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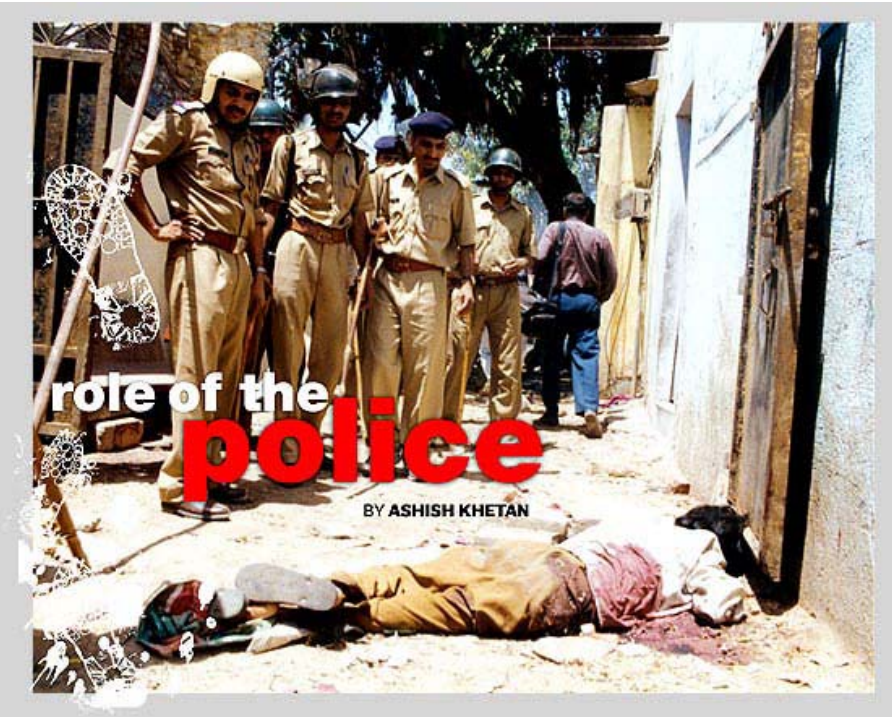


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role of the police

BY ASHISH KHETAN

Shocking accounts of how the guardians of the law colluded with the outlaws to make Gujarat's horror even worse

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From willing connivance to leading attacks on Muslims, the police smoothed the path for the rioters in every way they could [READ >>](#)

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Overview



POLICE COMMISSIONER PC Pandey (recently removed from the post of Gujarat DGP by the Election Commission) ordered that the 700-800 dead bodies at Naroda Patiya be clandestinely picked up and dumped all over Ahmedabad to reduce the toll of the massacre

BAJRANG DAL LEADER Babu Bajrangi says he surrendered when Narendra Modi asked him to do so. Joint Commissioner (Crime Branch) PP Pandey and his men arrested him, and told him it was all part of a show

ON PAPER, District Superintendent of Police ND Solanki sent a local Sangh leader to judicial custody, but in reality he sent him to stay in a VHP office

DCP GADVI promised VHP'S Kalupurzila mantri Ramesh Dave that he would kill "at least four-five Muslims" if Dave pointed them out to him. Dave took him to a house from where a group of Muslims could be seen. "Before we knew it, he'd killed five people," Dave said

INSPECTOR KG ERDA told the mob gathered outside the Gulbarg society it had three hours to do its work. The mob went berserk. One man was hacked to death in front of Erda

ERDA told VHP workers to set fire to a vehicle carrying Muslims. He said that the police constable accompanying the vehicle would run away. "The whole episode will end here itself and there will be no question of framing a case against anyone," he said

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ASHISH KHETAN

From willing connivance to leading attacks on Muslims, the police smoothed the path for the rioters in every way they could



Aim to kill Senior police officers did not just supervise the mayhem, they shaped it

AT AROUND 6pm on March 2, 2002, in Bhavnagar district's Ghogha Road, over 200 Muslim children were sheltering in a madarsa when a Hindu mob descended on it, baying for blood. Rahul Sharma, then Bhavnagar Superintendent of Police (SP), ordered his troops to open fire. The mob dispersed, the children were saved.

