

# MEN IN BLUE

A KINOSTREET PRODUCTION  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
STARRING ANTONY THASAN JESUTHASAN MANOJ CHANDRA MANOJ PILLAI  
CO-STARRING AYYAPPA KONIETI ADIN ANTONY ABID KHAN SHAIY YENANTU RAJESH YAKOLA ROHITH MENON BHANU GOPAL GILL KARNOVSKY TERENCE FLOWERS ROBERT KEEZEE TAKATSUKI  
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY SACHIN DHEERAJ PRODUCED BY JANANI VIJAYANATHAN SACHIN DHEERAJ CO-PRODUCERS MARY ELIZABETH ESQUIBEL NICOLE CHI LINE PRODUCERS MAGGIE BAILEY ARTURO JIMENEZ EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ANKUR SINGLA PRAKASH MOHANDAS SHRAYYA MUDIGONDA ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS RANJANA VENKATARAMAN UTSAV CHADHA  
PRODUCTION COORDINATORS JESSICA AYALA SRUA REDDY PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS AYDIN HALETTIRAS JUAN MARCO CALAZA KAVYA KALOR DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SEBASTIAN VALDIVIESO JAUREGUI FIRST ASSISTANT CAMERA JACOB BARAKAS CECE WELCHOR JOE MARKS TAN NGICHA SECOND ASSISTANT CAMERA JOSEPH HOGINS ZIMING XIE MARLON RUBIO SMITH BRADEN CARY JOSHUA PARADES ANA URBANT PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS JAVIER DOMINGUEZ ART DIRECTOR BROOKLYN DAVIS SET DRESSES ANDIE MARTINEZ CLAUDE RAZZA CAMILLE MORALES TERESA QUERRERO MADU GARCIA RATHER SARATHI BEST BOY JOSE RODRIGUEZ COSTUME DESIGNER ANNA ZEA ON SET HAIR STYLERS MIA KING PANJALA MARLIN JULIA BENNETT EMILY SHAPIRO PRODUCTION SOUND MIXERS EVAN SHERER ANDREW NEYLON HANNAH MARTINEZ LIN KYLE BOOM OPERATORS CHRIS GALLMEIER XIMENA CHAVEZ JESSICA LIENG GAFFERS ALEX LE CARLOS ESTRADA SKYLER FROST DERRICK DIXON KEY GRIP CORY MASON GRIPS LAUREN FERRO KATIE CHUNG ALESSANDRO LUNGI OMAR MARGHOULIN ANYA SWANSON FUND DRYDEN EVAN SCHWENEN BOBBIAS RIFE REBECCA HODNEY MAHESH KOTHA ALEXIS COPELAND JASON SAENGER LANE MANTZEV SCRIPT SUPERVISORS FUMIYA MIYAKAWA HANG LUONG HOUEIN SONNY KWON EDITED BY SACHIN DHEERAJ FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTORS KATHRYN VAN DIJEN VERONICA MAGIEL SECOND ASSISTANT DIRECTORS CARLY RAMOS ANN CHEN BTS PHOTOGRAPHER PRIYA THARMASELLAM SFX AND MAKEUP LIN KYLE SAFETY CONSULTANT JEFF SCHWAN ORIGINAL MUSIC NICOLAS GUERRERO SOUND STUDIO AURAL LAB SOUND POST BANGALORE SOUND DESIGN SHREYANK NANIAPPA SOUND EDITOR SURESH BAGALI Foley ARTIST SHARATH ARYA Foley RECORDIST AMBARESH CHABUKASAR Foley ASSISTANCE ANURAG CHABUKASAR SOUND MIXER MORGAN HONAKER COLORIST MAHAK GUPTA COLOR ASSISTANT AARYAMAN KUTTY VFX ARTIST SHANKAR SHARMA PICTURE FINISHING BRIDGE POSTWORKS THESIS COMMITTEE SUPERVISORS ANNE LEWIS DON HOWARD LALITHA GOPALAN CONCEPT ART KILLIAN GLENN STORYBOARDS BIBIN CJ

KINOSTREET

The University of Texas at Austin  
Radio-Television-Film  
Moody College of Communication



## **SYNOPSIS**

Inspired by actual events, **MEN IN BLUE** explores the effects of human trafficking and labor exploitation in the United States. Resistance brews among the Indian immigrants who were stripped of their dignity when a reputed shipyard in Texas conscripted them as guest workers to repair the oil rigs and ships damaged after Hurricane Katrina.

