



Michael Parker's Journal

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 Monday, February 21, 2005

[Oscar Watch: Best Short Live Action Film, Little Terrorist \(India\)](#)

Written and Directed by: Ashvin Kumar

Starring: Julfuqar Ali (Jamal), Sushil Sharma (Bhola), Megnaa Mehtaa (Rani)

Distributed by WahIndia.

William Faulkner once wrote that the art of writing short fiction was next to writing poetry: "...almost every word has got to be almost exactly right."

This same principle can be applied to short film. Think of it as a dance with perfection - every single element of the film must be in rhythm with the other. The story has to be tight. The plot can't wallow or skip a beat. The conflict can't be obscure. And the photography and dialogue, more than any of the other elements, must be the window of meaning, the purveyor of symbolism, and must carry the weight of character development, metaphor, irony, truth, reality, and the soul of humanity.

Not an easy task when you consider you are working with a time-frame of less than twenty minutes.

Ashvin Kumar's short live action film, *Little Terrorist*, is a wonderful story that is as taut, rhythmic, and meaningful as poetry. It's been nominated for the Best Live Action Short Film category at the Academy Awards and it was a pleasure to be able to screen it over the weekend.

Little Terrorist is about Jamal, a Pakistani Muslim boy who sneaks under the barbed-wire fence and into the landmine-riddled Indo-Pak border in order to retrieve an errant ball he and his friends were playing with. When the Indian Guards start shooting at him, Jamal frantically scrambles to safety, not realizing that he ends up on the enemy side of the border. Running away from the guards, he eventually follows an old Hindu schoolteacher (Bhola) into his village.

Blog banner taken from the oil painting "The Departure" (40"x 30") by Michael Parker, 1999.

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Before long, the Indian military begin a door-to-door search for the boy who they've declared a "terrorist."

Bhola hides Jamal from the soldiers until he can guide him across the border and return him home.

Little Terrorist is a story of poignant meaning in our world where divisions between peoples and countries is most visible and tangible. The hope in its message is that beyond the traditions and prejudices between us (Jamal and Bhola), bonds of friendship can be forged.

These lines from the review on the WahIndia website were highly accurate and I couldn't say it any more clearly: "[H]umanity triumphs over prejudice....This symbolic story of hope is a tale of human solidarity conquering all artificial boundaries."

Ashvin Kumar, who has written, produced, directed, and edited the short films *Sam* and *First Day Out*, will take on a project to transform his 48-minute feature, ROAD TO LADAKH into a major motion picture. This is his first Oscar nomination.

For your consideration for the Best Short Live Action Film Oscar: *Little Terrorist* is definitely worthy of it.

View the website for the film [here](#). View the short film online at [WahIndia](#). (There is a small fee.)

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