



THE BEASTS WE CARRY

EPK

THE BEASTS WE CARRY

8 min 50 sec/USA/Color/2026/English

16:9 aspect ratio/Digital

Budget: ~\$31k via Kickstarter, ~\$5k donations

Written & Directed By: Rishi Gandhi

Produced by: Adam Weppler, Cory Asinofsky & Rishi Gandhi

Edited by: Jan Lefrançois-Gijzen

Cinematographer: Mike Magilnick

Composer: Arindam Jurakhan



FESTIVALS



October 2026

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LOGLINE

Hira, a high schooler, can see the inner-selves of those around her manifested as mystical creatures. She must hide from them when post 9/11 fear, paranoia and suspicion turns them into inner beasts out for her blood.

SYNOPSIS

Hira, a high schooler, can see the inner selves of others manifested as supernatural beings, giving her insight into their feelings and desires. Her own inner self, a gentle mime, is her friend and protector. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Hira finds herself shunned. The inner-selves of her classmates turn monstrous, blaming their hurt and rage on her, but the worst is the betrayal of her two best friends. Hira and the mime, must escape lest they be torn to shreds.

WRITER/DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I'm an immigrant of South Asian heritage and I was fourteen years old in New York when I experienced 9/11. This film is inspired by how quickly people changed the way they treated me after that day. While a lot of New Yorkers came together in the aftermath of 9/11, NY also became incredibly Islamophobic and that ignorance extended itself to brown people at large whether they were Muslim or not. Through the character of the Hira and her mime, I want to illuminate the trauma of being a brown child in this time, when your friends are no longer your friends, and your teachers who are meant to protect you are no longer the mentors you thought they were.

The only protector a child can find is themselves, for better or worse. The change in tone, color and the feel of the inner selves from friendly to monstrous reflects the very real danger I felt as a child in the aftermath of 9/11 in NY. Despite being about an event that takes place over two decades ago, brown children still have to be their own protectors

-Rishi Gandhi

WRITER/DIRECTOR BIO

Rishi Gandhi is an award winning filmmaker.

A first generation immigrant of Indian descent moving between the Côte D'Ivoire, the UK, and US, Rishi Gandhi has spent years around the world but decided to make film his home. Rishi honed his skills on short film horror, broadcast news, and documentaries.

Rishi directed various short documentaries such as Arcade Oratory (2014) an exploration of the death of the American Arcade, and Beyond the Longbox (2014-2017), a docu-series exploring the comic book industry. Rishi also directed Mr. Muay Thai Nation (2017) the docu-short exploring combat sports & familial loss.

Rishi followed this up with Mater Mortis (2021), which explores familial illness & loss in the context of a horror film. Mater Mortis won numerous awards at film festivals, such as “Best Horror Short”, “Best Edited Short”, & “overall winner” at Festival Angaelica 2021.

Rishi’s latest work is The Beasts We Carry (2026), a film exploring the challenges of growing up brown in post 9/11 NY, through the lens of horror and a touch of magical realism. Rishi is currently developing The Beasts We Carry into a feature.



Rishi Gandhi

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PAST AWARDS



CAST BIOS



HIRA
Anuka Sethi

Anuka Sethi is an India-born, Dubai-raised, New York-based actor whose work as a Third Culture Kid informs her passion for nuanced, authentic storytelling, particularly narratives centering South Asian and underrepresented voices. She is currently Artist in Residence at Live & In Color, contributing across performance and artistic development for the company's full season. Recent credits include *The Thousand and One Nights* (The Club at La MaMa), *The Wolves* (SoHo Playhouse), *Alexandria* (Pop Up! Productions/Dixon Place), and the award-winning short film *Hide & Seek* (TasveerTV). A Nine Muses Lab alum mentored by founder Bryce Dallas Howard, Anuka holds a BFA (Hons) from NYU Tisch.



SAD CLOWN/PRODUCER
Cory Asinofsky

Cory Asinofsky was born on December 11, 1989 in the USA. He is an actor and production manager, known for *She Came from the Woods* (2022), *Ten Minutes to Midnight* (2020), and *Shroom* (2020).



THE MIME
Noor Hamdi

Noor Hamdi is an actor whose work is shaped by a multicultural upbringing between Van Wert, Ohio and Damascus, Syria, as the proud son of Syrian immigrants. Fluent in English, Arabic, Spanish, and Portuguese, Noor brings a global, deeply human lens to storytelling, with a particular passion for amplifying voices often left unheard. A graduate of The Ohio State University with a degree in International Relations and Diplomacy, Noor's career from Chicago to New York is driven by a commitment to representation and accessibility in the arts, inspired by growing up without seeing himself reflected on American stages and screens.



