



A scene from "Rehana Mirza's "Hiding Divya." Photo courtesy of the filmmaker.

Production Report: "Hiding Divya," "Ira & Abby," "Monopoly," "Superheroes," "Turkey Creek"

by Jason Guerrasio (December 7, 2005)

[EDITOR'S NOTE: indieWIRE's monthly production report looks at independent films in various stages of production. If you'd like to tell us about a film in production for future columns, please [contact us](#).]

In the December edition of indieWIRE's production column, Jason Guerrasio takes a closer look at five new films that are in production: Rehana Mirza's "Hiding Divya," Jennifer Westfeldt's "Ira & Abby: A Divorce Comedy," Lee Hang-Pae's "Monopoly," Ed Radtke's "Superheroes" and Leah Mahan's "Turkey Creek."

"Hiding Divya"

Writer-director **Rehana Mirza** tackles the issue of mental illness in her feature debut, which follows three generations of Indian-American women struggling to cope with the illness in their family.

In the film Linny (**Pooja Kumar**) and her rebellious daughter Jia (**Madelaine Massey**) return to Linny's hometown for her uncle's funeral where Linny learns she's entitled to an inheritance. Not able to receive it for two weeks, the two stay at Linny's mother's (**Madhur Jaffrey**) house. Never on good terms with her mother, feelings change when she shows signs of bipolar disorder, causing the women to put their differences aside.

Spending four years talking to psychologists, support groups and families going through the illness, Mirza realized the story wouldn't be centered on

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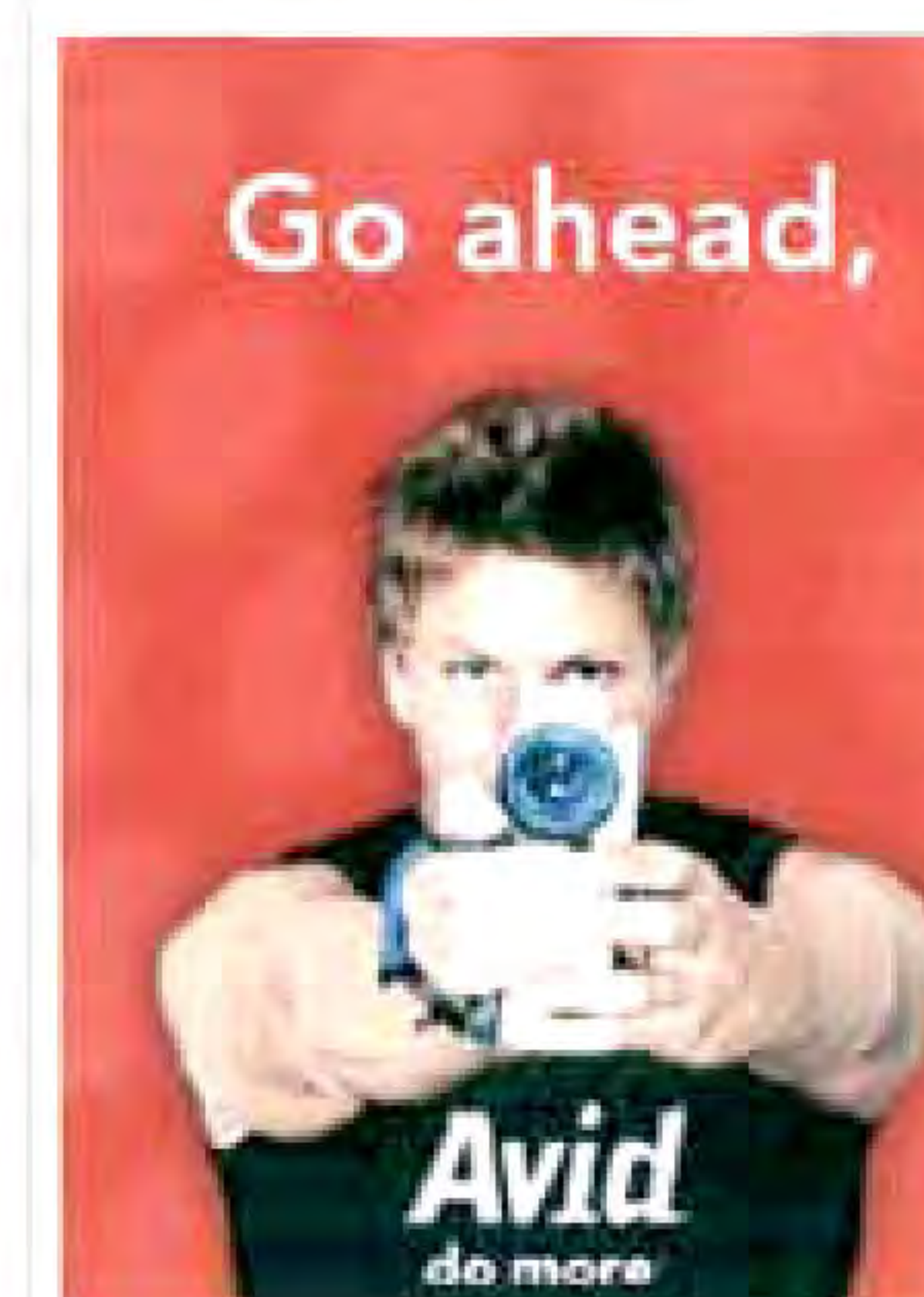
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the illness but the relationships within the family. In preproduction Mirza showed films like "**Pieces of April**," "**Thirteen**" and "**Garden State**," so her actresses would know what she was looking for. "While the script could easily be played for the mental illness aspect I wanted to make sure that [the actresses knew] it was just underneath the surface at all times," she says.

