

THE BALLAD OF SANDEEP

You can source him out, but you can't size him down.

THE FEATURE FILM PITCH PACKET



“Man’s body is so small,
his strength of suffering so immense.”
-Rabindranath Tagore

INTRODUCTION

The Ballad of Sandeep is a feature-length comedy based on an award-winning short film released in 2011. Inspiration for the short came from two primary sources: Deep Roy’s desire to show the world his true acting face, and the comedy inherent in the corporate phenomenon of outsourcing. Shot at breakneck speed on a shoestring budget, the short was a labor of love, modest in means but stately in vision. Its absurd take on office civilization, coupled with a dynamic performance by Deep Roy (*Star Trek*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Eastbound and Down*), earned the film over 35 festival appearances and 16 awards—enough to make us look twice at the little film that could.

FEATURE FILM DEVELOPMENT

Encouraged by the short film’s long and celebrated festival run, we adapted the original story into a feature-length screenplay. Picking up where Mike Judge’s *Office Space* left off, the feature carries the searing torch of satire into the 21st century, critiquing the corporate world with an insider’s eye and a big-hearted empathy for its nameless drones. This time around the story doesn’t rely solely on outsourcing to get across its themes, but also explores the immigrant pursuit of the American dream in a humorous and original way. Deep Roy is excited to reprise his role as Sandeep Majumdar, and we’re excited to bring his story to a wider audience. We have the script, we have the schedule, and we have the budget. The only thing we don’t have...is *you*.



THE BALLAD OF SANDEEP

You can source him out, but you can't size him down



Starring
Deep Roy, Gil Damon, David Amadio,
Steve Kuzmick, Brian Gillin & Bud Damon

Written by THE MINOR PROPHETS • Produced & Directed by DEREK FREY
Music by MIKE HIGHAM & ANDY RICHARDS
www.lazerfilm.com • www.minorprophets.com

LOGLINE

After his job is outsourced to Bangalore, ambitious programmer Sandeep Majumdar sets up a remote access in his apartment, tricking his former company into believing that he is really working from India.

SYNOPSIS

Indian-born Sandeep Majumdar works in the programming department of SWC, a software company in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. As he blindly runs code for an application called the Big Initiative, Sandeep dreams about getting promoted, buying a house, and winning the heart of his office crush. Reality strikes when his job is outsourced to Bangalore, and the fifty-four-year-old widower finds himself unemployed for the first time in eighteen years.

A barren job market forces Sandeep to take work as a snack jockey, a wrestler, and a birthday clown's sidekick. Humiliation breeds epiphany, however, and in a flash of unlikely inspiration Sandeep calls on bosom buddy and ex-colleague Henry Osgood to help him get his old job back. They secretly install a remote access in Sandeep's apartment, tricking his former company into believing that he is really working from India.

Into this masquerade dances a fair-skinned Delivery Man from the local Indian restaurant. A humble mystic and faithful student of the Vedas, he challenges Sandeep's palate as well as his mind, questioning the nature of his work and the role it has played in shaping his identity. Sandeep is touched, but continues to spend eighteen hours a day coding the Big "I," a performance so incredible it raises the brow of SWC auditor Guy Strapper. Fearing Strapper will discover their ruse, Henry shuts down Sandeep's remote access, and, on the Delivery Man's suggestion, the three travel to Atlantic City for a much-needed day-trip. There, Sandeep takes a virtual tour of his long-forgotten past as a weaver, culminating in a visionary moment on the roof of Trump's Taj Mahal casino.

His spiritual journey is cut short when Guy Strapper ferrets out the remote access and hauls both Sandeep and Henry into the office of senior director Klive Kettinger. Henry is terminated on the spot, but because of Sandeep's off-the-charts productivity Kettinger decides to rehire him, a move that enrages Strapper. Gandhi and the charkha fade as Sandeep's American dream again takes center stage. He scores a date with his crush and is named Comeback Worker of the Year, an award he will receive at an upcoming ceremony. Everything seems to be gelling for Sandeep, and he couldn't be happier.

