

BILAL SAMI

NYC

PRODUCER - DIRECTOR - SCREENWRITER

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Producer, director and screenwriter with over two decades of experience across documentary, narrative film, episodic television and branded content. Most recent producing credit, 'Hanging by a Wire' (Universal Pictures / Everwonder Studios), premiered opening day at Sundance Film Festival 2026 in competition to sold-out screenings. Previous credits include the Disney+ / Hulu Top 10 series 'David Blaine – Do Not Attempt' (Imagine Entertainment) and the Academy Awards–submitted crime thriller 'Laal Kabootar'. Experienced in scoping, budgeting and delivering complex video productions end-to-end—from pitch and pre-production through post and final delivery. Skilled at managing multi-stakeholder, co-branded projects across international territories. Fulbright scholar with international production experience spanning the US, UK, South Asia and the UAE.

SELECTED CREATIVE WORK - FILM, BROADCAST & STREAMING

Hanging by a Wire | **WRITER, PRODUCER** _____ Sep 2024 - present

Feature documentary thriller developed with co-writer Mohammed Ali Naqvi. Co-produced with Mindhouse Productions (London) and financed by Everwonder Studios and Universal Pictures. Premiered opening day at Sundance Film Festival 2026 in competition, garnering rave reviews and sold-out screenings. Director: Mohammed Ali Naqvi.

- Collaborated with director and co-writer through pitch phase, shaping the creative vision and negotiating with co-producing partners and financing studios on investment, financing and distribution outcomes.
- Supervised the legal, finance and compliance teams for talent releases, licensing and international broadcast clearances.
- Managed end-to-end production across the US, UK and Pakistan: vendor selection, production budgets, detailed timelines, deliverable tech specs and third-party vendor coordination. Oversaw post-production pipeline including Avid offline and online editing, scoring, sound mixing, color grading and delivery of assets to distributors.

David Blaine - Do Not Attempt | **SERIES ASSOCIATE PRODUCER** _____ Apr 2022 - Nov 2024

Six-part documentary series produced by Imagine Entertainment for NatGeo and Disney+. Disney+/Hulu Top 10. Starring the magician David Blaine. Showrunners: Toby Oppenheimer and Erica Sashin.

- Managed multi-country production logistics across the US, South Asia, South America, East Asia and Europe, including location scouting, talent coordination and crew resourcing in each territory.
- Worked directly with high-profile on-screen talent in the creative development of six episodes, coordinating schedules, scene risk assessments, talent selection and vetting, and production requirements across international shoots.

Laal Kabootar (Red Pigeon) | **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER** _____ May 2017 - Mar 2019

Feature-length crime thriller produced by Neher Ghar, distributed by Footprint Media. Director: Kamal Khan. Pakistan's official submission to the 92nd Academy Awards. Theatrically released in Pakistan, USA, Canada, UK, Norway, UAE and Qatar.

- Oversaw creative development, script development and post-production through to final delivery.
- Negotiated broadcast rights and digital distribution agreements for select international territories.

Stay with Me – The Life and Times of Farida Khanum | **PRODUCER** _____ 2019

Feature-length documentary about the iconic Pakistani singer Farida Khanum. Directed by Ali Sethi and Executive Produced by Mira Nair (Salaam Bombay!, Monsoon Wedding). Produced by Aiman Films and Coke Studio, Pakistan.

- Managed production involving high-profile talent and multiple co-production partners across the US and South Asia.

Vote | **PRODUCER, WRITER, DIRECTOR**

Apr - Jul 2018

Narrative short film produced for the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives, Pakistan, and the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex – a co-branded, multi-stakeholder pre-election intervention to encourage female voter participation in Pakistan.

Dobara Phir Se (Again and Again) | **Co-PRODUCER, WRITER**

Jun 2013 - Nov 2016

Feature-length romantic drama produced and distributed by ARY Films. Director: Mehreen Jabbar. One of the best-financed and logistically complex productions of its era in Pakistani cinema. Theatrically released across Pakistan, USA, Canada, UK, Norway, UAE, Qatar and Bahrain.

- Managed all aspects of production: casting, location scouting (Karachi and New York State), pre-production planning and budgeting, on-set producing, and coordination of vendors and collaborators across the US and Pakistan.
- Helped oversee full post-production pipeline: scoring, sound engineering and mixing, editorial, color correction, DCP creation, subtitling, and international distribution deliverables.
- Presented creative concepts and production plans to financiers and distribution partners.

Dhun (Melody) | **PRODUCER, DIRECTOR**

Jan 2014 - Jun 2015

Music documentary capturing a creative collaboration between Pakistani folk maestro Ataulah Khan Eesakhelvi and Cuban Jazz Trio 'A3', produced with record producer Mekaal Hasan. Premiered at the Alchemy Festival 2016, Southbank Centre, London.

