

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

KELSEA PAUL

TRIVIAL

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

JAMIE HEGLUND

STEVE KASYN

TOM PEARSON

ESHANA'S

BRITTANY PERERA

NADY SHEPHERD

WE HOURS PRODUCTIONS & PRESTINE MEDIA INC. IN ASSOCIATION WITH ARCANE FILM GROUP AND STUDIO REEL FILMS PRESENT

AN IDOWU OKENYI FILM "ESHANA'S TRIAL"

STARRING BRITTANY PERERA STEVE KASYN TOM PEARSON KELSEA PAUL JAMIE HEGLUND AND NADA SHEPHERD
DIRECTED BY IDOWU OKENYI DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY PIOTR SKORONSKI EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ALEKS SPURMANIS CO-PRODUCER SARAH STELLA KWAJI EDITOR ANDREA NOVOA MUSIC BY BEN D'CUNHA
SCREENPLAY BY ALEKS SPURMANIS DANIELLE D. JAMES DURGA RAJU MYAKALA



ESHANA'S

TRIAL

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

LOGLINE

A young woman recovering from a life-altering injury must face a terrifying foe in order to rescue the man she loves from the hate-motivated monsters who upended her life.

ESHANA'S TRIAL

GENRE: Psychological horror

RUNTIME: 17 minutes

SHOT ON: 6K Red Komodo-X
Digital camera

SYNOPSIS

Eshana and her fiancé Latif built Hope Kitchen in order to help starving immigrant families. The "Save Our City" street gang has been trying to shut them down ever since they opened. Latif calls Eshana for help after the SOC's latest act of vandalism has damaged their storefront window. Turning on the morning news as she prepares to go, she watches incredulously as immigration critic John Campbell defends the attack. Meeting up on the way to the restaurant, the couple are assaulted by a gang member who pushes Eshana into the path of a delivery truck.

Four months later, she is struggling to adjust to life as a paraplegic. She spends her waking hours obsessing over Campbell's appearances on the television despite Latif's efforts to get her out of the house. In her PTSD-fueled nightmares, Campbell appears as a demonic Hangman who torments her with premonitions of Latif's murder. Just outside her front door, Latif faces imminent peril at the hands of the SOC. In spite of her terror and confusion, Eshana forces herself to open the door in the hope that she can save him; but time is running out and the Hangman still stands in her way.



REVIEWS

"Words that carry weight. Eshana's Trial takes home Best Screenplay. A compelling and tightly woven narrative that explores complex themes with remarkable clarity and impact."

BRAZIL INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE AND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

TRAILER



Click [HERE](#) or on the image to view

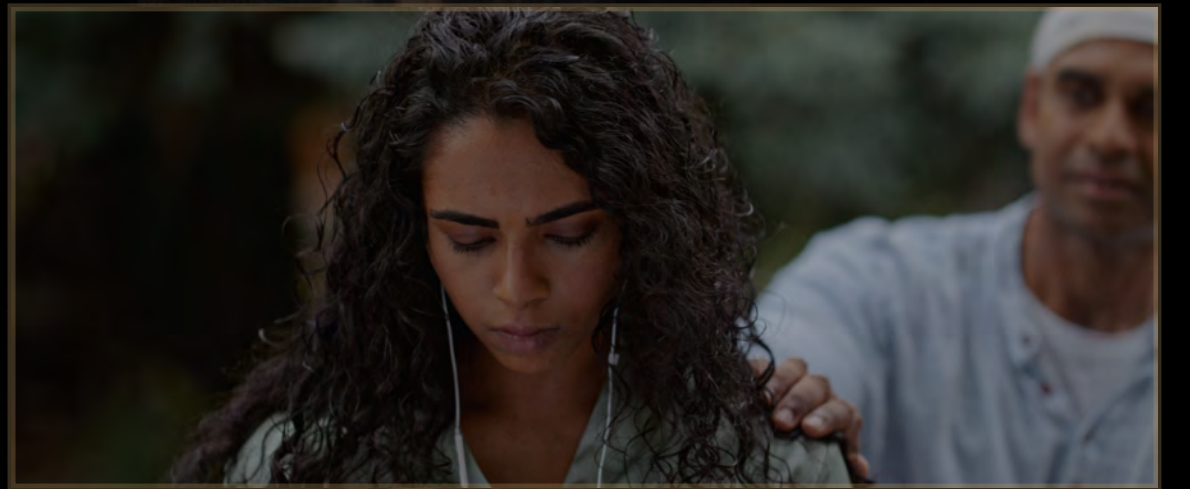
AWARDS



PRODUCTION STILLS



PRODUCTION STILLS



IDOWU OKENIYI

is a Nigerian - Ghanaian film director, producer and a co-founder of **Studio Reel Films**. He began his film-making career in 2008 when he shot and directed his first short film with a phone camera and using his roommates as actors. He taught himself everything he knows about filmmaking from practical experience and experimenting with friends.

