





Max Pinckers

The Fourth Wall





The Emperor asked the painter to paint the screens of his bedroom. The painter drew a landscape of mountains and waterfalls. A few days later the Emperor complained: 'Your waterfalls make too much noise. I can no longer sleep.'





Onlookers thought they were witnessing a film shoot, while police inspector Vinod said he thought the youths fleeing in the speeding car were terrorists.



















AS soon as they spotted me, they started firing. A bullet hit my stomach. When I screamed, they ran outside and again opened fire while getting into a car parked outside. Two more bullets hit my shoulders.



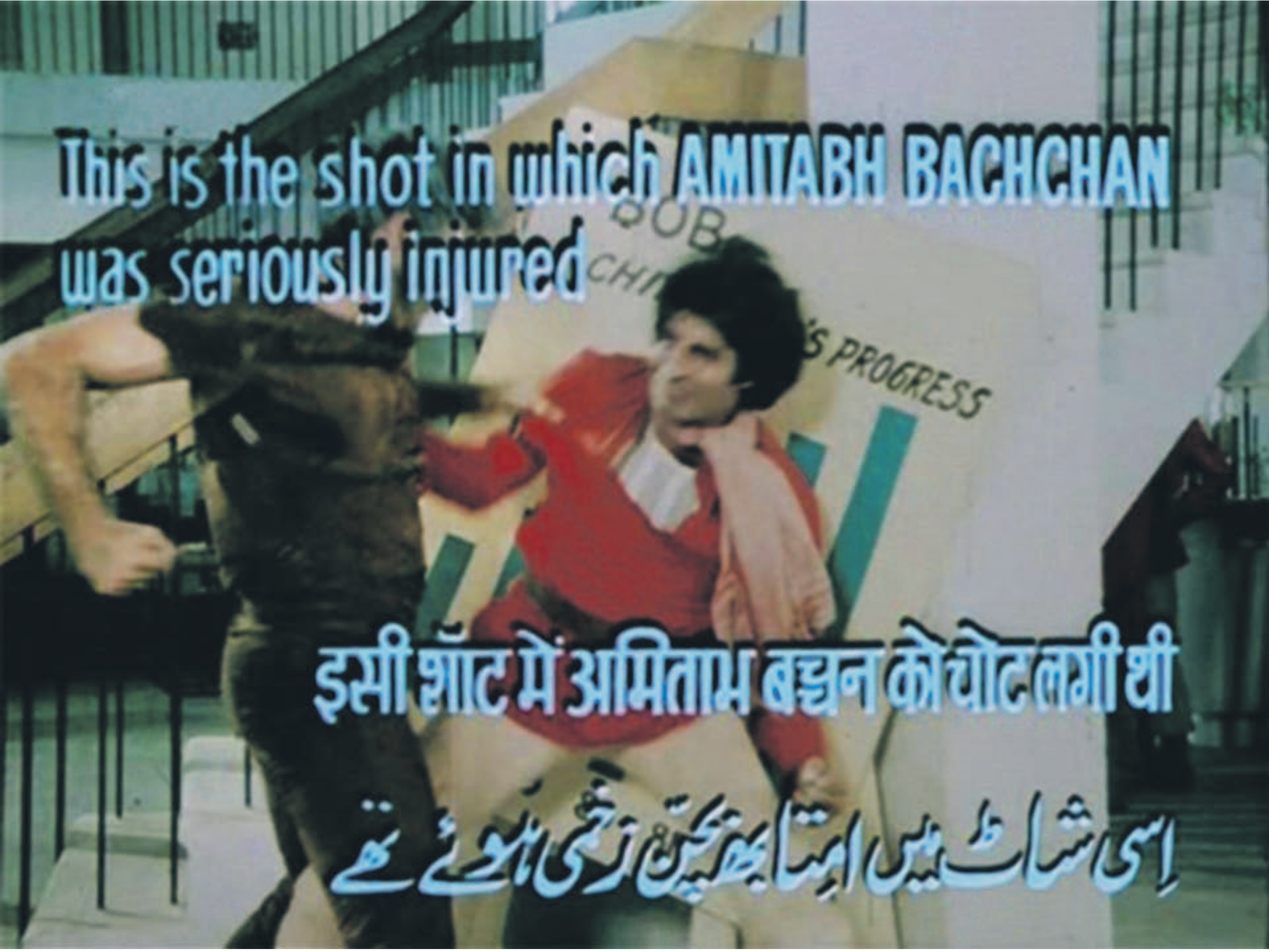








His conscience did not allow him to kill the man on-screen, who just fought death and survived the biggest battle of his life.

A still from a movie showing a man in a red shirt being hit by a large wooden block. The man is looking back over his shoulder with a pained expression. The block has the words "BOB CHITRA'S PROGRESS" and a green checkmark on it. The background shows a building with a staircase.

This is the shot in which AMITABH BACHCHAN  
was seriously injured

इसी शॉट में अमिताभ बच्चन को चोट लगी थी

اسی شاکٹ میں امیتا بھکچن زخمی ہوئے تھے



































All it took was  
a photograph  
of the so-called  
masterpiece to  
blow the lid on  
the art heist that  
wasn't.

