

A dark, stylized illustration of a long, empty hallway. The perspective is from the floor level, looking down a long corridor. The walls are dark with some lighter rectangular panels. The floor is light-colored with dark lines. A small, dark silhouette of a person stands in the distance at the end of the hallway. The overall mood is somber and mysterious.

CAN HAVE A MASK

INSPIRED BY THE ESSAY
BY ASITHA JAYAWARDENA MD, MPH

CAN I HAVE A MASK

Runtime: 3min

A frontline medical worker is torn between his responsibilities as a doctor and a dad as he grapples with his decision to re-use an old N95 mask in the early weeks of the pandemic.

Inspired by the essay, "Can I Have a Mask?" by Asitha Jayawardena, MD, MPH, this short film explores the human side of medicine by attempting to understand the decision-making our healthcare workers were forced to grapple with due to inadequate PPE.

CONTACT

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DIRECTOR STATEMENT

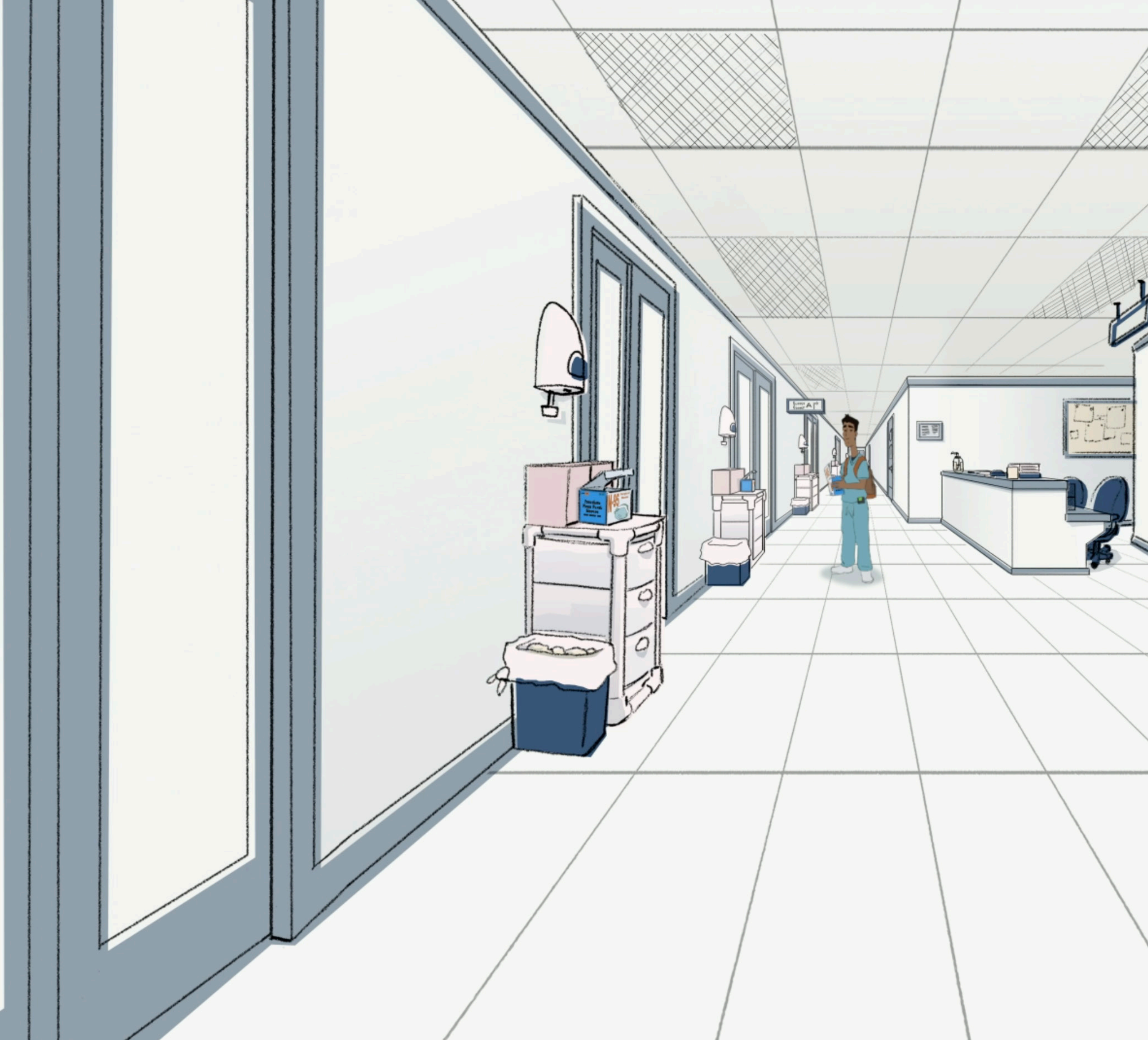
- 3.14.20 -

My brother is eight years older than me. I've never seen him fearful of anything until one night in March when he called me after his shift. He wasn't afraid of the virus or the looming shutdowns, but after a long day of treating COVID patients, he was terrified to come home. Even though he was taking every precaution, he was terrified that he might come home and infect his seventeen month old daughter or his wife who was thirty-four weeks pregnant. He'd shower after work, wash his scrubs every night - they even rented an apartment across the street in case he got COVID in the weeks proceeding his wife's due date. The strangest thing to me, though, was that he kept a reused N95 mask in his backpack. There was already a severe shortage of PPE nationwide and he knew it was only going to get worse.

