

# 20 Years After 'Satya': RGV Tells Story Behind Film

MUMBAI: "Satya", since its release on July 3, 1998, has garnered cult status as a gangster drama for its realistic depiction of the Indian underworld. It was an accident, says director Ram Gopal Varma, sharing the "truth" about what went behind the making of the "great film".

"Tomorrow is the 20th birthday of 'Satya'. It was an accident," Varma tweeted on Monday.

He shared a lengthy post, detailing the thoughts and experiences that led to the movie, co-written by Saurabh Shukla and Anurag Kashyap, and starring J. D. Chakravarty, Urmila Matondkar, Manoj Bajpayee, Shefali Shah and Saurabh among others.

"On the eve of 'Satya' completing 20 years, I looked back upon it and a ray of sunshine fell across my various fond memories of it and I started remembering the origins of its various aspects," Varma wrote.

"I am not trying to be modest when I say that its faults are solely mine and all its merits genuinely belong to others. I just swam blindly through the wonderful



current of energies... and somehow accidentally managed to reach the shore of success... This is the actual truth of 'Satya'," Varma wrote.

He recounted how when he first came to Bombay (now Mumbai) from Hyderabad to shoot "Ranggeela", a train ride through the Dharavi slums -- introducing him to the dichotomy in the super rich and downright poor living side by side -- left an indelible mark in his mind. And every once in a while, in due course, he used to hear the word "underworld".

It was not until he was at the

office of a producer, who got a call about a prominent person being shot dead by some gang, that it struck Varma to think about how "we always hear about these gangsters only when they either kill or when they die. But what do they do in between?"

"That was the first thought of mine which eventually resulted in 'Satya'," he said.

The idea was fuelled when he saw a newspaper with some arrested gangsters' photographs.

"Seeing their thin hands and mostly lean frames, nothing about them looked like how Bol-

lywood portrays the bad guys. They are like any other ordinary people. The guy walking on the road could be a gangster. Even the guy living next door could be a gangster. The whole point of it is that they have to mix up in the society and look like anybody else so as to operate in secrecy," deduced Varma.

All characters in "Satya" were modelled on someone he had met or someone he had heard of.

"Everyone had a reference point," he said, explaining the origins behind the memorable characters played by Urmila (Vidya), Manoj (Bheeku Mhatre), Saurabh (Kallu mama) and Snehal Dabi (Chander).

"Once I decided that this is a kind of film I wanted to make, the first person who came to meet me as a writer was Anurag Kashyap. So, I got him on board and he got Saurabh Shukla. We discussed a lot ... and there was no script on the day we started shooting.

"I went half by instinct and half by Anurag's manic way of writing highly realistic dialogue which mostly used to happen on

location," Varma wrote.

The first scene's shoot -- when Sushant Singh (Pakya) screamed unexpectedly -- set the mood and pace of how he wanted "Satya" to be made. "All realistic performances in 'Satya' came in because I stopped telling actors what to do. Actors were instructed not to follow written lines but just say whatever they feel like, so most of the times the content was told to them and they kept on improvising and I controlled it in the editing," he said.

Varma didn't have a "clear story" for the movie. But he knew his characters, except for Satya, essayed by J. D. Chakravarty -- and so, he owns up for any "inconsistency" in the character.

"When people ask me today, if I realised 'Satya' would become a great film, I will have to say no. That is because great films happen and no one can make them. The proof of that is none of us, whether it's Anurag or Manoj or me, could reach beyond Satya in the last twenty years... If we knew how to do it, why didn't we do it again?"

## 'Love Sonia' To Be Opening Night Film At IFFM

NEW DELHI: Tabrez Noorani's "Love Sonia" will be the opening night film for the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM), set to be held in August this year. It will mark the movie's Australian premiere.

The movie, featuring Mrunal Thakur, Richa Chadha, Frieda Pinto, Demi Moore, Anupam Kher, Manoj Bajpayee, Rajkumar Rao and Sai Tamhankar, is based on the widespread epidemic of human trafficking and global sex trade network. It will be showcased on August 10.

Noorani said in a statement: "We are delighted to be able to open the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne with our film 'Love Sonia' and are honoured to share our film Down Under, especially in the culturally diverse city of Melbourne."

The director, along with Freida, Richa and Mrunal will be in attendance for the festival opening for a gala screening followed by a question and answer session.

Richa said in a statement: "I'm glad that after London, the film will be shown at another big Indian film festival. 'Love Sonia' truly is a special film for me and for those who have worked on it."



The film follows the story of a young girl whose life goes for a toss when she gets caught in the net of the flesh trade. It is produced by David Womark.

IFFM's festival director Mitu Bhowmick Lange said it is an honour to have a movie, which deals with "such an important pressing topic", open the 12-day gala.

"A film helmed by such a talented bunch of actors combined with a compelling storyline fits in perfectly well with our theme this year, which is inclusion," Lange said.

## Amyra Learns A Lot Working On 'Rajma Chawal'

MUMBAI: Actress Amyra Dastur, for whom working in "Rajma Chawal" has been a learning experience, says her Hindi abusive dictionary has definitely widened.

Amyra's look in the Leena Yadav directorial is inspired by Rooney Mara from "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo".

Before Amyra began shooting for the film, the makers made her do was to unlearn the Mumbai diction and pick up how a Meerut girl settled in Delhi would talk. She then worked on her dialogue skills and intonation, followed by body language.

Actor Adil Hussain taught Amyra the right body language, Veena Mehta helped her with the dialogues and diction and N.K. Sharma worked with her on improvisational theatre.

Amyra, who was seen in "Kaal-akandi", said: "N.K. sir is definitely a unique teacher. I had to walk around the room for 3 hours until I learnt how to count in Hindi till 100. My Hindi abusive dictionary has definitely widened thanks to him. He is someone I consider very special to me."

## Inspiring 'Soorma' To Release on July 13



'Soorma' is an inspiring true story of the triumph of the human spirit, about a player, who made headlines for his miraculous comeback after an unfortunate, freak accident through sheer determination, hard work and unrelenting passion for the sport.

The title track has premiered for the inspirational film starring Diljit Dosanjh as hockey legend Sandeep Singh.

This electrifying number has been voiced by Shankar Mahadevan and penned by Gulzar. 'Soorma' releases in theaters across North America on July 13.

Directed by Shaad Ali, the cast includes Diljit Dosanjh, Taapsee Pannu and Angad Bedi.

'Soorma' tells the story of

the international hockey player Sandeep Singh, who was paralyzed and used a wheelchair for two years after an accidental gunshot injured him in 2006.

The film's tagline is "The Greatest Comeback Story of the Hockey Legend Sandeep Singh". Fighting against all odds, Sandeep got back on his feet and made a comeback to international hockey in 2008. India won the 2009 Sultan Azlan Shah Cup under his captaincy and went on to qualify for the 2012 Olympics. The film was shot in Shahabad, Chandigarh and in Belgrade, Serbia.

The hockey sequences in the film were choreographed by Sandeep Singh and his brother Bikramjit Singh.

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