

SACRED GAMES

Pilot Episode

"A Policeman's Day"

by

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Based on the novel by

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SACRED GAMES

EPISODE ONE: A POLICEMAN'S DAY

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. MUMBAI - DAY

Fluffy, a white Pomeranian, flies out the window of a modern high-rise and screams in her lap-dog voice all the way down, like a little white kettle losing steam.

She plummets past a billboard featuring Bollywood starlet ZOYA MIRZA, bounces off the canopy of an auto rickshaw, and skids to a halt near a cluster of Catholic SCHOOLGIRLS waiting for the bus. The conventeers scream in horror at the sight of Fluffy's spilled brains.

Five stories above, MAHESH PANDEY leans on the windowsill, in his silky striped pajamas, laughing.

INT. APARTMENT 502 - DAY

KAMALA PANDEY, Mahesh's pretty young wife and Fluffy's 'Mummy', staggers to the kitchen and grabs a butcher knife.

EXT. STREETS OF MUMBAI - DAY

Inspector SARTAJ SINGH (40) dodges the jammed jumble of traffic, belching exhausts and cacophony of horns. He's film star handsome and impeccably turned out, with an immaculate Turban, trim beard and moustache.

His partner, KATEKAR (45), is less discriminating in cheap rayon slacks, and a sweat-stained shirt. He's a big man with a paunch that sits on top of his belt like a suitcase.

They duck through ramshackle hutments nestled at the base of the modern high-rise. Sartaj steps carefully over two ragged boys asleep on the pavement. Katekar gives them a swift boot to get them moving.

INT. PANNA APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Sartaj and Katekar approach Apartment 502. Sartaj runs a hand over his Turban and checks the tuck of his shirt.

Together they break open the door.

INT. APARTMENT 502 - DAY

Sartaj and Katekar enter the apartment to find Kamala viciously stabbing the bedroom door with the knife.

SARTAJ
Mrs. Pandey.

She turns, the knife in a double-handed grip, held high. Her face is pale and tear-stained.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)
Mrs. Pandey, I am Inspector Sartaj Singh. I'd like you to put down the knife, please.

A voice shouts out from behind the bedroom door.

MAHESH (O.S.)
Police? Police?

Kamala slashes at the door again. She's tired and the point bounces off the wood and rakes across it.

KAMALA
BASTARD. BASTARD.

Sartaj bends her wrist back and takes the knife quite easily. She smashes at the door with her hands, breaking her bangles.

KAMALA (CONT'D)
Shoot him. *Shoot him.*

She slumps on the sofa and puts her head in her hands. Sartaj notices the bruises on her shoulder.

SARTAJ
What did you fight about?

KAMELA
He wants me not to fly any more.

SARTAJ
What?

KAMALA
I'm an air-hostess. He thinks...

Her startling light-brown eyes flash with anger.

KAMALA (CONT'D)
... he accused me of hostessing the pilots on stopovers.

She turns her face to the window.

Katekar walks her husband over with a thick hand on his neck. Mahesh hitches up his pajamas, and smiles confidently.

MAHESH

Thank you. Thanks for coming.

He offers Sartaj a bribe of few hundred-rupee notes. Sartaj slaps him smartly across the face.

SARTAJ

(flat; terse)

So you like to hit your wife, Mr. Pandey?

Mahesh's eyes are wide, his mouth open. Katekar sits him down, hard.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

You like to hit her, and then you throw a poor puppy out of a window? And then you call us to save you?

MAHESH

She said I hit her?

SARTAJ

I have eyes. I can see.

MAHESH

Then look at this.

Mahesh pulls up his pajama sleeve, revealing four evenly-spaced scratches, bloody and deep.

MAHESH (CONT'D)

More, I've got more.

He shows them a corrugated welt on his shoulder blade.

MAHESH (CONT'D)

She broke a walking stick on my back...

(finger and thumb)

This thick.

Kamala spits laughter at her husband and waggles her pinky.

KAMALA

Thicker than your prick. You pathetic, weak little--

Sartaj raises his hand, his eyes fixed and menacing.

SARTAJ
Enough. Be quiet.