That night he couldn't sleep so he channeled his fears and anxiety into an essay. It was incredibly moving and many encouraged him to publish it. Like most healthcare providers, though, he knew he could lose his job for speaking out. So I called a friend of mine and we went to work.

For seven months, our small team of students and recent grads rallied around this project. I was shocked at how many people were willing to volunteer their time to get this project off the ground, and it's because of their hard work that this film exists today. While my brother never published, "Can I Have a Mask", he continued to write. Two of his essays are now published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

This is his story.





Sahan Jayawardena

D I R E C T O R

Growing up in rural Iowa, Sahan used film to explore and diversify his perspective of the world. He pursued a BFA in Film with a focus in documentary filmmaking at Syracuse University. During his time in undergrad, he worked at the Cannes Film Festival, Toronto Film Festival, and the American Film Market. From there he moved to Los Angeles, where he started working at CAA before moving to PICTURESTART. As an aspiring writer/director, Sahan strives to provide a global perspective on local issues with a strong focus on culturally identity.



Asitha Jayawardena, MD, MPH

E X E C U T I V E P R O D U C E R

Dr. Asitha Jayawardena is a fellowship-trained pediatric otolaryngologist. His training included medical school at University of Iowa, otolaryngology - head and neck surgical residency at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and a pediatric otolaryngology fellowship at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary (Harvard Medical School). He has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications including leading journals such as the New England Journal of Medicine. Dr. Jayawardena has been an invited speaker at both national and international meetings including the World Congress of ENT, World Congress of Pediatric Otolaryngology, and the World Congress of Endoscopic Ear Surgery.



Joshua McMaster

P R O D U C E R , S T O R Y B O A R D S , A N I M A T I C , A N I M A T I O N

Growing up, Joshua fell in love with the masterful storytelling and technical intricacy found in animation through the movies of Pixar and Studio Ghibli. He began storyboarding and producing while studying animation at Syracuse University. After hearing Dr. Jayawardena's story, it was clear that "Can I Have a Mask" could harness the strengths of animation to bring humanity to the story of our frontline healthcare workers amid the scary new reality of COVID-19. He is proud and grateful to have worked with our dedicated and skillful crew of artists to tell a story that has resonated with so many people.



Ben Tomimatsu

B A C K G R O U N D S

An LA boy through and through, Ben Tomimatsu is a visual development and comic artist who is a magna cum laude graduate from Syracuse University with a BFA in Illustration. Currently obtaining his MFA in animation from UCLA, Ben believes cartooning to be an ideal way to introduce audiences to nuanced ideas. From light-hearted slice-of-life comics, to constantly weaving his deep interests in cityscapes, transit, history, and his own ethnic heritage into the work he produces, Ben continues to create while seeking out new challenges and opportunities to grow as an artist.



Jillian Cabrera

A N I M A T I O N

Jillian graduated with a BFA in Computer Art and Animation at Syracuse University and is currently pursuing an MFA in Animation at Savannah College of Art and Design. He specializes in character art and character animation.

As an artist, he emphasizes the idea of the inner voice; that we all have a story to share. For Jillian, animation is the best medium through which we can share this story. It offers a freedom to explore whatever our minds desire. As an animator, he can communicate to his audience how he sees the world, and maybe in the process, share a way of understanding it.



Mayanthi Jayawardena

G R A P H I C D E S I G N

Mayanthi, the founder of Serendib Creative, is a proud Sri Lankan-American artist of all trades. Mayanthi channels her passion through murals, digital illustration, photography, and videography. Mayanthi's award winning art is internationally recognized and has been featured from North Carolina to Australia. Mayanthi's art is an expressive blend of her Sri Lankan culture and her life experiences.



Martin Hilligoss

S O U N D D E S I G N & S O U N D M I X

Martin Hilligoss is a Los Angeles based filmmaker originally from Oregon. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Cinema Studies from the University of Oregon, and is now pursuing his MFA in Film & TV Production at USC School of Cinematic Arts.

In addition to being a Writer and Director, Martin is also an Editor, Sound Designer and Sound Mixer. He is passionate about using all elements of film to tell a story and enjoys collaborating with his colleagues to do so.



Matt Kerr

C O M P O S E R

A composer with a musical background and a B.F.A. in Film, Matt has had the opportunity to score over thirty different projects in the last five years. From PSAs to absurdist comedies to horror shorts, he's been able to create music for the screen in a variety of tones. Studying directing for four years at Syracuse University and writing/directing multiple projects of his own, Matt understands the power that music has in video content as well as the necessary balance between video and audio in a project.

CAST & CREW

D: Sahan Jayawardena

P: Sahan Jayawardena, Joshua McMaster

EP: Asitha Jayawardena, MD, MPH

Storyboard and Animatic: Joshua McMaster

Backgrounds: Ben Tomimatsu

Animation: Joshua McMaster, Jillian Cabrera, Abigail O'Reilly, Kyra Swander, Adam Lopez

Composer: Matt Kerr

Sound Design: Martin Hilligoss

Ink & Paint: Joshua McMaster, Jillian Cabrera, Abigail O'Reilly, Kyra Swander, Adam Lopez,
Abby Turner, Dawn Adepoju, Mayanthi Jayawardena, Lauren Foster

Graphic Design: Mayanthi Jayawardena, Serendib Creative

Special Thanks: NPR, NCPR, WBUR

Baby: Noelle & Skylar Jayawardena

