

Watch out for 'George Bush' in 'Mission Istanbul'

Originals and impersonators dot the cast of Apoorva Lakhia's 'Mission Istanbul'. While Jammu and Kashmir's politician Omar Abdullah appears as himself in the film on world terrorism, Brent Mendenhall plays George Bush.

Mendenhall is invariably mistaken for George Bush all over the world and Lakhia says that the actor has made a career out of impersonating the US president.

'We had to have Bush in a film on international terrorism,' director Apoorva Lakhia said with tongue in cheek. 'Since we couldn't get Bush, we went to the guy who plays Bush as a habit,' Lakhia told IANS.

'Brent Mendenhall has made a career out of impersonating George Bush. He's a well-known stand-up comedian and has been on the Jay Leno, David Letterman shows, and is invited to play Bush whenever required,' added Lakhia.

Mendenhall, posing as George Bush, went visited Maharashtra Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh.

'We had him accompanied by the full state-level paraphernalia. Vilasraoji's security just let him pass by without even contemplating a security check. Of course, we had to take the CM into confidence. But the rest of his staff were kept in the dark. And they got completely fooled,' laughed Lakhia.

Apparently, producers Suniel Shetty and Ekta Kapoor had to pay a fortune to get Mendenhall in the thriller.

Explaining how Omar Abdullah became the part of the cast, Lakhia said: 'Omar and I went to school together. I met him to play a role because 'Mission Istanbul' is about international terrorism. And he has had first-hand experience of it in Kashmir. I got to know so much from him. Omar's inputs really helped the film.'

Lakhia not only learnt a whole lot about the anatomy and politics of terrorism from his school friend Omar Abdullah, he also got him to play a role in the film.

'It was great fun. He flew down to [Jaipur](#) with his family to shoot. After we shot with him, his son ran to him for his autograph,' recounted Lakhia.

Omar appears as an interviewee on television in 'Mission Istanbul' that has Vivek Oberoi, Zayed Khan in main lead.

Lakhia also got bang-on look-alikes for Osama Bin Laden.

'Osama is played by Khalil Ahmed, who is an exact replica of the Al Queda chief.'

Subhash K. Jha (© IANS / India eNews)