INDIRA S. SOMANI

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

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DOCUMENTARY FILMS

I LOVE YOU MORE THAN MY LIFE (MOM AND ME), Production

Director, Producer, Writer, Cinematographer,

A personal documentary that uses narration, interviews, archival and observational footage. **Logline:** Indira returns home to Springfield, Illinois, to care for her aging South Asian mother, who struggles with depression. As she reflects on her mother's vibrant past, as an award-winning social worker who immigrated entirely on her own from India, Indira struggles to balance her roles as caregiver and daughter, while protecting her own mental health.

UNTITLED DOCUMENTARY, *Director, Producer, Writer* Post-Production

A 10-minute documentary that uses interviews and observational footage. **Logline:** A graduate student from India adjusts to life in the U.S.; having never left India before, he makes new friends, finds housing, takes new classes, and faces the economic constraints of being an international student. But when the pandemic becomes a global crisis, returning home becomes unlikely as India closes entry into the country.

LIFE ON THE GANGES, *Producer, Director, Writer, Cinematographer* 2016 to present

10-minute documentary short, which introduces the audience to the Ganges River (in Varanasi, India), the auspicious event called Dev Diwali, and one particular boatman, whose main source of strength and survival comes from the Ganges. Life on the Ganges is on **Kanopy.**

Accepted for DVD and Online distribution with New Day Films, Newburgh, NY Feb. 2018

Juried Festivals and Awards

Twin Rivers Media Festival, Asheville, N.C., *Juried* Jan. 2017

Northern Virginia International Film & Music Festival, Fairfax, VA, *Juried*
Nominated for Best Short Documentary April 2017

Southern Shorts Awards- "Award of Merit," (Cinematography, Direction, Editing, Music Producer, Production Design, Screenplay and Sound Design), Roswell, GA, *Juried* April 2017

New York Indian Film Festival, New York, *Juried* May 2017

Illinois International Film Festival, Chicago, *Juried* May 2017

Long Island International Film Expo, Bellmore, NY, *Juried* July 2017

Best Shorts Competition, "Award of Recognition," La Jolla, CA, *Juried* July 2017

Cannes Short Film Festival, Nice, France, *Juried, Best Short Documentary* Sept. 2017

DC South Asian Film Festival, Rockville, MD, *Juried* Sept. 2017

Mumbai Shorts International Film Festival, *Juried* Nov. 2017

Berlin Independent Film Festival, *Juried, Best Short Documentary* Feb. 2018

Hollywood International Independent Documentary Awards, *Juried (Jan. 2017), Award of Recognition, Documentary Short*, Los Angeles, CA March 2018

CROSSING LINES, *Co-Producer, Co-Director, Co-Writer, Cinematographer*

30-minute documentary about my experience as an Indian American woman who returns to India for the first time after her father's death. (trailer). Crossing Lines is on Kanopy. Crossing Lines is on **Kanopy.**

- Smithsonian Indian American Heritage Project, "Beyond Bollywood," traveling exhibition 2015-2020

National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institute, Sonoma County Museum, Santa Rosa, CA, Olive Hyde Art Gallery, Freemont, CA, Morris Museum, Morristown, NJ, Minnesota History Center, St. Paul, Minnesota, Mathers Museum, Indiana University Bloomington, Indiana, John E. Conner Museum, Texas A&M University, Kingsville, Texas, City of Raleigh Museum, North Carolina, (2017) South Carolina State Museum, Columbia, South Carolina (2017) Ontario Museum of History & Art, Ontario, Canada (2018)

- Distributed for Public Television by NETA 2008-2011
  (NETA- National Educational Telecommunications Association)
- DVD and STREAMING Distribution by New Day Films, Newburgh, NY 2009 to present

***Cities of Juried Festivals/Screenings for* Crossing Lines** Nov. 2007 to May 2016
Rockville, MD; Washington, DC; Harrisonburg, VA; Springfield, IL; Charlottesville, VA; Rochester, NY; Dallas, TX; Baltimore, MD; Lexington, VA; Cupertino, CA; Honolulu, HI; New York, NY; Los Angeles, CA; Temecula, CA; Piscataway, NJ; West Valley City, UT; Silver Spring, MD; Austin, TX; Delray Beach, FL; Atlanta, GA; Mumbai, India; Dargle, South Africa; Sydney and Melbourne, Australia; Tamworth and Birmingham, England and Bucharest, Romania

***Public Television Screenings of* Crossing Lines** May 2008- July 2011
More than 100 screenings on PBS affiliates across the U.S.