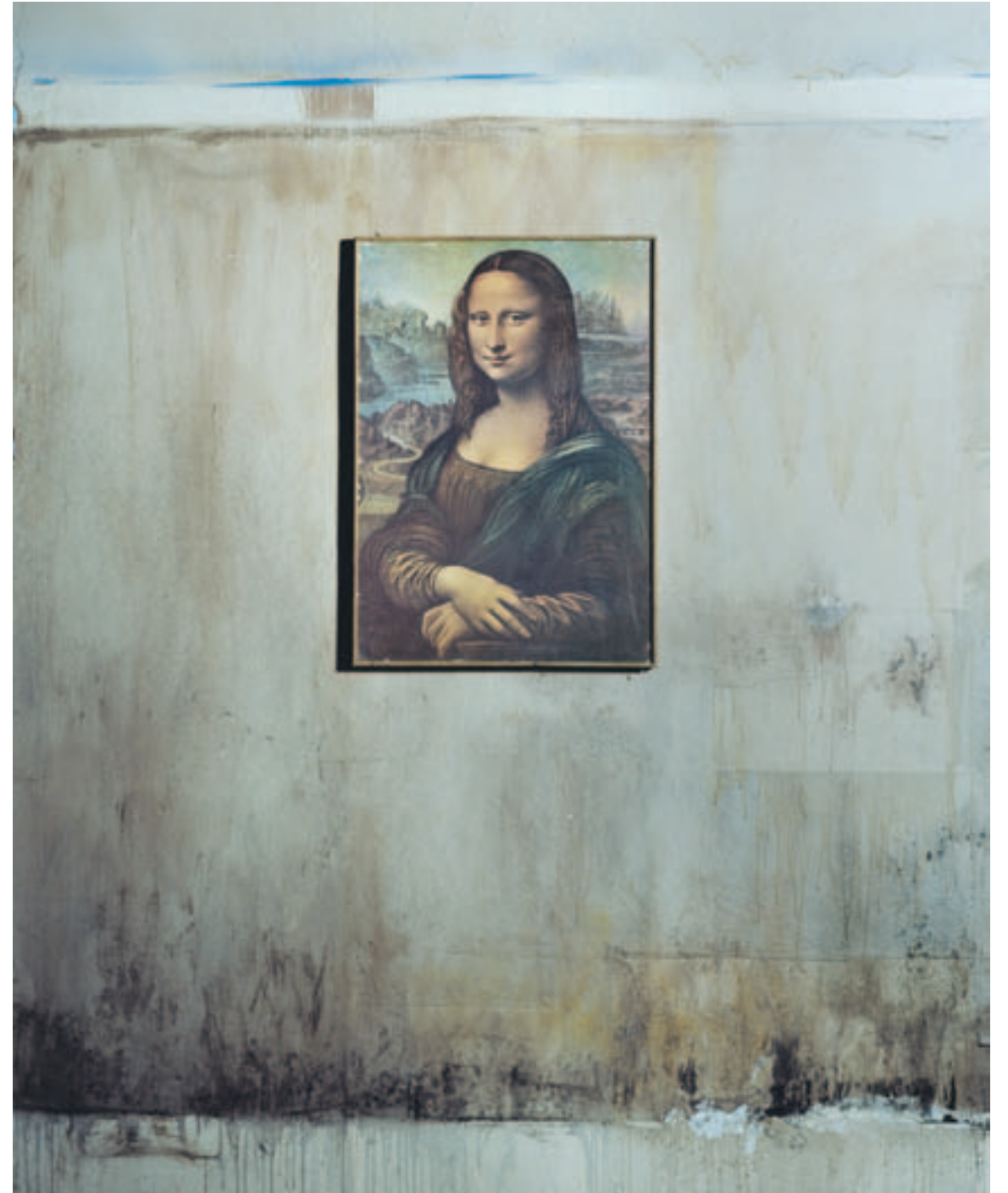


























The plots on  
the napkin.

Anyone  
interested in  
the movie?



























Oiled men in shorts climb impossible trees and bound across rooftops like gazelles. They are 'adivasis' who break into your houses, rob your money and clothes, rape women and sell girls into the sex trade. If they find a newborn, they rip the baby apart to satiate their hunger by drinking the blood.



































Schoolgirl runs  
away from home  
to Mumbai in  
search of her idol  
Salman Khan,  
only to find herself  
lost in the middle  
of an unknown city.















the Heera-Panna Shopping Centre that Saturday. When he shows up, she is very happy to see him and tells him so. They stroll along the lanes of the mall, just a regular guy and his girl, just like all the other dating couples from Malabar Hill and Breach Candy, and he thinks he notices some of the men look in her direction and then look at him with envy and admiration. They walk past an electronics shop, and she squeals, turns to him and says, 'Oh, that's such a nice juicer! You know, the doctor's asked my mother to drink fresh juice every morning!' And so, gallant that he is, he will walk into the store and, without asking the price, tell the clerk, 'That juicer. Pack it.' They will go into other stores. 'That's such a lovely shirtpiece,' she says. 'It would look great on my little brother.' As a reward, she might lead him into a lingerie store and get the clerk to show them their most exciting underwear. She might deliberate over the purchases, holding the bra over her shirt, the G-string over her crotch, might ask him to admire the material, giggle over her naughtiness. The clerk has seen all this before, many times, and he plays his part well, showing them his most expensive wares, addressing the suitor with the respect appropriate for a big man, a ladies' man. He orders Cokes for both of them, which takes some time coming, during which she keeps making more purchases, so that every time the man makes a move to go, the clerk protests, 'But the cold drinks are just coming, sir!' The clerk knows he is too embarrassed to ask the prices of the items he is buying, so they can be made up on the spot; the next day the girl will come back with her wispy purchases and bargain hard over splitting up the spoils. But in the meantime the suitor is thinking of her in all of these items, that red lace bra, those see-through panties. He is determined that tonight he will see her in them, and then he will see her without them.

The shopping expedition might have cost him over a lakh. He will have to ask the bhai to send down some more money, and in return he will have to kill or beat someone for the gang. On his way out, he says to her with urgency, 'After you get off work tonight, you're coming with me.' This time he will not take no for an answer. This time she can see he intends to have his way or she will lose him. He will curse her and never come to the bar again, and neither will his money.

So she will finally say, 'Okay, tonight.' And after the bar closes, he will be waiting outside for her, and they might take a taxi to a good hotel—the Oberoi or the Taj or the Marine Plaza.

Or, if the girl is more imaginative, if she has poetry about her, they will do what Anees the gangster tells me they have done with him. She will use the birds.

'You have to go to Haji Ali, to drink juice at 1 a.m.,' he begins. Haji Ali is the tomb of a Sufi saint, and there is a causeway leading off the road to go to his tomb, on which there is always a line of Hindus and Muslims both seeking the blessings of the saint. Every year, on a monsoon high tide, waves wash some of the worshippers from the exposed causeway. The taxi drivers touch their lips and their heart as they drive by Haji Ali. At night it becomes a juice centre. When I was growing up, I used to be taken by my parents after an evening in a restaurant to Haji Ali, where we would sit in the car and a man would bring fresh juice to our car windows. The breeze that comes in off the sea from the west cools you, and the iced juice with a little masala refreshes you and is good for your health. I did not know then what Mohsin and Anees told me, that one of the people associated with the juice stand is a brown sugar smuggler, dealing in very large heroin shipments. To me it was just a beautiful place to drink a non-alcoholic beverage.

So at 1 a.m. the suitor will be waiting for the bar girl in a taxi at Haji Ali, anxiously scanning every person walking towards him, every car that pulls up. She might be late, he might think she's ditched him and might start cursing her, but then finally she shows up and she takes his breath away, she is so beautiful. When she gets in the taxi with him she is dressed in a miniskirt, and he notices how smooth and fair her thighs are. He smells her perfume. She is wearing something that leaves her arms bare, or she is wearing a sari and a backless blouse. She is not smiling now, she is not meeting his eyes now. She is watching the sidewalk for something, until finally she sees him: a man with a couple of cages slung over his shoulder, filled with birds.

She gives the taxi driver a fifty and tells him to take a walk, go drink some juice.

