

SPEAK

a short film

About the Film

Speak is a short film highlighting the struggles modern Muslims face when choosing between speaking out and defending their faith and staying quiet for fear of judgment and persecution.

Plot Summary

On the day of her speech for Class President, Natasha's world is rocked by the news of yet another mass shooting at the hands of Muslims. What follows is a day of confrontation and difficult conversations which leads Natasha to her breaking point and to speak out or remain silent.

The Filmmaker

Many Muslims around the world live their daily lives with an ongoing internal battle similar to the one Natasha faces in the film. This is true for first-time writer/director/producer, Shaheed Devji, who spent the majority of his life getting to a point where he was comfortable and confident being an open and proud Muslim person only to have that all turned on its head in recent years.

With continued negative portrayal of the religion of Islam and growing hate towards Muslims and many others who are seen as "different," the idea of being open and proud, and speaking out in favour and defense of Islam became one that came with potential negative consequences.

However, recently Shaheed was inspired by other Muslims, including *Speak* actor Ziyana Vasaya, who have spoken out courageously in defense of a peaceful Islam and this prompted him to finally tell the story outlined in this short film to help shed light on this specific perspective and experience.

Production Details

The majority of the cast and crew of *Speak* worked on the product as volunteers, however, the film had a budget of approximately \$9,000, the majority of which (\$7,000+) was raised through an Indiegogo online crowdfunding campaign. The funds raised were used in part to cover facility rentals, including the rental of Port Moody Secondary School, equipment rental, food for cast and crew, and film permits.

Where to Watch

Speak is currently being submitted to film festivals and will not be available online publicly until it has completed this process. However, there will be opportunities for public viewing in educational venues, including a screening and panel discussion on February 26, 2020 at the Ismaili Centre Vancouver.

For more information, including access to a teaser clip, production still photos, and to schedule interviews and/or coverage, contact Shaheed Devji by emailing speak@fivecedar.com, or by phone at 778-847-7424.

www.speakshortfilm.ca