

# SALESMAN OF THE YEAR

Ranbir Kapoor chits chats  
about his office experience

**What was your reaction when you read the script and that you would be playing a sardar in the film?**

Well *Bachna Ae Haseeno* had not released at that time and Adi (Aditya Chopra) called me and said, "just react to this title: *Rocket Singh – Salesman of The Year*". He didn't tell me who the writer or director was. It didn't really hit me that it was a film about a *Sardar*. Later on he told me that Jaideep (Sahni) and Shimit (Amin) had been working on the script and Shimit was planning to direct it. I was ecstatic because I am a big fan of Jaideep and Shimit's work and just to get a film written by Jaideep and directed by Shimit and produced by YRF was just overwhelming for me". But it is not being a *sardar* that excited me about playing the role. I am playing a man who happens to be a *sardar*. It's the story, the director, the production house and the character that got me excited to do the film.

**This is your first film with Shimit Amim. How was the experience?**

He is one of the finest human beings I have met. He is a bit of an introvert, doesn't over or under direct you, has the right sensibilities of how he wants the actor to do a scene, is extremely talented and gives you your space. I think he is fantastic. I am relatively new in this industry but certainly amongst the directors I have worked with he is one of the best. It has been a humbling experience for me to be directed by him and to be speaking Jaideep's lines.

**Your look in the film is completely different. What were your friends' and family's reaction? It was a "theda" (mixed) reaction. For 5 weeks**



we tried different kinds of turbans because we wanted to get the turbans correct - the fabric, the colour pattern, length etc. Even while doing the readings I used to wear the turban so that I can get used to the fact that I am playing a *sardar* and it doesn't look like I've just worn the turban for the sake of the character on the day of the shoot. But yes, for my family – well, my mother and *nani* are *sardarnis* so they were ecstatic and said that their wishes are fulfilled that my grandchild is playing a *Sardar*, so they were really happy. My friends were really happy that I am working with Shimit as a Director.

**For your look in the film you grew a beard and did something with your eyebrow - did the people around recognize you?**

Because it is a character based film, we wanted to make it as real as possible. We didn't want to put a fake beard so I took 5 weeks off and grew a natural beard. Thankfully I have a good growth so it didn't take a long time. Even then, it was

not that when I went out people didn't recognize me. When we started the film, the buzz of the movie was such, that whenever we went - like we shot a lot on roads and actual streets of Mumbai - people saw a kind of familiarity with this character (which is *Harpreet Singh Bedi*) and people started connecting with me, as the character. It is nice when people see you and say that you are looking like a *Sardar* and you are not looking like Ranbir Kapoor. That's when you succeed. Since the beginning, everyone – Shimit (Amin), Adi (Aditya Chopra) and Jaideep (Sahni) – told me time and again that I was not Ranbir Kapoor, or *Raj of Saawariya*, I was playing a character called *Harpreet Singh Bedi*. That way we made the film as real as possible.

**The kada you are wearing - please tell us about it?**

The *Kada* I am wearing in the film, I remember, Yashji (Yash Chopra) personally got it from the Golden temple in Amritsar. I think it was as a blessing he gave it to me and also to give me an authentic look in the film. The team constantly checked if everything was perfect in my look and wardrobe, because we were playing real characters and at the end of the day we didn't want to do anything inaccurate.

**Do you identify with the character?**

Absolutely. Because I think the character is about the youth of the country. It's about the youth consumed by the desire of the brighter future, youth with the honesty and integrity and a clear heart. They want to earn money obviously, but they have to choose a path and do it in the right way. You can choose between the

two paths. And the path that *Harpreet* chooses is really brave. What he does is amazing!

**Did you have to work on the language?**

As I said before, *Harpreet* is a boy from Mumbai. All his friends are modern. He goes for parties, he plays cricket. Because he is a boy from the fourth generation there is not much use of Punjabi. But his grandfather, played by Prem Chopra comes from Punjab. So the way he dresses, the kind of language he uses, the kind of turbans he wears is different from what *Harpreet* wears. So everything is kept in its individual places and kept as real as possible.

**There are many characters in the story. How did you feel working with them?**

It was phenomenal. I felt like a fish just out of



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water. There is so much talent. They deserve so much more than I have got in just two films. The passion for their work! We all became a part of a family, it was amazing. It was so infectious and it drove us all to give more to the film.

**Tell us a secret about Harpreet Singh Bedi?**

I don't think Harpeet has any secret . He is that kind of a boy whose life is an open book. He is not calculative or manipulative. If he does something, he does it with his heart. I think that is what is amazing about him.

**How was your experience of shooting with Shimit Amin in general?**

As I said, the experience was amazing, right from being offered the film, to interacting with Shimit and Jaideep, to shooting all over Mumbai, suburbs, streets. I don't think there is any one memorable incident. I think the experience is very memorable, which I cherish. Because I learnt a lot from Shimit, alot from Jaideep, Harpreet and all the characters. And that's more important and memorable than any one other incident.

**How was it playing Office – Office?**

I was totally alien to this world. Shimit wanted me to have a look at how an office runs, so we used to hang out in the Yash Raj corporate offices to go and see how the atmosphere is. He showed me some DVDs just to see how offices are run. Even when our set was made , it was an office and it was actually like we are going to office. Even when we were not shooting and got breaks we spent time there. So it was not like we were never out of office and were staying there



and hanging out. We used to be so engrossed in our characters, that most of the time we used to call each other by our character names.

**Did you model yourself on someone for the character of a Sardar?**

Shimit and Jaideep have made the character so new that I couldn't imagine anyone in it but I remember I had a friend called Jaikaran Juneja whom I have grown up with. He is a Sardar. He is as normal as you and me - you don't have make it a caricature or make it an item. Harpreet speaks exactly like him. I don't think I have modeled myself on him, but I have taken some traits from him.

**Who is better in the role of a Sardar - you or your Dad?**

I can never compare myself to my father. He is one the finest actors in this Industry. I am new here. I cannot even compare myself to his 30 illustrious years in the Industry. He is one of my favorites. I would rather not even use my name in the same sentence.

**What do you think makes a good salesman?**

More than getting the job, orders and targets achieved, it's the honesty and integrity. And not only in sales, in any profession. You just need to have these qualities and you will succeed in whatever you do.

**Why the title – Rocket Singh Salesman of the Year?**

A lot of people I know, have connected with the title. It's weird in a way; it gets a smile on your face.

**What did you feel on reading the script?**

I remember it was late at night. I was simply bowled over. They said you can come tomorrow and read the remaining script, but I just didn't want to leave it! I wanted to know where this character is taken and where the film went. I don't want to just sell the film, but the way Jaideep and Shimit have written the film, they have done it with lot of conviction. He believed in the character. He believed in the field of sales. The marriage of thought that Shimit has with Jaideep is like Salim-Javed, meet Manmohan Desai meets all the great directors in the country.

**Tell us your thoughts on Jaideep Sahni as a writer?**

Jaideep has this different tone where lines are concerned. He has this balance of lines. There is no dialogue *bazzi*. They are subtle in a way.

**How has your experience been with YRF – from Bachna... till now?**

You grow with very movie. I was on a different mindset. I feel I have grown as an actor. Both the films have been a memorable experience. I do hope I get to work with this team in some way or the other in the near future.

**What do you want to say about the crew?**

Niharika was clear that she wanted the characters to stand out and costumes to support the character. It wasn't a jump in thought. She had every character bang on. The cinematographer, Vikash, has shot the film with great detailing. Jaideep and Shimit were clear on how they wanted to shoot the film. They have made it very classy.