

KAPIL OLIVIA KARAN FARAN MEERA TOM EVERETT
TALWALKAR LIANG SONI TAHIR SIMHAN SCOTT

Paper Flowers

PRESS KIT

100 minutes
USA
English
Dir. Mahesh Pailoor
Prod. Asit Vyas

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AV ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY PRODUCTION "PAPER FLOWERS" STARRING KAPIL TALWALKAR OLIVIA LIANG KARAN SONI FARAN TAHIR MEERA SIMHAN WEST LIANG WITH JENNY GAGO
AND TOM EVERETT SCOTT CASTING BY EMILY SCHWEBER CSA MUSIC BY KRISTIN OHRN DYRUD PRODUCTION DESIGNER CARLEE WYMAN EDITOR CARY LIN SCREENPLAY BY MARY KRELL-OISHI MAHESH PAILOOR
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY AAKASH RAJ ASSOCIATE PRODUCER NAMAN GUPTA KAPIL TALWALKAR OLIVIA LIANG CO-PRODUCED BY BRANDON MIREE PRESENTED BY MITA & ASIT VYAS SANTOSH GOVINDARAJU MAHESH PAILOOR
 PRODUCED BY ASIT VYAS DIRECTED BY MAHESH PAILOOR

Paper Flowers

Pitch

“Fault in Our Stars” meets “The Big Sick”

Genre

Young Adult Romance
Inspirational Drama
True Story

Logline

When suddenly faced with a rare form of cancer, a young man embarks on a transformative journey of gratitude, inspiring loved ones and strangers with his unwavering spirit and viral manifesto that challenges the world to find beauty in every sunset. Based on a true story.

Short Synopsis

Shalin Shah, an ambitious USC graduate, leaves behind his loving Indian American family and devoted girlfriend, Fiona, to pursue his dream of making a difference as a Peace Corps volunteer. However, his life takes a devastating turn when a check-up for a lingering cough reveals a shocking diagnosis: a rare and aggressive form of cancer. Forced to return home and undergo treatment, Shalin confronts the fundamental question: what is the true meaning of life when faced with limited time? Based on a true story, PAPER FLOWERS is a poignant and inspirational journey of love, loss, and hope. It serves as a roadmap to cherish the moments we have and to remember to stop and enjoy every sunset.

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Long Synopsis

A fresh graduate from USC, Shalin Shah (Kapil Talwalkar) is ready to take on the world and make a difference. Being the only son to his Indian immigrant parents, Jay (Faran Tahir) and Reema (Meera Simhan), Shalin carries the burden of South Asian expectations. The only problem is, Shalin is headed off to Peru with the Peace Corps instead of med school, and his long time girlfriend, Fiona (Olivia Liang) is Taiwanese American, instead of a more “suitable” Indian American match. Shalin’s best friend, Milan (Karan Soni), is more than happy to watch his friend’s predicament, teasing him as “every Indian parent’s worst nightmare.”

Undeterred, Shalin sets off for Peru and finds even more than he was expecting — he finds a real purpose and meaning to his life. But before Shalin can embark on his newfound journey, a check up with a local Doctor for a lingering cough, reveals a much more troubling diagnosis. Returning prematurely to the US, Shalin is shocked to learn from Dr. Baxter (Tom Everett Scott) that he has a rare and aggressive form of cancer.

Shalin’s life is completely upended in an instant, and a once bright future becomes dim. Through chemotherapy and self introspection, Shalin tumbles on a downward spiral, in spite of his family’s best efforts. But with the help of Fiona and her undying love for him, they pull out of the darkness together. As Shalin confronts mortality head-on, he realizes that even in the midst of death and a shortened life, he still has an opportunity to change the world — by living his life in the moment and sharing his experience with others through an inspiring manifesto that quickly goes viral.

PAPER FLOWERS is a journey of love and loss, tragedy and hope, and most of all, a roadmap for all of us living and breathing to not to take our moments for granted and to remember to stop and enjoy every sunset.

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Based on a viral true story

HUFFPOST

Thank You, Cancer

I strongly believe everything happens for a reason. Had terminal cancer not happened to me, I would not have been able to inspire my closest friends and family to appreciate the beautiful gift of life a little more and live more appreciative and positive lives with my story.

By: Shalin Shah, Contributor, May11, 2015, 09:40 PM

READ THE ARTICLE:

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/thank-you-cancer_b_7260708



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Press

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DEADLINE

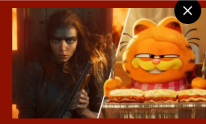
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'Furiosa' Opening To \$31M-\$34M, Lowest No. 1 Memorial Day Weekend Opening In Decades; 'The Garfield Movie' Clawing At \$30M-\$32M



HOME / FILM / CASTING

Kapil Talwalkar, Olivia Liang, Karan Soni & Tom Everett Scott Join Inspirational Indie 'Paper Flowers' Based On Viral HuffPost Article

By [Matt Grobar](#)
June 26, 2023 9:29am

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COMMENTS



(L-R) Kapil Talwalkar, Olivia Liang, Karan Soni and Tom Everett Scott
Naman Gupta; Getty Images

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<https://deadline.com/2023/06/tom-everett-scott-joins-paper-flowers-indie-karan-soni-1235424623/>

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Bios

Mahesh Pailoor (Director)

Mahesh Pailoor is an award winning filmmaker based in Los Angeles. Raised in a seaside town in Maine to immigrant Indian parents, Mahesh's films often grapple with divergent notions of South Asian identity. His work has been championed at festivals and institutions, including SXSW, Cannes Lions and the Smithsonian. Pailoor directed and co-wrote the acclaimed independent feature film "Brahmin Bulls" which The New York Times praised as a "warm debut". He has also directed multiple episodes of marquee shows like NBC's "The Blacklist" and CBS's "S.W.A.T." showcasing his versatility across genres. Mahesh is an alumnus of the NBC Emerging Director Program, Disney's TV Directing Program, Berlinale Talent Campus, and Film Independent's Screenwriting Lab and Project:Involve. He is a graduate of NYU Tisch and earned an MFA in directing from the American Film Institute. Pailoor's latest feature "Paper Flowers" is based on the viral Huffington Post article, "Thank You, Cancer" and captures an Indian American's poetic meditation on mortality after a terminal cancer diagnosis, further representing an evolving diaspora experience.