Sartaj walks to the window and stares at Fluffy's small white body on the pavement below.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)
(softly)
Love. Love is a murdering asshole.

TITLE SEQUENCE:

Katekar drives the police department Gypsy jeep through a snarl of traffic. Sartaj rides shotgun. A masala-mix of music blasts from the bazaars; Punjabi folk jam meets hip-hop.

The music plays over a kinetic, intoxicating swirl of images: Soaring skyscrapers. Thickets of slums. Gleaming multiplexes. Ancient temples. Cricket stadiums. Over packed trains. Long loops of rail. The enormous bustle of millions on the move. A clash of old and new, rich and poor, ugly and beautiful.

The sprawling web of humanity transforms into a intricate pattern of white chalk lines. Brightly colored sands pour into each precise geometric shape. Slowly, the full splendor and symmetry of a mandala is revealed.

The sand is swept away revealing the title:

SACRED GAMES

END TITLE SEQUENCE.

ACT ONE

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The Gypsy jeep coasts through the gates of a police station. A tall barricade surrounds the complex. The thickness of the walls and the weight of the facades, gives a reassurance of bulky power; law and order.

A gallery runs along the front of the building crowded with informants, favor-seekers, and relatives of those chained in the detention room.

INT. STATION HOUSE - DAY

Sartaj enters the Station House for Zone 13. Five CONSTABLES come jerkily to attention, and then subside into their usual sprawl on plastic chairs.

Each desk services a steady stream of supplicants with their tales of hardship and woe. The constables write up the complaints in registers and collect the appropriate bribes.

Sub-Inspector KAMBLE (27), a lothario wannabe in his knock-off designer threads with a pistol slung in his belt, has a MOTHER and her SON in front of him.

MOTHER

He's supposed to be in school, and where does his father find him?
Playing with some street kids.
Thinks he doesn't need school. I'm tired of it, saab (sir). You take him. You put him in jail.

She dabs at her eyes with the end of her blue sari.

Sartaj can tell from her calloused hands that she works as a bai, washing dishes and clothes. He takes in the boy in his blue-uniform short pants. He's about thirteen, quite wise, with a stylish floppy hair-do and flashing black eyes.

SARTAJ

Come here. What's your name?

The boy shuffles sideways.

SAILESH

Sailesh.

SARTAJ

I've seen you before, Sailesh. Near the train station. Playing cricket. You've got a good arm.

Sailesh glances up, pleased by the compliment.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)
 Why don't you listen to your
 mother? You think you're too tough?

Sartaj slams a hand down on the desk. Sailesh starts and backs away. Sartaj grabs him by the collar and twists him around the end of the desk.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)
 Let me show you what we do with
 tough guys like you.

INT. DETENTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sartaj walks Sailesh into the room, lifting him off the floor with each stride. Katekar is sitting with another CONSTABLE at the end of the room, near a line of chained prisoners.

SARTAJ
 Katekar, which is the toughest of
 this lot?

KATEKAR
 This one, sir, think's he's hard.
 Narain Swami, pickpocket.

Sartaj shakes Sailesh so that his head wobbles and snaps.

SARTAJ
 This big man here thinks he's
 harder than all of us. Give Swami a
 few smacks. Let him see.

Katekar lifts the cringing NARAIN SWAMI and bends him over. Swami struggles and jingles his chains. The first open-palmed blow lands on his back with an awful popping noise and he howls. After the third and fourth he's sobbing.

NARAIN
 Please, please, saab. No more.

After the sixth blow, Sailesh is weeping fat tears. He turns his face away and Sartaj forces his chin around.

SARTAJ
 You know what we do next?

Sartaj points at a bar that runs from one wall to the other.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

We string him up by his hands, and give it to him on the feet with the bat. Show him the bat, Katekar.

Katekar holds up a well-worn cricket bat. The boy whimpers.

SAILESH

No, don't.

SARTAJ

You want to end up here, Sailesh? Like Narain Swami?

SAILESH

No.

Sartaj takes the bat.

SARTAJ

What's that?

SAILESH

No, saab. Please.

Sartaj walks him to the door, and winks at Narain Swami, still bent over, flashing an upside-down-grin.