Over the next two weeks, after the Bhavnagar incident, the police took similarly courageous action at a few other places. By March 16, eight people had been killed in police firing in Bhavnagar district; five were Hindu, two Muslim. Timely intervention kept the district more or less free of killings. On March 16, however, at 10:10am, Sharma received a call from then Minister of State for Home Gordhan Zadaphia.

“Zadaphia said that while I had done a good job, the ratio of those who died in the police firing was not proper — he was complaining about there being more Hindu deaths than Muslim. I told him things would depend on the ground situation and the nature of the mob,” Sharma said in his deposition before the Nanavati-Shah Commission.

Sharma also told the Commission that when he had called up then Director General of Police K. Chakravarty on March 1, 2002, at around 10:20pm, to request the deployment of additional forces in Bhavnagar, the DGP had said that “though he would send one State Reserve Police Force company the next morning, I should not expect more help as the bureaucracy had been completely compromised.”

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The two conversations Rahul Sharma had with Zadaphia and the Director General of Police provide ample indication of the role the majority of the police force played during the 2002 massacre, joining ranks with the mobs that were setting Gujarat on fire. From egging on murderous hordes to go for the kill, to supplying them with ammunition, to transporting bombs between districts, to opening fire at Muslims who were already under attack from Hindu rioters — the police facilitated the massacre in every possible way.

Here are some firsthand accounts from the rioters and conspirators of the help they received from sections of the police in the nightmare days when the upholders of law turned into rioters in uniform.

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Talking to HARINDER BAWEJA, former ADGP Intelligence, RB Sreekumar, endorses the rioters' view that the government was on their side

When you were ADGP intelligence, had you filed a report saying weapons had been smuggled from Sabarkantha?

In 2002, weapons were recovered from some Muslim areas. Our information was that they were manufactured in an iron works unit in Wadgam, owned by a VHP worker. I had sent the report in writing and also informed KR Kaushik, then the Ahmedabad police chief. When they conducted a raid, nothing was found, but I learned later that the raiding party had leaked the information, which is why nothing was found. The press found out and Hindustan Times ran a front-page report. They kept harassing me but nothing came of it. It was strongly suspected that they were manufacturing tamanchas — country-made firearms.



Were these weapons used during the riots?

This information came later on. An inquiry was ordered against me — but the DGP said no action could be taken because it is routine for Intelligence to share information.

Was any action taken against the raid party?

(laughs) The raid party's action was in tune with the political interests of the ruling party. The recovery was shown from the Muslims to make the point that the police was doing a good job of maintaining law and order. Subsequently, on August 15, DG Vanzara and others were rewarded for this recovery.

Did you file any reports on the flow of arms or bombs during the riots?

Copies of my reports were appended in my first affidavit to the Nanavati-Shah Commission. There was a report on the distribution of trishuls. I took over in April 2002; by then, the frenzy had come down. I had sent reports saying FIRS were not registered properly, many offences were being clubbed together and that the names of the VHP leaders at the head of the mob were being left out of FIRs. This became a controversy. On none of these reports did the government take any follow-up action or seek any clarification. That is very relevant.

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Role Of The Police

‘Their Eyes And Mouths Were Shut’

Transcript: BABU BAJRANGI

The Bajrang Dal zealot says the police could have prevented his hordes from entering Naroda Patiya, but didn't



Babu Bajrangi

SEPTEMBER 1, 2007

Nobody can do what Narendrabhai has done in Gujarat. If I didn't have Narendrabhai's support, we would not have been able to avenge Godhra... because the police was standing right in front of us, seeing all that was happening, but they had shut their eyes and mouths... At that time, had the police wanted, they would never have let us in... There was just one entry, like a housing society has, and then Patiya begins... If they wanted to stop us, there were 50 of them there, they could have stopped us... We had good support from the police... because of Narendrabhai... and that is because whatever happened in Gujarat, happened for the best. We got some relief from these people [the Muslims]... they had got so high and daring...

