



I'm Doing My Job

A Feature Documentary
Directed by Aneri Shah

Overview

I'm Doing My Job is a 50min documentary following 6 young, female South Asian & Black emergency medical physicians' lives throughout the pandemic in NYC.

From motherhood, to multi-generational family pressures to quit, to protecting communities of color, to rising up as leaders during times of crisis, these intelligent, courageous, and flawed women showed up for their communities when it mattered most, exposing the **beauty of BiPOC daughters of immigrants coming into their power.**



IT'S DEEP



IT'S RAW



IT'S EVEN FUNNY



Origin Story

In March 2020, Aneri's cousin was working as an ER physician in Brooklyn, NY. One day, her cousin was told she had to create a will. She called Aneri and said, "Will you take my newborn if something happens?" Aneri began recording their conversations every morning.

After a YouTube video they made went viral, other female doctors started reaching out to her, which fueled Aneri to raise money and hire a crew to capture the stories of 6 South Asian and Black female ER physicians across NYC and Chicago.

Building video technology startups while doing stand-up comedy for the last 12 years, Aneri is perfectly poised to bring nuanced, flawed, & kickass South Asian women to the big screen.



**Director:
Aneri Shah**

Motherhood and Leadership

These doctors are giving birth, watching newborns without outside help, and rising up as leaders at the hospital, all at once. Some of their families are pressuring them to quit so they can focus on family, while others are cheering them on.

In examining the intersection of motherhood and burgeoning careers, we discover true leadership requires delving into our deepest vulnerabilities.



Dr. Shivani Mody

Maimonides Medical Center, Brooklyn

Three days after Dr. Shivani Mody returned from maternity leave, her hospital became the hardest hit hospital in the world. While juggling parenting a 5-month-old and running the emergency room, she was also donating her breast milk to a COVID antibody study.

Amidst all of this, Dr. Mody faced pressure from her multi-generational family to quit her job. She ended up moving in with her grandparents and parents in Michigan for support. Unfortunately, family continued to host pujas and gatherings, putting Shivani at risk during her second pregnancy.



Dr. Ameerah Haamid

John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook
County, Chicago

While working in one of the hardest hit hospitals in the world in March 2020, Dr. Haamid gave birth and discovered her partner was cheating on her. She was angrier about the COVID exposure than the betrayal. To protect her daughter from further exposure, she left her with her parents for months.

In June 2020, she became a leading voice for the Black Lives Matter movement, running racial bias seminars and marching. Later, she ran a big vaccine campaign in her community. Despite facing many challenges, she emerged as a strong leader, using her experiences to create positive change.



Women of Color and Leadership

"I'm short, I'm brown, my voice can get very, very high. I have to bark in order to be heard. During COVID, we were all working together as a team, and all of that kind of went away. It was really, really nice."

–Dr. Shazia Sohrawardy

Women of color, especially from immigrant families, are often overlooked for leadership roles. In reality, they are tremendously tenacious and built for times of crisis. With no historical COVID data and communities crumbling, hospitals started looking to these women to lead.



Dr. Shazia Sohrwardy

Brookdale Hospital, Brooklyn

The film opens with the vibrant & humorous Dr. Sohrwardy exclaiming that she "hated the clapping". Working in a community hospital, she played a critical role in saving hundreds of lives while also helplessly watching hundreds die in a single night.

Growing up Muslim, she always wanted to be an actress but was not allowed to by her family, so she found an opportunity to leverage her charisma to advocate for better protective measures for medical professionals. Even as she rose as a leader, she says she now combats intense fatigue and PTSD.



Dr. Sabena Vaswani

Maimonides Medical Center, Brooklyn

The haunting feeling of being the last person patients saw before they died weighed heavily on Dr. Vaswani. Amidst the pandemic, her brother-in-law was diagnosed with cancer, and she found herself flying back and forth to help out. Travel restrictions and safety concerns added layers of stress.

Despite these challenges, she harnessed her experiences to advocate for the importance of proper protective equipment, raise awareness of gun control and help alleviate other broader health issues facing society.



Nuances of Multiculturalism

All 6 subjects were women of color and daughters of immigrants across South Asia.

While this film is not *about* these women being South Asian, some of the characteristics deeply embedded in South Asian culture include pressure for women to put family first, to be submissive to men, and to subjugate their needs for others.

This caused conflict as these women became crucial as saviors & leaders to the bigger community.



Dr. Smruti Desai

SUNY Health Science Center, Brooklyn

Having grown up in India, she was sensitive to how patients of color were being disproportionately affected by the virus. She also struggled with identity issues, feeling that she was either "too Indian" for leadership positions typically held by white Americans or "not colored enough" for the diverse communities she serves.