She calls out to the bird seller and he comes over. His cages have tiny songbirds fluttering about inside, with beaks of different



colours. The dancer asks her man to buy some of the birds—six for five hundred rupees; 'If you want more fun take a dozen,' advises Anees—and the girl rolls up all the windows of the taxi and opens the door of the cage and all the birds fly out and fill the small dark taxi with their energy and their music. She laughs with delight and asks her man to play a game with her: Catch the birds. They reach out their hands to grab the birds, which are small and quick, and they have to wave their arms wildly about even to touch them. As the girl and her ardent suitor reach out to catch a bird, they sometimes, accidentally, can't help touching each other. This is new for the man—remember, he hasn't touched her up to this point. As a bird lands on her shoulder, he must make a grab for it, and if the bird flies off, his hand lands on her shoulder. If it should fly close to her breast, why, it is within the rules of the game that he should try his best to capture the songbird, which might just be that little bit too quick for him, and his hand, in its dart forward, might meet with something else, softer, harder. And so the whole of the tiny Fiat taxi is filled with birdsong, her giggling, his laughter, and, every now and then, a quick female gasp. And so it is that at last, at long last, the dancing girl and her patient suitor go all soft and hot in the back of the taxi, the space around them filled with fluttering and panicked songbirds.

Half an hour or an hour later, the door of the taxi opens and half a dozen or a dozen dead birds are thrown out on the road. If there are any remaining alive, they fly out over the great dark sea, free at last.

#### MONALISA DANCES

I started going to the beer bars because I was puzzled. I couldn't figure out why men would want to spend colossal amounts of money there. On a good night a dancer in a Bombay bar can make twice as much as a high-class stripper in a New York bar. The difference is that the dancer in Bombay doesn't have to sleep with the customers, is forbidden to touch them in the bar, and wears more clothes on her body than the average Bombay secretary does on the broad public street.

The more timid admirers will give their money to the dancer who will shuffle it out over the palm, a more precise paper, easier to collect and allot to customers like to play games. A dance lottery with one of her customers of paper, on each of which is a dance and then picks up or like him, can sustain an illusion her that amount, it could a 100,000 rupees. Ar along with the song, which he holds, and not even a guide Mustafa quickly, a code printer, pieces of Ying, in a has a pier,

In the mid-1990s, sub-brokers could make two lakh a day from cheating a client, telling him his shares were sold at a few paise lower than they really were, pocketing the difference—and then blowing it away as easily as it came, in the beer bars. The boom went bust, but Mustafa is still here, drinking his rum with soda and Coke.

The customers literally blow money on the dancers. They will walk up to the dance floor and stand with a stack of notes over the head of the favoured dancer. The notes, in an expert hand, traverse the distance between customer and dancer on air and fluff out, forming a halo or fan around the girl, enveloping her in the supreme grace of currency, its wealth adding immeasurably to the radiance of her face, exalting her in this most commercial of cities, until the floor is littered with rupee notes and the male attendants scurry around to collect them and deposit them in the dancer's account.



































A guy from the  
slums becomes a  
millionaire over-  
night. You know  
the only other  
person who's done  
that? Me.







































The duo  
broke into the  
actress' home  
using sleep-  
inducing gas.























Sonali was  
very curious  
to know if  
there was life  
after death.

























07/28/2008 9:30 am







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[in order of appearance]



‘The Emperor Suan Sung asked the painter Li Chin Chi to paint the screens of his bedroom. The painter drew a landscape of mountains and waterfalls. A few days later the Emperor complained: “Your waterfalls make too much noise. I can no longer sleep”.’

*Raul Ruiz, Poetics of Cinema, Éditions Dis Voir, Paris, 2005, p. 34.*

‘Onlookers thought they were witnessing a film shoot, while police inspector Vinod said he thought the youths fleeing in the speeding car were terrorists.’

*Cops, two ‘terrorists’ in 20-minute car chase  
The Times of India, Monday, July 11, 2011.*

MUMBAI: Curious onlookers and policemen suspected that the youths in the speeding car were fleeing ‘terrorists’. Police said the car belonged to Orix Auto Infrastructure Services Limited, which is in the fleet service business for the corporate sector. ‘Our driver, Subramani Devandran (29), after dropping a guest in Chembur, headed to Parel to pick up another, when the incident occurred. Devandran stopped at Parel for snacks and left the keys behind. The next moment, the accused stepped in and sped away. On seeing Devandran run behind the car, the four policemen got suspicious and chased it. When the police cornered the accused, they jumped out and started running along the main road in Sion,’ company fleet assistant Shashidharan Nair told TOI.

Onlookers thought they were witnessing a film shoot, while police inspector Vinod Randive said they thought the two in the car were terrorists. ‘Our suspicions were raised when, instead of stopping, they accelerated on hearing the siren. When the policemen closed in on them, they entered the bylanes on road 21 at BMC colony at high speed. After two rounds, they entered road 16, which led them to an exit point outside GTB railway station. They drove towards Sion-Chembur but they got caught in the traffic snarl and Kunchikurve was held,’ Randive said.

The accused have been booked under the Indian Penal Code sections 34 (common intention ), 379 (theft) and 427 (mischief causing damage) and they have been remanded to police custody till July 14.

*Agent Vinod: Movie Review  
The Times of India, Thursday, March 22, 2012.*

MUMBAI: He tries to be a Bond-cum-Bourne kind of a secret agent. More than an intelligence officer, he comes across as an action hero—a Singham over a spy. More than clothes, he changes countries. He can open any door, barge any security, escape every attack and kill any person. He has instant access to database of spies and terrorists across the globe at his fingertips. He is the man — Agent Vinod. All of that is acceptable as long as the intended espionage thriller has an inventive storyline. But after a world tour across half a dozen countries, the film culminates with a traditional climax where the Indian capital faces a nuclear-threat. The time bomb has to be detected, decoded and deactivated. The only novelty in the narrative is that our neighbouring country is not the perpetrator. It’s not the terrorists but some elite business community who spread terror around the world so that they can gain out of the sudden stock market fluctuations across the world. Ludicrous as it may sound, this is the film — Agent Vinod.

Agent Vinod (Saif Ali Khan) is an Indian intelligence officer who is on a mission to unearth a global conspiracy. A suitcase bomb is being stealthily shifted across countries to finally reach New Delhi where it’s targeted. En route Vinod meets Iram (Kareena Kapoor), a Pakistani agent who has her own agenda but subsequently helps him on his operation.

