

JORAM
Digital Press Kit

Joram

genre SURVIVAL THRILLER | language HINDI | duration 138 mins | country INDIA
cast Manoj Bajpayee | Mohd. Zeeshan Ayyub | Smita Tambe | Megha Mathur | Tannishtha Chatterjee (Special Appearance)
Rajshree Deshpande (Guest Appearance)
director & writer DEVASHISH MAKHIJA | producers SHARIQ PATEL, ASHIMA AVASTHI CHAUDHURI, ANUPAMA BOSE, DEVASHISH MAKHIJA | production company ZEE STUDIOS, MAKHIJAFILM
director of photography PIYUSH PUTY | editor ABHRO BANERJEE
sound design DHIMAN KARMAKAR | background score MANGESH DHAKDE
colourist SIDDHARTH MEER | associate producer DEEPAK SIMHAL
creative producer VIRAJ SELOT

Logline:

Confronted by the sudden brutal murder of his wife, his own history of violence and a System that wants him crushed at any cost, immigrant labourer Bala (aka Dasru) flees with his infant daughter Joram from a metropolis to his erstwhile home in distant forests, to negotiate their survival with a bloody past that he had mistakenly thought was left behind for good.

Short Synopsis:

Dasru and Vaano lead an anonymous life as migrant labourers on a Mumbai construction site with their infant daughter Joram.

Karma, a tribal leader from Jharkhand, campaigning for elections, stumbles upon Dasru, revealing that he is not who everyone thinks he may be. Karma, who lost her only son to rebel-militants over a land deal he was trying to negotiate, finds herself swinging wildly between a bereaved mother's grief and a haunting, irrepressible vendetta.

A brutal turn of events compels Dasru to cradle Joram into a sling, and flee, for the distant forests he had once run away from... for answers, and survival.

Soon he has Mumbai cop Ratnakar in hot pursuit. Torn between duty, systemic victimisation and the gradual realisation of how he, like Dasru, is probably just a helpless outsider to the inner machinations of 'development at any cost', Ratnakar finds himself shifting from pursuer to witness in a brutal endgame that seems like it may grind Dasru to dust, like it must have thousands before him.

But a man desperate for his little girl's survival can go to unimaginable lengths.

Long Synopsis:

Dasru (and Vaano (had migrated to Mumbai a few years back from Jhinpidi. They now lead an anonymous existence as migrant labourers on a construction site, their lives seemingly as inconsequential as their little tribal village in the forest.

They have an infant daughter, Joram.

Suddenly, one day, the site has a visitor from their native state Jharkhand - Phulo Karma, a local MLA who has travelled across the breadth of the country (to Maharashtra) to distribute goodies amongst 'her people' living away from their original homes in lieu of the upcoming elections. Watchful, alert, sharp, Karma is a grieving mother who lost her only son to violence over a land deal he was trying to negotiate. She has by her side an able aide from back home, the young tribal woman Bidesi.

Both these women together try to unravel Dasru's identity, revealing that he is not who everyone thinks he may be. Their arrival triggers a string of hellish events.

Vaano is brutally killed.

Dasru escapes a near attempt on his life.

The news channels blare out that he, an ex-militant, is responsible for his wife's murder. Dasru, unsure of who to trust, and how to explain himself, takes his little girl and makes a run back to the forest, to the life he had run away from, for answers, and some support from those he knew there, hoping in this way he may be able to ensure Joram will survive. He knows his past has somehow caught up with him, but he has no clue who it might be, or why.

But a murder committed by an ex-miltant can become a festering volcano for the system. Soon he has Mumbai cop Ratnakar in hot pursuit. Torn between duty, systemic victimisation due to his own lower caste status and absolute ignorance about the world he is getting into, Ratnakar gets sucked into a gradual realisation of how he,like Dasru, is probably too just a helpless outsider, at the bottom of the pyramid of power.

The lives of Dasru, Phulo Karma, Ratnakar and eventually, Joram, collide in a climax of a chilling game of deceit, manipulation and power. Laying bare our collective abandonment of the marginalised, and the ruptured legacy of 'development' that we are bequeathing thoughtlessly to our children.

