

Cultural Diversity in America - A Celebration

Ms Vinanti Sarkar* reports from New York: "MISTAKEN IDENTITY" has won Golden Lion award for best documentary at George Lindsey UNA Film Festival, Florence, AL. USA.

"Winning first prize with the Golden Lion Award is awesome, young Amanda (the late) would have cheerfully said. Just the name of the award "Golden Lion" pays tribute to the Sikhs. We are most grateful to the 6th annual George Lindsey UNA Film Festival for recognizing "*Mistaken Identity*" production with this unique honor of being listed for the first place Documentary award. Thank you."

Three months ago, Producer & Director Vinanti Sarkar® presented the film in the George Lindsey/UNA Film Festival in Florence, North Alabama, a remote southern State festival. She wondered whether the TV documentary, projecting the charismatic personality of 22-year-old Amanda Gesine, and produced exclusively for mainstream America's "family and youth genre," would be accepted in small town America?

If this remotely isolated part of America accepted "Mistaken Identity" - which the Golden Lion Award proves it did - then the door is open to take the TV documentary into mainstream. The folks in Florence recognized Amanda's concerns of her youth generation and that the film stands for a fine TV example of "cultural diversity in America." More specifically, this snug, little town appreciated her discovery of Sikh Americans after 9/11.

At the festival, Dr. George S. Lindsey, the cofounder, congratulated the winners who rose from a field of 111 submissions produced in 2001-2002, across the United States and several foreign countries

"It is absolutely remarkable how professional the films are that have been entered in this festival. It is also amazing how much talent there is among the young filmmakers of today. It is awesome," said Lindsey, who is an Alabama Stage and Screen Hall of Fame member.

"Mistaken Identity" was entered in the name of Amanda Gesine who conceived the idea and worked on the film for nine months, as the host/narrator and investigative journalist, working on R & D on the Internet from day one. As the months went by, she grew more interested and spoke often about producing a TV series demanding more understanding and tolerance for the different ethnic groups, which make up America's "global" population, with focus on the Sikhs.

The production crew consisted of international producers from Taiwan, Pakistan, China and the U.K. The director Vinanti Sarkar is a woman filmmaker from India (President of WLWD 2000, Inc. a boutique digital TV company in New York City). The 4-time Emmy award winning editor, Philip Marshall whose ancestry hailed from Ireland; while Director of Photography, Marek Majowics from Poland, second cameraman Masbaul Talukder from Bangladesh. **The "*kirtan*" music score and songs are sung by the highly acclaimed singer Dya Singh and his international group of musicians from Australia.**

This film “celebrating cultural diversity in America”, spotlighting the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and victimization of Sikh Americans who were mistaken for Arab terrorists, because of their beards and turbans, worn for religious reasons. The story is told through the eyes of 22-year-old “white” final year student from Georgetown University, Williams College, Washington, D.C.

For location shooting, Amanda flew over weekends and holidays and lived with her parents in Greenwich, Connecticut. After completing the documentary, she had a tragic accident on 14 June 2002 and the film is a tribute to her loving memory, making it her inspiring legacy to the world.

The George Lindsey/UNA Film Festival in Florence, North Alabama was the brain child of Actor/comedian George Lindsey, after achieving success on Broadway and in Hollywood. The famed actor’s repertoire includes: “The Andy Griffith Show, “Mayberry R.F.D.”, “Hee Haw” and numerous other serials, such as “Gunsmoke,” “Alfred Hitchcock Presents” and “M.A.S.H.”.

Lindsey is a true example of “giving back”, when he returned to his home state and his alma mater - the University of North Alabama. His dream was to “give back a film & TV legacy,” which will inspire future generations of young actors, filmmakers, students and professors of film, television, theatre and new media technology, to showcase their talents and work.