Idowu's first official film was **"The Special One"**, an adaptation of the book by Samuel Suberu Oluwasegun. It's a story about a deaf girl's struggle with ableism. His other directorial credits include two other short films that deal with societal and psychological issues: **"3 Nights Ago"** and **"Jungle Justice"**. These short films have garnered a number of awards in film festivals. He is currently working on a feature-length adaptation of "Jungle Justice".



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"All of my previous films deal with difficult and emotionally challenging subjects like ableism, PTSD, vigilantism. I have always taken great care to approach these subjects with empathy and sensitivity for those who have suffered; but I've also never sanitized or sugar coated that suffering either. Eshana's journey is a difficult one filled with many unpleasant twists that may be hard for viewers to watch. I am looking forward to challenging my audience to feel her pain; and feel her resentment and vulnerability. I also plan to comfort them by showing them how she is redeemed by letting go of...of her fear.



I hope that audiences will be able to see their own fears and resentments reflected in the plight of both of our main characters, Eshana and Latif. I hope that it will help them to understand how holding onto these negative emotions keeps us feeling isolated and alone. I also hope that they can see the value of letting them go, even when it seems impossible or futile to do so."

Watch the video [HERE](#)

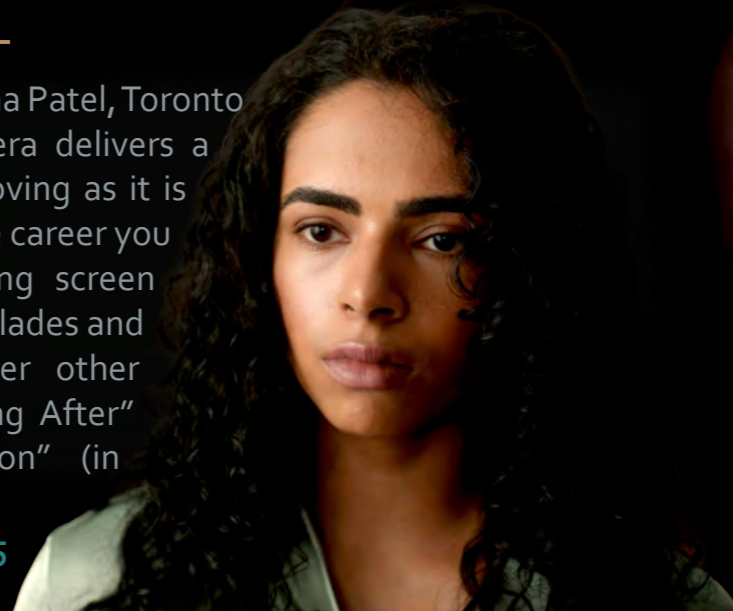
MAIN CAST

BRITANY PERERA

as ESHANA PATEL

Starring in her breakout role as Eshana Patel, Toronto Film School graduate Brittany Perera delivers a standout performance that is as moving as it is genuine. Brittany is an actress whose career you will want to follow. Her captivating screen presence is sure to garner many accolades and compelling new assignments. Her other acting credits include "The Morning After" (2024) and "Dhillon Hates Dhillon" (in production).

www.imdb.com/name/nm15084075



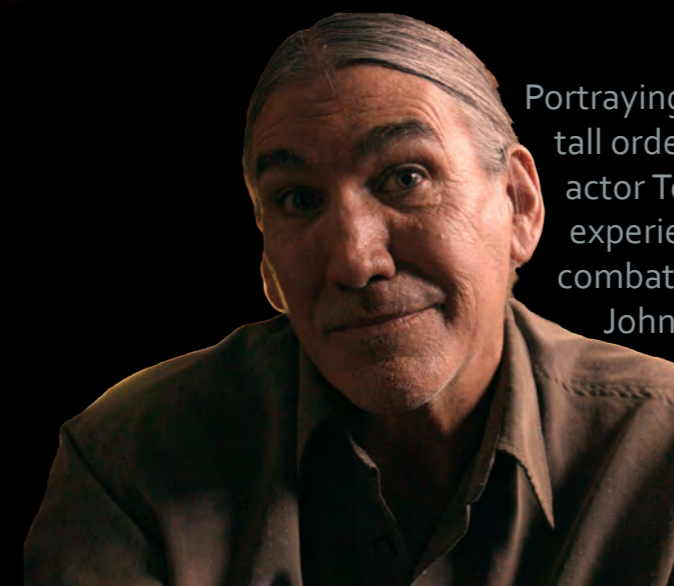
MAIN CAST

TOM PEARSON

as the HANGMAN

Portraying the iconic villain of our story may be a tall order, but one that veteran stage and screen actor Tom Pearson is up for. Tom channels his experience as a content creator to portray combative and controversial news personality John Campbell. As Campbell's sinister alter ego Hangman, Tom combines theatrical physicality and nuanced understatement to create a monster that audiences will dread to see.