...

The Muslims kept making calls to the police, kept running to the police... They had one man called Salem... supposed to be a sort of Naroda Patiya dada... he got into a police jeep... got right inside... I myself caught him and dragged him out... The cops said kill him, if he's left alive, he'll testify against us... He was taken a little way away and finished off right there... If the bastard had lived, he would have said he'd climbed into a police jeep and was thrown out, things like that...

...

[By the end, there were about 700- 800 bodies.] They were all removed... The Commissioner came that night and said that if there were so many dead at one place, it would create trouble for him... So he had the corpses picked up and dumped all over Ahmedabad... When they were brought to the Civil Hospital for the post-mortem, they were said to be from this place or that...

...

AUGUST 10, 2007

At 2.30 that night, I called the police inspector [Mysorewala]... He said don't come here [to the station]... There were dekho to [shoot at sight] orders against me... Wherever Babu Bajrangi was found, he was to be shot... He told me to run away... our Mysorewala... He said he couldn't do a thing for me... I wasn't even to tell anyone he'd called... But even so, he sent a rider to my house... you can imagine how my children felt at that time...

...

[Four months later] Narendrabhai told me... there was a lot of pressure on him... The media, TV, so much coverage... Babu Bajrangi is a goonda... Laloo complained in Parliament about my not being caught... So Narendrabhai asked me to surrender... I said, alright saheb, if you

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tell me to, I will give myself up... I surrendered near Gandhinagar... it was all a big drama... all a drama... the police, the Crime Branch, had been told I would be passing through that area... PP Pandey saheb, who was [joint] commissioner in the Crime Branch then, he was there too and some 12 or 13 cars came... These people waited on the road from Biloda to Gandhinagar... they checked a few cars... I had to land up... it was part of the act... If I'd gone straight to the Crime Branch, the media and the NGOs would have ripped me apart... It was all a drama... they caught me, tied me up with rope... all drama... They told me they were tying me up just for show...

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‘The Cops Must Have Killed 70 Or More’

Transcript: SURESH RICHARD

A Naroda Patiya accused reminisces on the energetic help the police gave the killers

AUGUST 12, 2007

The police were with us... I can tell you so myself even now... the police... That day was great... They were shooting right in front of us... They must have killed 70 or 80 or more... didn't even spare women...



Suresh Richard

...

We'd finished burning everything and had come back... That was when the police called us... They said Muslims were hiding in the gutter... Now when we went there, we saw their houses had all been burned down but seven or eight of them had hidden in the drain... We closed the lid on it... if we'd gone in after them, we might have been in danger... We closed the lid and placed big boulders on it... Later on, they found eight or ten corpses in there... They'd hidden to save their lives, but we closed it off and they died of the gases down there... This happened in the evening... the dhamaal went on till night, till about 8.30...

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Role Of The Police

‘Narendrabhai Got The Police On Our Side’

It was a field day, says the VHP's Ahmedabad president

Transcript: RAJENDRA VYAS

JUNE 8, 2007

Rajendra Vyas: As chief minister, Narendrabhai couldn't say "Kill all the Muslims." I could say it publicly because I was from the VHP... Pravinbhai Togadia can say it... But he [Modi] can't say it... But it's like how we say it in Gujarati, "aa khada kaan khada" [to turn a blind eye]... meaning, he gave us a free run to do whatever we wanted to since we were already fed up of the Muslims... The police was with us... Please understand what I'm trying to say — the police was on our side, and so was the entire Hindu samaj... Bhai [Modi] was careful about that... or else the police would have been on the other side....



Rajendra Vyas

TEHELKA: Yes, if it had been a Congress government...

Vyas: Then the result would have been the opposite...

TEHELKA: But the police are after all Hindu. What I want to know is what stand did they take then?

Vyas: They didn't go near the Muslims... [though] when people would call them up, they'd say they were coming... That's what they did at that time... The other thing they did was tell people that they could do whatever they wanted... they wouldn't do a thing...

