



Sagar Radia.

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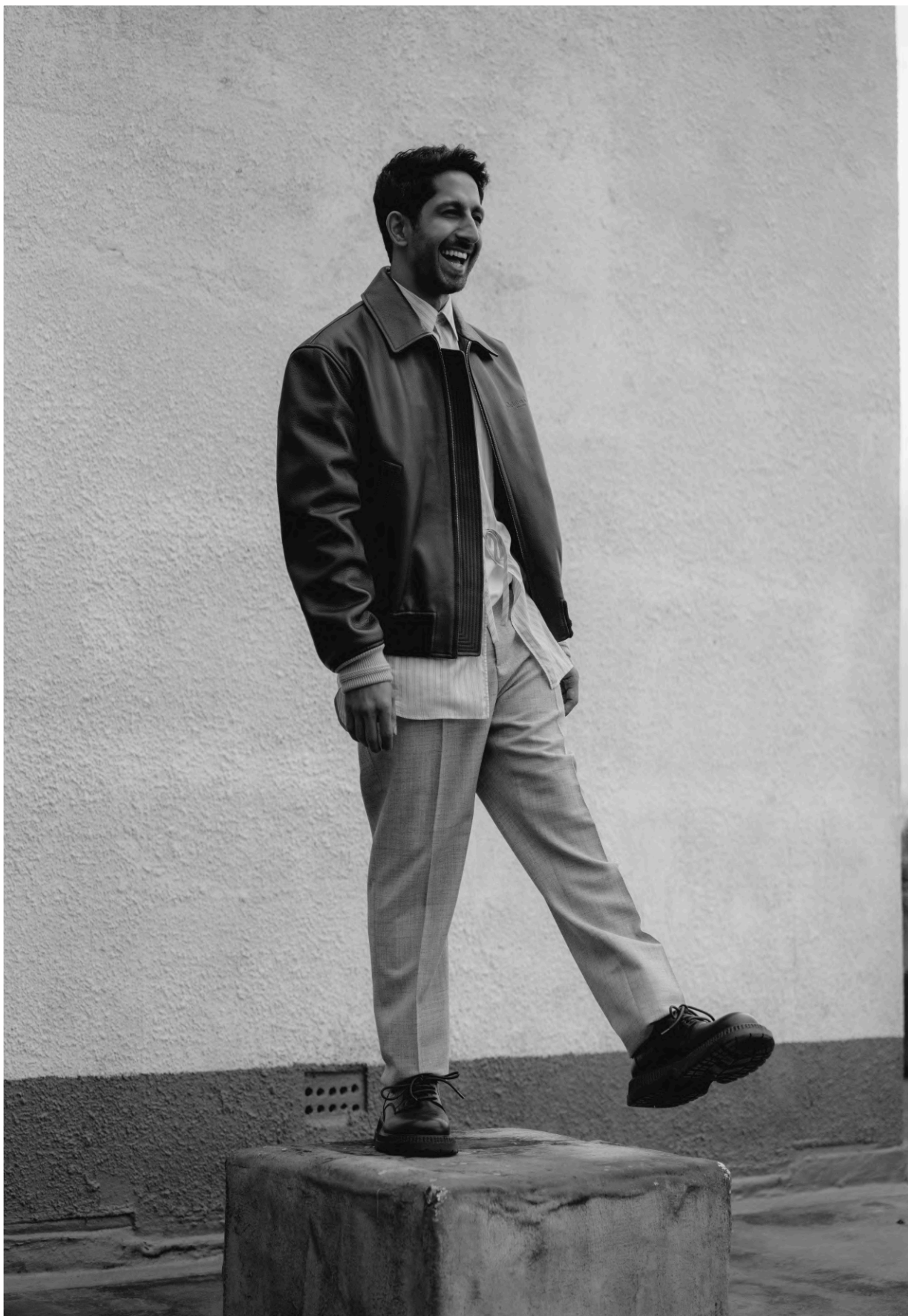
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Sagar Radia, the breakout star of HBO's "INDUSTRY," offers a candid and insightful look into the complex world of his character, Rishi. As we talk, Radia explores the character's motivations, the pressures of high-stakes finance world, and the personal sacrifices made in pursuit of success. Beyond the character, Radia also opens up about his experience as an actor, offering a raw and honest perspective on the industry and the challenges faced by aspiring performers.





V: Sagar, it's a pleasure to meet you. I must say, I've been hearing a lot of buzz about your performance in the new season of HBO's "INDUSTRY." Congratulations on the success! Now, I have to start by asking, have you had a chance to watch the new season yourself? What are your thoughts on it?