Asit Vyas (Producer)

Asit Vyas is an entrepreneur with a journey that spans acting, restaurant franchises, and the world of cinema. He was a franchisee of Burger King restaurants in San Jose and Pizza Hut in Connecticut and Rhode Island. While building his career as a fast-food franchisee, he pursued his cinematic passion by studying filmmaking, which led him to "Zara Si Bhool (A Small Mistake)," a Bollywood feature made in Hollywood, available on Amazon Prime.

As his children headed off to college, he embraced a career shift. He sold his franchise business and completed UCLA's prestigious Producer's Program, reigniting his dedication to the entertainment industry. Today, he is actively engaged in producing his second feature, "Paper Flowers." While living in Los Angeles with his wife, he takes pride in parenting a son and daughter pursuing medical careers with their wonderful spouses. His journey embodies enduring passion, dedication, and a celebration of diversity, whether in restaurants, films, or cherished family moments.

Paper Flowers

Directors Note

Gratitude. That's the one word that this film has taught me. I didn't know Shalin Shah or his story when he passed away in 2015. It wasn't until a few years later when Asit Vyas (producer) approached me to direct the film, that I first read Shalin's op ed in the Huffington Post, "Thank You, Cancer." What struck me, was Shalin's humility and perspective in the face of mortality. We're all going to die. That's a given. But how we spend those days, who we spend those days with, and how we appreciate it all — that's the real gift of life. That was the gift Shalin gave to me, from a 22 year old, wise beyond his years.

The challenge in making this film was how to convey those lofty ideas without becoming sanctimonious and overly sentimental. To that end, we worked hard on grounding the film and telling both Shalin's spiritual journey as well as the journey his closest loved ones went on, inspired by him. As much as this is Shalin's story, it is also an ensemble piece with an incredible cast lead by Kapil Talwalkar and Olivia Liang. Along with the cast, we had an equally incredible and passionate crew who dedicated their time and talent to the making of this film.

I am so grateful for everyone who has come on this journey with us and I'm excited to share the film with audiences, helping to spread Shalin's message of gratitude even further.

Mahesh Pailoor (Director)

Paper Flowers

Producers Note

In 2015, a young man filled with hope and love changed the world with phrases like “Thank you, Cancer” and “Sunset for Shalin.” Shalin Shah, 22, a promising relative of mine, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. He soon not only accepted his diagnosis with grace but also helped his friends and family view life through a lens of positivity.

Living with love, purpose, and gratitude became his personal epiphany. Shalin shared this message with those close to him, and it quickly spread across the internet, becoming a viral sensation.

Shalin’s story, a testament to living each day fully, created a lasting ripple effect. His legacy, touching diverse walks of life, continues to inspire. Shalin’s last wish was to share his story worldwide, hoping to help people appreciate the beautiful gift of life a little more. I decided to do my part by making “Paper Flowers,” an inspiring film based on his true story.

Asit Vyas (Producer)

Paper Flowers

FAQ

Why this story?

There have been a number of films made about young people going through a terminal diagnosis. But what set Shalin's story apart, was his message of gratitude and his fearlessness in the face of mortality, to live as best a life as possible, with the time he had left. In our fast paced and constantly changing world, where our eyes are glued to smart phones and AI systems are starting to become more and more prevalent, Shalin's message of reflection, of taking time to watch a sunset, is ever more important. As simple as it is, the act of being grateful and being in the moment is the true gift of life. Making a movie to help spread that message was always our guiding post.

Diverse Casts and Crew

Starting from the top with Kapil Talwalkar and Olivia Liang, all the way through Karan Soni, Faran Tahir, Meera Simhan, West Liang, and the venerable Tom Everett Scott, we had an incredible cast. We hope that the film is a showcase for these actors, some of whom haven't had a leading platform before. Beyond that, the ensemble of actors who play the extended friends and family worked so hard to create a lived in experience.

We also wanted to show an aspect of the Asian American experience that we rarely see — families moving through grief alongside cultural traditions and expectations. Diverse stories with diverse casts offer another view on universal stories.

In addition, behind the camera we had a young, talented, and diverse group that reflected the characters on screen.

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Cast and Crew

Kapil Talwalkar as Shalin Shah
Olivia Liang as Fiona Chang
Karan Soni as Milan
Faran Tahir as Jay Shah
Meera Simhan as Reema Shah
Tom Everett Scott as Dr. Baxter
West Liang as Tony Chang
Anita Kalathara as Ami
Jenny Gago as Nurse Natalie
Jeremy Culhane as Dave
Juan Gabriel Pareja as Dr. Salvador
Casey Gardner as Christy

directed by Mahesh Pailoor
produced by Asit Vyas
executive producers Asit & Mita Vyas. Santosh Govindaraju
cinematography by Aakash Raj
screenplay by Mary Krell-Oishi, Mahesh Pailoor
production design by Carlee Wyman
edited by Cary Lin
costumes by Amanda Massi, Taj Jackson
co-produced by Brandon Meree
associate producer Naman Gupta
music by Kristin Øhrn Dyrud
casting by Emily Schweber CSA