

A KABUKI PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH KHICHRI PRODUCTIONS

THE CLOSEST POINT

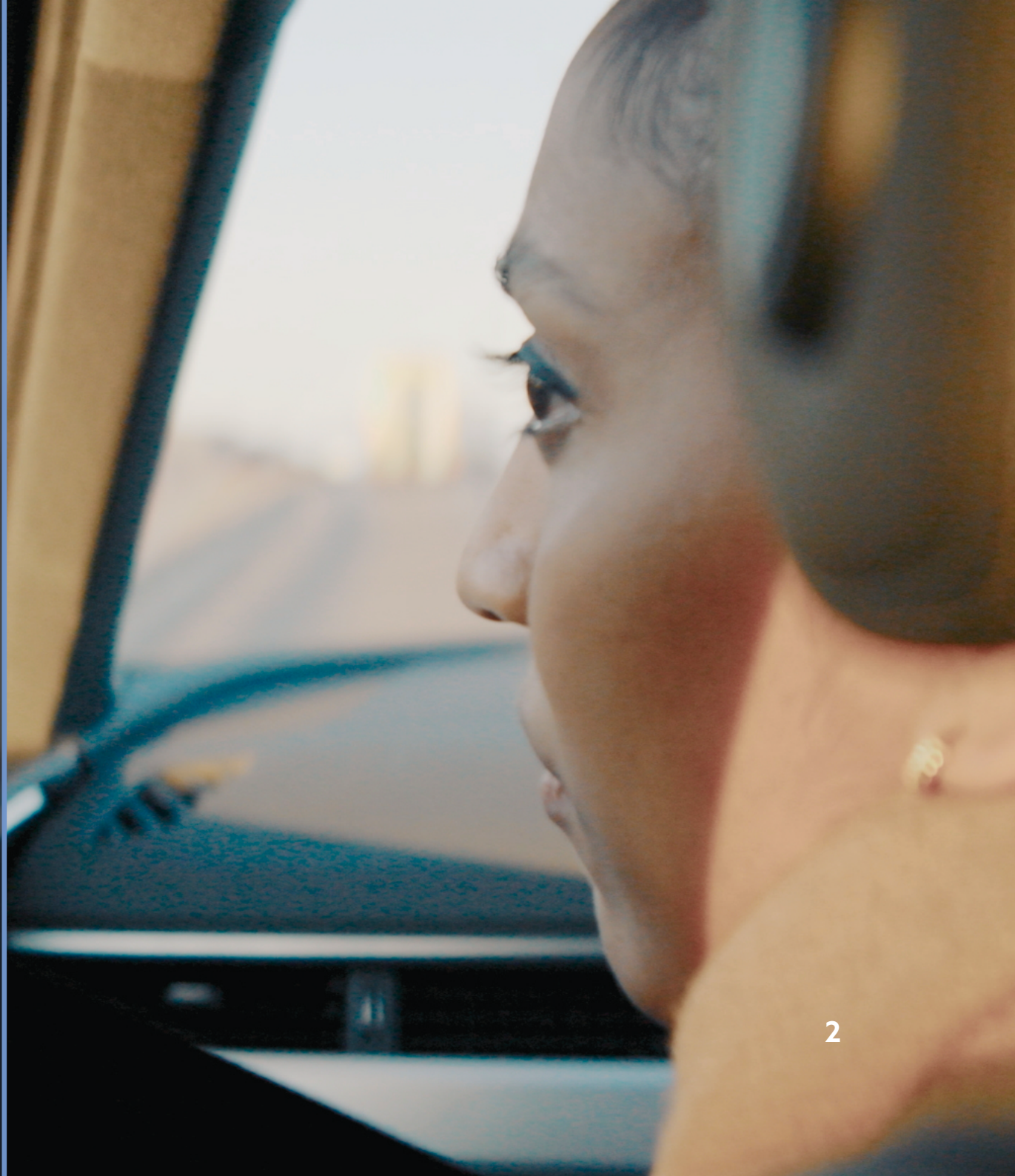
A film by **Dilesh Korya**
Produced by **Ajay Parekh**

'That was the closest we ever got,
just 0.01cm between us'
Wong Kar Wai



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A young couple are at a crossroads when they have to make the most difficult decision any parent could make about their premature born baby. With their endurance and relationship tested, they reunite to rekindle once more the bond they all have.

