

The jehadi



Omar walked through the crowded streets of Chandini Chowk in Delhi.

At the very heart of Old Delhi, the Chowk was a significant historical and social center. Teeming with local bazaars selling all kinds of goods: from trinkets to vegetables, from books to pirated CD??™s and DVD??™s of the latest bollywood flicks and all kinds of local delicacies and mysterious concoctions. The Chowk was also extremely popular with locals and tourists alike. It was also an economically significant area.

Omar heard the usual din you would find at a Bazaar. Women haggling, shopkeepers creating a vociferous din, children scampering about, ??? white-skins??™ peering at goods, old men talking politics...the usual bazaar scene. The Chowk was rightfully situated in the heart of Old Delhi.

And this was where Omar was about to strike. Like a myocardial infarction, Omar intended to ensure Delhi would never quite be the same again??|A few hundred meters away, RAW Agent 707 stood looking for someone suspicious??|someone who looked like a suicide bomber. The RAW had gathered information that, on the 4th of September, 2011, the Mujahedeen had planned an attack somewhere in Delhi. Several agents were similarly stationed all over the city looking for suspects. The suspect was a tall man, about 6 feet 2 inches tall. Built medially, he was rumored to walk with a very slight limp, so slight that it was almost impossible to detect. And this is exactly why Agent 707 had been stationed at one of the most difficult places to police.

His hawk like gaze observed and analyzed every single detail around him. He had proven himself countless times during numerous infiltrations and recon

operations. Moreover, patriotic fervor was imbedded into him so deeply that from the age of 7 he knew he would surrender himself to the defence of his country. His dedication was boundless and he felt a burning rage against these militants...anarchists in his mind.

And the top brass knew that even though Chandini Chowk would be difficult to police (It was impossible to note every face and notice someone's behavior); they had selected the right man. They knew that if they had to entrust that swarming area with one man it had to be Agent 707. For Agent 707 was a man who burned with wrath of God if he felt that his country were to come to any harm whatsoever. If the eyes are the window to the soul; then grief is its door, thought Agent 707 as his keen eagle-like gaze scanned the crowd.

Indeed, he was looking for a man whose eyes had an unnatural resolve, almost Satanic in its quest for destruction. Someone who was far too detached from the merriments of the Bazaar; someone who seemed isolated and far too withdrawn. A difficult task by all standards indeed. Yes, Omar was the man who Agent 707 was looking for. But little did either of them know about the other's presence. Omar was thinking about his job at hand. A young man of 27, he was a native of Srinagar. He barely remembered much of his childhood, except the day the militants came.

He was nine years old at that time. He remembered his parents being gunned down; the militants carrying him away. It was just that day that his best friend, Rahul was about to come back from Mumbai.

The two of them were inseparable...they were brothers in everything they did, hand in glove in every prank at school.

And yet they were adored by all. As charming as Balram and Krishna, the two children could almost be considered local celebrities. But then came the militants. They took him across the border to Pakistan. And there it was where his training began. He hated his teachers. They were brutes.

If he didn't finish his endurance course on time they kicked him in the mud. If he didn't remember some passage from his academics he was whipped. But this was where he learnt how the Hindus had wronged every Muslim in India, how every life he took was not murder but the sacred will of God. And over time Omar became a fanatic. A killing machine who killed without remorse; a Jehadi, Allah's own warrior who took part in the Great Battle to restore the honour and pride of every Muslim. Agent 707 looked on.

Still no sign of anyone strange or different. It was getting extremely hot; 11 o'clock, just when the bazaar reached its peak. He stifled a yawn and suddenly his eyes fell on Omar. Omar fit the description of the suicide bomber; a man who walks freely to his doom, effortlessly brushing aside all his worries; or as he was made to believe, to the great halls of Allah where the noble and the great were honoured. Except that this man was not quite free. A slight limp, extremely difficult to notice plagued him. His sixth sense convinced him that this was the man.

Years of training had attuned him to know exactly who he was looking for even though hadn't laid eyes on that person before. His senses heightened at the sight of the prey. Stealthily brushing through the crowd

and tailing Omar, he stalked his prey like a tiger on the hunt. He would use his firearm if necessary. He just needed to be sure this was the man and not some stupid heartbroken youth.

Omar felt the adrenalin course through his veins, egging him on, reminding him of the greatness and the glory he would soon achieve. He reached the centre of the Chowk??|he looked all around. People who had wronged his community??|members of his community who had wronged themselves by accepting their oppression. A grim laugh escaped him and he shouted out his war cry: ??? Allah Oh Akbar!??? ready to pull the detonator. The Agent 707 pulled out his firearm and taking aim pulled the trigger twice. Two bullets got dislodged into Omar??™s body??|Omar felt his hand go limp.

He was so close to pulling the detonator but he could feel the blood pouring over his body. The babble of the whole crowd had subdued as they all turned towards the Jehadi. Agent 707 dove towards the bomber to ensure he was no longer a threat. And as he did the only thought that rang through his head was: ??? If you believe that God creates miracles, then you have to believe the Devil has a few up his sleeve too.

??? A month later Agent 707 was honoured with an award for saving the lives of hundreds. However all he could feel was a torrent of memories of him playing with his best friend Omar in the beautiful gardens of Srinagar, twenty years ago.?