Until his dream date goes south, henpecked Henry gets kicked out of the house, and the Delivery Man dies after a freak car accident. Are these merely random events, or the karmic consequence of Sandeep rushing back to work, failing to—in the Delivery Man's words—"Do the needful"? The reeling programmer can't say, but to set things straight he must decide where his allegiance lies: with the Big "I"—the company, or the little "I"—himself. At the SWC awards ceremony, hounded by Guy Strapper and a fleet of kamikaze executives, Sandeep scrambles to find a better place in that moral limbo between America and India: a near distant shore where the pie in the sky and the salt of the earth are but two sides of the same coin.



ACCOLADES FOR THE BALLAD OF SANDEEP SHORT FILM

- BEST FEATURETTE - 2011 Vegas Cinefest.
- BEST DIRECTOR OF A SHORT FILM - Derek Frey - Independent Film Quarterly Festival
- BEST COMEDY SHORT - 2011 Mockfest
- BEST SHORT FILM - 2012 Freestyle Film Exhibition
- BEST WRITING - The Minor Prophets - 2011 Mockfest
- BEST ACTOR - Deep Roy - The Sunset International Film Festival - Los Angeles
- BEST ACTOR - Deep Roy - The 2011 Colorado Film Festival
- BEST COMEDY SHORT - 2011 Jersey Shore Film Festival
- AWARD OF EXCELLENCE - 2012 International Film Festival For Peace, Inspiration & Equality
- AWARD OF EXCELLENCE - 2012 Best Shorts Competition
- AWARD OF EXCELLENCE - 2012 RINCON International Film Festival - Puerto Rico
- AWARD OF MERIT - Lead Actor Deep Roy - 2012 Best Shorts Competition
- AWARD OF MERIT - Accolade Film Festival
- HONORABLE MENTION - 10th annual DIY Film Festival
- BRONZE AWARD WINNER - 2012 Prestige Film Awards
- FINALIST - International Film Festival for Peace, Inspiration & Equality
- SEMI-FINALIST - NEXT TV Film Festival
- VOTED 1 OF THE TOP 3 SHORT FILMS - Silicon Valley Film Festival
- FINALIST - Moondance International Film Festival
- AWARD OF EXCELLENCE - The International Film Festival: Spirituality, Religion & Visionary

OFFICIAL SELECTIONS

- Albuquerque Film Festival
- The Other Venice Film Festival
- Twin Cities Film Festival
- Atlanta Shorts Fest
- Rumschpringe Film Festival
- New York Hell's Kitchen Film Festival
- Lucerne International Film Festival
- The OffShoot Film Festival
- Independent Film Quarterly Film Festival in NYC
- Mockfest Film Fest
- Irvine International Film Festival
- Big Easy International Film & Music Festival
- India International Film Festival - Tampa Bay
- Winter Film Awards - NYC
- New Hope Film Festival
- Big Island Film Festival - Hawaii
- Workers Unite Film Festival
- International Freethought Film Festival
- Costa Rica International Film Festival



DEEP ROY
Actor

Deep is a little person who plays larger-than-life characters on T.V. and the big screen. His roles as an Ewok, Droopy McCool, R2D2, and Yoda in *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* have endeared him to millions of moviegoers throughout the world. He and Simon Pegg are the only holders of a unique science fiction trifecta, namely to have appeared in the Doctor Who, Star Wars, and Star Trek franchises respectively.

Deep Roy made his professional screen acting debut as a character named Kloko in a 1976 episode of *The New Avengers* entitled “Target!” He made his film debut that same year in *The Pink Panther Strikes Again*, in which he played the Italian Assassin. In the Doctor Who serial “The Talons of Weng-Chiang,” he was cast as the “pig-brained” Mr. Sin, a villain with a distinct appetite for homicide. He has played apes in two movies: *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan*, and the Tim Burton remake of *Planet of the Apes* (2001). He has worked for Burton in three other films: *Big Fish* (2003), *Corpse Bride* (2005), and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005), playing all 165 Oompa-Loompas, a role for which he trained extensively in yoga, dance, and minor instrument playing. He has several other film and T.V. acting credits, including roles in *The X-Files*, *Flash Gordon*, *Return to Oz*, Jim Henson’s *The Dark Crystal*, and the fantasy classic *The Neverending Story* (he played Teeny Weeny, the rider of the “racing snail”). He appeared in *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* (2009) as an Egyptian guard, and in both *Star Trek* (2009) and *Star Trek Into Darkness* (2013) as Keenser, Montgomery Scott’s assistant. In one of his more prominent speaking roles, Roy played Aaron, a violent Mumbai-born Mexican criminal, in the second season of the HBO comedy *Eastbound & Down*. Deep also starred as Sandeep Majumdar in the 2012 award-winning short film *The Ballad of Sandeep*.