Mirza was also selective on what mental illness she wanted to examine. "I saw a lot of [films about] schizophrenia and it was often displayed within a brilliant or artistic mind," she says. "There wasn't a film that I saw about bipolar disorder so I thought well this is something that is very common amongst the people that I was talking to."

Currently in postproduction, the 22-day shoot was filmed around New York and New Jersey last summer. Produced by Mirza's sister, **Rohi Mirza Pandya**, it was shot on DV and 16 mm by **Renato Falcao** and edited by **Rich Song**. Executive producers are **Gitesh Pandya** and **Deep Katdare**.

For more information, please visit the [film's website](#).

"Ira & Abby: A Divorce Comedy"

The latest project from actress-writer **Jennifer Westfeldt** ("**Kissing Jessica Stein**"), this romantic comedy takes a look at modern-day marriage and asks if saying "I do" really is the path to life-long happiness. Directed by **Robert Cary** ("**Anything But Love**") filming wraps in New York City in mid-December.

The film revolves around Ira (**Chris Messina**) and Abby (Westfeldt) who decide to get married after knowing each other for less than a day. Spanning their first year of marriage, we find the newlyweds and their families in emotional chaos leading to affairs, divorces and lots of therapy.

Cary, who's known Westfeldt since their college days at Yale, came on board in March and immediately fell in sync with Westfeldt's story. "We come from the same neighborhood and in our long relationship we've shared some of the same experiences," Cary says. "So part of it is a wonderful way to share the world we live in with the rest of the world."

Though pegged as a romantic comedy, Cary says the film isn't a wacky laugh fest; it does take a serious look at relationships. "I think with a romantic comedy you have to believe in the characters so there's a reality to it," he says. "It's not a movie that judges its characters, it lets the audience do that, and that naturally means darker moments."

Produced through **Brad Zions'** Breakout Pictures ("**Kissing Jessica Stein**"), it's shot on 35 mm by **Harlan Bosmajian** ("**Lovely & Amazing**"), cut by **Philip J. Bartell** and executive produced by **Jennifer Todd**, **Ilana Levine** and Westfeldt. The film also stars **Fred Willard**, **Frances Conroy**, **Jason Alexander** and **Darrell Hammond**.

"Monopoly"

Inspired by the true-life incident of a computer hacker successfully penetrating Korea's main bank server, this modern-day noir follows two men undertaking the perfect crime to become part of the elite 1% who control the country.

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