WILLY
Braden Allen King

Braden Allen King is a Northern Virginia-born actor working across stage and screen, currently appearing in the first Broadway national tour of *Back to the Future* playing Dave McFly and Slick, and understudying Marty McFly directed by Tony Award winner John Rando. His stage credits include the Broadway national tour of *The Prom* and the pre-Broadway lab of *The Music Man* revival starring Hugh Jackman. On screen, Braden recently wrapped a TV pilot directed by Emmy winner Jen Stafford and stars in the [trailer](#) for *Loopers*, a comedy set in the world of golf caddying.

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CAST BIOS



THE STRONGMAN

Ilya Khazov

Ilya Khazov, "The Lion of Limassol," is a Cyprus-based professional strongman, and director, out of Ohio. Standing 6'5" and competing at 180kg, he's a Guinness world record holder and SCL world record holder in tractor deadlift and front hold. He directed Strongman Champions League 2025: USA Special. Trilingual in English, Russian, and Greek, he's lived in Cyprus for over 30 years, and currently trains out of Ohio.



BRUCEY

Raymond Miranda

Raymond Miranda is known for I Think I'm Sick (2023), Blondie Boy (2025) and Mom Always Says Be Nice (2025).

CONCEPT ARTIST/POSTER ART



ART

David Romero

David Romero is a freelance illustrator, animator and concept artist who has worked on various film and video game projects, such as Black as Night (2021), Cooking Companions (2021) and Trepang2 (2023).

He primarily works in the horror genre and started his career by making animated horror short films, such as Midnight Snack (2015), Pine Devil (2017), and Pleasant Inn (2019).

Illustrated for Image Comics and did a whole issue for The Department of Truth. (#15, the 'Mothman' issue).

He recently has worked on a number of comics projects as well as the concept art and poster for The Beasts We Carry.

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CREW BIOS



PRODUCER

Adam Wepler

Adam Wepler is an award-winning and versatile storyteller, establishing himself as a dynamic voice in the industry. Whether captivating audiences through his acting, producing, writing, or directing, Adam consistently brings an empathetic and nuanced touch to his characters, infusing originality into the narratives he brings to life.



COMPOSER

Arindam Jurakhan

Arindam Jurakhan (b. 1995), known professionally as JURAKHAN, is a composer, producer, rapper, and multi-instrumentalist whose work dissolves the boundaries between genres to create visceral, immersive sonic worlds. A film composer for horror, experimental, and independent cinema, he shapes sound into experiences that physically and emotionally move his listeners. His music blends industrial hip-hop, ambient noise, and cinematic orchestration into a rhythm-driven language that blurs the line between score and song.



CINEMATOGRAPHER

Mike Magilnick

Mike Magilnick is a US based Director of Photography who focuses on narrative production. Mike developed his skill through years working as a Gaffer and Key Grip before solidifying his position as Cinematographer. Since then he has continued to learn and grow with every project, viewing each one as a unique challenge.

Some of his recent films are the horror feature Founders Day (2023) and Self Help (2025).



EDITOR

Jan Lefrançois-Gijzen

Drawn to darkness and light alike, Jan's been working as an editor for the last decade. Notably, he's cut a couple feature-length documentaries, most recently Nick Broomfield's The Stones and Brian Jones. In the world of scripted shorts, he's shaped Emma Raimi's Stop Whining and Start Winning and Harry Heng's award-winning Hard Light. Jan is assisted by a beast who's hairy: Marlowe, the one-eyed-cat.