**RUNTIME** 35'

**COMPLETION DATE** November 2022

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN** USA

**SHOOTING FORMAT** Digital

**SCREENING FORMAT** DCP

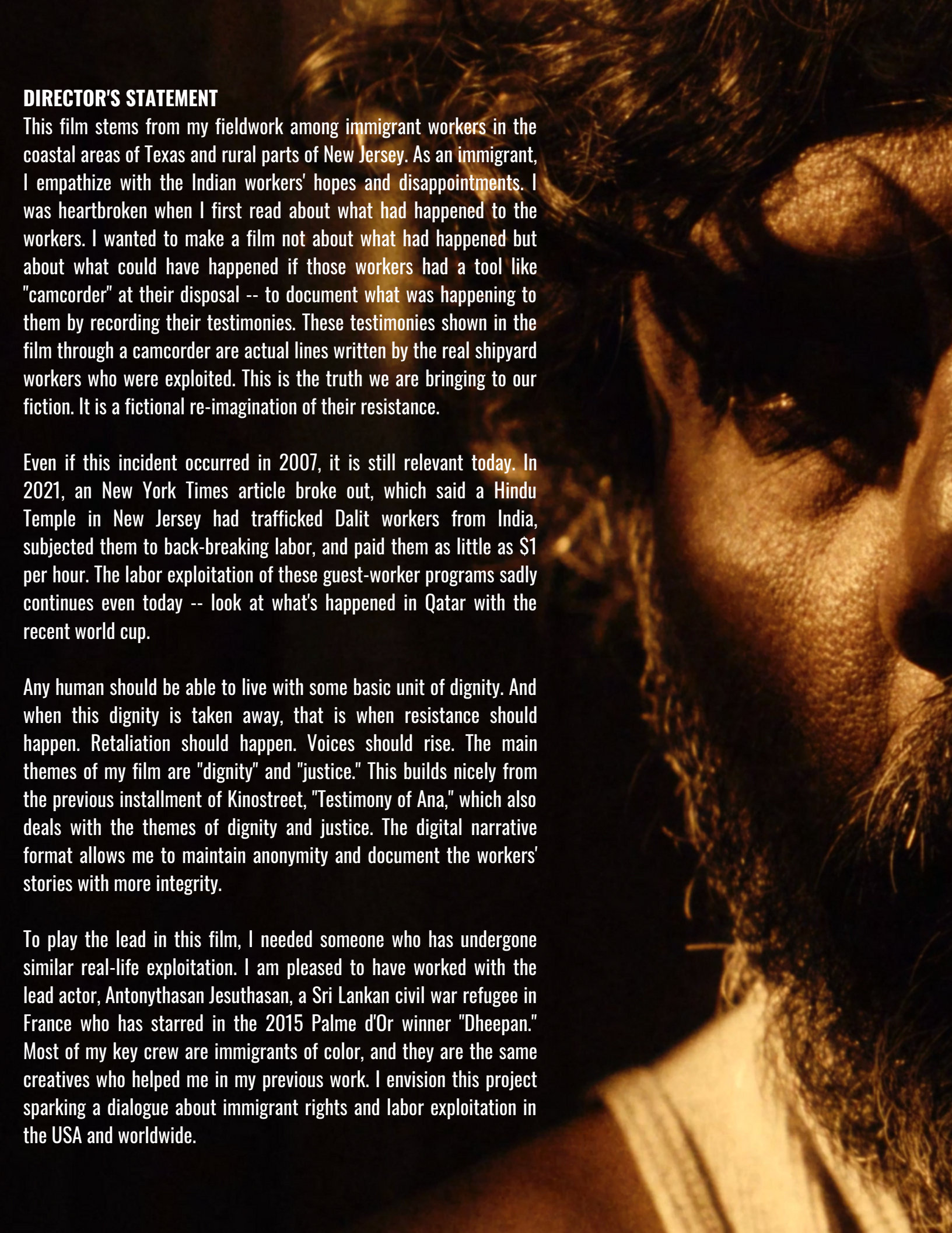
**ASPECT RATIO** 2.39:1

**SOUND** 5.1

**LANGUAGES** Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Hindi, English







## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

This film stems from my fieldwork among immigrant workers in the coastal areas of Texas and rural parts of New Jersey. As an immigrant, I empathize with the Indian workers' hopes and disappointments. I was heartbroken when I first read about what had happened to the workers. I wanted to make a film not about what had happened but about what could have happened if those workers had a tool like "camcorder" at their disposal -- to document what was happening to them by recording their testimonies. These testimonies shown in the film through a camcorder are actual lines written by the real shipyard workers who were exploited. This is the truth we are bringing to our fiction. It is a fictional re-imagination of their resistance.

Even if this incident occurred in 2007, it is still relevant today. In 2021, a New York Times article broke out, which said a Hindu Temple in New Jersey had trafficked Dalit workers from India, subjected them to back-breaking labor, and paid them as little as \$1 per hour. The labor exploitation of these guest-worker programs sadly continues even today -- look at what's happened in Qatar with the recent world cup.

Any human should be able to live with some basic unit of dignity. And when this dignity is taken away, that is when resistance should happen. Retaliation should happen. Voices should rise. The main themes of my film are "dignity" and "justice." This builds nicely from the previous installment of Kinostreet, "Testimony of Ana," which also deals with the themes of dignity and justice. The digital narrative format allows me to maintain anonymity and document the workers' stories with more integrity.

To play the lead in this film, I needed someone who has undergone similar real-life exploitation. I am pleased to have worked with the lead actor, Antonyhasan Jesuthasan, a Sri Lankan civil war refugee in France who has starred in the 2015 Palme d'Or winner "Dheepan." Most of my key crew are immigrants of color, and they are the same creatives who helped me in my previous work. I envision this project sparking a dialogue about immigrant rights and labor exploitation in the USA and worldwide.





