

MAKING WAVES: A PRAKASH KADIRI FILM



PRAKASH KADIRI
Class of 2017
Concord, NC

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To produce a film is to bring dreams into reality. Having completed several different video projects of varying degrees of difficulty, I was determined to tackle what would be the most demanding project yet. I had recently purchased an old film camera from 1965 and decided my next big project was to be shot on film. But first, I needed to find a fitting story.

I began writing *Waves* with two other writers in September of 2015, influenced by Dr. Goldberg's The Elements of Politics course. We studied the human condition through the writings of Shakespeare, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Plato,

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North Carolina

Thucydides, Herodotus, and others. I used the foundational concept from Stanley Kubrick's *Fear and Desire*, which followed four soldiers who had crash-landed on the wrong side of a war zone and had to return back to their country. In my film, four soldiers chose to desert their nation during war while being hunted by their own countrymen for treason. While the film had a war backdrop, it is more concerned with how their conflicting perspectives affect their shared goal of survival.

After initial drafts of the screenplay were written, I somehow convinced a team of thirty people to join me on this experiment. While I had a team and a script, I needed funding to bring all of these ideas into reality. The Burch Committee was receptive to my proposal and became an ally on this journey, granting funding for film stock, lab processing, costuming, and props.

With the script and funding in my hands and a large team behind me, the creative and



practical challenges began as we used the summer to scout for suitable locations across North Carolina, going as far as Boone all the way to Topsail Island. The largest panic we had during pre-production occurred weeks before going into production: the camera

tests produced images that looked washed out and unusable. This sent me into a flurry of contacting everyone on the eastern seaboard that could know the cause of the issue. No one was able to offer any help except a local cinematographer who allowed us to run another round of camera tests in his warehouse. Unfortunately, these tests produced similar results. I continued calling professionals and had finally received a hint. Those two weeks of uncertainty forced

me to find solutions to issues that no one else had faced, teaching me that perseverance while facing a problem will always yield a favorable result.

We began our first week of production in December in Boone. At nights, the team braved below-freezing temperatures with the threat of rain and ice looming over us. Our first night was the worst. It had me thinking, "What did I get myself into?" That night was a wake-up call for the real challenges of this project. Though over the next few days, our workflow smoothed out, what I found most fascinating is how a large group was able to endure physical, mental, and emotional stress over three straight weeks when many others have would run off.

As a director, I forego the formal practices of crafting a shot list and storyboard. I have a clear idea of what I want to do, but the fun lies in arriving on set and working through the scene with the actors. This allows for adaptability while working through the scene; I can feel the

rhythm and then decide how to shoot it.



One thing I pride myself on as a filmmaker is that I never have a boring shoot. It may not be comfortable, but it is never dull. The Burch Fellowship allowed me to take on this uncomfortable and engaging challenge with my peers. The experience affirmed that not only am I capable, but that my life should be dedicated towards my art, regardless of obstacles and opposition. Throughout this journey, I was not only tested as a filmmaker, but also tested as a person. I learned I must not convene a team based solely on talent, but on heart. When you work so intimately under strenuous conditions, character matters more than talent. While I felt the general tensions as we all grew tired, the loyalty of my team to the project is too great to put into words. I hope to continue to inspire that level of dedication as I pursue bigger and more complicated projects. I can face my future with confidence because of the opportunity afforded to me by Mr. Burch.

