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The acting students of the FTII present their Hindi adaptation of Reginald Rose's play *Twelve Angry Men*

The Deciding Factor

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A boy is convicted of murdering his father. A jury of 12 people gather to decide the fate of the accused. This premise of the 1954 teleplay, *Twelve Angry Men*, by American playwright Reginald Rose inspired the acting students at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII). A group of 20 got together, studied the characters, rehearsed their roles and are now ready with a Hindi adaptation, titled *Faislaa*.

Directed by Arvind Pandey, the play will be performed by two groups of 10 students each. Even though the teleplay has been previously adapted into a play, an English film and a Hindi film (*Ek Ruka Hua Faisla*), it wasn't easy to put it together as a Hindi play, admits Pandey. They tried their best to stay true to the original plot. "But we have only

10 jurors and not 12 and some are women too. For the 10 characters, we had to come up with backgrounds, personalities and even behavioural characteristics that were in sync with the original. That took some time and work," he says.

Like the original plot, the jurors in the Hindi adaptation are given the task of deciding the fate of the accused boy. The judge informs them that he will be given the death sentence if found guilty of the murder of his father. As the plot unravels, the different professions of the jurors and the reasons for their particular points of view come to the fore.

Hemant Pandey, one of the students of Group A, says, "I play the role of Juror no 4, who is a stock broker. Since he has always seen life as a profit or loss statement, he goes along with the circumstantial evidence and



finds the boy guilty." For his role, he met stockbrokers to analyse the manner in which they speak and behave to add authenticity to his acting.

As the play opens, it is Juror no 8 who first pronounces the accused as 'not guilty'. Tarun

Wadhwa, of Group B, who essays the role, says, "My character is an architect. He tends to look at all possible outcomes. In fact, he is sure from the beginning that the boy is not guilty." His character faces numerous odds, as he has to convince the others

about the obvious errors in the evidence. "I prepared for the role by watching the film and the manner in which the juror put forth his point to the others," he adds. Their efforts will be presented to an audience on February 17 and 18 at the main theatre of the FTII.