02,880	-	01:02:04,360	Do you have a letter for her?
01:02:05,280	-	01:02:06,320	<i>Firoza?</i>
01:02:07,079	-	01:02:08,599	<i>Who is at the door?</i>
01:02:08,599	-	01:02:09,800	It's the Postman, Grandma
01:02:10,360	-	01:02:11,280	Who?
01:02:11,559	-	01:02:12,559	Postman!
01:02:19,559	-	01:02:21,639	It's a letter from <i>Lahore</i> , Grandma
01:02:32,119	-	01:02:33,519	What is your name, son?
01:02:35,039	-	01:02:35,920	Gurdas
01:02:36,599	-	01:02:37,400	Where are you from?
01:02:38,639	-	01:02:39,800	Where is your family?
01:02:42,519	-	01:02:43,760	<i>Toba Tek Singh</i>
01:02:45,840	-	01:02:49,360	Do you know that <i>Toba Tek Singh</i> is deemed to be in Pakistan?
01:02:50,400	-	01:02:54,000	Your family must have tried to move to India?
01:02:55,760	-	01:02:57,599	Where were they planning to go?
01:02:58,639	-	01:02:59,880	<i>Amritsar</i>
01:03:00,119	-	01:03:01,039	<i>Amritsar?</i>
01:03:01,519	-	01:03:02,679	I'm from there
01:03:04,039	-	01:03:06,400	<i>Amritsar</i> is the home I grew up in
01:03:09,039	-	01:03:11,239	Speaking of <i>Amritsar</i>
01:03:12,360	-	01:03:15,559	Have you heard from your family after they reached there?
01:03:16,960	-	01:03:21,320	<i>Reports are rising of a downright display of vandalism of London heritage</i>
01:03:21,320	-	01:03:23,360	<i>by Indian workers on the streets</i>
01:03:23,360	-	01:03:26,039	<i>As the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslim communities</i>

Cont'd

# dialogue list /transcript

01:03:26,039	-	01:03:28,119	<i>engage in violent demeanor in London</i>
01:03:28,400	-	01:03:30,639	<i>This comes following the riots in India</i>
01:03:30,639	-	01:03:33,320	<i>between large mobs of Muslims mass migrating</i>
01:03:33,320	-	01:03:36,360	<i>to the newly formed Islamic State of Pakistan</i>
01:03:36,360	-	01:03:38,840	<i>and enormous crowds of Hindus and Sikhs</i>
01:03:38,840	-	01:03:41,199	<i>migrating to the newly formed Indian Republic</i>
01:03:41,960	-	01:03:42,639	<i>As Lord Mountbatten continues his...</i>
01:04:05,039	-	01:04:07,599	Son, will you read this letter to me?
01:04:09,079	-	01:04:11,679	It is your personal letter, I really shouldn't
01:04:12,519	-	01:04:15,280	You're like one of us, read it for me
01:04:16,519	-	01:04:19,400	We shall be really grateful
01:04:20,079	-	01:04:22,400	I don't know how to read <i>shahmukhi</i>
01:04:22,599	-	01:04:24,559	And her eyes are weak
01:04:29,960	-	01:04:31,159	Okay
01:04:41,679	-	01:04:44,960	It's a letter from a Waheeda
01:04:45,239	-	01:04:48,000	Waheeda? My youngest sister
01:04:49,000	-	01:04:50,800	It's been ages since I had heard from her
01:04:51,159	-	01:04:52,679	Go on, what does her letter say?
01:04:57,360	-	01:04:59,039	Beloved Nadira
01:05:07,719	-	01:05:09,239	All is lost
01:05:15,039	-	01:05:17,039	I'm in a foreign country...
01:05:20,000	-	01:05:22,239	...with no one to call my own
01:05:23,679	-	01:05:24,880	In <i>Amritsar</i> -
01:05:26,239	-	01:05:28,280	Our house...
01:05:29,800	-	01:05:30,840	Our land...
01:05:34,559	-	01:05:38,239	And our memories...
01:05:41,320	-	01:05:43,559	We were leaving everything behind to move to <i>Lahore</i>
01:05:46,039	-	01:05:48,719	But in the dark of the night...
01:05:50,400	-	01:05:52,199	...our bus was suddenly attacked
01:05:54,199	-	01:05:56,119	I couldn't see anyone's face
01:05:58,239	-	01:06:00,679	There was suddenly fire all around me
01:06:02,880	-	01:06:04,880	Blood all around me
01:06:07,800	-	01:06:09,199	And people screaming everywhere
01:06:11,719	-	01:06:13,480	I somehow...
01:06:14,360	-	01:06:15,599	managed to escape
01:06:17,280	-	01:06:18,519	And I kept running...
01:06:19,119	-	01:06:26,000	...till there was nothing to look back at
01:06:28,559	-	01:06:29,719	Next morning...
01:06:30,519	-	01:06:31,639	I found out...
01:06:35,880	-	01:06:39,679	...that everyone in our family -
01:06:40,840	-	01:06:41,719	Mother
01:06:42,119	-	01:06:43,079	Father
01:06:44,400	-	01:06:46,039	All 12 of them were killed
01:06:51,639	-	01:06:56,079	In <i>Lahore</i> , I have been given a small room to live in
01:06:56,800	-	01:06:58,159	Four walls...
01:06:58,920	-	01:07:02,480	in a country that they say is ours
01:07:05,599	-	01:07:06,800	But it doesn't feel like home