S: Thank you for the kind words! I have been lucky enough to watch all of season 3! HBO sent us screeners a few months ago which is never a bad thing - It means I can mentally prepare if I don't like my performance! That aside, I think I would be a fan of the show if I wasn't in it, so the anticipation you get as a fan of any show you look forward to is the same!

I think the first thing that comes to mind when I think about the show is how I proud I feel. In season one Mickey and Konrad wrote this raw, unpolished, unpredictable, sexed-up interpretation of the banking world. To then see how far we've come in regards to character exploration, the different facets of banking and personal relationships the show explores is testament to how the boys have evolved the show year on year. We have an amazingly talented cast which sits on the backbone of an incredible crew, some of who have been there since season 1 i.e the make-up team, some of the camera team, our supporting artists on the trading floor who feel like those workers you may see in the office every day, who you smile and nod at as you head to your desk. It's a unique experience, and one I can't compare to any other project.

V: Episode 304 is your stand-alone episode where you deliver a brilliant performance. Can you tell us a bit more about what makes this episode so special?

S: Thank you! What makes an episode like this so special, begins with the inception of the idea. Why this character, why this episode, why now - were my initial thoughts. I think Rishi in season 1 became this unexpected (at least for me) fan favourite. The boys noticed this and trusted me with a bit more in series 2 and as a result series 3 led the way for a world in which we follow this character for 48 hours to see what he would get up to. I think on so many levels this episode is unique - it follows Rishi on a rollercoaster of emotions exploring themes of addiction, friendship, classism, masculinity to name a few. That coupled with good writing, and the fact you're seeing a British Asian character leading the episode, I'm hoping it gives a texture and nuance to a story that we're not used to seeing on television. Kit (Harrington) said to me he loves seeing a bottle neck episode on a television shows, but only when it's been earned, which he felt this has...So that's never a bad ego boost going into filming!

V: I can only imagine the dedication and emotional investment required to bring such a complex character to life. Can you share with us a bit about your process in preparing for a role like Rishi?

S: You know it's interesting because the world of research and deep diving into a character has become easier from when I started acting. We live in an information age, arguably too much information sometimes, that you have so much to draw from should you wish to use it. YouTube, films, books, google, people, social media - can all provide you with reams of information to piece together a role like this. For me, ultimately it starts with the script. If the writing is at the level it needs to be to pull off something like this, then you're already ahead of the curve. I was working one week ahead of what we would film - which means I knew the scenes inside out one week in advance to shooting them. That allowed me to stay prepared enough but loose enough should things change, but also giving room to find things on the day when we were filming. Mickey and Konrad were also super collaborative with me - Before we started shooting Konrad spoke openly to me saying they obviously don't know the South Asian experience first-hand and should any part of the script not feel right, culturally, then let's find a way to make it what it needs to be. Giving your actor that agency makes it feel like you're working together instead of a top-down approach which isn't uncommon in this industry. Once we had the script down then you throw in the A-team of actors and crew and you're off to the races!

V: I'm particularly drawn to the complexities of his ambition. It's a force that drives him, yet it seems to consume him as well. How did you balance these two sides of the character?

S: I think complexity by the sheer nature of the word means you don't really find a way to balance the two sides of the character - that's what makes it complex? Us, as humans, are multi-hyphenates who have so many different sides to us. In the case of Rishi, he is ambitious, he is all consuming, he does have an addictive personality. But if we all took a moment to take a step back and assess the different sides of our own characters, complexity is right at the heart of it. Sometimes balancing that comes quite naturally, almost second nature because we don't know any different from ourselves than what we're experiencing on a day-to-day basis, right?

I think addiction is the best way to describe his ambition and drive. Rishi is a winner. He lives life on the edge, almost an adrenaline junkie, he gets his thrills from high -



stakes. You look at any sporting professional at the highest level and they have this need to compete. The minute that stops, they lose a part of themselves. I think Rishi's new lifestyle after getting married takes something away from him, subsequently leading to him to spiral. His ambition feels stunted. The change is arguable too much and he begins to let loose in other areas to fill that void.

V: I'm curious to know, beyond the individual performances, what themes or messages do you think this season of "INDUSTRY" explores?

S: One of the great things about the show is despite the finance aspect of it being very prevalent to the story, it sits as a backdrop to the key relationships. Series 3 puts a microscope on family, on love, on loyalty, on deception, on self-sabotage. We explore what it looks like to sacrifice it all for material gain. Identity is a major theme of the show. People, to an extent, have a fixed identity but then how do we code switch in different environments and what does that look like, and more so, what can that turn us into, both good or bad. If the workplace makes you a certain way, is that the real you, or the work you?