NOTE: CLICK ON HEADSHOTS TO LEARN MORE

Production Notes

1. This project was first written at the start of 2024 for 'Monkeypaw Productions' No Drama screenwriting competition.
2. The feature version of the project was written in late 2024 and has been revised several times.
3. The visual concept for the short is to show a world with two color palettes. One before 9/11 and one after 9/11.
4. A Kickstarter was built throughout early 2025 and launched in summer 2025. It raised \$31,717 to cover the production phase of the project. It can be seen [HERE](#)
5. The remaining budget of approximately \$5000 has been raised through donations via fiscal sponsorship.
6. Director Rishi was making a cross country move during the midpoint of the Kickstarter from Los Angeles to Philadelphia, PA.
7. Casting was done over zoom over a few days in August 2025.
8. The intent was always to lean into using live performers for the inner selves, and lean into lighting and production design to sell the world of the film.
9. The original lead role was written for a boy, but during casting Rishi noticed Anuka Sethi had applied for the role of the Mime and tried her for the lead. She did so well the lead role was re-written for her. The character of Raju became Hira.
10. Noor Hamdi, who portrays the Mime didn't have a typical audition. He and Rishi had a conversation about the character and the role of the Mime. Noor was hired off this single conversation.
11. The film was shot in Peekskill NY, at the Peekskill Church of Assumption in September 2025 over four days: load in (1), shooting (2), break-down (1).
12. Ilya Khazov's role was initially intended for a bodybuilder, but no bodybuilder was as large as what the role required. Therefore he was cast for his size as a strongman.
13. Director Rishi has worked as a colorist with most of the crew on other film productions prior to this short.
14. The post production process was done remotely between Philadelphia, Los Angeles, NYC & New Mexico.
15. Costume designer Chris Calfa was picked due to his experience working live on Broadway. His experience came in handy when getting many extras into costume for the two days of shooting.
16. Twenty background actors were hired for this short.
17. Cory Asinofsky produced the film on set while in full clown make up. It was terrifying & funny at the same time.
18. A making of youtube series was produced as the short was being made. It can be seen [HERE](#)
19. No AI was used in the making of this film.

CREDITS

A Film By

RISHI GANDHI

PRODUCERS

Producer ADAM WEPPLER
Producer CORY ASINOFSKY
Producer RISHI GANDHI
Co-Producer WREN EDWARDS
Associate Producer TODD & LIZ KING
Associate Producer CINDY EDWARDS POJETA
Associate Producer ALEX TORRES

CREW

First Assistant Director CODY BOCCIA

Production Designer MARK D'AGOSTINO
Set Decorator LYDIA PERRY
Key Hair & Makeup CHARLES ZOMBRANO
Assistant Hair & makeup SIANI AMALBERT
Assistant Hair & makeup CHURCH HALEY
Costume Designer CHRISTOPHER CALFA

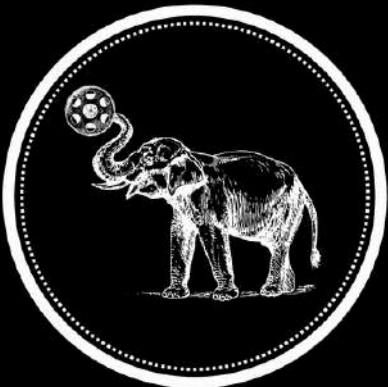
Director of Photography MIKE MAGILNICK
First Assistant Camera AIDAN O'CONNOR
Key Grip MASON HORTON
Gaffer/Associate Producer CHRISTOPHER BYE/FLYING BEE PRODUCTIONS
G&E Swing BENJAMIN DESORCEY
Stedicam Operator ARNALDO VARGAS
Boom Operator/Sound Mixer CHRISTIAN KIRCHER

Fight Choreographer/Key PA JACK LYNCH
Production Assistant ELSA HAMMERAN
Production Assistant VIVIANA SIMON
Set Photographer ERIC MOSSMAN

CREW

Editor JAN LEFRANÇOIS-GIJZEN
Colorist & Finishing Artist CHRISTIAN NAVAS
Composer ARINDAM JURAKHAN
Sound Designer & Re-recording Mixer CHRISTOPHER ROBLETO-HARVEY
Visual Effects GEDALY GUBEREK
Voice Over Recordist SANDRA ESPINOZA

Storyboard Artist ANDY CUNG
Storyboard Artist BRETT HAAS
Concept Artist/Poster Artist DAVID ROMERO



STUDIO TUSK

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CAST

Hira ANUKA SETHI
Mime NOOR HAMDI
Willy BRADEN ALLEN KING
Brucey RAYMOND MIRANDA
Sad Clown/Additional VO CORY ASINOFSKY
Strongman ILYA KHAZOV

The Crush CLAIRE BOONE
The Icon JUDY FLANNERY DURKIN
Homeroom Teacher ALAN BENDICH
Fairy EMILY BERRY
Bully 1 KHYREE SQUIRE
Bully 2 DANIEL PRICE
Mobster PATRICK LOPEZ
Biker JACK LYNCH
Luchador MIKEL HERNANDEZ
Angel/Demon ANGELA PEREZ
Old Soul/Big Bad Wolf BROOK PACKARD
Mermaid LILY STAROBIN
Student 1 VIVIANA SIMON
Student 2 CHESKA AGUILUZ
Student 3 SAVANNAH ROSE
Student 4 KANA SEIKI
Student 5 CORDELIA HAMLIN
Background Teacher 1 ALEX HOSP
Background teacher 2 JUDITH SARAGURO
Background teacher 3 HOWARD RUSSOCK
Additional VO ADAM WEPPLER

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CONTACT

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Linktree*