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CASTING BY **KATE PLANTIN CDG** MUSIC BY **AROOJ AFTAB**
PRODUCTION DESIGN BY **HATTIE SMITH** SOUND DESIGN **PAUL DONOVAN**
DOP **DAMIAN PAUL DANIELS** WRITER, DIRECTOR, EDITOR **DILESH KORYA**
PRODUCER **AJAY PAREKH**

Title of Film: THE CLOSEST POINT
Country of Production: United Kingdom
Date of Completion: May 2024
Screening Format: DCP and Pro Res available
Duration: 15 minutes and 35 seconds
Genre: Drama
Language: English

CONTACT DETAILS

Website: [HTTPS://THECLOSESTPOINT.CO.UK/EPK/](https://theclosestpoint.co.uk/epk/)

Instagram: [HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/THECLOSESTPOINT_ASHORTFILM?IGSH=MWFka243Nm52azFLMw==](https://www.instagram.com/theclosestpoint_ashortfilm?igsh=MWFka243Nm52azFLMw==)

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STORY SYNOPSIS

Shireen and Simon have a premature baby, born at 28 weeks. The baby has survived to reach 40 weeks and then caught an infection. It's the day of his 40 week birthday and the doctors need a decision from the parents, on whether they should proceed with keeping him alive. Yet Simon and Shireen are in different places. Simon is blinded by love for Shireen and his desire for a family at any cost. Shireen is totally enveloped around her son. But she can see her son suffering and irrespective of Simon's feelings, she wants it all to end. Added to all that, the months in the NICU has driven the relationship to breaking point. Shireen and Simon are just exhausted.

To make this profoundly difficult decision, each must face the barriers in themselves and remember what love really is. Barriers that have built up over the gruelling months in NICU. There are barriers everywhere—from the incubator that separates not only the parents from their baby, but divides the parents themselves, to the emotional chasm that separates Shireen and Simon. Sometimes, love gives the strength to recognise the loss and realise that one must let go.

'The Closest Point' is a deeply emotional story, that confronts a subject that remains unspoken. So many parents have, however briefly, faced life in NICU. Every one of them will be relieved that they did not have to make the decisions that Simon and Shireen have had to. Most parents bury this part of their lives as they move on with a new baby or relationship. This film is a gentle reminder of this past.

Furthermore, in COVID times, many more of us have faced difficult decisions within an Intensive Care Unit, as we have watched our loved ones behind barriers, unable to touch and comfort them. We have all been moved by life and death choices. The bleep of the heart monitor is sound of this period.

'The Closest Point' though begins in a hell that none of us wish to experience, yet ends with a deep sense of love. The audience will shed a tear at the end, but it will be done with a smile. There is hope as Shireen and Simon, however briefly, find a love to make the most difficult of decisions, not only for the baby, but also for themselves.

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

This a true story. My son, Naveen was born on 13th January 2000. He lived for 66 days. In the last 2 weeks his mother and I stayed full time at the hospital. It was a grind, but when you in the midst of such trauma, you aren't aware of how awful it really is.

One night, I was having a break outside the hospital, when from the darkness a couple appeared and what happened in the script played out. After, I returned to the hospital and two days later we decided to end our son's life. This story becomes extraordinary because of the couple. They take something tragic and raise it into something beautiful, a story about grief and love. Our daughter Svenja was born a year later. Naveen's mother and I remained together for 12 years.