DEREK FREY
Director/Producer

Derek has a long and successful working relationship with director Tim Burton, running Tim Burton Productions for the past 13 years. Most recently Derek co-produced *Frankenweenie*, which received an Academy Award nomination for Best Animated Picture in 2012. That same year he produced the music video *Here With Me* for The Killers. Derek is currently serving as Executive Producer on *Big Eyes*, starring Christoph Waltz and Amy Adams, slated for a 2014 release.

Derek has worked on over 15 feature films, and acted as Associate Producer on *Alice in Wonderland*, *Dark Shadows*, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*, *Corpse Bride*, and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. His credits also include producer on the documentary *A Conversation with Danny Elfman and Tim Burton*; writer of the Frankenweenie-based short film *Captain Sparky vs. the Flying Saucers*; and editor of the comprehensive and award-winning publication *The Art of Tim Burton*. Derek worked closely with curators from MoMA for the creation of the Tim Burton touring exhibit, which has made record-breaking stops in New York City, Toronto, Melbourne, Paris, Los Angeles, and Seoul.

Derek has directed his own films and music videos, including *The Ballad of Sandeep*, which has appeared in over 35 film festivals and brought home 16 awards, including Best Director at the Independent Film Quarterly Festival, and Best Featurette at the Las Vegas International Cinefest. In 2013 he directed the comedic short *Sky Blue Collar*, which has already been accepted into several film festivals around the world. Derek was awarded Best Director of a Short Film at the 2013 Chicago Comedy Film Festival for his work on *Sky Blue Collar*. He is currently in post-production on the featurette horror *Green Lake*, filmed on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Derek was born in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, and holds a Bachelor of Arts Cum Laude in Communication Studies from West Chester University.



THE MINOR PROPHETS Writers/Actors

The Minor Prophets are a four-man comedy troupe from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Since 2001, they have written, directed, and produced over 35 short films, the best of which have screened at the Trocadero Theater, the Bryn Mawr Film Institute, and New York's Variety Underground. Also practiced in the art of sketch comedy, the troupe has performed seven full-length stage shows (among them *World War Five*, *Altogether Awesome*, and *Fade to Yellow*) at select venues in Philadelphia, New York, and Atlantic City. *The Ballad of Sandeep* marks their third venture with long-time collaborator Derek Frey, and their first with Mr. Deep Roy. They have recently completed work on the script for the feature-length version of *The Ballad of Sandeep*.

"Students in the school of show business."

--Matt Smith, *Philadelphia Metro*

"Other sketch comedy troupes may rely on thinly veiled political commentary, slapstick and general gimmickry. But by combining sketch comedy with prerecorded short films, The Minor Prophets do all they can to flout convention."

--Maggie Serota, *Philadelphia Weekly*

"The funniest thing to come out of Pennsylvania since M. Night Shyamalan. The Minor Prophets are the absolute masters of WTF comedy. They've made about three dozen films over the last decade, and each one is distinguished by a classical approach to writing and structure. They're very serious about making seriously funny films."

--openfilm.com

"Absurdity in motion."

--Mishael Devlin, *The Triangle*



JOSH ROTH Producer

Josh Roth has been working professionally in film since 2000. Immediately following graduation from college, Roth produced the micro-budgeted feature film *Making Revolution*, orchestrating a cast/crew of over 400 people to complete the project.

Roth next collaborated with Derek Connelly and Colin Trevorrow (*Safety Not Guaranteed*, *Jurassic Park IV*) on the independent television pilot *GARY: UNDER CRISIS*, which went on to premiere at the inaugural New York Television Festival in September 2005. The pilot subsequently sold to Touchstone Studios and was widely touted as a landmark independent television success.

