 Production Shooting Script – Rida

Rida Khan, 19, Victoria

| Segment | Format beats | Rida’s story |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Hero introduction (approx. 0:30) | * Rida introduces herself – a brief summation of who she is, where she comes from and what she does. * Rida talks about where she is now, and teases back to the fact there’s been a dramatic change in her life, which leads us to the beginning of her MY24 journey. | Example needs to be in Rida’s words:   * Hi, I’m Rida and I’m 19 years old. * I live in Melbourne. * Likes/dislikes * Quirky fact about herself * My life used to be very strict and traditional, and for a long time, it didn’t bother me because I was happy – but when I moved to Australia, I gained independence and education, but both of those wonderful things ended up costing me an awful lot more than I ever thought possible. |
| Life before (approx. 1:30) | * Relationships to friends, family, attitude towards life, school, and so on * There is a focus on illustrating the aspects of her life that will come to be directly affected by her life-changing experience, and is a clear set-up for the forthcoming MY24. * Need to ensure the ‘Life before’ segment is clearly different from the ‘Pay-off segment’ and ‘Life now’ beats towards the end of the episode, so the sense of transformation of Rida (both in terms of character and story) is clear. | Before her MY24, Rida was living a privileged but relatively traditional life, the first girl amongst 20 boys in her extended family. Having grown up in a middle class Islamic family in Pakistan with maids and many other trappings of wealth, Rida’s family migrated to Australia when she was 11 and it came as a shock.  Rida arrived in Australia in 2005 at the age of 11 years old. Her father, a university professor of ornithology, and her mother, a molecular biologist, had already moved their family from Pakistan (when Rida was age 3) to Japan (Rida age 3-7) and then back to Pakistan (Rida age 7-10) before coming to Australia. Rida speaks fondly of her time in Japan and credits it as the happiest years of her childhood when they all lived together as a family unit.   * Tell us more about this time – why was it so happy, what do you remember, how did you spend time together as a family, and so forth.   Rida’s parents had applied for Australian citizenship in 1994 and when it came through several years later, they thought why not give it a go. Rida’s parents have very strong traditional views and high expectations about education.   * What can you tell us about their traditional views and the expectations they had? Tell us how you felt about moving to Australia – Were you excited? Looking forward to it? Nervous?   When they arrived in Australia, they lived in Horsham, a country town full of other migrants. Rida and her family including Mum, Dad, brother Saif and sister Rawa, lived in a small house with only two bedrooms. (Later on, her brother Safi was born in Australia too.) Rida describes her house as a birdcage – square, brown and like a trap. They lived 36 steps from their school so that her parents could keep a very close eye on them and make sure they attended school and got an education. This was very important to them, especially coming from an Asian culture.   * Did you and your family have much to do with the local community then? Did you family enjoy living there?   For the first two years, Rida hated Australia. She didn’t know the language, was going through puberty and found it tough to fit in at school. She was bullied and teased, however found life became easier as her English improved.  Although they were living in Australia, at home, Rida felt that her parents had a lack of cultural understanding of Australia and still forced their Pakistani values on her.   * Can you give us an example of their lack of cultural understanding of Australia?   As a female, Rida was not allowed out of the house. She was either in the house, school or under the watchful eye of her mother out and about at the supermarket.   * Can you tell us how this made you feel? Did you feel stuck between two cultures? What were the ramifications of that?   Rida often got into arguments with her parents over her manner towards her elders. Her parents were cross with her if she spoke to adults addressing them by their first names. They were also insistent that she wore a headscarf to school. The headscarf was the cause of much contention. Rida felt that wearing it increased bullying at school and her father was only insistent that she wear it because his friend’s daughter wore a headscarf in school. Before this point, both in Japan and Pakistan, Rida and her mother never wore the headscarf. She felt it was hypocritical that she wore the headscarf and her mother did not.   * How did your parents react to this? Did you ever take it off when you got to school? What were the kids saying at school? How were they bulling you?   Over time, as Rida’s English improved, so did her school life and she found that at school she began to have a voice and feel equal to the boys and the Australian kids. However, at home, she felt her voice was not heard at all and her opinion was never valued.   * Can you give us any examples of your opinion not being listened to by your family? Did you ever try and explain how you were feeling about being torn between two cultures to your parents? If so, how did they react?   After 18 months of living in Australia, Rida’s father was unable to find work as a professor of ornithology. He was told he was over-qualified and so he returned to Pakistan, leaving his wife and three children in Australia as a temporary measure.   * How did you feel about this? Were you relieved, worried or felt a bit more free?   Rida felt that her brother Saif got on fine in school because he was good at sports and her younger sister Rawa was really happy and loved living in Australia – she spoke excellent English and even had an Australian accent.   * What was your relationship like with your siblings? Did they ever have problems with your parents’ expectations?   Rida felt like the problem child, feeling that the headscarf made life harder for her and acted as a barrier between her and the other children in school. Over time, she embraced Australian culture and the language. For Rida, life became happier in school than it did at home as she struggled with the challenges of living in two cultures – one at home and one in school.   * Can you tell us what changed at school to make you feel happier? Did you make more friends?   Interviews:   * Megan – best friend from school years 8-12   + Rida had stayed with her family as a place of refuge when her MY24 happened. |
