

Samurai

India / USA

Dev BENEAL



Genre: **Noir Thriller**
Format: **35mm**
Estimated Running Time: **90 min.**

Budget:
US\$ 4,500,000 (HK\$ 35,100,000)
Funds Secured:
US\$ 3,375,000 (HK\$ 26,325,000)

Producer:
Dev BENEAL

Writing Credit:
Dev BENEAL

Production Company:
August Entertainment

HAF Goals:
Funds, Sales agents

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INTRODUCTION

A lonely assassin who has never been caught finds himself infatuated with a Bollywood diva, only to realize that she is his next assignment. His obsession with the starlet forces him to question his samurai code of honor and everything that he stands for. This is *Samurai*, director Dev BENEAL's, urban thriller set in Bombay that plays out as a chess game between an elusive hit man, the glittering world of show business, the shadowy underworld and the law. An homage to Jean Pierre MELVILLE's crime classic, *Le Samourai*.

SYNOPSIS

The cold and ruthless killings of several Bollywood studio heads has Jeff DACOSTA written all over them but the Chief of Police is frustrated. DACOSTA is an expert hitman who has never been arrested because he's so hard to catch and because his alibis are always rock solid. He's also something of a freak with his obsession with fashion, his bespoke suits hand tailored in Hong Kong, his love of weapons and his elegant lifestyle.

But unlike his earlier assassinations, DACOSTA has left a clue this time and it's eating at the Chief. Why did Jeff let the superstar actress see him? And why didn't she identify him in the line-up? It is six days until the Chief retires and he is determined to arrest DACOSTA at all costs, and so a cat and mouse game ensues. The noose is tightening around DACOSTA, but the hitman is hard to catch and hard to kill because he follows the rigorous code of the samurai: "One who is a samurai must, before all things, keep constantly in mind, by day and by night, the fact that he has to die. That is his chief business."

Someone will betray DACOSTA, but who? The underworld Don who hired him? The film mogul he is stalking? The streetwalkers who provide him with his alibis? The Bollywood diva who witnessed his crime? Because DACOSTA has uncovered a secret, one that unnerves the Don who hired him so much that he puts out a contract on DACOSTA. With both the police and the underworld gunning for him, DACOSTA has nowhere to go.

As the game reaches checkmate, and the story reaches its climax, both the hunter and the hunted know, "There is no solitude greater than a samurai's, except perhaps that of a tiger in the jungle."

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My dream was to make films. I left school, ran away from home and came to Bombay, the birthplace of almost a thousand films each year. There I knew no one, so I decided I'd pursue my other dream: to learn French. I joined the Alliance Française and became a member of its Ciné Club. It was there that I

saw Jean Pierre MELVILLE's *Le Samourai* and it was love at first sight, a love that became an obsession over the years. Why? I wasn't a hitman or a samurai. Maybe it was the solitary figure lost in the enormous city that haunted me, or the film's ambiguous morality.

And then there was Bollywood. The mother of all film businesses, joined like a Siamese twin to the underworld. It was a world I saw up close as I began making my own films. My friends getting shot at, guns jamming, bullets exploding, directors clambering out of bathroom windows, hanging from sewer pipes, hiding in strip malls in Los Angeles. It was funny and hair-raising at the same time. Yet the lure of the films was too strong to keep my buddies away. They kept coming back to Bombay for more. And the underworld kept wanting more from them.

And then it hit me. Here were the two worlds collapsing into one another. Here was the story waiting to be told. MELVILLE's hitman was reborn in Bombay as Jeff DACOSTA or Jeff from the coast - a smooth operator who haunts Bollywood. He is a killer who lives by a code and who is being hunted by the Chief of Police. Living in the intersection of the roller coaster world of Bollywood films, the underworld and the unstoppable city by the sea - Bombay - the two men find they share a similar moral universe. What separates them is ultimately a fine line between reason and madness. This finally is the noir story that had to be told; the Bombay noir I had to make.

DIRECTOR

Dev BENEAL's first feature, *English, August*, is acknowledged as a landmark in contemporary Indian cinema, inspiring a new generation of independent Indian filmmaking. His second feature, *Split Wide Open*, chronicled the water wars in Bombay and premiered at the Venice International Film Festival. Between them, the two films have won seven international awards and were the first Indian films to be distributed to major theatrical success by 20th Century Fox. His third feature, *Road, Movie* was officially selected for L'Atelier de Cannes in 2006, was completed in 2009 and subsequently premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. It was a huge hit at several international film festivals where it played

to sold-out crowds. It will open the Generation 14 plus competition section at the 60th edition of Berlinale, the Berlin International Film Festival 2010.

PRODUCER

See above.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Passionate about entertaining the world with original stories and characters, August Entertainment's inaugural production, *Road, Movie*, was officially selected for L'Atelier de Cannes in 2006. The film was completed in 2009 and premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival that same year. It was an official selection of the Tokyo International Film Festival and of the 1st Doha Tribeca Film Festival. It will open the Generation 14 plus competition section at the 60th edition of Berlinale, the Berlin International Film Festival 2010. Intent on discovering new voices and new talent, August Entertainment produces short feature films by first-time filmmakers for global distribution through its maverick program, 24x7 Making Films™