Roth then made the calculated decision to work in various departments on numerous sets to better understand producing from every vantage point. Roth's projects have included *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (Steven Spielberg), *Alice In Wonderland* (Tim Burton), *Men In Black 3* (Barry Sonnenfeld), *Oblivion* (Joseph Kosinski), and *Fast & Furious 7* (James Wan). Roth credits his extensive knowledge of film production to lessons learned under the aforementioned directors and producers in collaboration with every major studio.

During this time, Roth also produced myriad projects through his company Fat Dragon Films, including music videos, short films, television pilots, and feature films. As a producer, Roth oversees projects from development through delivery, routinely bringing his projects in on time and either at or under budget. While fiercely protective of both the bottom line and the director's vision, Roth has nurtured numerous vendor relationships, enabling him to consistently deliver films with exceedingly high production values for reasonable rates. Thus far, projects that Roth has worked on have grossed well over a billion dollars at the box office.

The Ballad of Sandeep marks the first collaboration between Fat Dragon Films, Lazer Film, and the Minor Prophets.

MARKETING/FANBASE/TARGET AUDIENCE

Who still believes in the American Dream? Who still believes that hard work and self-sacrifice will eventually pay off in the end? To those Americans just now pulling themselves from the mire of the Great Recession, the American Dream is nothing but an empty promise, a fatuous ideal left over from the post-WWII era. Though degraded in the eyes of our native sons, the Dream continues to captivate an ever-growing number of Indian immigrants, currently the third-largest immigrant group in the U.S. at 1.9 million. It is the journey of one such newcomer, computer programmer Sandeep Majumdar, that is at the heart of the absurdist comic drama *The Ballad of Sandeep*.

During its lauded festival run, the short film distinguished itself from other comedies in its dramatization of the effects of outsourcing on Sandeep and his co-workers. The feature-length version, in addition to exploring the ethical implications of outsourcing, wrangles with a broader and more varied set of themes: spirituality, materialism, human relations in a mechanized world, and the role work plays in defining the self. Ever mindful of its comedic obligations, the *Ballad* tempers these headier concerns with broad-stroke satire, subtle sexual innuendo, and a modest helping of old-fashioned slapstick, inspired in part by lead actor Mr. Deep Roy.

Deep, a 40-year veteran of T.V. and film, brings to the project a well-established fanbase. Ranked by IMDb as India's second-most recognizable actor, Deep attracts followers of Tim Burton, the *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* franchises, and Danny McBride's HBO series *Eastbound and Down*. Science fiction devotees used to seeing Deep in exotic or freakish roles will enjoy watching him take off the mask and walk in the shoes of an ordinary man. Director Derek Frey and writers The Minor Prophets claim loyal fanbases in Philadelphia, Los Angeles, London, and Hawaii—not to mention a legion of Facebook friends from all over the sub-continent.

If Swami Vivekananda were to have a fever dream about Mike Judge's *Office Space*, that dream would be called *The Ballad of Sandeep*. Because so much of the film centers on the Indian immigrant experience and the philosophical tension between East and West, the primary target audience is Indian-Americans, demographically male, middle-class, and college-educated. But that audience must also include the 3.4 million Americans who, according to a Congressional Research Service report, have lost their jobs due to outsourcing since 2003; as well as the scores of men and women across the globe working in the IT field, the unsung heroes of our digital age; and, if they'd be so willing, the rest of the country's immigrant population, the new breed of pursuers ardently revising the old American Dream.

HIGH NOTES

- The short film had a successful run On Demand in the United States via Verizon Fios
- 50,000+ fans of *The Ballad of Sandeep* on Facebook
- Countless opportunities for technology tie-ins/product placement
- Deep Roy, Minor Prophets, and Derek Frey fanbases
- *Star Wars/Star Trek*/Tim Burton fans
- Appeals to the IT crowd, and speaks to the current state of the global workforce
- Appeals to the growing legion of Mind Body Spirit followers across the USA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Ballad of Sandeep Official Website:
www.theballadofsandeep.com

The Ballad of Sandeep on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/theballadofsandeep

The Ballad of Sandeep on Junto Box Films:
www.juntoboxfilms.com/projects/the-ballad-of-sandeep

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