The spy thriller isn’t essentially designed as a suspense flick. Like his last film ‘Johnny Gaddaar’, Sriram Raghavan ensures that the viewer is aware of the villain’s identity at the very onset. The film is more about the hero’s journey to reach the rogue. Moreover there are so many of the scoundrels in the story, spread out



across several countries, that you lose track of the mastermind. The writing by Raghavan and Arijit Biswas, after a point, gets convoluted and manipulative to suit the scheme of things. Moreover the exaggerated action often overpowers the aptitude you expect from an espionage film. Also the action is more brawn over brain. Thankfully the romance track between Saif and Kareena isn't overblown. Their camaraderie is buildup amidst the central plot and the narrative never strays from its core genre. However at one point you do feel that the film is going off-track when the stylized spy flick ponders on the trials and tribulations in the life of an undercover agent. Further it attempts to explore their latent aspirations—he wanted to be a painter, she a doctor! Ah! Such pragmatism doesn't work in the larger-than-life picture. Mercifully their past isn't explored through actual flashback footages but is merely described through dialogues. Verbosity is better than visual atrocity.

Beyond some sporadic moments, the film lacks any underlying tone of humour, despite the potential. That makes the proceedings somewhat dry. The dialogues are plain functional. Pooja Ladha Surti's editing is smart and sassy and the long runtime doesn't hurt much. The action is slick but doesn't stand out. CK Muraleedharan's cinematography is competent. The background score which derives from James Bond signature tune and RD Burman numbers works well.

*Here comes the real Agent Vinod*  
*The Times of India, Monday, March 26, 2012.*

MUMBAI: Meet Mahendra Sandhu, the original Agent Vinod who even gets an honorary mention in the new Agent Vinod film by Saif Ali Khan. 'I'm still known as Agent Vinod after 35 years,' says Mahendra Sandhu. 'Cops at traffic signals, security guys at the airport still call me Agent Vinod. For years and even now people shout "Agent Vinod" when they spot me.'

‘As soon as they spotted me, they started firing. A bullet hit my stomach. When I screamed, they ran outside and again opened fire while getting into a car parked outside. Two more bullets hit my shoulders.’

*Cop on security duty shoots at self for medal*  
*The Times of India, Tuesday, March 22, 2011.*

JAIPUR: A police constable guarding the quarters of former BJP MLA Surendra Singh Rathore here on Sunday shot and injured himself allegedly in pursuit of gallantry medals and promotions.

Mahendra Rajguru, a constable with the Reserve Lines, was transferred to Rathore's security on March 16. He is now undergoing treatment at the SMS Hospital's ICU with three bullet injuries in his shoulder and stomach. Police have recovered some narcotic drugs from his quarters and claimed that Rajguru was under their influence when the incident happened.

According to police, the incident took place around midnight at bungalow number 208 in Frontier Colony near Adarsh Nagar belonging to MLA Surendra Singh Rathore. Panicked residents, after hearing a series of gunshots, informed the police. 'A police team was rushed to the spot and found Rajguru with three bullet injuries,' a senior police officer said. In his statement to police after the incident, Rajguru claimed that he spotted two to three people standing inside the bungalow premises. 'As soon as they spotted me, they started firing. A bullet hit my stomach. When I screamed, they ran outside and again opened fire while getting into a car parked outside. Two more bullets hit my shoulders,' Rajguru claimed in his statement. Rajguru further said he had also fired about 20–22 rounds from his gun and claimed that 'some bullets might have hit the men'. 'We registered an FIR on the basis of Mahendra's statement and launched a manhunt for the attackers,' the officer said. He, however, said when forensic examination of the spot was conducted, police found all empty cartridges belonged to Rajguru's gun and they started suspecting his story.



‘His conscience did not allow him to kill the man on-screen, who had just fought death and survived the biggest battle of his life.’

*1982 Coolie accident  
Hindustan Times, Friday, February 17, 2012.*

NEW DELHI: Who can forget the tragic Coolie accident that Bachchan met with while filming an action scene with co-star Puneet Issar. The actor nearly escaped death following the accident. In fact, he reportedly clinically died for eleven minutes. But like it happens in Bollywood films, he revived, as wife Jaya Bachchan exclaimed, ‘look, his toe is moving!’ But alas, that was just the starting of his health troubles.

During a 1983 interview, Bachchan realised how he was privileged to have the best of medicines, being imported from abroad, while others who did not have the luxury, suffered helplessly. In a 1983 interview the actor talked at length about the transformation he underwent post the Coolie accident — ‘There were people who wanted to know details as to how it all happened and whether it was the punch or the table or whatever,... and I tell them that it’s not important as to how I was injured, but what really is important is the lack of medical facilities after I was injured and what made me really aware of these factors when I was in the hospital was that we sadly lack timely facilities towards people who might be in a similar condition that I was.’

*Amitabh’s Injury on sets of ‘Coolie’ in 1982  
Breaking News online, Friday, February 10, 2012.*

Although Amitabh began his film career from ‘Saat Hindustani’ in 1969, he established himself in Hindi Cinema with his movie, ‘Zanjeer’ in 1973. He broke the traditional romantic era and impressed the audience with his ‘angry young man’ image. He was then offered films with fight sequences. Sometimes, experts from Hollywood were also invited to specially direct certain tough action scenes only for Amitabh, like the beginning ‘train-Dacoity’ scene in ‘Sholay’.

‘Coolie’ was made in 1982. The story was based upon the lifestyle of the railway coolies, where Amitabh himself was playing the character of a Coolie who was also the unofficial leader of them, fighting for their cause against the tyranny of the Wealthy heartless community. It was an action scene on 26 July 1982 when Amitabh was supposed to jump on to a table fighting with Puneet Issar. Perhaps that was a black day for Bachchan and the whole world of silver screen. When he jumped towards the table the corner of the table struck his abdomen, resulting in a spleeny rupture (injury to the spleen) from which he lost a significant amount of blood. Amitabh was rushed to the hospital for splenectomy and his condition remained critical for months. He spent time in the hospital struggling for his live. Amitabh’s fans and well wishers across the country were shocked and started prayers in temples, mosques and Churches. Also, there were long queues of well-wisher fans outside the hospital where he was recuperating. Such a massive display of love for an actor was witnessed earlier or till now.

By the grace of God, Amitabh defeated death and survived. He was again back to shooting and the film was released in 1983 making it a huge success due to the enormous pre-release publicity of Bachchan’s accident. Director Manmohan Desai altered the climax of ‘Coolie’ after this accident. The hero was supposed to die in the end, but the change of script made him alive, as Desai did not want to upset the Bachchan fans. His conscience too did not allow him to kill a man on-screen, who

just fought death and survived the biggest battle of his life. Also, in the released film, the footage of the fight scene is frozen at the accident moment and a caption appears onscreen marking this as the instance of the actor’s injury. After recovering from the catastrophe, Amitabh has acted in several films in the past few decades and gave many hits too. No actor (old or young) has been able to match his magic and charisma till date.

At the age of 69, Amitabh Bachchan is still strong and raring to go. He had undergone three surgeries in the last few decades because of some complications arisen out of that incident. But, he always emerged stronger.