EXT. STATION HOUSE - DAY

Sailesh sits quietly on a metal chair with a Coca-Cola bottle clutched between his knees. Sartaj sits beside him holding the cricket bat. He runs his hand over a distinct pattern of cracks in the wood.

SARTAJ

People like Narain Swami end up beaten up, used up, in jail, and finally dead. All from not going to school and disobeying his mother.

SAILESH

I'll go.

SARTAJ

Promise?

SAILESH

(touching his throat)
Promise.

SARTAJ

Better keep it. I hate people who break promises.

Sailesh nods. Sartaj notices him staring at the bat.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)
Think you can steal my wicket?

EXT. STATION HOUSE - DAY

Sartaj winds up and bowls. Sailesh crushes the ball, sending it over the wall and clattering across the tin portico.

SARTAJ
Good knock, Sailesh.

Sailesh punches his fist in the air.

SAILESH
I am Sehwag!

Sailesh hands Sartaj the cricket bat.

SARTAJ
Keep it.

The boys eyes go wide with disbelief.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)
Just remember your promise or I'll
come after you.

EXT. STATION HOUSE GATE - DAY

Sartaj leads the boy back to his mother. She hangs back at the gate. She opens her hand revealing a neatly folded hundred rupee note.

SARTAJ
No.

Sartaj turns and walks away.

EXT. METRO BIG MULTIPLEX - DAY

Opening night of a Bollywood blockbuster. BEGGAR BOYS and GIRLS work the eager crowds. SCALPERS stroll the pavement, shouting over a fanfare of car horns.

SCALPER
Balcony two-fifty, stall one-fifty.

PARULKAR (60), his wife, NISHA, and their grandchildren, ISHIRA(8) and AJAY (5), approach the theater. Parulkar wears a smart suit and projects the confidence of a man in charge of his own destiny. A couple of automatic-weapon-carrying GUARDS hover nearby.

EXT. METRO BIG MULTIPLEX - DAY

Parulkar is stunned to hear the news.

PARULKAR
What? Are you sure?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Bibi presses soaked almonds between her thumb and index finger until the skin splits.

IFFAT BIBI
I might be a doting old woman, but
I have eyes and ears everywhere.
Two of Gaitonde's men are making a
cash collection. The old mill
district. One hour.

PARULKAR (O.C.)
I'll send my boys.

INT. TEXTILE MILL - DAY

The ruins of a defunct textile mill. A lithe young CRIMINAL (24) is strung upside down from a beam.

PRAKASH SAMANT (48), bald and pudgy, beats him with a thick strap. The young man howls in pain.

SAMANT
Where is Ganesh Gaitonde?

CRIMINAL
Please, saab. I know nothing. I
know nothing. Please. Please.

Samant's partner, VIJAY (34), drags a second YOUTH (21) across the floor. He's bloodied, bruised, barely conscious. Vijay drags the youth away from Samant and props him up.

Samant pulls a gun. Vijay steps away. Samant shoots the youth twice in the chest, with cold, callous efficiency.

Vijay wipes down a pistol and sets it beside the dead guy. The terrified criminal stares at his dead friend and kicks wildly against his bindings.

CRIMINAL (CONT'D)
Don't kill me, saab, please...

SAMANT
Last chance, bastard.

The criminal wails and cries hysterically. Samant slaps him.

SAMANT (CONT'D)
Stop bawling! God.

CRIMINAL
Please, saab. My Ma, I'm all she has. Let me write a letter.

SAMANT
If I let you write your mother a letter, you'll give us Gaitonde?

CRIMINAL
Yes, saab. I give you my promise.

Samant finds a torn piece of cardboard and returns to find his prisoner dangling limply from the rope.

VIJAY
The little mama's boy passed out.

Samant slaps him.

SAMANT
Wake up.

The criminal doesn't move. Samant checks his pulse and shakes his head in disgust.

SAMANT (CONT'D)
Youth of today. One little tap and their heart stops.

He steps back and puts two rounds in the criminal's chest. He cuts the rope. The body hits the ground with a sickening thud. Samant wipes off a pistol and sets it beside him.