***Film Awards for* Crossing Lines**
"Honorable Mention," University Film and Video Assn. August 2009
"Best American Documentary," Heart of England International Film Festival June 2009
"Best Documentary-Short Format," Gracie Allen Award, Alliance for Women in Media June 2009
"Bronze Palm Winner" Mexico International Film Festival May 2009
"Best Documentary Award," California Arts Assn. Digital Short Film Festival Jan. 2009
"Runner Up for The Best Short Documentary Film," Baltimore Women's Film Festival Oct. 2008

Press for Crossing Lines
"Being Indian-American in Springfield," *The State Journal Register,* Springfield, IL, March 1, 2015
"Crossing Lines-identity issues across cultural, national bounds," Bharat Times, Melbourne, Australia, August, 2009
"Crossing Lines," G'Day India, Melbourne, Australia, August, 2009
"A migrant finds her way home," Indian Link, Sydney, Australia, July 2009
"Crossing Lines, the documentary," Illinois Times, Springfield, IL, May 2008
"Crossing Lines Documentary Chronicles Identity Search," India-West, San Jose, CA, Sept. 2008
"Indira's crossing," India Abroad, New York, New York, August 29, 2008.

SKILLS: AVID EDITING; CINEMATOGRAPHY: CANON_C200

Service to the industry
- Pre-screener for IDA (International Documentary Assn.), Awards August 2023
- Documentary Screener for the Telluride Film Festival September 2022
- Screener for Peabody Awards, Documentary Category December 2021
- IDA, Judge, 2019 Enterprise Production Grant June 2019
- BEA (Broadcast Education Assn.) Judge for faculty documentary Award January 2018
- UFVA (University Film and Video Assn.)- Judge, faculty documentary award May 2010
- BEA-Judge for student documentary award April 2010

BROADCAST JOURNALISM POSITIONS

CNBC (Fort Lee, NJ) June 2001 to June 2002
Producer, "Wake-up Call"
Senior Producer, "Early Today"

YAHOO! FINANCE VISION (New York, NY) March 2001 to June 2001
Freelance Field Producer (streaming media)

STOCKHOUSE MEDIA CORP. (New York, NY) May 2000 to January 2001
Executive Producer (streaming media)

WJLA-TV (ABC affiliate, Washington, DC) August 1996 to May 2000
Senior Producer, Producer, Off-air Reporter, 6 p.m. 11 p.m., Weekend Producer

WVEC-TV (ABC affiliate, Norfolk, VA) October 1995 to July 1996
Producer, 11 p.m. and weekend newscasts

WSBT-TV (CBS affiliate, South Bend, IN) September 1994 to October 1995
Producer, 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. newscasts

WICS-TV (NBC affiliate, Springfield, IL) October 1993 to September 1994
Producer, morning newscasts

GRANTS

CAAM (Center for Asian American Media) ($50k for *I Love You More Than My Life*) 2024
Kickstarter Campaign ($59,529.00 for *I Love You More Than My Life*) 2024
SAHMIN (South Asian Mental Health Initiative & Network), ($500) 2023
Khushalani Foundation ($3000) 2022
Caucus Foundation ($2000) 2022
Mary Pickford Donor Award (UCLA) ($5000) 2022
Developing the Short Film (UCLA), ($5000) 2022
Carole Fielding Grant, (UFVA), ($2000) 2022
Mary Pickford Donor Award (UCLA) ($4000) 2021
Center for the Study of Women (UCLA), Travel Grant ($500) 2021
Mary Pickford Donor Award (UCLA) ($1000) 2020
Howard Junior Faculty Writing and Creative Works Summer Academy (all-expense paid) 2016
Dow Jones News Fund Multimedia Training Academy **(**all-expense paid) 2016
Howard Advanced Summer Research Fellowship ($15,000) 2015
Howard Summer Research Fellowship ($10,000) 2014
Lenfest Summer Fellowship Grant 2012
(Satellite TV Acculturation study in San Francisco, Atlanta $6500)
Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Fellowship, India Aug. 2011- Jan. 2012
(Western influence of Indian programming, $16,000)
Lenfest Summer Fellowship Grant 2011
(Satellite TV Acculturation study in Houston, Chicago $6500)
Lenfest Summer Fellowship Grant 2010
(Satellite TV Acculturation study in New York/New Jersey, $6500)
Washington and Lee University, Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communications 2009