| MY24 statement (approx. 0:30) | * In her own words, Rida makes a decisive statement about her MY24 moment in Act 1. * This is the inciting incident to the ensuing drama and creates curiosity in the audience. For example, “My life changed completely the day I was confronted by police in the principal’s office.” | Example needs to be in Rida’s words:   * My life changed the day I called Child Protection Services to…   Rida’s MY24 came the day she picked up the phone to call Child Protection Services. She had come to a stalemate with her family – they had expected her to lead the traditional life they had planned and wanted her to travel back to Pakistan where Rida would inevitably face an arranged marriage. She flatly refused and the tension was extreme. Rida could not understand her father’s determination to take away her freedom and felt threatened by his fury. She was 16 and the decision to make a stand for herself would change the trajectory of her life completely. |
| The MY24 (approx. 3:00) | * Rida goes back to give us a blow-by-blow account of their MY24 in detail from her perspective. We track through the moment or event chronologically to induce a growing sense of drama, including:   + What happened? When? Where? How?   + What was she thinking while it was happening?   + What did she do?   + How did she feel? * This event is the cause of their life transformation, so it must carry weight for Rida and the audience. * This account leads us to understand clearly the inciting incident Rida referred to in her MY24 statement – it makes sense now. * This is the cause of great transformation that life is now offering. | The lead up to MY24:  Every school holiday in Pakistan, Rida’s father would come over to Australia to visit Rida, her siblings and mother. His holidays with them were often tense as he had been away for most of the year and he had a limited respect for Australian culture and did not handle the culture shock well.  One day, Rida had paid to attend a course in Melbourne and had arranged to take a cab to the venue. When she told her father, he forbade her to take a taxi to Melbourne. In Pakistan if a woman travelled alone in a taxi she was at risk of being attacked as taxi drivers had bad reputations for such crimes, Rida’s Dad felt the same way about taxi drivers in Australia.  When she protested and stood up for things being different in Australia, her father did not like it and felt that she had become headstrong. Rida’s father declared that he was going to take them all back to Pakistan. Fearing a life of an inevitable arranged marriage and poor education, Rida fought with her father to stay. She had tried so hard to make her life work in Australia that she did not want to give up and leave it behind. Outraged by her standing up for herself he argued and beat her.   * Does she want to talk about this, or did we decide to just say they fought?   The following day (Rida’s MY24), Rida called child protection services and the police for their support after her experience of domestic violence. The police were very firm with Rida’s father who made it very clear that although things may be acceptable or expected in other countries, it would not be accepted in Australia. The police asked Rida if she wanted to press charge. She said no but wanted to be placed with a different family. She took refuge with her friend Megan and her family. She remained there for 3 weeks without her family knowing where she was.   * Tell us about what it was like staying with Megan’s family for those three weeks. How did you feel? Did you have any second thoughts?   Rida’s family placed all the blame of the incident on her, declaring she had brought shame on the family for bringing the police and child protection services into an issue that should have been kept within the family home.   * How did you cope with knowing this was what your family thought, and that you could do nothing to change their perspective?   Interviews:   * Megan Portelli (best friend) * Lynette Portelli (Megan’s mum who offered her a place to stay at time of MY24) * Margaret Cooper (first councillor at Wimmera Counselling Care) |
| New direction statement (approx. 0:30) | * This is a moment of self-revelation – we can clearly see how Rida’s MY24 event has changed her perspective of her life forever, and through the revelation, she has a new view of life and the future. * Rida succinctly defines the new path she’s found herself on – her new goal, the new purpose she wants to strive for and achieve. * This occurs at the end of the MY24 account, leading directly into ‘The impact’. | Example needs to be in Rida’s words.  Self-revelation – Rida realised the only way to live the life she wanted was to become self-reliant and live independently of her family who, although had hurt her, she still loved.  New path – Rida needs to talk about her new goal – living independently, the purpose of this newfound independence, and what she hoped to achieve with it. |
| The impact (approx. 3:00) | * Rida works through the impacts of the life-changing event – her decision takes her on a journey, one filled with new experiences and new people, combined with problems and obstacles that need to be overcome. * Other people in her life share their views on the impacts and obstacles of Rida’s story * This narrative builds as we head closer to seeing Rida achieve her goal – we get a clear sense she has been changed by her choices. | The impact of Rida’s MY24 was dramatic. Because she was removed from her family home, her life was altered forever. Standing up for herself put her in a position of control over her own life in a way she never would have dreamed of had she still been living in Pakistan.   * What did it feel like to know you were suddenly in charge of your whole life, for the rest of your life? Did you ever question the sacrifice?   