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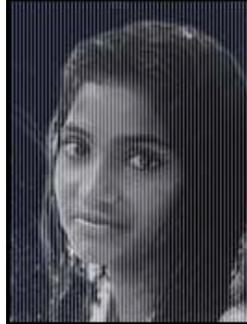
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`Split Wide Open`

`If you know English, you don't have to work hard` goes a line in Dev Benegal's `Split Wide Open`. How true this is, especially in the case of Rahul Bose and Laila Rouass. The life sketch of a water mafia drop-out KP (short for Kut Price) played by **Rahul Bose**.



`Split Wide Open` is the name of a TV where people from different walks of life come and bare their hearts, souls and closets, giving one the impression that Mumbai is full of demented deviates. Anchor **Laila** comes close to Rahul Bose who provides her with some people who give out some of their dark secrets on camera.



All this while, the main problem dogging KP is the mysterious disappearance of an adopted sister, a 10-yr old street kid **Didi (Farida Hyder Mullah)**. He combs the city for her, but is unable to trace her, until, much to his frustration, find's that she is now the `keep` of an affluent electronics professional (Shivaji Satham), and is reluctant to leave it all and return to her roots.

No doubt `Split Wide Open` takes up some real embarrassing issues, but somehow gives the whole film a patchy and jerky feel. Also the jumping of the screenplay between two parallel tracks is too abrupt and disconcerting.

Rahul Bose as the `man-on-the-street` KP is miscast, mainly due to his town college Hindi delivery. At one point, he even brazenly switches to English, after asking the viewers' permission to do so. Laila Rouass role is an extension of her TV anchor routines, which means she hardly has to act. The street kids are genuinely good. **Shivaji Satam** as the paedophilic middle-aged man is excellent.



But the best performance in the film is by **Ayesha Dharker**, in a brief, but well conceived role. The cinematography by Sukumar Jatania gives a docu-drama look to the film. Music by Nitin Sawhney is consistently good, which is not surprising, considering it is a music house production.

`Split Wide Open` is serious viewing - so serious that things tend to get a bit too heavy for comfort.



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