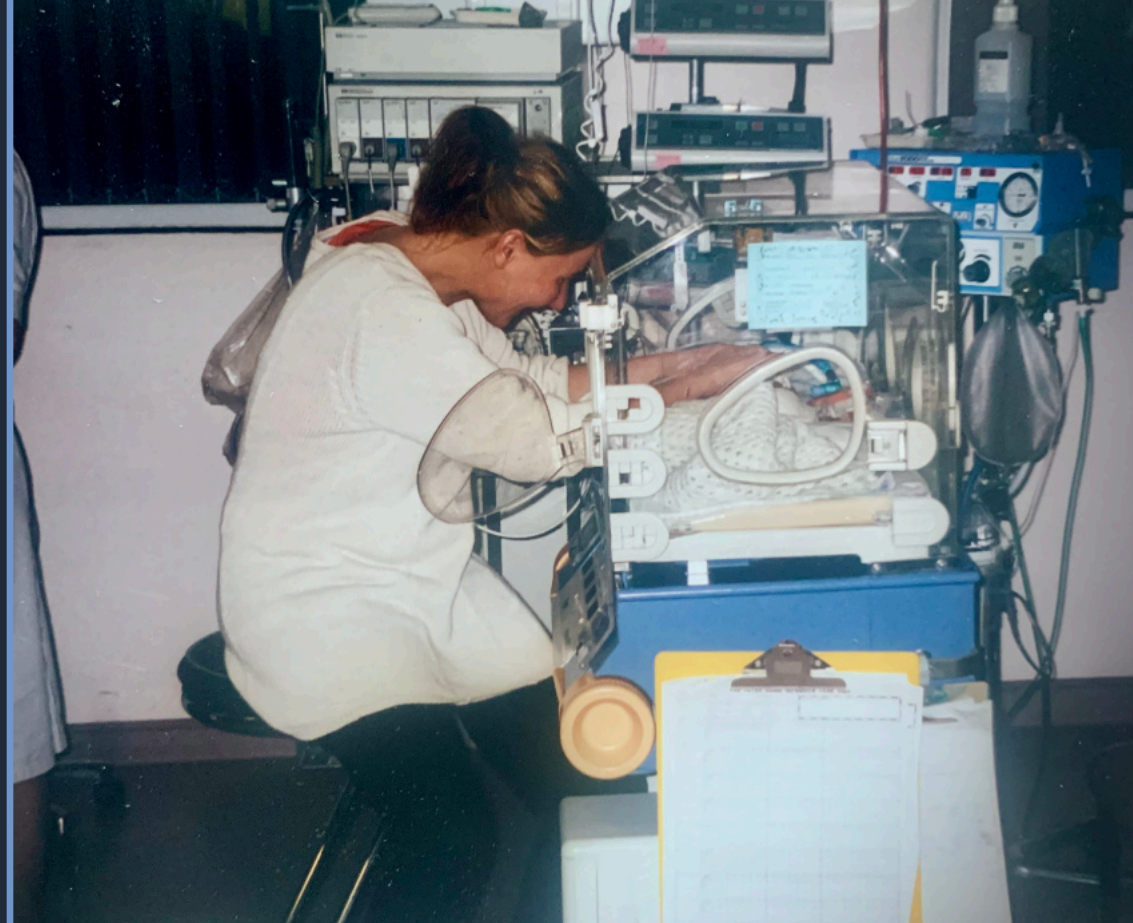
Shireen and Simon are not Naveen's mother and me. There is an underlying truth, about how these situations bring out such complex emotions. The questions they ask, are the same questions we asked, but their motivations and outcomes are very different. I have taken events and changed them to suit Simon and Shireen's journey.

On another level, this film enabled me to touch on themes of fatherhood and motherhood. How each feels either connected or disconnected to their child. Every mother has felt and maybe has said 'because I am the mother'. Every father will know what Simon meant when he replies 'at least you had the chance'.

'The Closest Point' is about the spaces between us. That space, or distance could be as little as 0.001cm, yet appear as wide as a chasm. In traumatic times, these gaps either create a feeling of alienation, isolation and loneliness. Simon and Shireen are torn apart, driven away from each other-yet, somehow, at the end, however briefly they connect, the closest point they have ever been.

Dilesh's Bio

Dilesh Korya is a British Asian filmmaker and editor based in Bristol, UK. For over 25 years he has been editing documentaries for BBC, Channel 4. Many have won awards and garnered big audiences and critical praise. He has directed and edited numerous films. Most recently, his first feature documentary, *Kekee Manzil-House of Art* has been screened at festivals world wide, winning 3 Best Documentary Awards.