INT. TEXTILE MILL - LATER

Parulkar is on site wearing his DEPUTY COMMISSIONER'S UNIFORM. Samant and Vijay flank him. The blood from the recent "encounter" is still fresh on the ground.

Sartaj, Katekar and Kamble watch from the sidelines as Parulkar addresses a crush of reporters.

PARULKAR
... acting on received intelligence, the Flying Squad searched the premises, and encountered two members of the Gaitonde gang.

(MORE)

PARULKAR (CONT'D)

The criminals were asked to surrender, but they immediately drew weapons and fired at the squad, who then retaliated.

Kamble leans close to Sartaj.

KAMBLE

I heard it was a hit job. The order was given by Gaitonde's rival gang.

SARTAJ

Ganesh Gaitonde and Suleiman Isa must be stepping up their war again.

KAMBLE

I also heard that the boys made twenty thousand for their trouble.

SARTAJ

You better get in the squad then.

KAMBLE

Boss, what do you think I'm saving up for? The going rate to get in is twenty-five grand.

SARTAJ

Very expensive.

KAMBLE

Very.

Kamble puffs himself up, his face aglow with excitement.

KAMBLE (CONT'D)

Money makes it all happen, my friend. To make money you have to spend money.

Katekar eyes Samant posing jubilantly over the blood stains.

KATEKAR

Asshole gets twenty thousand and his picture in the paper and we get a dead poodle.

Rookie crime reporter RANJANA MITRA (24) stands out as the only woman in the room. Dwarfed by her male counterparts, she throws words like grenades to be heard.

RANJANA

Deputy Commissioner, sir, can you comment on recent intelligence that Ganesh Gaitonde is back in Bombay?

The room goes into uproar at the news. Parulkar raises his hands for calm.

PARULKAR

Did your mother tell you that to frighten you? *'Be a good girl or Ganesh Gaitonde will get you?'*

The reporters laugh.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)

Last we heard he was holed up in a yacht off the Indonesian coast. Why risk his neck to come back here?

The male reporters regard Ranjana like she's an idiotic woman who can't possibly understand the desires of a man.

REPORTER #1

Bastard's living the dream.

REPORTER #2

Partying with film stars.

REPORTER #3

Fucking all those whores.

REPORTER #1

(sarcastically)

Yeah, I'd trade all that for the sweltering armpit of Mumbai.

Ranjana steels herself against their mocking tone.

RANJANA

Isn't it true, Commissioner, that the new government is forcing you to resign. Taking down Gaitonde would be a feather in your cap. It might even save your career.

The news sends murmurs through the ranks. Sartaj shoots a worried glance at Parulkar. The old-pro smiles broadly.

PARULKAR

Ah, young reporters and their imaginations. I assure you, Madam. I am not going anywhere.

(MORE)

PARULKAR (CONT'D)
I suggest you remember that, for
the sake of your own career.

Parulkar spots Sartaj, and raises his hand.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)
Gentlemen, one minute, please.

EXT. TEXTILE MILL - DAY

Parulkar leads Sartaj outside.

SARTAJ
You wanted to see me, sir?

Sartaj notices a resignation in his sideways glance.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)
Is it true?

PARULKAR
It's the new minister. He wants me
out. All his speeches about
cleaning up the city.

Sartaj is shaken by the news. Parulkar stares out over the
vast urban sprawl of Mumbai.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)
We are good men, Sartaj. Good men
who are forced to be bad to keep
the worst men under control.
Without us, there would be nothing
left... only a jungle.

SARTAJ
You will fight back, sir?

PARULKAR
I always hoped that the day I
retired, you'd take my place.

SARTAJ
I couldn't fill your boots, sir.

PARULKAR
Nonsense. You're the best man I
have. The smartest. You know why
you don't get the big cases?
Because you don't play the game.

Parulkar places a fatherly hand on his shoulder.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)
Mutual interest is the oil that runs this city. You make connections, you rise up, you make more money, more connections, then you get real power.

SARTAJ
Yes, sir.

PARULKAR
Listen to me, Sartaj, if you want to stay in this job. Don't let the bastards take you down with me.

Sartaj nods.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)
We'll have to be more careful with the deliveries. Meet me later at the flat, okay?