# ‘All it took was a photograph of the so-called masterpiece to blow the lid on the art heist that wasn’t.’

*‘Hello, the Goya is still on our wall, thank you. (click)’  
The Times of India, Wednesday, February 15, 2012.*

MUMBAI: While the art world was stunned by the sudden discovery of a ‘priceless Goya’ in the house of a Mumbai property broker, leading to the suspicion that the painting may have been stolen, all it took was procuring a photograph of the so-called masterpiece to blow the lid on the art heist that wasn’t.

The version of Francisco Goya’s ‘Saturn Devouring His Son’, found in Majid Sultan Khan’s Oshiwara residence last Monday, even at first glance is no more than a cheap imitation of a timeless classic that has been on display since 1889 at Madrid’s Prado. The Oshiwara police supposedly discovered the painting in Sultan Khan’s home when they had gone there to search for illegal weapons following a tip-off last Monday. They noticed a large box in one of the rooms, and Khan, on being asked about it, told them that it contained a 19th century masterpiece by Goya. ‘Khan had to recover dues of about Rs 15–20 lakh from another property dealer. That person told him to take this painting instead, saying it was worth crores,’ senior police inspector Dilip Rupwate told Mumbai Mirror. The police sent the painting to the archaeological department in Sion, where experts are still speculating on the chance of it being a Goya, and are setting up a committee soon to verify its authenticity.

But the cops, after talking to officials at Prado, are already convinced that the painting is a fake. ‘Still, we are waiting for the report from Sion,’ Rupwate said, adding that Goya’s son had made certain replicas of his father’s work, and they’re trying to check if it could be one of them. Rupwate said that when they examined the 3.5x4.5 ft frame at Khan’s home they found it to be very old. Based on that, they arrested Khan for copyright violation. Khan was presented in court last week, where he was remanded to police custody for two days, following judicial custody. He was later released on bail. Despite attempts, Khan could not be reached for comments. When Mumbai Mirror contacted the museum in Spain, an amused official said they had been inundated with calls from India since morning. ‘Worry not,’ he said with a chuckle, ‘the priceless masterpiece is still safe, and not stolen.’

The painting was originally one of the murals at Goya’s home, La Quinta del Sordo. Saturn Devouring His Son, the most famous of his Black Paintings, depicts the Greek myth where Titan Cronus, fearing that he would be overthrown by his children, ate each one during their birth. The work is one of the 14 so-called Black Paintings that Goya painted directly onto the walls of his house sometime between 1819 and 1823. It was transferred to canvas after Goya’s death and has since been held in the Museo del Prado in Madrid.

# ‘The plot’s on the napkin. Anyone interested in the movie?’

*India: Maria Susairaj walks free—A case of chopped body  
The Times of India, Tuesday, July 5, 2011.*

Maria Susairaj walked free out of the jail on July 2. Will her mind be free from seeing the collage of images of her boyfriend allegedly chopping a body into pieces in front of her, with blood splattering all over and the possible guilt she faces hereafter?

MUMBAI: Cut to three years ago. An aspiring actress named Maria Susairaj makes contact with a creative director of a television channel for a role in a TV soap. Some arrangements are made between them and this creative director, Neeraj Grover, lands up at Maria’s house for a night out. In between their escapade, Susairaj keeps receiving angry calls from her boyfriend, Emile Jerome, telling her to throw Grover out, after knowing of his presence in the house. The boyfriend arrives at her house in the early morning only to get into a scuffle with Grover after seeing him in bed with his girlfriend.

Jerome, in a fit of anger and jealousy stabs the man several times, leaving him bleeding to death. As per Susairaj’s ‘constant statement to the police’ she told her boyfriend to take him to the hospital, but despite her pleas, Jerome, a trained naval officer who knew the consequences of bleeding profusely, refused to budge. Finally, they both decided to dispose off his body. But how? They devise an alleged plan to erase all evidence, which they perhaps think will save them from the police. They allegedly chop the body into pieces and burn it. Jerome told the young actress to buy choppers from a nearby shop. After her return, Jerome cuts the body in several pieces, stuffs it in a sports bag and both drive to a nearby jungle to burn the body. Hence, no trace of blood, body, motive, weapons, etc. All evidences wiped out. After a few days, both are arrested. The case begins. Every time a new confession from each of the offenders. The case is prolonged as there is no evidence of ‘what really happened and how it happened.’

Cut to the present, July 2. Over three years have passed, Susairaj who allegedly helped in the murder and who reports say misled the police, walks free from the jail and her boyfriend Jerome, will be free after 7 years. The whole nation of India was shocked with the intensity of the murder and is still numb from the verdict. Crying for justice are Grover’s parents. Even as Susairaj walks free, the case raises a number of pertinent questions, which are likely to remain unanswered.

One filmmaker is capitalizing by making a film on the issue and promoting it as ‘exploring the mindset at that very moment of killing, undertaken by people who are not killers or deranged people.’

*Neeraj Grover murder: Ram Gopal Verma wants to cast Maria Susairaj in film  
India Today, Saturday, July 3, 2011.*

Notoriety is turning out to be Maria Monica Susairaj’s ticket to stardom. On the day she walked out of Byculla Central Women’s Prison in Mumbai and appeared in a primetime-grabbing press conference, publicity-savvy Ram Gopal Varma announced he wanted to cast her as the heroine of his next film.

And now, there is the buzz that the producers of the television reality show, Bigg Boss, are keen to have her as a contestant on the upcoming Season 5. The irony is in-your-face. If Maria, a one-time struggling Kannada starlet, looks all set to get her real break on the hit TV show, she came in the limelight for the murder of TV producer Neeraj Grover in the first instance. It may be a while before she



signs Bigg Boss or Varma’s next film — or any other project, for that matter. But the potential spoils of her grizzly claim to fame were obvious on Saturday at the press meet her lawyer, Shaikh M. Sharif, and she held in Mumbai to clear her name.

Going by what happened at the conference, the onetime struggler is already a star. At the press meet, Maria cut a picture of demureness, letting her lawyer do most of the talking. As friends of Neeraj Grover — the man she was accused of killing (she has been let off with the lighter charge of destroying the evidence) — protested and as press photographers shamelessly reduced the event to a circus for photo-ops, it looked like she would break into tears any moment now. ‘I am innocent,’ she whispered into the microphone. ‘I am convicted and this is a big stigma in my life.’ Clearly, she chose her words well for maximum melodramatic effect, even as her lawyer dismissed all the charges levelled against her by the prosecution. Maria took the mike again and said in an emotion-choked whisper, her hand held by a relative: ‘The time I spent in jail was very...I should say blessed because I got close to God. It was He who brought me out today.’