Determined to make a difference, she led a die-in during the Black Lives Matter movement, bringing media attention to systemic racism. She also began wearing Indian oil in her hair to work as a source of comfort. She has become a powerful voice for change, advocating for the underrepresented communities around her.



Dr. Humaira Ali

Maimonides Medical Center, Brooklyn

Born and raised in Queens, NY in a big, Muslim family, Dr. Ali worried about her grandparents, parents, & cousins who all live in the same house. Knowing the importance of family, Dr. Ali became known as the "FaceTime Queen", helping patients video call their loved ones as they died alone in the emergency room.

As all of this was going on, she fell in love with a non-Muslim male nurse at her hospital, who ended up finding a way to convert from Catholicism to Islam and marry her, despite all of the mosque closings.

Dr. Ali is a resilient, family oriented, and empathic force.



Behind the camera /

Sharika Ajaikumar

Senior Editor

Sharika Ajaikumar is a Brooklyn-based editor from India. Her credits include the upcoming feature documentary "Chasing Chasing Amy", "For Flint" (Tribeca 2017), and "40Days: Joshua vs. Ruiz Jr". She has worked on projects for a diverse range of clients, including DAZN, Discovery, Condé Nast, Food Network, IFC, NASDAQ, and The Players' Tribune. She holds a Master's degree in Television, Radio, and Film from S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University.



Behind the camera /

Priya Darshini

Composer

Priya's music blends Indian classical music with various global styles, resulting in a unique and captivating style. She has collaborated with a diverse range of musicians and released her debut solo album "Periphery" in 2020, earning a **GRAMMY nomination**. Priya is also an actor, ultra marathoner, entrepreneur, and environmental advocate. Her work has been featured in publications like Variety Magazine, Rolling Stone, and India.

Musicians featured on the score are Max ZT (Hammered Dulcimer), Moto Fukushima (Bass), and GRAMMY-nominated Dave Eggar (Cello).



Behind the camera /

Erika Kramer

Director of Photography

Erika Kramer is a filmmaker and writer living in New York City who has worked for over a decade in video production, from long days and nights spent in the perilous world of reality TV in Los Angeles all the way back to her student film days at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. In 2013, she started her own video production company called Sleeves Up Productions (SUP), producing content for brands like Microsoft, Venmo, and Zocdoc.



Behind the camera / Florencia Reolon Assistant Director

Florencia Reolon is an Uruguayan director and editor based in Barcelona who has been working in the audiovisual field since 2012 as a director, producer, and editor. Florencia has directed two documentaries for Unicef: 2 lives: 2 miles apart // Love and No more no less.

She was also the producer of the docu-fiction DOCOM, winner of the Best Documentary at the 12º International Festival for Schools of Cine.



Behind the camera /

Kopal Goyal

Editor

Kopal is an India-based documentary filmmaker and editor. For the past several years, she has been working towards creating stories that speak authentically to people. She builds compelling narratives and emotional stories around Indian women who, against the backdrop of a conservative society, practice extreme sports, such as rock climbing.

These women use sports as a tool to break their own limits and conquer their fear after a lifetime of being told they “aren’t good enough” or “strong enough”



Director's Statement

When crisis strikes, people reveal their truest selves. I made this film because for the first time, I got to speak to South Asian women about their deepest fears, hopes, and vulnerabilities and watch them surrender and just "be".

Watching women of color and daughters of immigrants revel in their multitudes and show what an empathic leader looks like is the therapy I didn't know I needed.

It is profound that we never mention that all the subjects are women of color. I believe true progress is when we can take universal stories and have race, ethnicity, and gender as the multi-layered backdrop rather than main stage. I love these stories. I love these women. This film is my love letter to them.

Aneri Shah, "I'm Doing My Job"



Where We've Been

Screened at **Happy Monday** in New York City September 2022

Screened at **Second Home** in Los Angeles October 2022

Officially premiered at **Portland Film Festival** in October 2022

Partnered with **Roco Films** to license film to companies and universities.



Portland Film Festival



HappyMonday, Brooklyn
South Asian run content studio



Second Home, Los Angeles
Coworking space for artists

Executive Producer



An Emmy Award-winning production company
producing ads, branded entertainment,
documentaries, live streams, and more.

Distribution Partner



ROCO Films distributes documentary films to
audiences and media platforms worldwide.

Sponsor



Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
trains health practitioners & scientists who
treat people, not just symptoms.

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Full screener available upon request