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'I Had Special Curfew Permission'

Transcript: DHIMANT BHATT

MS University chief accountant, Bhatt commanded respect in Vadodara. He used it to gain cover for arms-running

MAY 9, 2007

Some 50 people like myself had special permission from the police commissioner... to move in curfew areas to help... in order to maintain the peace and law and order... That was just an excuse... I am very open... clear [about it]... But how were we to help the Hindus? At that time, there wasn't even a stick of wood in Hindu homes. So what were we to do?... We took iron pipes... three feet each... iron bars, and if there were people from the Bajrang Dal, then trishuls... The Bajrang Dal people had a plan for putting together the samaan [weapons] and we went and supplied them to key persons in various localities... It was very necessary...

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Role Of The Police

'If You Said Jai Shri Ram, The Police Understood'

Transcript: DHAWAL JAYANTI PATEL

Ram's name was all it took for the police to overlook a consignment of bombs. The VHP functionary knew that well

JUNE 13, 2007

TEHELKA: After Godhra, when you made bombs and sent them to Ahmedabad, didn't the police stop you on the way?

Patel: We concealed them from the police... the police would also let us go... If you say Jai Shri Ram, it matters... After all they were Hindus, they also understood...



Dhawal Jayanti Patel

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'All The Cops Helped, Even Gave Us Cartridges'

Transcript: RAMESH DAVE

The VHP's zila mantri in Kalapur was assured of full support from the police. Unlike the area's Muslims

JUNE 12, 2007

The police were very helpful... very helpful... That's why when the human rights people came... when they saw everything... they said the politicians had a role in it all... the police too, in fact, everyone who belonged to the [Hindu] *samaj*... because, after all, what were the police? ... The police were Hindu too. The thing was, they were under pressure from the government... If they wanted to do something, they couldn't...

[SK] Gadvi saheb was a new DCP here... Curfew was on and he was patrolling about... I went up to him on my cycle and said namaskar to him... How are you out in curfew hours, he asked... I am a *maharaj*, I said, I can go wherever I please... Up till then, he didn't know I was from the Vishwa Hindu Parishad... Then he said he wanted to climb to the top of a nearby temple... I asked him what it was he wanted to do there... He said a lot of Muslims from outside were sitting there and he wanted to set them straight...



Ramesh Dave

I said, if you want to set them straight, then there's a spot I can take you to... But you have to promise me that you'll kill at least four or five of them there... He promised...

Then we went to that place... He said he'd been there before... I said, forget whether you've been here or not... There was a house which was locked, I had the key sent for and we went to the terrace. From there, the place was straight ahead... He started firing from the terrace, and before we knew it he'd killed five people...

Gadvi saheb would tell us never to take his name anywhere, but all the policemen helped us... they all did... One shouldn't say it, but they even gave us cartridges...

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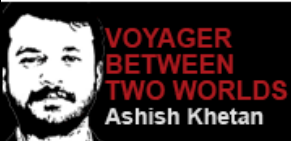
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‘The Police Did Nothing Except Watch Us’

Transcript: PRAHLAD RAJU

The extermination squad that entered Gulbarg had all the time in the world, says an accused in the case



Prahlad Raju

SEPTEMBER 8, 2007

TEHELKA: How did the police behave with you on the day of the Gulbarg incident?

Raju: The police did nothing except watch us...

TEHELKA: They let you do whatever you wanted to?

Raju: They did not arrest a single person that day. Nobody was touched.

TEHELKA: They didn't stop anyone?

Raju: They dispersed us after 4:30.

TEHELKA: Till then nobody was stopped?

Raju: When orders came from the higher-ups... we were told to leave.

TEHELKA: They let you do as you wanted till 4:30?

Raju: Yes... The Crime Branch people behaved very nicely with us... We felt completely at home... Our family members used to come to meet us and they were allowed to... We were kept at the Branch for about a week...

