

Celebrity Interview: Hollywood Triple Threat Sugith Varughese Discusses New Role In 'The Girlfriend Experience'



Interview by [Lori Bizzoco](#). Written by [Mary DeMaio](#).

In the latest celebrity news, the famous Steven Soderbergh film turned television series, *The Girlfriend Experience*, premiered on Starz last night, April 10th. Fortunately, we had the chance to interview Indian-born Canadian actor Sugith Varughese, who plays Tariq Barr, the managing partner of the law firm where Christine works. For those who don't know the

plot, Christine (played by Riley Keogh, daughter of Lisa Marie Presley) is a legal intern by day and a high-end escort “girlfriend” at night.

In our exclusive [celebrity interview](#), Varughese opens up about the show, the casting of his character, and his long-term relationship off-screen.

Celebrity Interview: Sugith Varughese Talks Acting Experience

Being in the business for more than 20 years as a scriptwriter, actor, and director, Varughese thought he’d seen it all. However, one of the biggest surprises came about after his audition for *The Girlfriend Experience*. “I went in for a three-line part as an East Indian businessman who’s on the phone with his wife in Bombay just before he’s about to hire one of these escorts,” he explains. “I used an Indian accent for that part.” His agent called soon after and said that he “didn’t get that role.” Instead, they cast him for a major role in the series, one intended, he says, for a strong white male character. “The producers had a new vision and even changed my character’s name to reflect my background,” he adds.

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For Varughese, it was important that Barr has tremendous confidence, power and status. “Here is a guy who is Indian-American and a managing partner of the biggest patent law office in Chicago,” he says. “He didn’t get that job because his dad owned the firm. He’s going to be somebody who had to be twice as good as everyone else to get where he got.”

Even the way his character dressed was significant to the

actor, who noted that he spoke with the costume designer and tried to make Barr's suit more distinctive. "It was a great opportunity to bring a lot to the performance because the part wasn't already laid out like a regular television show," he says. In fact, he didn't even know what was going to happen to his character until the week of shooting. "We didn't get the scripts in advance," he shares.

Given the most recent controversy with the Oscars and the trending hashtag #OscarsSoWhite, there is clearly a problem in terms of recognizing diverse film-making and acting talent. Varughese believes that many of the nominees who should have been on the Oscars stage weren't there. "I think that the industry itself is changing, but I don't know if the recognition side of the industry has caught up," he says in our celebrity interview. "It is important that the people who are doing it and being successful at it are acknowledged as much as anyone else."

Actor Reveals His Best Relationship Advice

In terms of celebrity relationships, it's no surprise that dating an actor can be tough. Jealously, competition, and conflicting work schedules aren't easy to handle. Depending on the person, finding that balance can be a bit of a struggle. Luckily for Varughese, his long-term partner doesn't work in show business. "The balance is all on my part, and it is up and down," he says. "She is able to keep things on a more even keel."

Staying true to yourself, he says, is the most important relationship advice he can give. "The world is divided between us and them," he explains. "It's important to emphasize the values that you want in your life in order to make sure that your partner measures up and is consistent with your principles or convictions." Varughese shares that he and his

significant other couldn't be more different in terms of personality, career, and background. However, the one – and most important – thing they have in common is their core values, including family and love. As a result, they don't have many conflicts. "If you have the same values, you have a shot at making a relationship work," he says. "If you don't have the same values, but you're both actors, I don't know if it will work out."

Related Link: [Relationship Advice: Understand What You Don't Want](#)

As for what's next, Varughese recently finished shooting a pilot in Vancouver – and it was another part that was originally cast for someone completely different. "It's an exciting time for actors of diverse backgrounds," he says. "There is now a chance to come into your own and not be judged by ethnicity but by your abilities."

You can keep up with Varughese on Twitter [@SugithVarughese](#). Tune in for The Girlfriend Experience on Starz!