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DIASPORA

"American Desi" set to storm India after US success

Nitish S Rele • Florida • July 30 • 10:50 AM IST

The film was a dream come true for any directorial debut.

American Desi released in March, played in only 38 theatres in the United States and Canada, but still ranked in the top 25 domestic box-office charts, alongside other films that were shown in hundreds of theatres.



Indeed, the romantic comedy was a good investment.

The film's budget was just \$250,000, and it ended up making over \$1 million for its producers, one of which is its director-writer Piyush Dinker Pandya of New York.

Also, the movie about the colourful lives of Indian college students growing up in the US was the first fully English-language movie released by Eros Entertainment.

Ask Pandya about his thoughts when he looks back at the making of *American Desi*, and he replies: "It's hard to tell. At the time we made the film, we didn't know it would be picked up in such a big way."

But the 33-year-old told *indya.com* in an exclusive interview that he wished he had more money to make the film.

"All the actors were professionals, who have starred in numerous TV programmes on American network TV as well as in films and theatre," he pointed out.

What's Pandya been doing since *American Desi* is no longer playing in North American theatres?

"I just came back from Europe, where I am preparing to release



the film in theatres," he replied.

"Thereafter, we are going to release it in theatres in India and other countries," he added.

Simultaneously, the young filmmaker is working on the official movie soundtrack and the official Director's Edition DVD and video.

"The soundtrack boasts the best of Eastern and Western fusion music from today's top artists," he said.

"The Director's Edition DVD will be packed with extra features, including bonus footage, interviews, trailers, director's commentary and a behind-the-scene look," he said.

Looking down the road, Pandya hopes to soon begin shooting his next "action film" in the Jackson Heights area of New York.

"Deep Katdare and I have written the script," he said.

"It's like an Indian version of *Lethal Weapon*, with two police officers. The film, which still doesn't have a title, has a South Asian slant to it. It's got lots of action and a little comedy," he said.

A Computer Science graduate of Rutgers University in 1990, Pandya studied filmmaking at New York University, Rutgers and The New School with a focus on direction, screenplay writing and film production.

In 1993, he directed and produced the sitcom *Under One Roof*.

He also was a camera operator on the independent short *The Sari* directed by J Palit.

He has worked on the production of New Line Cinema's *Hangin' With The Homeboys*.

Pandya continues to be an independent computer consultant with clients such as Merrill Lynch and Hoffmann-LaRoche.

Here's wishing more *American Desis* to the young director. <<

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