PRODUCER STATEMENT

The story for me starts with recognising the need to produce my own work. As an experienced Producer in Live events, Brand experiential and a long history in film and television I wanted to restart my career post pandemic with projects that resonated with my own passions and connections in life. When I returned from living in Hong Kong I spent a lot of time with Dilesh talking about a number of film projects that we both wanted to make, each film project had a unique social, political or personal connection, and whilst some of the projects had a commercial angle and may of been of interest to a commissioning editor we knew that *'The Closest Point'* was ultimately a personal story that had to be told on our terms.

The story whilst personal to Dilesh, also resonated with me as a universal story for many people and couples around the world dealing with the day to day trials and tribulations of relationships and also the demands made on human beings all over the world when it comes to the life and death situation of a child. As we positioned this film through the development phase, to cast and crew members, we discovered that many people related to the premature birth of a child, and/ or, the death of a baby.

Another aspect of this film for me is the unique nature of film making itself, the need to define the script through talking and digging deep into the characters but also the ability to convey the essence of the story to the wider creative team in order to develop the final product. At each stage of discussing this with the DoP, casting agent, production designer, and cast, we were able to embrace everyone's contribution and be so happy with the film. It is ultimately a quiet film with gravity.

As we moved into 2024 we are both feeling very proud of the film we have made and the future prospects of not only seeing *'The Closest Point'* on the big screen across the festival circuit but also knowing that we have plenty more projects to produce together.

[HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/USER1415033/REVIEW/
903330911/852c67970c](https://vimeo.com/user1415033/review/903330911/852c67970c)



PRODUCER AJAY PAREKH



WRITER/DIRECTOR/EDITOR DILESH KORYA



DOP DAMIAN PAUL DANIELS



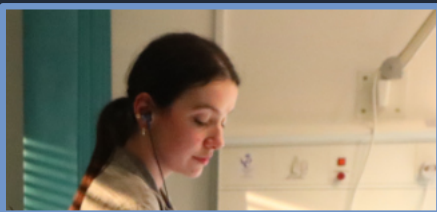
PRODUCTION DESIGNER HATTIE SMITH



SOUND PAUL CATON



1ST ASSISTANT DIR JEROEN BOGAERT



SCRIPT SUP REBECCA KING



WARDROBE SHEARA ABRAHAMS



MAKEUP/HAIR SHEREE WARWICK



KEY CAST



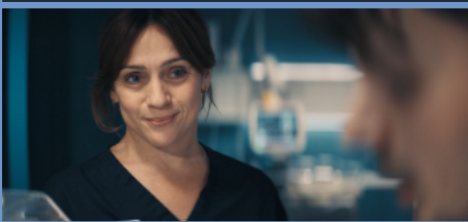
SHIREEN HIRAL VERSANI

Hiral Varsani is a TV and Film actress. After gaining her MA in screen acting at Drama Centre London, she made her television debut with BBC's Doctors and then Call the Midwife. Hiral can also be seen in Mike Leigh's upcoming feature film Hard Truths.



SIMON RICHARD SOUTHGATE

Richards has worked in theatre, tv and film for a number of years. Having had roles in Skins, Casualty and Doctors. He also writes, produces and directs his own short films



HEAD NURSE AMANDA RYAN

Trained at R.A.D.A. Theatre work includes productions at The Menier Chocolate Factory, Bath Theatre Royal, York Theatre Royal, Birmingham Rep, Theatre Clwyd, The National Theatre and The Criterion and The Playhouse in the West End. Some of her many TV and film credits include; Casualty, This is Going to Hurt, Shameless, The Forsyte Saga, David Copperfield, Britannic and Elizabeth.



ROSE AMY ELLIS

Amy is a London based Actor from Somerset. Since graduating she can be seen starring as Peaches in The Alienist (Netflix) and most recently in feature film Butterfly, Lost as Etain where she won Best Actress in a Supporting Role in Across The Globe Film Festival.