[The Very Useful Theater Company](#)

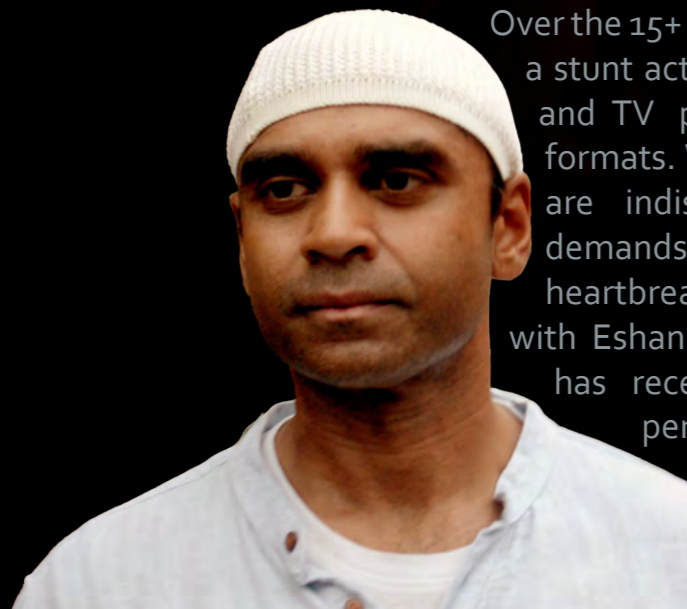


STEVE KASAN

as LATIF ATTALAH

Over the 15+ years that Steve Kasan has performed as a stunt actor, he has appeared in hundreds of film and TV projects that span many genres and formats. While Steve's athleticism and versatility are indispensable for meeting the physical demands of his role as Latif, it is the tenderly heartbreaking moment that this character shares with Eshana that audiences will remember. Steve has received numerous awards for his past performances including "You Don't Own Me" (2021), "The Depth of Pyaar" (2019), and "Actor's Life" (2016).

www.imdb.com/name/nm3885547

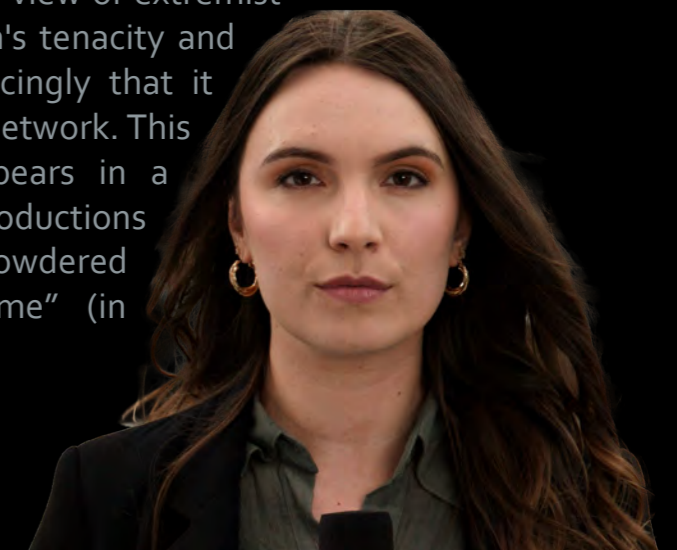


KELSEA PAUL

as AIDYN GADLING

In her role as news reporter Aidyn Gadling, it is Kelsea Paul's job to confront the controversial world view of extremist John Campbell. Kelsea portrays Aidyn's tenacity and journalistic professionalism so convincingly that it may land her a job with a local news network. This Lewis Baumander alumnus also appears in a number of other recent film productions including "The Life Coach" (2024), "Powdered Ink" (in production) and "Our Home" (in production).

www.imdb.com/name/nm15302618



A CONVERSATION WITH CREATOR

ALEKS SPURMANIS

What inspired you to make this film?

The original inspiration came from an animated short called "The Hangman" that I saw in high school. It is an 11 minute animation that Les Goldman and Paul Julian created in 1964. It is based on a poem that Maurice Ogden wrote in 1951.