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## **DIRECTOR BIO**

Sachin is an award-winning filmmaker who studied at The University of Texas at Austin as part of their MFA program in Film & Media Production. His work has been screened at prestigious film festivals such as Hot Docs, Raindance, EnergaCAMERIMAGE, and Krakow. He strives to tell stories that demand an urgent conversation and seeks to engage with people, places, and communities that are slowly disappearing. He aims to affirm their existence through cinema by preserving their lives and memories.

His pre-thesis film, TESTIMONY OF ANA, won the National Film Award (Swarna Kamal/Golden Lotus) for the Best Non-Feature Film issued by the Government of India and won the Best Short Documentary Award at the Oscar-qualifying 13th International Documentary & Short Film Festival of Kerala. The film also secured distribution on reputed platforms such as MUBI and Kinoscope.

He is a recipient of the prestigious President's Award for Global Learning at UT Austin and the Austin Film Society Grant in 2020.

Sachin won the competitive Panavision New Filmmaker Program Equipment Grant and the UT Graduate Continuing Fellowship (an award given to support the final year of an outstanding graduate student) to implement his MFA thesis project, MEN IN BLUE.





**WINNER**  
**28th Annual DGA Student Film Awards, GRAND PRIZE,**  
**West Coast Asian American Category**

**DIRECTOR, WRITER, EDITOR** Sachin Dheeraj  
**PRODUCERS** Sachin Dheeraj, Janani Vijayanathan  
**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Sebastian Valdivieso  
**ORIGINAL MUSIC** Nicolas Guerrero  
**PRODUCTION DESIGN** Javier Bonafont  
**SOUND DESIGN** Shreyank Nanjappa  
**SOUND MIXING** Morgan Honaker  
**COLORIST** Mahak Gupta  
**COSTUME DESIGN** Jana Zek  
**LINE PRODUCERS** Arturo Jimenez, Maggie Bailey  
**GRADING STUDIO** Bridge PostWorks  
**THESIS SUPERVISORS** Anne Lewis, Lalitha Gopalan, Don Howard  
**FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTORS** Kathryn Van Buren, Veronica Maciel  
**SCRIPT SUPERVISORS** Fumiya Hayakawa, Hang Nguyen, Sonny Kwon

**FEATURING** Antonyhasan Jesuthasan,  
Manoj Chandra, Manoj Pillai



SWP

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