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Geo Entertainment PVT LTD

Oct 2018 - Oct 2020

GENERAL MANAGER – NEW MEDIA & SYNDICATION

Established and ran the New Media department from the ground up for Pakistan's largest media network.

- Built GEO's first streaming partnerships including Netflix, VU Clip, Zee5, Amazon and cinema distributors worldwide, negotiating contracts and rights clearances across international territories.
- Negotiated and closed content licensing agreements with Netflix, Amazon, VU Clip, Zee5 and cinema distributors across international territories, including contracts and rights clearances.
- Took over international syndication portfolio, extending the company's footprint across diaspora markets and international territories. Presented partnership strategies, content roadmaps and deal terms to network leadership.
- Managed the entertainment channel's social media team and YouTube channel – the second largest in Pakistan with over 72 million subscribers.
- Recruited, trained and managed a team of content adaptation specialists for platform-specific deliverables and metadata requirements.

Headstart Advertising

Nov 2017 - Jul 2018

DIRECTOR, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, WRITER

Directed and produced commercials and corporate documentaries for institutional and global brand clients.

- Clients included The World Bank, Bayer International, the Government of Pakistan, and the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.
- Managed all production phases from client brief and concept presentation through to final delivery, including filming on the Sony, RED and ARRI camera systems and post-production in the Adobe suite as well as DaVinci Resolve.
- Scoped production budgets, timelines and deliverables for each project; vetted and managed 3P production vendors.

The Lahore Biennale Foundation

Nov 2016 – Apr 2017

DIRECTOR OF MANAGEMENT & COORDINATION

Team lead overseeing the curatorial, research, finance, production and external relations teams for the inaugural Lahore Biennale, one of South Asia's premier contemporary art events.

- Organized and produced the 'City in Context 'Art Symposium and was the lead artist for the week-long 'Stories We Tell 'exhibition at the Alhamra Arts Council – a live experiential activation encompassing interactive public installations.
- Coordinated cross-functional teams including artists, curators, government stakeholders, sponsors and logistics vendors.

SELECTED CREATIVE WORK - ARTS & CORPORATE

Coke Studio - Season 11 _____ 2018

LYRICIST, WRITER, PRODUCER

Worked on 31 tracks produced by over 70 musicians in dozens of regional and international languages for Coke Studio, an international music franchise featuring live studio-recorded South Asian music performances.

Aao Sunayein Kahani (Stories We Tell) _____ 2016

LEAD ARTIST, PRODUCER

Created the public art project fostering cross-community exchange through the collection of stories via installations. Commissioned by the Lahore Biennale Foundation with a grant from the Centre for Culture and Development, Denmark. Over 8,000 stories collected; book published; week-long exhibition at Alhamra Arts Council.

TECHNICAL SKILLS & AI IN PRODUCTION

Editing & Post: Adobe Premiere Pro and post production suite, Avid Media Composer.

Camera: Sony and ARRI Alexa family of cameras; proficient with lenses, lighting, grip and electrical equipment.

AI Tools in Production: Sonix.AI (automated transcription), ElevenLabs (voiceover generation), Topaz AI (archival image correction/enhancement, video quality upscaling), and AI image generation platforms (Midjourney, DALL-E among others) for creating pitch deck imagery and pre-visualization.

MEMBERSHIPS & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Pakistani Academy Selection Committee for the 98th Academy Awards _____ 2026

Jury Member Netflix-Funded 'Tasveer Film Fund' awarding \$35,000 in production grants _____ 2025

Member of the Television Academy (USA) _____ 2024 - present

AWARDS, GRANTS

Selected for the inaugural Film Market Select at the 19th Tasveer Film Festival, Seattle _____ October 2024
TV series 'Behind The Scenes' created with South Asian superstar Fawad Khan attached to headline.

Laal Kabootar (Red Pigeon) - Pakistan's submission to the 92nd Academy Awards _____ 2019

Global Media Makers LA Residency – Film Independent USA Nov – Dec 2019
Selected as Fellow for the project 'Sheher (City)'.

Public Arts Grant - Center for Culture and Development (CCD), Government of Denmark _____ 2016
Grant award for a public art project done for the Lahore Biennale Foundation.

Fulbright Scholar _____ 2009 - 2012
Scholarship awarded for MFA in Film at Ohio University.

EDUCATION

MFA - Film | Ohio University - School of Film _____ 2012

Bachelor of Science (Honors) - Computer Sciences, Social Sciences | LUMS _____ 2003