Parulkar glances back at the reporters.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)
I suppose I'd better get back in there.

SARTAJ
I'm sorry, sir.

PARULKAR
I know you are.

Sartaj watches Parulkar returning to the reporters and a barrage of questions. He seems tired. The swell of his belly no longer jaunty, only weighted by regret.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. STREETS OF MUMBAI - DAY

Katekar steers the Gypsy through gaps in the traffic with balletic timing. Sartaj pushes his seat back and drowsily watches him change gears and snake the jeep between trucks and autos with less than inches to spare.

KATEKAR

See? It's a confidence game. You go forward, someone always backs off, and it's always the other asshole.

Katekar scratches at his crotch and stares down the driver of a double-decker bus, forcing him to an absolute stop.

They take a left, and Katekar grins at the wide swagger of the turn. Sartaj grins as they get stuck behind an elephant lumbering along in the slow lane.

KATEKAR (CONT'D)

Only in motherfucking Mumbai.

The jeep is instantly surrounded by HAWKERS selling candy and trinkets. A MONKEY TRICKSTER skips through the gridlock. The monkey is on a leash and WEARS A HUMAN MASK OVER ITS FACE. The effect is grotesque and unsettling.

Sartaj stares out the window feeling very bleak about his future prospects. Katekar senses his trepidation.

KATEKAR (CONT'D)

Don't worry about Parulkar. He's like some circus clown, you knock him down flat, he pops back up.

Katekar pulls into a narrow parking space. A large white sign with red lettering reads: DELITE DANCE BAR AND RESTAURANT.

INT. DELITE DANCE BAR AND RESTAURANT - DAY

The girls of Delite Dance Bar spin under disco lights to Bollywood music, quite respectably covered up in saris, while men hold up fans of notes for them to pick from.

Sartaj sits across from Katekar in a booth with their heads lowered gratefully under the wash of cold air from a vent above. A WAITER brings two Pepsis and they both gulp fast.

SHAMBHU SHETTY joins them and slides smoothly in next to Sartaj, neat and trim in blue jeans and a tailored shirt.

SHAMBU

Hello, saab.

Shambhu shakes hands with both of them. Sartaj takes in his taut shoulders and smooth, twenty-four-year-old face.

KATEKAR

Been trekking, Shambu?

SHAMBHU

Early next week, my friend. To Pindari glacier.

Shambhu places a heavy brown envelope on the seat. Sartaj slides it onto his lap, and raises the flap. Inside, are ten rubber-banded stacks of hundred-rupee notes.

SHAMBHU (CONT'D)

It clears out your head. Why do you think the great yogis meditate way up there?

Katekar raises his empty glass and glances at the dancers.

KATEKAR

My meditation is right here, brother. I find enlightenment every night.

Shambhu laughs and clinks glasses with Katekar.

SARTAJ

Listen, we have to do a raid.

SHAMBHU

Again? We just had one.

SARTAJ

The government's changed. Things have changed.

SHAMBHU

What's all this noise about protecting Indian culture? Aren't the girls doing Indian dances? Delite Dance Bar is a temple of culture, is it not?

Sartaj and Katekar glance at the girls, silenced by the audacity. Shambhu holds up his hands.

SHAMBHU (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. When?

SARTAJ

Next week.

SHAMBHU

Do it before I leave. Monday.

SARTAJ

Fine. Midnight, then.

SHAMBHU

Oh, come, come, saab. You're talking food from the mouths of poor girls. That's too early.

SARTAJ

Twelve-thirty.

SHAMBHU

At least one, please. Have some mercy. That's half the night's earning's gone.

SARTAJ

You better still have some girls here when we come in. We'll have to arrest someone. Ask for volunteers. They can give whatever names they like.

SHAMBHU

Sartaj, you know, if I tell the girls you are coming on the raid, you your very own self, I bet I'll get ten volunteers.

SARTAJ

Listen, asshole--

SHAMBHU

Twelve even, if you escort them in the van. That Manika asks about you all the time. So brave he is, she says. So handsome.

KATEKAR

(very serious)

I know her. Nice home-loving girl.

SHAMBHU

Fair complexioned. Good at cooking--

Katekar makes no attempt to hide a smile as big as Shambhu's.

