



FILM

**TIFF 2014 Film Review: Tigers**

Posted on September 11, 2014

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Danis Tanovic's Tigers follows a common man in his quest for justice and tackles a serious issue.



Based on a real life story the film adheres to extensively researched facts and depicts how the misleading marketing of baby formula in areas with poor water and sanitation is causing infants to die. This is an issue, which continues to persist even today.

Tigers is the story of **Ayan (Emraan Hashmi)**, a struggling Pakistani salesman who lands a dream job of working in a multinational corporation. Committed in earnest to his new role, he aggressively uses sales strategies to mark his territory, which include offering gifts to doctors and healthcare professionals to recommend his products. Little does he know that his work is having dire consequences.

The film begins with Ayan narrating his story to a film crew and how his life changes after marriage. His wife **Zainab (Geetanjali Thapa)** persuades him to apply for a job in Lasta, a multinational company instead of selling cheaper local Pakistani pharmaceuticals. Ayan literally and figuratively adopts a tiger's sales attitude in pushing the infant formula, his target being that "every baby should be a Lasta baby".

Soon he becomes popular with doctors and hospital staff and leads a content life as his own family starts expanding. The eye-opener comes when his doctor friend shows him first hand how his infant formula when mixed with dirty water is making babies die since mothers are persuaded to use formula instead of breastfeeding.

Ayan then sets out to challenge the very system he is a part of. He quits his job and sends a legal notice to his company to stop marketing breastmilk substitutes in the country. In the process he makes big enemies and risks everything.

A film with a strong message *Tigers* itself was a risky film to make but that didn't stop Oscar winning director Danis Tanovic from telling the story. Tanovic further humanizes the story by remaining true to the subject matter rather than sensationalizing the issue. He keeps the film deliberately subdued yet in doing so it loses dramatic impact.

Hashmi is remarkable in his portrayal of Ayan in a role sans the usual Bollywood escapism. He effectively portrays his inner turmoil as a man who wants to raise his voice. In fact he is quite at ease playing the common man. Geetanjali Thapa and seasoned actors Vinod Nagpal and Supriya Pathak portray his intimate family unit.

This Indo-French production is backed by Indian financiers and producers Guneet Monga, Prashita Chaudhary and Anurag Kashyap. The film is shot in Germany, London and India where locations in Punjab were used to depict Pakistan. The film is slated for an early 2015 release.