

Hollywood director to shoot city's slumgirl millionaire's life

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Kolkata: Hollywood director Jack Sholder is set to visit the Kidderpore slum, accompanied by a former dweller of one of the shanties there, Jillian Haslam. She might have grown into one of the most acclaimed motivational speakers in the world and an author but the millionaire has not forgotten her roots. Sholder will turn Haslam's autobiography 'Indian, English', into a film, for which the two are slated to go on a road for locations this weekend.

Haslam will take Sholder—known for his horror and sci-fi films, such as Nightmares on Elm Street II, The Hidden, By the Dawn's Early Light, Alone in the Dark and Where are the Children—in Kidderpore slum, where she lived with her parents in abject poverty; the salubrious of a house, under where her mother took shelter with her and her siblings, the pavements where they lived and the places where her mother worked as a help. Work on the film, which will be shot mostly in Kolkata and in the UK, where Haslam is, will start a brief time immediately after the location recon and other formalities

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Jack Sholder | [@jacksholder](#)

are done. The names of Kate Winslet and Angelina Jolie are doing the rounds for Haslam's role, though no confirmation was yet in come. Joshua Russell, one of Hollywood's best-known screen writers, who teaches at Columbia College Chicago, Western Carolina University and DePaul University, has been roped in for the screenplay.

Haslam, fifth among 12 siblings, was born to British parents, Roland Haslam and Margaret, who were initially well off. Roland had retired from the British Army, but refused to return to England. But his decision to live on in his "beloved Kolkata" with his family proved disastrous

for them as Indian companies refused to employ him owing to his British ancestry. Without any earning and nowhere to go to, Roland gradually fell ill and had to move in with the Salvation Army. By then, he had four of his children to maintain. Going through a painful journey, Haslam landed a secretary's job in a bank by chance, which proved to be the turning point of her life. She finally left for the UK, where she utilised her experience to start working for the underprivileged and give motivational talks. This captivated her into the corporate and academic world. Now a moderator to employees at Bank of America, McDonald's, King's College London, Barclays, Cambridge University Heriot Watt University and TEDx, her book is a bestseller, too.

Kalied about his visit to Kolkata and the film, Sholder called Haslam's life, a "Dickensian experience". "Jillian Haslam's improbable journey, her growing up in Calcutta, is enormously compelling—a story almost too dramatic and improbable to believe in, like something out of Dickens, yet true. It's a story that has the power to move, with an epic sweep, yet it is intensely personal. It has something to say about the human condition that can cross borders, as Jillian has done. Her inspirational tale of determination to not just survive but to flourish against all odds is tailor-made for the cinema. I can't think of a more worthy project," he said.