SARTAJ
 Bastards. Come on Katekar, we're
 late.

EXT. DELITE DANCE BAR AND RESTAURANT - DAY

Leaving the club, Sartaj and Katekar run into a DIAMOND
 MERCHANT. The old-timer recognizes Sartaj.

DIAMOND MERCHANT
 You are Sardar Saab's son?

He pats Sartaj on the shoulder.

DIAMOND MERCHANT (CONT'D)
 I knew your father. He was the only
 honest policeman in Bombay.

SARTAJ
 (muttering)
 Yes, he was a good man.

Sartaj walks away, shoulders stiff, bribe money in hand.

INT. STATION HOUSE - DAY

Sartaj turns the Delite money over to MAJID KHAN, the senior
 inspector on duty.

KHAN
 Ah, Sartaj... have a cup of tea.

Khan strokes his handlebar moustache and flips through the
 stacks of Delite money.

He counts out a few hundred rupees for Sartaj and moves the
 bulk to a safe behind his desk. Inspector Samant, and a posse
 of his FLYING SQUAD BOYS are just leaving.

SAMANT
 (with satisfaction)
 Ah, Sartaj, you've finally woken
 up. You couldn't keep your rich
 wife, and now you have to take the
 money like the rest of us.

Sartaj snatches the cash and walks on.

EXT. MARINE DRIVE - DUSK

Sartaj rides his motorcycle along Marine Drive, past the chic
 restaurants and coffeehouses crammed with young urbanites.

Along the water front, those without access to lavatories, squat on concrete tetrapods and defecate into the sea.

INT. PARULKAR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Parulkar's south Bombay pad. Opulent and expansive with views over the Queen's necklace - the majestic sweeping coastline.

Parulkar sits cross-legged on a sofa in the drawing room.

PARULKAR
Come, come, Sartaj.

Dishes of Indian food are laid out on the table.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)
Have some. It's very good.

SARTAJ
I've already eaten, sir.

PARULKAR
Try some. Once in a while it's good to enjoy the small things in life.

Sartaj helps himself to a small helping, while Parulkar opens a cupboard, and hefts out a black duffle-bag.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)
It's forty today.

SARTAJ
Yes, sir.

PARULKAR
This could be the last delivery for a while. This business with the new government will slow things down.

Parulkar upends the heavy duffle bag and empties out the cash. Eighty bundles of five-hundred rupee notes spill out. Sartaj doesn't blink at the amount.

Parulkar watches as Sartaj gathers up the bricks of cash one-by-one and places them in the duffel, as is their ritual.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)
The bastards should focus on education. Take my grandson. Can the boy read? Not a word.

SARTAJ
Ajay. He's only five.

PARULKAR

Five and a half. It's that fancy school. Call themselves the best in Mumbai. We had to use a dozen contacts to get the boy in.

SARTAJ

It's a new system of teaching, sir. They don't want to put pressure on the kids.

PARULKAR

Yes, yes, but at least teach them to read "cat" and "bat". You and I had pressure and we didn't come out so badly.

SARTAJ

I didn't do too well. I was terrified by those exams.

PARULKAR

C'mon, you were not so bad. You had other things on your mind. Always cricket and movies and girls, my God, the girls.

Sartaj smiles and drops in the last stack into the duffel.

SARTAJ

Forty, sir.

Sartaj zips the duffel. Parulkar raises a hand.

PARULKAR

Give my regards to Mehta.

INT. HOMI MEHTA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sartaj angles up a narrow staircase into a tiny office. He is greeted by HOMI MEHTA a neat, discreet Pari gent, dressed completely in white.

MEHTA

Sartaj, come, come.

Sartaj sets the black duffel-bag on the desk.

SARTAJ

This is from Saab.

MEHTA

Yes, yes, but when are you going to bring me some of your own cash. You need to save for the future.

SARTAJ

Not today, Mehta. Maybe next time.

Mehta counts the money, laying the bricks in orderly stacks.

MEHTA

Next time, next time, like this your life will pass. One day you wake up and you are old. And where is your security? And how will you support your wife?

SARTAJ

I'm not married anymore.