What is the Hangman about?

The plot concerns an enigmatic hangman who enters a small town and murders its citizens one by one until only the narrator is left. When the hangman comes for him, he protests that he did nothing wrong. The hangman replies that he did nothing to help the others and now there is no one left to defend him.

How is the story relevant now?

Ogden wrote his poem as a commentary on the evil committed against American citizens during the McCarthy era in the 1940s. We are clearly facing similar authoritarian impulses in North America today.

How is Eshana's Trial different?

I wanted to provide audiences with a more hopeful story, so I tried to imagine what kind of hero would be able to stand up to the Hangman. It had to be someone who had every reason to fear him but able to act in spite of that fear. She would also have to be willing to act without knowing what the outcome would be.

Why is your protagonist an Indian woman?

Eshana's character was inspired by the real life stories of several remarkable women whose acts of kindness and resilience inspired me. One of them happens to be of East Indian ancestry.

Are Eshana and Latif a Muslim couple?

They are an interfaith couple in fact. While this is a nuance that I intend to explore more fully in the feature length version of the film, Eshana was raised in the Christian faith.

What is the film's connection to Islamophobia?

I was heartbroken when I learned about the hate-motivated murder of the Afzal family right here on Canadian soil in 2021. It is not who we are as Ontarians. Rather focusing on their killer's malicious behavior however, I wanted Eshana's Trial to reflect the suffering of the living victims and the incredible amount of resilience that their emotional healing requires.

Why not cast a disabled actress as Eshana?

I tried; but as a first-time indie producer on a limited budget, it proved to be surprisingly difficult to find an actress whose features and disability align with the original character description. I am planning to devote more time and resources into our talent search for the feature length adaptation.

BEHIND THE SCENES

BEHIND THE SCENES



Photos by Joyce Jiang, Andrea Krepelka, and Nellie Jalalzadeh

click [HERE](#) for BTS video

PRODUCTION



Director **Idowu Okeniyi** and DOP **Piotr Skowronski** developed the ambitious shotlist that allowed us to attain the high quality of cinematography that we achieved in this production. Given the unenviable task of keeping our cast and crew on a very demanding shooting schedule, Assistant Director **Babatunde Agunloye** still found time to deflect on-set tension with some timely humor.

When the first Assistant Director that we hired left the project mere weeks before principal photography, co-producer **Sarah Kwaji** used her industry connections to quickly find us a trusted and capable replacement in the form of **Babatunde Agunloye**.



Inspired by the iconic villain that Maurice Ogden penned in 1951, this film was originally titled **The Hangman**. As we approached the film's release date however, we discovered no less than 18 previous releases with the same title. While we renamed our production to **Eshana's Trial** as a way to differentiate it, we also feel that the new title better reflects our film's aspirational messaging.

CHALLENGES

Some supporting crew members chose to back out participating in our production at the last moment. While co-producer **Sarah Kwaji** helped us recruit other talent, Executive Producer **Aleks Spurmanis** and his wife, Head Hairstylist **Dominique Spurmanis**, were forced to backfill several supporting roles. Fighting exhaustion, they succeeded in keeping our production schedule on track.



Due to budget constraints, **Brittany Perera**, **Tom Pearson** and **Steve Kasan** all performed their own stunts. While Steve is a trained and seasoned stunt actor, both Tom and Brittany needed to learn some challenging new skills with the help of our knowledgeable stunt coordinator Paul Stafford.

EDM artist **Jessa Le Carre** (DJ Jessa) fell in love with the concept of our film and wanted to be part of our production even though we didn't have the budget to fly her in from her home in Washington DC. Having arranged her own lodging and transport, our intrepid superfan arrived on-set prepared to play not just one but two background roles in our film!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Financing for this project was made possible with the support of SAI MOHAMMED and RICARDO PHILIP of RCA. "All involved with RCA are able to create intergenerational wealth, peace of mind, and do what they love."

The producers would like to thank the following people for their invaluable support and encouragement.

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META BAZE (Latvian Center)
CAZI MEHEK (Inspired Image)
DANNY BUI (Origin Films)
MARIA THORBURN
ALBERTS VITOLS
BĂNG THỊ BẾ
PUJITA VERMA

IN LOVING MEMORY

MICHAEL PINSONNEAULT (1954 - 2023)

Thankyou for teaching me how to find hope in the darkness.



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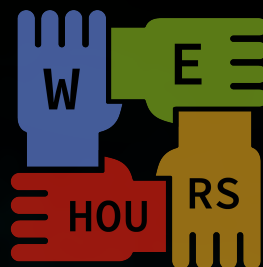
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PRODUCTIONS