If the press meet was a screen test of sorts, Maria must have impressed many sfilm producer who watched it live on TV. In Bollywood, abounding with examples such as Sanjay Dutt and Salman Khan, who walked straight out of jail to find plum film offers waiting for them, there should be a lot of scope for Maria. On May 7, 2007, Maria’s boyfriend Emile Jerome, a former navy officer, got into a fight with Grover at her flat in Mumbai’s Malad area. The altercation ended with Jerome stabbing the TV producer to death. Maria and Jerome, according to the prosecution, then cut Grover’s body into pieces, parcelled the pieces in plastic bags, and disposed of them in Thane’s Manor forest.

Meanwhile, Ram Gopal Varma, whose upcoming film Not A Love Story is based on the headline-grabbing murder, has already tweeted claiming he wants to cast her in his next project. ‘Maria Susairaj wanted to become famous as an actress and she became famous as a murderess,’ Varma wrote on his Twitter page. ‘If things went well it could have been a Rangeela for her. Since things went wrong, her dreams of becoming an actress went for a toss.’ And he added: ‘Now that she has been released I want to sign Maria Susairaj for a film.’ But Varma is known these days more for his penchant for courting controversy than the films he makes. A section of the industry, however, is guarded about taking Varma’s declaration seriously. It believes his offer to cast Maria in a film as nothing but a publicity gimmick for Not A Love Story.

On a cue, Varma said to agencies: ‘Movies are made for publicity. All that I do is for publicity. It is my job.’ Maybe Maria will have to take a lesson or two from the champion headline maker.

‘Oiled men in shorts climb impossible trees and bound across rooftops like gazelles. They are “adivasis” who break into your houses, rob your money and clothes, rape women and sell girls into the sex trade. If they find a newborn, they rip the baby apart to satiate their hunger by drinking the blood.’

*Imaginary robbers fuel mass hysteria  
India Today, Tuesday, February 14, 2012.*

MUMBAI: Rumor had it that members of the ‘Chaddi Baniyan’ gang were trying to break into houses and kill occupants before running away with valuables. Besides this, stories of ‘monkey men’ who climb trees and jump over rooftops, had also left the residents unnerved. Local residents armed with lathis started patrolling areas of different neighborhoods in Mumbai.

Yet this has not prevented a mad frenzy among the residents of Mumbai and Thane where scores of people are patrolling their areas armed with bamboos, iron rods and undertaking ‘bandobast’ duty outside their housing societies each night. This has led to many unfortunate incidents where innocent people wandering near these vigilantes have been beaten black and blue or even killed.

The complaints were so convincing that the police started to wonder if the monkey man was indeed real. After locals informed them that they saw two ‘monkey men’ hiding in the trees, they promptly came to the spot and also called in the Fire Brigade to climb the trees to check whether the monkey men were present or not. Not just that, the cops also went to a couple of footwear shops in their vicinity inquiring whether any of them had fit ‘special springs’ on the soles of shoes, that gave the Monkey Man the ability to jump like a monkey.

*Now, monkey men rumours claim two lives in Kandivali  
Indian Express, Wednesday, February 29, 2012.*

MUMBAI: Though the Mumbai Police have dismissed rumours of ‘monkey men’ terrorising localities in the eastern and western suburbs, two men from Kandivali lost their lives on Monday night in the melee and stampede-like situation that followed an alleged sighting in the area. Additional Commissioner of Police (North) Ramrao Pawar confirmed that such rumours were doing the rounds and they had asked people to stop believing them. While rumours that monkey men — who can climb tall trees with ease and jump over rooftops were trying to break into homes and kill residents before committing robberies — began from the Mulund-Bhandup area, they have now gradually spread to other areas, the police said. On Monday night, residents of Tulaskarwadi in Kandivali (West) claimed to have spotted a dark-complexioned man running on their roofs. The incident took place around 8.30 pm when Radhika Bhagiya (17) and her friends, all SSC students, were studying in a room. Bhagiya said she was sitting beside the window when a well-built and dark-skinned man put his arms through the window and tried to grab her. ‘I panicked and rushed down with my friends. The terrace door was locked so the man jumped onto the roof and ran away,’ said Bhagiya who went to the Kandivali police station and registered a non-cognisable complaint.



‘Before that, around 6.30 pm, a woman heard footsteps on her roof and called up her son Narendra Patel (24), asking him to hurry home as she was afraid he might be the monkey man. Patel, who panicked and rushed home, crashed his motor-cycle into a truck and died,’ said an officer from the Kandivali police station. Around 11.30 pm, another man died due to the panic in the area. Rajesh Chavan (25) had come to stay at his in-laws’ residence. The family was having dinner when locals of the nearby Sai Nagar area began yelling that the monkey man had been spotted there. Chavan, his wife and in-laws ran outside the house to nab the man when he slipped on the tiles of the congested lanes of the chawl and fell on his back, breaking his spinal cord. A crowd of around 50 residents were running on the narrow lane at the time. Chavan was rushed to Bhagwati Hospital in Borivali, where he was declared dead on arrival. The Kandivali police have registered an accidental death report and claimed that some residents were spreading rumours and creating terror.

On February 20, a police constable was injured in stone-pelting on Kurar police station by an angry mob after residents of Malad (East) demanded that three alleged robbers held by the police be handed over to them to be lynched. This, however, was not the first time that angry residents in an area have resorted to vigilante justice to allegedly bring a ‘robber’ to justice following rumours. On February 12, a 37-year-old man who had gone to meet his brother at his Ghatkopar residence was beaten up by around 20-25 residents. The victim Ravindra More was wearing shorts, leading locals to believe that he was a member of the chaddi baniyan gang rumoured to be robbing houses in the Ghatkopar-Mulund stretch. A mentally challenged person was beaten up by residents in Bhandup on February 8 after he was mistaken for a thief.

## ‘Schoolgirl runs away from home to Mumbai in search of her idol Salman Khan, only to find herself lost in the middle of an unknown city.’

*Teen comes to city to meet her hero Salman, finds villain instead*  
*MiD DAY, Monday, March 5, 2012.*

MUMBAI: Kurla RPF finds the 14-year-old near a railway station restroom; cops now trying to track down the unidentified man who duped her of money by promising to take her to the star.

Spending a few hours watching Guddi — a classic about how a schoolgirl (Jaya Bhaduri) falls in love with a movie star (Dharmendra), or rather his silver screen persona, and how her enthusiasm fades as she gets to know more realities of the reel world — might have saved 14-year-old Pinky (name changed) a world of trouble. The teenager from Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh, ran away from her house with a sum of Rs 3000 to meet her idol Salman Khan.

Unfortunately, once in Mumbai, she found herself lost in the middle of an unknown city with neither money to go back nor food to eat. The star-struck Std IX student disappeared from her home on February 23. Her father lodged a missing complaint with the local police. Even as cops had initiated investigations, on February 28, Pinky called her home informing that she was safe in Bhopal.