Cont'd

# dialogue list /transcript

01:07:08,599	-	01:07:11,199	I wish you can come soothe this lacking
01:07:11,960	-	01:07:13,400	I need you
01:07:16,079	-	01:07:17,400	Your Waheeda
01:07:27,679	-	01:07:30,079	There is nothing left to say
01:07:32,760	-	01:07:36,199	To move our family safely to this new country...
01:07:37,079	-	01:07:39,360	we sold everything we had...
01:07:39,960	-	01:07:42,840	...to send them enough money
01:07:43,960	-	01:07:45,960	To help them with everything we had
01:07:50,079	-	01:07:54,199	Now we don't have enough money to go to her
01:07:57,880	-	01:08:00,039	Nothing left to send to her
01:08:03,159	-	01:08:05,840	My poor sister must be so troubled
01:08:07,880	-	01:08:09,880	All alone in a new country
01:08:16,560	-	01:08:18,479	How afraid must she be?
01:08:23,800	-	01:08:25,319	My beloved sister
01:08:25,880	-	01:08:26,920	Waheeda
01:08:33,760	-	01:08:36,760	I pray that Allah may soothe her plight
01:10:58,479	-	01:10:59,520	Dear Firoza
01:11:01,800	-	01:11:03,960	The day I heard your name for the first time...
01:11:04,920	-	01:11:07,840	lies heavy on my heart
01:11:09,560	-	01:11:11,760	I've written this letter to you...
01:11:13,880	-	01:11:18,000	...because I don't have the strength to say this looking into your eyes
01:11:19,800	-	01:11:21,199	I don't know a world...
01:11:21,640	-	01:11:24,640	I would live in without turning that one meeting on the station...
01:11:25,319	-	01:11:26,560	that one moment...
01:11:27,760	-	01:11:29,319	into a lifetime
01:11:32,800	-	01:11:36,399	But for now, our ways stand divided
01:11:37,119	-	01:11:38,800	Our destinations entwined
01:11:41,600	-	01:11:44,119	I'm going back to look for my family
01:11:45,279	-	01:11:46,439	I have to see...
01:11:47,399	-	01:11:51,000	if this new India is really my old India
01:11:53,199	-	01:11:55,079	A place that I can call home
01:11:57,359	-	01:11:58,560	I pray that...
01:12:00,319	-	01:12:01,720	...you and your grandmother
01:12:02,239	-	01:12:04,079	find your way to <i>Lahore</i>
01:12:05,720	-	01:12:07,279	I pray that...
01:12:07,920	-	01:12:10,680	one day, as the ashes of this storm settle...
01:12:11,600	-	01:12:14,600	I find my way back to you
01:12:16,399	-	01:12:22,039	I pray that <i>Sutlej, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Beas...</i> [The five rivers of Punjab]
01:12:22,479	-	01:12:24,479	guide me back to you
01:12:28,079	-	01:12:29,600	I pray that we never...
01:12:30,479	-	01:12:33,079	have to talk this way again, reading ink on paper
01:12:35,600	-	01:12:39,439	But talk by reading lips
01:12:41,399	-	01:12:43,079	And listening to voices
01:12:45,119	-	01:12:46,560	And there is no noise
01:12:49,640	-	01:12:50,520	Gurdas

# media

48s Trailer



Production Stills



Hi-res images are available at [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1B2l9lf2lpaqniB8pcq5sgJFhwa1Pr\\_kj?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1B2l9lf2lpaqniB8pcq5sgJFhwa1Pr_kj?usp=sharing).

# production credits

## CAST

Gurdas	Mohit Mathur
Firoza	Jasdeep Shallon
Nadira	Surinder Matharu
Gurdas' Boss	Trevor Murphy

## CREW

Producer	Annizette Jensen
Writer	Deven Ahire
Director	Ritvik Tyagi
Director of Photography	Abilash Megalai Madhan
1st AD	G. Abrom Henries
Editor	Ritvik Tyagi Aishwarya Das
Music Composer	Tushar Lall
Sound Mixer	Sarthak Ray
Production Designer	Juliette Anquetil
Script Supervisor	Nivedita Vijaykumar
Camera Operator	Kiran B.M.
1st AC	Avanti Devdikar
2nd AC	Antonio Bud Edgar Vazquez
Gaffer	Louisa Lorenz
Spark	Eteriya Edilgerieva
Sound Recordist	Joseph Dunne
Boom Operator	Marian Vosumets
Hair and Makeup Artist	Lara Al-Jamal
2nd Unit 1st AC	Fred White

# production credits

## Special Thanks

Punjabi Theatre Academy

Acme Graphics

Kent Film Office

East Kent Railway

Rebecca Knapp

Mani Dasti

And all the crew, tutors and LFA Staff

Technical Coordinators	Margarida Correia
	Luca Alari-Williams
	Swaen Lievestro

Post Production Coordinators	Ben Wharton
	Iveta Trivonova
	Tom Rowson

Senior Production Coordinator	Alastair Train
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Executive Producers	Daisy Gili
	Anna MacDonald





*Producer:*  
Annizette Jensen  
+44 073922 38080  
aeajensen@gmail.com

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*Director:*  
Ritvik Tyagi  
+44 074353 77241  
ritvik3096@gmail.com

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