Jhinpidi is no more that idyllic village from collective memory. It is now a huge iron-ore mine. The people Dasru knew are either dead or untraceable or a starkly different version of themselves. Phulo Karma is a part of his past that he had never really fully embraced or even full understood. But in fact had run away from.

Ratnakar finds himself shifting from pursuer to witness of a brutal endgame of vengeance that seems like it will surely take Dasru down. Like it must have hundreds before him.

Does Dasru eventually make it? Will Joram grow up into womanhood? Will there be any forests or even a planet left to shelter those who dwell in it?

Joram is a journey that explores these questions. But there are some questions that may remain unanswered. Or maybe, could end in hope.

Director's Statement

A *survival-thriller* about a displaced indigenous man - Dasru - on the run with his three month old baby girl **JORAM**, this film strives to remain an insider's perspective at its epicentre, even as it ripples outwards to show us (the relatively privileged city eyes) what the complex realities thrown up by the conflict around 'development' truly look and feel like. How desperate such a conflict can make someone. What its outcome means not only for the directly displaced, but even for each and every last one of us.

On the other side from the disenfranchised, battered, bereaved father Dasru is - Karma - a widowed, bereaved mother who has lost much more. One tragedy makes Dasru fearful, fatalistic and hunted. Another makes Karma a raging, bloodthirsty hunter. Two different beasts spewed from the same fractured political machinery. And now on a frightening collision course with one another.

'Justice' is a principle that all people must *receive* what they *deserve*. But in a top-down hierarchical social construct not only does the apex decide what the bottom of the pyramid deserves (and receives), it is this apex that decides who ends up at the bottom in the first place.

'JORAM' tries to question this.

'JORAM' asks if justice is enough?

It asks if the getting of justice the way society understands it itself is a flawed idea?

If its misuse is invisibly factored into its very DNA?

In that case what chance does a marginalised entity stand when asked to make way for a nation's good? For Development?

In their fight to reclaim what is snatched away, simply surviving becomes the hardest thing to do. In fleeing the oppressive, untiring, all-encompassing juggernaut of the powers-to-be, could simply *surviving* be a political act?

The powers that be, fuelled by Karma, try every tool at their disposal to *erase* Dasru. Until he finds something to fight for - his baby girl. Could she be his only legacy? Could she be the last remnants of a fading tribal identity? Could she be Redemption? Could she be Empowerment? Could she be a new beginning? Or finally the closure his desperate, endless run needs?

We have attempted to abstract these questions through images and intimate episodes, focusing instead on the few characters that drive the story, allowing the anecdotal to fall away, and letting the emotional take centre-stage, in the hope that JORAM's concerns will resonate universally with an entire species that in its greed continues to fail its own.

In closing, 'JORAM' echoes the ancient wisdom of the indigenous peoples... "*When the blood in your veins returns to the sea, and the earth in your bones returns to the ground, perhaps then you will remember that this land does not belong to you. It is you who belong to this land.*"

Director's Biography



Devashish Makhija has written and directed the multiple award winning short films 'Taandav', 'El'ayichi', 'Agli Baar' (And then they came for me), 'Rahim Murge pe mat ro' (Don't cry for Rahim LeCock), 'Absent', 'Happy', 'Cycle' and 'Cheepatakadumpa'; and the full length feature films 'Ajji' (Granny), 'Bhonsle' and the forthcoming 'Joram'.

His short and feature films have competed and won awards at the international film festivals of Rotterdam, Gothenberg, Beaune, Black Nights, Busan, Glasgow, Tampere, MOMA, APSA, Barcelona, Singapore, amongst many others.

He has also had a solo art show 'Occupying Silence'; written the bestselling children's books 'When Ali became Bajrangbali', 'Why Paploo was perplexed', 'We are the dancing forest', a Harper-Collins collection of short stories 'Forgetting', the Neev Literature Award winning novel 'Oonga', and the forthcoming book of poems 'Bewilderness'.

'By/Two', a story by him from the Edgar Award nominated 'Mumbai Noir', has been adapted into a feature length film to be directed by him next year.

Filmography

Bhonsle (Feature) -

Director Ajji (Feature) -

Director Taandav (Short)

- Director

Cycle (Short) - Director, Producer

Cheepatakadumpa (Short) - Director,

Producer Agli Baar (Short) - Director

El'ayichi (Short) - Director