Police traced the call and found that it was in fact made from Mumbai. A team of cops arrived in the city, and after coordinating with RPF, Kurla police, found the person whose phone had been used. According to the police, the phone belonged to a tea stall owner outside Kurla Terminus. On inquiring, he revealed that Pinky, along with another man, had approached him on February 28 to make the call to her home. Police continued to trace the infatuated teen, while another team from Madhya Pradesh police was sent to Kolkata to find Pinky’s whereabouts.

Finally, Kurla RPF found Pinky by a restroom at the Kurla Terminus on Sunday. ‘Our constable spotted her near the lavatory. She was immediately brought to the police station, where she revealed that she ran away from her home to meet Salman Khan. However, on arriving in Mumbai she was confused about where to go and what to do and broke down in tears. At that point she was spotted by a stranger, who consoled her and promised to take her to the actor,’ said a police officer from Kurla RPF.

‘That person demanded money from her and vanished after pocketing all the cash Pinky had left. She said she didn’t approach police believing she would somehow manage to meet the actor,’ added the officer. ‘The girl will be handed over to Madhya Pradesh police, who will carry out necessary investigations. Various medical tests will also be conducted to check if she was sexually assaulted. Meanwhile, we are trying to track down the unidentified man who duped her,’ said Rajesh Kamble, senior police inspector, Kurla RPF.

Three years ago on May 29, MiD DAY had reported (Salman-E-Ishq) the adventures of two teens from Shimla who came to Mumbai to meet Salman Khan. The boys met one Rishu Jarat of Ludhiana, who took them to a relative’s salon in Parel when they arrived at Dadar station. Meanwhile, their worried parents had registered a missing complaint in Shimla. The cops were moved when they heard of the boys’ desire and took them to Salman’s residence. Unfortunately, the actor was not at home, but the cops took them to St Andrews High School, where an ad shoot was on. ‘Even though they couldn’t meet Salman, they were happy to get a glimpse of the shoot,’ a cop said.



‘So at 1 a.m. the suitor will be waiting for the bar girl in a taxi at Haji Ali, anxiously scanning every person walking towards him, every car that pulls up. She might be late, he might think that she’s ditched him and might start cursing her, but then finally she shows up and she takes his breath away, she is so beautiful. When she gets in the taxi with him she is dressed in a miniskirt, and he notices how smooth and fair her thighs are. He smells her perfume. She is wearing something that leaves her arms bare, or she is wearing a sari and a backless blouse. She is not smiling now, she is not meeting his eyes now. She is watching the sidewalk for something, until finally she sees him: a man with a couple of cages slung over his shoulder, filled with birds.

She gives the taxi driver a fifty and tells him to take a walk, go drink some juice.

She calls out to the bird seller and he comes over. The cages have tiny songbirds fluttering about inside, with beaks of different colours. The dancer asks her man to buy some of the birds—six for five hundred rupees; ‘If you want more fun take a dozen,’ advises Anees—and the girl rolls up all the windows of the taxi and opens the door of the cage and all the birds fly out and fill the small dark taxi with their energy and their music. She laughs with delight and asks her man to play a game with her: Catch the birds. They reach out their hands to grab the

birds, which are small and quick, and they have to wave their arms wildly about even to touch them. As the girl and her ardent suitor reach out to catch a bird, they sometimes, accidentally, can’t help touching each other. This is new for the man—remember, he hasn’t touched her up to this point. As a bird lands on her shoulder, he must make a grab for it, and if the bird flies off, his hand lands on her shoulder. If it should fly close to her breast, why, it is within the rules of the game that he should try his best to capture the songbird, which might just be that little bit too quick for him, and his hand, in its dart forward, might meet with something else, softer, harder. And so the whole of the tiny Fiat taxi is filled with birdsong, her giggling, his laughter, and, every now and then, a quick female gasp. And so it is that at last, at long last, the dancing girl and her patient suitor go all soft and hot in the back of the taxi, the space around them filled with fluttering and panicked songbirds.

Half an hour or an hour later, the door of the taxi opens and half a dozen or a dozen dead birds are thrown out on the road. If there are any remaining alive, they fly out over the great dark sea, free at last.’



‘A guy from the slums becomes a millio-  
naire overnight. You know the only other  
person who’s done that? Me.’

*Sushil Kumar from Bihar: First to win Rs 5 crore on KBC  
The Times of India, Thursday, 27 October, 2011.*

MOTIHARI (EAST CHAMPARAN): A ‘baagar’ of ‘Majhauwa’ is how a person is referred to when he has to be ridiculed in this part of the country, ‘baagar’ meaning a fool and ‘Majhauwa’ being the Mughal-era revenue pargana that is modern-day East Champaran and West Champaran districts of Bihar. From this land of sweet-tongued simpletons hails the Bihari Babu who created television history by winning the Rs 5-crore jackpot on offer at Amitabh Bachchan-hosted ‘Kaun Banega Crorepati’.

Calling Sushil Kumar alias Mantu a ‘Slumdog Millionaire’ would be an affront of sorts to this 27-year-old postgraduate in psychology. But this IPS aspirant is also — like the story of Mumbai teen played by Dev Patel in Danny Boyle-directed blockbuster — a rags-to-riches story, his current job as a computer operator fetching him Rs 6000 per month and his parents and four brothers so penurious that they live in a rented accommodation because the dilapidated ancestral house is mortgaged to a moneylender against a loan.

Sushil’s father Amarnath Patel works as a clerk for a contractor. ‘Mantu, third among my five sons, has been studious and inquisitive since his childhood,’ he said. His wife, Renu Devi, added her son has been watching KBC for several years though the family came to own a TV set only last year when her son got the state government’s contractual job which, ironically, involves tracking the flow of millions of rupees under MGNREGA in neighbouring West Champaran district.

Their three elder sons, including Sushil, are married. One of them works at a garment shop while the other is an insurance firm agent. The younger brothers are studying at Motihari where Sushil was also schooled in a Hindi-medium government school before doing graduation and master’s from local SNS College and MS College respectively. Prior to Sushil, no one in the five-season history of KBC ever turned richer by Rs 5 crore. When the prize money was Rs 1 crore during the first three seasons, Harshwardhan Navathe of Mumbai was the only one to return home as a crorepati. Its season 4, when the jackpot became worth Rs 5 crore, saw 37-year-old Jharkhand woman Rahat Tasleem quit after answering the Rs 1-crore poser.

Kumar’s show of success was filmed on October 25 and is slated to go on air on November 2. Still in Mumbai with his newly-wed wife Seema, Sushil told TOI over phone he would use the money to repay the loan and get his ancestral house back. ‘I would also buy a plot of land to construct a ‘comfortable house’ for my parents and brothers,’ he said and added he would use part of the money on preparations for the civil services exam for which he would now move to Delhi. A huge fan of Bachchan, Sushil said meeting the superstar was like a dream come true and he touched his feet when he went to the sets because he wasn’t confident of clearing the ‘very tough’ Fastest-Finger-First round. ‘I had dreamt of meeting Bachchan but not of winning this big an amount,’ he said.

