

IKRAM BASRA

Poet and Playwright



BIO:

By the time I was 27, I had seen too much death and I was weary of news. When events were not too horrible to retell, news stories were often hyperbolic and unnecessarily alarming. More than ever, I wanted to do work that served truth, in the highest sense of that word, and I turned my attention to storytelling.

Education

Government College University, Lahore - BA, Political Science and Journalism, 2005
Punjab University, Lahore - MS, Mass Communications, 2007

Media Producer and Reporter

Producer, Pakistan Television News, 2009-15

Reported on Pakistani army operations in Taliban occupied regions; the Marriott bombing; Benazir Bhutto Assassination, and other major crises

Lyric Writer and Poet

Poems published in Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Nepali, Bengali, Marathi, Oriya, and English
Song lyrics for Bollywood pop stars
Song tribute to Benazir Bhutto that became theme for Pakistan People's Party

Playwright and Screenwriter

Whistling Woods International, Film City, Mumbai - Diploma in Screenwriting, 2014
Enrolled as MFA Candidate, Iowa Playwrights Workshop, 2018

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Selected Plays:

WE ALL WERE SUNFLOWERS - Production, University of Iowa, Fall, 2019.

Dramatizes the revenge of Shaheed Udham Singh on Colonel Michael O'Dwyer for the 1919 mass murder of Indian civilians at Jallianwala Bagh. The story is at the center of a larger meditation on the massacre, its aftermath, and nation of India.

A VILLAGE IN ASIA - Scheduled for staged reading, Iowa New Play Festival, Spring, 2020.

Dramatizes a case of child rape and murder in which the inhabitants of a village engage in pursuit and arrest of the perpetrators and are faced with the question of justice. Based on actual cases in Pakistan.

THE JOB - Reading, Iowa Playwrights Workshop, Spring, 2020.

Autobiographical one-person play whose main character is abducted by the Taliban while on assignment for Pakistan Television. The abduction occasions a flood of personal and philosophical reflection.

LINKS:

Ikram Basra YouTube Channel (Poetry Readings, News Demos from Pakistani TV).
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLY3qVkJFyjB9WENnTbZd76yFRGhWxNVxhG>

"5Q: Interview: Ikram Basra, Playwrights Workshop," *Writing University*, University of Iowa.
<https://www.writinguniversity.org/blog/5q-interview-ikram-basra-playwrights-workshop>

"Sharing the Pain, Beyond the Border," *Tribune (India)*. About production of *We All Were Sunflowers*.
<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/features/sharing-the-pain-beyond-the-border-756877>

CONTACT:

For information and scripts, contact the playwright, Ikram Basra (ikram-basra@uiowa.edu), or Art Borreca, Co-Head of the Iowa Playwrights Workshop (art-borreca@uiowa.edu).