JAI PRASHANDAN VARATHARAJAN

Prashandan (Prash) is an Actor and Chemical engineer based in London. After graduating in 2021, Prash went on to work in short and feature films, commercials for famous Youtubers, trained as a dancer and work as a chemical process engineer for a start-up. He is also a certified associate member at the Institution of Chemical Engineers.

FAQ

Why make this film at this time in your life?

For more than 20 years this film has resided in me. The long days of isolation during COVID, aligned with two very important losses in my life-I felt a deep sense of grief, that stuck with me in the isolation. I lived on my own, so spent most of the days in my own thoughts. Watching on tv, everyday, the people in ICU, relatives looking on behind walls of PVC and plastic, unable to touch their loved ones. Somehow, this story came into fruition. The first draft is almost the same as the final shooting script with only 2 scene changes.

Key attributes of the film?

The most important thing for me is to leave the audience feeling a deep sense of grief and love. When we lose someone we love, we go through the whole range of emotions before we find peace, where we can celebrate the person we have lost-a sense of love touched by loss. It's a good place.

How did we find the actors?

Without the help of Kate Plantin, the Casting Director, we would not have found the actors. She was able to put a callout to various agents, look on Spotlight and then recommend some to me. From the various casting tapes, both Hiral and Richard stood out. The Head Nurse role, played by Amanda Ryan, came from a recommendation of my partner.

What was the writing process?

The film sat in my head for over 20 years. Then during the second lockdown, October 2020-I had been through an emotionally turbulent period. From that, I wrote my first draft. I was very surprised, I had never written a script before. Then I contacted my friend Shafeeq Vellani, who acted as my script editor. Over the next year I began a process of writing and rewriting. It was at that point that Ajay came on board.

Once I was happy with the script, I started to get my close friends to read it out to me- they loved it. I found that anyone involved in scriptwriting or script editors were the least helpful or useful. I was very downcast after the reaction of these people that I stopped for 6 months-I assumed it to be a crap script. My partner encouraged me not to give up, so I entered the script into various short film script competitions, noticing that it would get shortlisted. This gave me the encouragement to continue.

There is ambiguity at the end. Why?

The film can be read in multiple ways. The film is about them, their relationship, not the baby. In every scene, every dialogue can be read as not only about what to do with their baby, but also about their relationship itself. To me, at the end, they agree that they cannot go on, their relationship will end.





How did we fund the film?

We did not receive any money from any of the funders for short films. At the beginning of 2023, we needed to make a decision about whether to actually make the film or not. We both had some money saved up, but we needed more.

Then a tragedy hit. My best friend Shafeeq Vellani suddenly passed away. I later learnt that he had left me some money in his will. With that cash injection and monies from Ajay and myself, we could shoot the film in November.

Are Shireen and Simon, you and your partner at that time?

No, the characters are very different. None of the dialogue nor any of the scenes between them happened to us. The only similarity is the location (NICU). I did bring a cake in after 2 months, but both my son's mother and I wanted to do this. I did have a conversation with a nurse about my son swelling up like a balloon and having those wounds. And of course, I did meet the 'angels' outside the hospital. Everything else is formulated to make a story.

What was your visual inspiration?

My biggest inspiration were the films by Wong Kar Wai and Park Chan Wook. Films like 'In The Mood For Love' and 'Decision to Leave'. I paid close attention to the way that they framed their characters, the lighting and use of colour. Added to that, I looked at a lot of paintings. Particularly Northern European portraiture from late 19th century, artists like Hammershoi, Freidriech, Millet and Munch. Working with Damian, we identified how space was used to express internal emotions.

Why did you chose widescreen?

This format gave us the ability to play with the space between the characters. The film starts with Simon and Shireen at ends of frames, never touching within it. Constantly separated by lines, from the objects we place between them. By the end they are closer together in the frame, almost touching at times.

The use of sound is innovative. How did you make the soundtrack?

I worked closely with the Sound Designer, Paul Donovan. He used sound to create different moods and tones. Early on, the sounds of the NICU appear invasive and surround you. As the film progresses, these then become much warmer. The bleeps and tones of the heart monitors are almost symphonic.