*Slumdog Millionaire,Written by Simon Beaufoy, November 4, 2007  
© Slumdog Films Limited,  
39 Long Acre, London Wc2e 9Lg*

140	INT. STUDIO. NIGHT.	140	144
	PREM		PREM
	Time for a commercial break, Ladies and Gentlemen. I know, I know, I can’t stand the tension either. Don’t even think about leaving your seat. We’ll be back.		(laughs) You’ve said that before, yaar.
	(CONTINUED)		Prem finishes pissing. Goes over to the washbasins, runs the taps and washes his hands.
	97.		JAMAL O/S
	140 CONTINUED:	140	No, I really don’t.
	The lights flick back on. Prem slumps back in his chair.		PREM
	PREM (CONT’D)		What? You can’t take the money and run now. You’re on the edge of history, kid!
	You’ve got the luck of the devil, yaar, I’ll give you that.		JAMAL O/S
	JAMAL		I don’t see what else I can do.
	I- I need to-		PREM
	PREM		Maybe it is written, my friend. You’re going to win this. Trust me, you’re going to win.
	Oh, the toilet. Sure. Naveed, Jamal wants the bog.		
			Prem leaves. Jamal flushes and comes out of the cubicle. Goes to the wash-basins. In the mist on the mirror fabove the taps is written the letter ‘B’. Jamal stares at it. Gradually it fades, leaving only the growing fury on his face staring back at him.
141	INT. CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI TERMINUS. DAY.	141	
	The clock reads five oh three. Jamal stands on the footbridge. Humanity washes around him. His eyes dart around, frightened to miss her. Checks the clock again. Six. The platform is almost deserted. He wanders away.		
142	INT. CORRIDOR. NIGHT.	142	
	Prem wanders down the corridor followed by a Security Guard. Another Security Guard is waiting at the entrance to the toilet. Prem goes in, leaving the two Guards in the corridor.		
143	INT. CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI TERMINUS. DAY.	143	
	Jamal stands on the footbridge gazing down at the hordes of commuters. Five o’clock, five fifteen, five thirty. Six. Jamal rests his head against the railings.		
144	INT. TOILET. NIGHT	144	
	Jamal is in one of the cubicles. Prem goes to the urinal. Unzips.		
	PREM		
	A guy from the slums becomes a millionaire overnight. You know the only other person who’s done that? Me. I know what it’s like. I know what you’ve been through.		
	JAMAL O/S		
	I’m not going to become a milionaire. I don’t know the answer.		
	(CONTINUED)		
			98.



## ‘The duo broke into the actress’ home using sleep-inducing gas.’

*2 held for theft at actress Sridevi’s home  
Mumbai Mirror, Saturday, February 11, 2012.*

MUMBAI: Two months after valuables were reported from actress Sridevi’s Oshiwara residence, two men have been arrested for the theft. The accused — Manoj Rathod, 22, and Prakash Kamble, 24, are drug addicts, said the police, adding that they had stolen the valuables to buy narcotic drugs.

On December 7, a laptop, a cellphone and silverware collectively valued at Rs 9 lakh had gone missing from the actress’s home. The police suspect that the accused duo had sprayed some sleep-inducing chemical in the rooms to avoid getting caught. This is reminiscent of the 1972 superhit film ‘Bawarchi’ in which the lead actor, Rajesh Khanna, loots his employers in a similar manner.

A Filmy Flashback: In the superhit film ‘Bawarchi’ actor Rajesh Khanna plays a cook who steals from his employers by using a sleep-inducing spray in the room. In the 1972 film, Khanna plays a do-gooder who steals from his rich employers and distributes the booty to the less-privileged. According to the police, Rathod and Kamble were strolling around Versova telephone exchange to identify their target when they zeroed in on bungalow 18 belonging to Sridevi and her film producer husband Boney Kapoor. The police said the theft could have taken place between 4am and 9.30am. Besides Sridevi and her husband, their two children were fast asleep. A few hours earlier, the family had returned from a trip to Dubai and were fast asleep. They had returned a little before 3am and had retired for the day a little over an hour later.

When the accused duo got inside, they sprayed some chemical from a can that they were carrying. This doubly ensured that none of them woke up until the next morning. They spent about an hour gathering valuables lying around the house before escaping. According to the police statement given by Kapoor’s manager Sunil Malhotra it was he [Malhotra] who first discovered the theft when he reached their home around 9.30am. Malhotra found that the main door was open and everyone at home asleep. The statement says that Malhotra woke them up and alerted them about the unlatched door. A while later, they realised that a few items had gone missing.

The police arrested the duo on a tip-off they received. Senior inspector Dilip Rupwate said that the accused have previous records of house-breaking in Versova and Oshiwara areas. They have been booked for theft and have been remanded in police custody for three days.

## ‘Sohail was very curious to know if there was life after death.’

*12-year-old Delhi boy dies aping TV serial suicide  
Hindustan Times, Thursday, February 9, 2012.*

NEW DELHI: Twelve-year-old Mohammad Sohail was addicted to crime serials on television and convinced that one comes back to life after committing suicide. His belief turned fatal.

Sohail climbed on a pile of four chairs and hung himself from a ceiling fan with his mother’s dupatta on Tuesday. He was alone at his home in Maujpur, northeast Delhi, at that time. Sohail’s father Mohammad Salim said the boy had probably tried to copy a TV episode from February 4 in which a woman died in a similar way. Sohail, his family said, had watched many crime serials in which an actor shown committing suicide in one episode performed a new role in the next. The Class 5 student of an MCD school took this to believe that the actor had come back to life.

‘Sohail was very curious to know if there was life after death. After watching the episode on February 4, he had asked if he would die after hanging himself in a similar way,’ said Salim, a factory worker in Maujpur. ‘I scolded him for asking this. I would always tell him that TV is all drama,’ he said. Sohail’s mother Ishrat Jahan had been witness to his curiosities. ‘His mind was full of questions and he would always seek the answers from others. I used to ignore his curiosities, but never thought it would cost me his life,’ she said. Nimesh Desai, psychiatrist and director of the Institute of Human Behaviour & Allied Sciences, said Sohail might have been psychologically troubled or vulnerable to psychological problems.

## ‘I had come to India in search of the pot of gold, only to find that that pot had been buried deep in my unconscious.’

*Vijay Mishra, Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire,  
Routledge, New York and London, 2002, preface, p. 5.*



I had come to  
India in search of  
the pot of gold,  
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## Colophon

Max Pinckers  
The Fourth Wall

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