(Crossing Lines, $500)
Washington and Lee University, Office of the Provost & Dean of the College 2009
(Crossing Lines, $2500)
Lenfest Summer Fellowship Grant 2009
(Satellite TV Acculturation study in Australia, $6500)
Washington and Lee University, Office of the Provost, 2008
(Crossing Lines, $1000)
Department of Education 2008
(Crossing Lines, $900, Digital Visual Interface)
University of Maryland, Office of the Provost, 2007 & 2008
(*Crossing Lines, $1900*)
University of Maryland, Philip Merrill College of Journalism 2007
(*Crossing Lines, $3500*)
The Richard Eaton Foundation 2008
(*Crossing Lines, $500*)
American University Faculty Grant (*Crossing Lines, $5000)* 2004
(co-wrote proposal, awarded to co-producer, Leena Jayaswal)

NEW DAY FILMS

New Day Films is a filmmaker-run distribution company (co-op democratically run by more than 100 filmmaker members) distributing films to educators.

- Equity and Representation (E & R) Team Lead 2018- Present
  - Active in supporting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the co-op
  - Editor of the E & R Newsletter
  - Overseas Outreach of Filmmakers from a variety of film festivals

- Launch Coach 2009- to 2014
  - screen films from new filmmakers, interviews, checking sources, reviewing applications
  - help new filmmakers build a distribution platform for their documentaries

SAJA (SOUTH ASIAN JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION)

SAJA is an organization for journalists of South Asian origin and journalists interested in South Asia or the South Asian Diaspora. It promotes accurate coverage of South Asia and the South Asian diaspora.

- Member 1995 to present
- Videographer, SAJA's Annual Awards and Scholarship Gala July 2010, June 2011
- Moderator of panel on SAJA "Comes to DC" August 2010
- Participant, SAJA-DC: Coverage of "Navigating the Labyrinth" Conference, National Press Club, Washington, DC Feb. 2007
- Moderator of Panel, "How I got the story," Annual Convention, New York, NY July 2006
- Reviewed and critiqued broadcast tapes. Annual Convention, New York, NY June 2005
- Workshop Instructor, "TV News Production," Annual Convention, New York, NY June 2004
- National Vice President, Convention Chair, New York, NY June 2002
- Participant of "Covering Washington" panel, Annual Convention, New York, NY June 2001
- Moderator of panel on "Anthrax," New York Chapter, New York, NY October 2001
- President, Washington, DC Chapter 1997-2000
- "Outstanding story on South Asians in North America," Technology Boom in N. Va. 2000
- "Outstanding story on South Asians in North America," Diwali 1999

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY (Orange, CA)
Adjunct Lecturer, Broadcast Journalism and Documentary, Dodge College, Spring 2023, Spring 2024

HOWARD UNIVERSITY (Washington, DC) 2012-2021
Associate, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Media, Journalism and Film, School of Communications

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY (Lexington, VA) 2008-2012
Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communications

THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND (College Park, MD) 2004-2008
Adjunct Lecturer, Teaching Assistant, Philip Merrill College of Journalism

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY (Washington, DC) 2003-2004
Assistant Professor, School of Communication, Division of Journalism

FULBRIGHT-NEHRU SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP, INDIA Aug. 2011 to Jan. 2012

- Filmed a documentary about a major Hindu festival, Dev Deepavali (15 days after Diwali), in the holy city of Varanasi, based along the Ganges River.

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES,
School of Theater, Film and Television, Los Angeles, CA
M.F.A Directing/Production, Documentary Film, March 2023

THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, Philip Merrill College of Journalism, College Park, MD
Ph.D. Journalism and Public Communication, 2008
Dissertation: Enculturation and Acculturation of Television Use among Asian Indians in the U.S.

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, The Medill School of Journalism, Evanston, IL
M.S.J. Concentration: Broadcast Journalism, 1993

KNOX COLLEGE, Galesburg, IL
B.A. Independent Major: Media, Race and Gender, 1992

LANGUAGES:

Russian: read and write, Hindi: general knowledge

REFERENCES

Kristy Guevara-Flanagan, MFA, Professor, UCLA, School of Theater, Film and Television,
Los Angeles, CA 90095, phone: 415-350-3066, email: kgflanagan@tft.ucla.edu

Erin Ploss-Campoamor, MFA, Producer of "I Love You More Than My Life."
Los Angeles, CA, phone: 310-991-4614, email: eplosscam@gmail.com

Leena Jayaswal, MFA, Professor, Director of the Photography Program, School of Communication,
American University, Washington DC 20016, phone: 202-341-6911, email: leenajayaswal@gmail.com