She was placed in supportive housing and, with guidance from her counsellor and social workers, at 16 had to learn to support herself like an adult. At this time, Rida had to grow up in a short space of time. She had to deal with lawyers and landlords to help find accommodation, she had to support herself financially and still go to school and focus on studies.   * Tell us how you felt when this was happening – how were you dealing with it all?   She took a job at a pizza place and later in retail to help pay the rent. She continued her studies initially (despite the stress of having broken away from her family who she still loved very much), but then the workload became too much, and she decided to take a year out of high school to work in the pizza place.   * Can you tell us how you juggled all of this, and how you coped?   Even though it was not an ideal job, she felt completely liberated to be earning her own money and to make her own decisions. She had much support from the Wimmera Uniting Care unit and had a mentor called John who helped with groceries and counselling. She received legal aid to help find accommodation, as she had to be age 17 to sign a lease.   * Tell us how it felt when you got your own place and independence? What did that feel like, and what were some of the first things you did in your own place?   In August, Rida’s father went back to Pakistan for the start of the school year and then Rida’s mother and siblings followed him in November.   * How did Rida find out about this? How did it make her feel? Was she still in contact with her siblings? Does she know how they felt?   Interviews:   * Megan and Lynette Portelli * Margaret Cooper * Other work colleagues? |
| Pay-off statement (approx. 0:30) | * In her own words, Rida crystallises her achievements as a result of her MY24 moment and its impacts – this second turning point mirrors the MY24 statement at the turning point of Act 1. * This section, directly following ‘The impact’, gives the audience a firm understanding of what the physical and emotional actions of Rida have led to – this is the ‘Pay-off statement’.   + It may be a specific tangible achievement, or a stage of their personal development that is well underway and moving towards achievement.   + It may be a realisation that has come through the actions and obstacles outlined in ‘The impact’ that is leading them to a new, more ambitious goal.   + It could be an achievement that is introspective – a character shift and new understanding of their purpose in life and how they relate to the world around them. * This segment is in direct contrast to the ‘Life before’ section at the beginning of the story – it must clearly show Rida in a different phase of life, having clearly developed as a character in her actions and her understanding of her life and her place in it. | Example needs to be in Rida’s words.  Rida talks about her sacrifice, and what it’s led to for her – how it’s given her true independence, and what this independence has done for her life.  Rida has had to learn true independence. And though tough at times, she’s managed to make the absolute most of it. Rida has held onto her faith though chooses to no longer wear the hijab.  This seems to be a combo of a realisation and introspective for Rida’s ‘Pay-off statement’. |
| Life now (approx. 2:00) | * Rida gives us an account of life now – what she’s doing, study, friends, social and family life – a rounded summary that illustrates just how far she’s come since the start of her story. * There should be a brief moment of reflection about the journey she’s been on. | Now Rida is 18 and a truly productive, independent, free-spirited young woman. She got through her VCE with flying colours and with sponsorship from the tax office, is studying and living on campus at Monash University, which she loves.   * Can you tell us more about your university life, and how your independence at such a young age has helped you now?   Importantly, she has begun to repair the relationship with her family. They speak regularly over Skype and her parents have come to terms with her decision to stay in Australia. They can see that it has been the right decision for her and that she’s making the most of the education and other opportunities open to her.   * How did this reconciliation come about – can you tell us more?   Rida has become involved in community radio, starting up her own program about diversity in Australia.   * Can you tell us more about this program? How did you start it? What inspired you? How do you feel like your past challenges helped you with this?   She loves writing and has won several short story competitions. In 2012, she went back to Pakistan to see her family after 2 years of not seeing them.   * What was this visit like? How did you feel, and how did your family react?   She’s discovered a passion for fancy dress parties and hanging out with her friends. Along with her studies, she’s leading a full and very happy life.  Interviews:   * Friends and work colleagues |
| The future (approx. 0:30) | * Rida gives us a short summation of what she sees for herself in the future:   + What will she be doing?   + What will she continue with?   + What will she leave behind? * There must be a sense of forward momentum and a continued path that her MY24 has put her on. | The future is looking just as full but not quite as traumatic as the past few years for Rida. She has continued to work on her new radio program called ‘Colourful Australia’, and she’s working on her first novel while continuing her studies.  Rida is determined to contribute to cultural understanding in the community and greater freedoms for personal choice. She has dreams of one day becoming a philanthropist and helping to rebuild communities in poorer nations. She also hopes to study psychology so she can better counsel those she helps. She’ll continue to repair the bonds with her family but is unsure if she’ll ever be able to trust them again. For the time being, she is happy to know that they can all still admit to loving one another very much.   * Rida needs to reflect on her MY24, and how it changed her life – how different her ‘Life before’, and ‘Life now’ are, and what life would have been like if her MY24 had never happened. * What does she think the future holds for her relationship with his family? * What is she leaving behind, and what is she moving forward with? * What else does she see herself doing in the future? (Friends, career, and so on) * What are her hopes/goals? |