Who wrote the music?

The main track is 'Mohabbat' by Arooj Aftab. She is an Grammy winning artist, living in New York. We were able to get clearances for use at Festivals World Wide. I played her album whilst writing the script. It's deep melancholic sound and poignant voice adds depth to the film. Arooj is one of the leading contemporary Jazz/Indian artists.



CITATIONS AND AWARDS

'I FOUND IT TO BE AN INTENSE YET SOMEHOW CALM TAPESTRY OF PAIN, SUFFERING, LOVE AND LOSS, ALONGSIDE BEING INSIGHTFUL TO THE HUMAN CONDITION, OF BOTH LACKING AND ABUNDANCE.

IT EVOKED TEARS AS WELL AS SMILES IN ME. IT ALSO ELICITED A POWERFUL SENSE OF LIFE, OF BEING ALIVE WITH EQUAL MEASURES OF LOSS AND GRIEF WHICH IS A PART OF LIFE.'

Jo Morgan , COUNSELLOR AND THERAPIST, SPEAKING ABOUT THE SCRIPT.

'WHAT A BEAUTIFUL FILM AND I THINK IT'S VERY IMPORTANT. I HAVE MANY FRIENDS WHO LOST THEIR BABIES AND IT IS OFTEN SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE DON'T TALK ABOUT ENOUGH. I GUESS IT'S A REALLY HARD THING TO DISCUSS, WHICH IS WHY FILM IS SO POWERFUL FOR THIS. THANK YOU FOR MAKING IT.'

Verity Wislocki, FILM PRODUCER

'AN UPLIFTING AND INSPIRING FILM, WHICH SHOWS US THAT EVEN IN OUR DARKEST TIMES, WHEN WE FACE LOSS AND PAIN, THERE IS ALSO LOVE AND HOPE.'

Francis Welsh, FILM PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

'THIS IS AN EXCEPTIONALLY TOUCHING AND POIGNANT STORY. I'VE HAD FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHO HAVE SPENT A LONG STRETCH IN NICU. IT MUST HAVE BEEN HARD TO NURTURE THIS FILM TO FULL FRUITION BUT ALSO AN HONOURABLE THING TOO.'

Katie McCullough, FESTIVAL FORMULAE



FULL CREW LIST

CAST

Shireen
Simon
Head nurse
Nurse
Rose
Jai

Hiral Varsani
Richard Southgate
Amanda Ryan
Lucy Blunt
Amy Ellis
Prashandan Varatharajan

Supporting Cast

Himani Patel
Ellis Bridger
Susanne Fenner
Daniel Jacobs
Sara Sioufi
SuTuncer
Vaani Parekh
Emily Brown
Yveta Drulyte

CREW

Casting Director
Music
Costume Designer
Hair and Makeup
Hair and Makeup Assistant
Production Designer
Art Department Assistant
Line Producer
Production Manager
Production Runner
Work Experience

Kate Plantin
Arooj Aftab
Sheara Abrahams
Sherrie Warwick
Keira Ash
Hattie Spice
Solomon Lamey
Dominic Davey
Ethan McDowell
George Walker
Sofía Del Olmo Gutiérrez

1st Assistant Director
2nd Assistant Director
3rd Assistant Director
1st Assistant Camera
2nd Assistant Camera
Gaffer
Sparks

Sound Recordist
Script Supervisor
Production Stills and BTS
Unit Catering

Locations

NICU Consultant

Post Production
Post Co-Ordinator
Grade
Online

Sound Design

Director of Photography

Writer, Director and Editor

Producer

Jeroen Bogaert
Erin Large
Emily Brown
Marina Selega
Ken Mizutani
John Wenman
Kevin Gardner
Nathan Campell
Lorenzo Guerrieri
Paul Caton
Rebecca King
Alan Howard
Michelle Vickers
Vaani Parekh
West London Film Studios
The Hospital Location
Lizzie Dyer

Doghouse Post Production
Lizzie Coney
Michael Lansdell
Fred Tay

Paul Donovan

Damian Daniel

Dilesh Korya

Ajay Parekh



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CONTACT DETAILS

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