

ITV commissions compelling crime thriller DI Ray starring Parminder Nagra

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ITV commissions compelling crime thriller DI Ray starring Parminder Nagra, written and created by Maya Sondhi and produced by Jed Mercurio's HTM Television

Detective Inspector Rachita Ray is the focus of new ITV drama DI Ray starring internationally renowned Parminder Nagra.

Fresh, relevant and thought-provoking, DI Ray is a four-part drama written by Line of Duty actress and screenwriter Maya Sondhi (Mount Pleasant, The Kumars, Ackley Bridge, EastEnders) and produced by Jed Mercurio's HTM Television (Bloodlands). Jed Mercurio (Line of Duty, Bodyguard) will executive produce the series, alongside Madonna Baptiste (The Stranger, Black Mirror, Stephen). It will be directed by Audrey Cooke and Alex Pillai and produced by Charlotte Surtees (Code 404, Two Weeks to Live, Dave Allen At Peace).

Set in Birmingham, DI Ray introduces us to Leicester-born Rachita Ray, a police officer who takes on a case that forces her to confront a lifelong personal conflict between her British identity and her South Asian heritage.

On taking the role of Rachita Ray, Parminder Nagra commented:

“I am so looking forward to getting back to the UK after such a challenging time globally to be part of this exciting new project. Written by Maya Sondhi and executive produced by the force that is Jed Mercurio, we are being helmed by an amazing team to bring something special to our story telling landscape.”

Rachita achieves the promotion she’s been waiting for when she’s asked to join a homicide investigation. However, on her first day she’s told the murder to which she’s been assigned is a ‘Culturally Specific Homicide.’ Rachita’s heart sinks – she suspects she’s a ‘token appointment’, chosen for her ethnicity rather than her ability.

Never one to shy away from a challenge, Rachita sticks to the case, determined to both find the killer and call out the obvious biases her colleagues are bringing to the investigation. And it’s far from easy. The case isn’t a run-of-the-mill murder; it involves delving deep into the dangerous world of organised crime.

Rachita is more than up for the task, but what she didn’t count on is what this case stirs up inside her; the realisation that she’s been burying a personal identity crisis her whole life. Truth is, she’s had to work twice as hard as everyone else.

It’s not that she doesn’t want to be Indian, it’s just that it would have been easier if she were white.

Screenwriter Maya Sondhi commented:

“This is a project which is deeply personal for me as a British Asian Brummie woman. It’s only in the past 10 years or so I’ve really been able to truly embrace my heritage. So much of this show is my story and in telling it honestly, I hope others from all different backgrounds will relate.”

DI Ray is a gripping four-part series that tracks a compelling murder investigation whilst exploring the emotive subject of racism in the workplace. It asks difficult questions about what it’s like to be British but feel ‘other.’ And it does so whilst sending viewers on a thrilling ride through the murky underworld of Birmingham and beyond.

The series has been commissioned for ITV by Head of Drama Polly Hill. It will be produced by HTM Television, an independent production company co-owned by Jed Mercurio and Hat Trick Managing Director Jimmy Mulville. It will be distributed globally by Hat Trick International and Anton Corp.

Polly Hill commented:

“Maya’s script is brilliant. It’s funny, relevant and introduces the fabulous DI Ray, played by the equally fabulous Parminder Nagra. It’s always hard to find a fresh detective, but it feels we have with Rachita Ray, in a thriller that will keep the audience captivated till the end.”

Jed Mercurio commented on behalf of HTM Television:

“Everyone at HTM Television is thrilled to be collaborating with writer Maya Sondhi, director Alex Pillai and star Parminder Nagra on such a thought-provoking series. DI Ray is first and foremost a thriller, while Maya’s writing poses complex and timely questions about the nature of personal ethnic identity.”

DI Ray will be filmed in the Midlands during the autumn of 2021.

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