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Role Of The Police

'They'd Deliver Our Arms Safely For Us'

Transcript: ANIL PATEL

The VHP's state vibhag pramukh basks in the benefits of State patronage. What could be better than a District Superintendent of Police on one's team?

The JUNE 13, 2007

Anil Patel: See, there were some areas where we were very concerned about our safety...

TEHELKA: Such as...

Patel: Kalupur... Dariyapur... Hindus live along the edges of these places. For their safety, we sent some *samaan* [weapons] from here.

TEHELKA: Sent from here...



Anil Patel

Patel: From time to time... there were some policemen we were in touch with... They would come and take the *samaan* and deliver it safely to the places it was supposed to go... The police here gave us so much support... Some even said, do something... loot them, break them, finish them... I had a fight once with a DSP. One of our brothers cut a Muslim's ear off with a sword and the DSP arrested him. I told the DSP that our people had been burnt to death and that he was corrupt and used to share food with Muslims in Baroda. Later on, he released the guy. DSP ND Solanki was very good. He said, release him...

TEHELKA: So Solanki lent support?

Patel: Full, full. He gave me complete support... See, when the riots were dying out, when temperatures had started cooling down, someone in Biloda village said that nothing had happened there... that something should be done... There was a man there called Mansoori... he was a SIMI sympathiser... he had a vegetable shop... He was hacked to death... Later on, a co-minister from our area, [VHP leader] Arvindbhai Soni, was arrested... I went to Biloda and later on I called the DSP and talked to him... Jayantibhai and I both went and met him and he said he would release Arvindbhai... Everything was there on paper, in the arrest report, but when Arvindbhai was to be transferred to judicial custody, he was told to go back to the [VHP] *karyalaya*...

TEHELKA: To go to the *karyalaya* ...

Patel: He stayed there for a month and a half.

TEHELKA: That's what the DSP said? Who was the DSP?

Patel: ND Solanki

...

Patel: There was this IB officer, Sreekumar, who sent a fax to the Ahmedabad police commissioner saying the Sabarkantha VHP had supplied weapons to Ahmedabad... The matter was inquired into... our block minister was arrested... The inspector who came for the inquiry was associated with the Sangh...

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TEHELKA: What was his name?

Patel: I don't know but... after the inquiry was over, he told us that he was with the Jeevan Dal Bhole, our vibhag pracharak...

Nov 03, 2007

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'Tea Twice A Day And Food From Home'

Transcript: MANGILAL JAIN

The Gulbarg massacre accused has fond memories of the hospitality afforded at the Ahmedabad Crime Branch

SEPTEMBER 8, 2007

TEHELKA: What was the name of that inspector you were talking about.

Jain: [KG] Erda [Meghaninagar police inspector]...



Mangilal Jain

TEHELKA: Erda... what did he do?

Jain: He supported us... Those people kept away from the public that day.

TEHELKA: Kept away from Muslims?

Jain: From the public.... from Hindus... they told us that everything should be finished within two or three hours.

TEHELKA: That means they gave you two or three hours...

Jain: To finish...

TEHELKA: To finish everything...

Jain: This was happening across all of Ahmedabad. [It was understood] no outsider would come. Even reinforcements weren't going to come... The force wouldn't get there till evening... So we were to do all the work.

TEHELKA: He told you to do it all in two to three hours...

Jain: He said it and the mob went berserk. Some started looting. Others started killing... Someone dragged a man out and hacked him down and burned him... A lot of this kind of stuff happened...

TEHELKA: You were caught after two months?

Jain: I surrendered after two months.

TEHELKA: Did you appear in court?

Jain: Not in court... I appeared before the Crime Branch people. Sadavrati saheb was there... I called him home. We had dinner. He told me to surrender. I did as he said...

TEHELKA: Sadavrati cooperated?

EARLIER IN TEHELKA

Jain: Cooperated... he met me in the evening...

TEHELKA: Was he of help...

Jain: He said that Mangilal's name was there. He told me to surrender...

TEHELKA: At your house?