For Rishi he starts to explore his own morality. In episode 4 we go on this Uncut Gems-esque journey with him. He gets to the end and begins to question the type of man he is versus the man he wants to be. What is the consequence of too much...of anything! How has that backfired and affected his ability to be a good husband, a good father, a good colleague and good a human being.

The message of greed and over consumption for these characters lead us to a point where everyone starts to reassess themselves. But is it too late?

V: Can you give us a glimpse into what viewers can expect from the final episode of the season?

S: I genuinely don't know how to describe the final episode. I think the little people know the better because what it does is bring everything and everyone to a breaking point. The consequences of everyone's actions are now coming to collect. Some come out feeling peace and contentment and some absolutely...do. Not. Mickey and Konrad as writer/creators, and in the case of episode 7 and 8, directors, love backing themselves into a corner. You could easily walk away from the end of series 3 and think that's the end of the show, where could they possibly go from here? But if they're lucky enough to do it again I have no doubt they'll come out swinging in a way no one would expect. I genuinely don't think they'd have it any other way.

V: I'm always fascinated by the journey of actors and what it takes for them to truly feel like an actor. So, when do you think an actor starts to really feel like one? Is it a gradual evolution that comes with gaining experience and becoming more professional? Or do certain milestones, like winning awards, play a significant role in that process? And what about the critics? Do their opinions hold weight in shaping an actor's sense of identity? Or is it something more personal, something that is felt deep inside the moment you first discovered your passion for the craft?

S: Speaking for myself, I can tell you first hand that being an actor, or feeling like an actor is definitely more a state of mind, then through some esoteric milestone you're trying to reach. That took me a while to learn. You go through your teens and 20's not quite sure where you fit in the world and what your future looks like, then you choose a career that's even less secure and it can leave you questioning many things over many years. Imposter syndrome is a common term amongst the community. You go through years of rejection wondering if this industry even wants you. You see your peers have huge success and you question whether you're just kidding yourself. The best advice I can give is to focus on the work, keep it about the work and be the best actor you can be, whatever that looks like. Inevitably experience and work helps you as gain confidence because it can feel like you're doing something right. But this is by no means a meritocracy and requires a thick skin and perseverance to push through. Winning awards and critical acclaim I'm sure can be a nice temporary boost to the ego but that's short lived. It's about a creating an identity that goes beyond the label of being an actor. An actor is a small part of who I am, but it by no means defines me. To be better at my job, to inform the work I do, I try and focus on the things I enjoy away from it. Whether that's spending time with family and friends, enjoying good food, or whether that's playing football once a week. These are the things that create my identity. Being an actor is just an extension of that.

V: When it comes to facing and overcoming challenges, how do you personally experience courage? Does it emerge as a natural by-product of your passion for acting, or do you see it as a distinct quality that is earned through one's actions and choices?

S: Truth be told I think courage is a bit of all of those. Overcoming challenges is a part of life we all have to face in different ways. Some people are dealt a more challeng-

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ing hand come that are a true testament to one's character. As an actor it can sometimes feel like a personal attack when you don't get a role you really want. You can put your whole being into a part only for someone to decide your left eyebrow is too big. It requires that courage to pick yourself back up and go again. It's why I think actors are some of the most resilient people you'll meet. We'll take a beating and come back time and time again. I would encourage any actor to look at *Industry* as a perfect example. Rishi was a character on the periphery of the show in series 1. The boys took notice of the work and how the audience responded to him and upped him in series 2. When you get a chance like that you have to grab it with both hands and give it your all. I get to sit here today with an entire episode on arguable one of the biggest television networks in the world, and that comes from courage.

That comes from action, and choice.

V: Sagar, as we wrap up, I'm curious about what truly defines respect for you as an actor. Beyond awards, what specific qualities or actions do you believe contribute to earning genuine respect in the industry?

S: Oh man, Work respects work! If you can make it in this industry through the levels of competition that exist. If you can sustain a career and make a living from the thing you love to do - That's the respect right there. I can't think of another industry, outside of professional athletes, where the respect from your peers and those you perform for exist at the same level. We do it for ourselves first and foremost but if you can earn the respect of those who spend their hard-earned money to watch you, or follow your career then you're doing something right.

Don't miss "*Industry*" Season 3 when it hits UK screens on October 1st.



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