Jain: At my house... Don't worry [he said], have no fear and produce yourself at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning... All will be well... Your son will be out in a month or two... Now that his name is on record, there's no way out... If his name is there, it means he has to appear... Even a PM or CM can't help it... So I surrendered to the Crime Branch... they took good care of me...

TEHELKA: They took good care of you...

Jain: Yes sir... down there in the lock-up, there were mosquitoes and it's filthy... We were not kept there... there was a room up above their office... We were kept in the office... There were mattresses... food from my home would come for me twice a day... We were there for three days ...

TEHELKA: Three days...

Jain: We were produced in court on the first day...

TEHELKA: Where did they record you as being picked up from?

Jain: They said that we were picked up from home....

TEHELKA: They said this...

Jain: Yes, that's what they said... That's what the police are like, they say one thing and do something else... All they want is to keep their own names looking clean...

TEHELKA: But they took good care of you...

Jain: It was good... We got there in the evening... we would get tea twice a day and we could make phone calls... I would get calls from home... we would also make calls... we had full phone facilities... We were in the Crime Branch for three days... we were not even touched... I have to say this... nobody laid a finger on me... They took my statement that day itself... "What happened... Where were you that day..." [was all they asked.]

TEHELKA: What did you say?

Jain: I said the shop was closed and I had gone there to watch... I was part of the group... I said I was in the group... and my house was at a distance from that place and there was a huge crowd, I didn't recognise anyone who did the killing... That's what I'd say... "Don't know who was doing the killing... Everybody was raising slogans... so was I..." That's what I told them, and then I said that after it all, I got home by 2... That's what I said...

TEHELKA: That's what you said...

Jain: What I said...

TEHELKA: Didn't they try forcing you to tell the truth?

Jain: No, sir... I wasn't even touched... Whatever I said, they noted down...

TEHELKA: Noted just as you said...

Jain: They didn't say anything to me... I was on remand for two days... the remand was over on the first day itself... It was just for name's sake... For two days I would get my tiffin from home... my family members would come to meet me... I had every convenience...

TEHELKA: Meaning the remand was just a formality... a legal process...

Jain: These people followed full legal process...

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Role Of The Police

'Erda Said, It Will Be The End Here'

Transcript: MADAN CHAWAL

Indicted in the Gulbarg carnage, Chawal is all admiration for a decisive police inspector

SEPTEMBER 8, 2007

Chawal: Erda saheb said that... that whole region... I showed it to you, didn't I?

TEHELKA: Yes.

Chawal: I was just standing around... some 8 to 15 people were there near him... We asked, Saheb, what are you doing, why are you saving them [Muslim survivors]?

TEHELKA: You said this to Erda...

Chawal: The public... we were 8 to 15 people... everyone asked him 'What are you doing?'

TEHELKA: You asked him where he was taking the Muslims?

Chawal: We asked him where were you taking them... then he told us what he was doing...

TEHELKA: What did he say?

Chawal: He said, do this... when the vehicle [in which the Muslims were] comes this way, our constable [accompanying the vehicle] will run away... set the vehicle on fire... The whole episode will end here itself and there will be no question of framing a case against anyone... *Poori picture yahin khatam ho jaayegi* [this picture will end here itself]...

...

TEHELKA: What did you say in your statement to the police?

Chawal: I only talked about how I was shot at that day at 6.30, nothing else...

TEHELKA: You didn't tell them that you were there in the morning...

Chawal: None of that... "I was at my shop... I got shot at... I was doing my business and had come out to weigh something, when the police started firing and a bullet hit me, what could I have done"...

TEHELKA: Did you tell the police that you were there with the mob throughout the day?

Chawal: No... not that...

TEHELKA: But didn't [DIG DG] Vanzara ask you to tell the truth, give the true statement?



Madan Chawal

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EARLIER IN TEHELKA

Chawal: Nothing of the sort happened...

TEHELKA: Even during all those days you were with him?

Chawal: It was just two or three days...

TEHELKA: Did he keep you well?

Chawal: He treated me well... didn't say anything to me...

TEHELKA: What about food?

Chawal: Food and all used to come from home...

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