MEHTA

Yes, yes, but you will be. You don't want to depend on your children I tell you. Especially nowadays.

Mehta flashes a smile.

MEHTA (CONT'D)

I charge only a small commission. In a world of dishonesty, I am an entirely honest man.

He says it without pride, simply as a statement of fact. He holds up a five-hundred-rupee note and makes it disappear with a magician's slight of hand.

MEHTA (CONT'D)

India today. Switzerland tomorrow.

Mehta chuckles to himself and pats the money.

MEHTA (CONT'D)

Okay. Forty total. All complete and correct.

SARTAJ

Right. I'll see you soon.

MEHTA

Bring me something to save for you. Think of your old age.

INT. BATHROOM, SARTAJ'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sartaj stands under a pounding stream of cold water washing off the dirt of the day.

He dries off in front of a mirror. His hair falls loose around his shoulders. His face is still handsome, but broken down by time. He touches the dark crescents under his eyes.

He gathers up his hair, ties his topknot with the care of an artisan, and puts on the inner "undress" of his turban. He reappraises himself and still doesn't like what he sees.

INT. DRAWING ROOM, SARTAJ'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is modest, yet markedly more upscale than a lowly inspector can afford.

Sartaj lies on his sofa, with a bottle of whiskey and drinks in accurate little sips, timed regularly. He allows himself two tall glasses and resists the urge to push it to three.

He flicks quickly through TV channels, from a car race in Detroit to a dubbed American TV show to a movie countdown show but can't settle on anything. The phone rings...

INT. PRABHJOT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sartaj's mother PRABHJOT KAUR sits in an armchair, with a sari draped around her plump shoulders, and an aging German Shepherd at her feet. A blood-dripping horror movie plays on television, the sound down low.

Garlanded pictures decorate the wall: A wedding picture of Sartaj's parents, Sartaj at ten, in a blue turban too large for his head, smart blazer and gleaming shoes. Sartaj's father, with his glorious moustache and white beard, the crispest turban, a pristine uniform and gleaming black boots.

PHABHJOT

Hello, Sartaj.

SARTAJ (O.C.)

Hello, Ma.

PHABHJOT

Did you just get home? You sound tired?

SARTAJ (O.C.)

I'm fine, Ma.

PHABHJOT
Don't lie to me, Sartaj. I hear things.

SARTAJ (O.C.)
What have you heard?

PHABHJOT
That Parulkar's in trouble with the new government.

SARTAJ (O.C.)
Yes, ma. That's true.

PHABHJOT
Be careful, son. I never trusted that man. I told your father, just because he listens to your endless stories, you think he's your devoted friend, but mark my words, that Parulkar's a sharp one.

INT. SARTAJ'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SARTAJ
You're the sharp one.

PHABHJOT (O.C.)
I hope you're not drinking too much.

SARTAJ
Ma--

PHABHJOT (O.C.)
Did you find a cook?

SARTAJ
I'm working on it.

Sartaj smiles and pours a third glass of whiskey.

PHABHJOT (O.C.)
Like you're working on fixing that leak in the ceiling, like you're working on finding a wife?

SARTAJ
Ma--

PHABHJOT (O.C.)
This is no good, son. A man should be with a woman. That is how it is. You can't get through life alone.

SARTAJ

You like being alone.

PHABHJOT (O.C.)

That is different. I have seen all of life, Sartaj. I have done my duty.

Sartaj ponders his mother's odd choice of word, "Duty"?

PRABHJOT (O.C.)

Now go to sleep, son, or you'll be tired for your shift.

SARTAJ

Yes, ma.

Sartaj hangs up and looks out the window. Beyond the lights of the city is the darkness of the sea. He finishes the whiskey and leans out trying to find a breeze.

He keeps leaning over, perilously unsteady, and stares down at the pavement below. He sees himself falling, his white shirt flapping frantically, a CRACK of the skull...

Then silence.

Sartaj steps back from the window. Where did that come from?

EXT. STREETS OF MUMBAI - NIGHT

The rain falls in sheets of silver. Sartaj shelters in a doorway next to a cigarette stall. His gaze is fixed on a light in the upstairs window of an expensive apartment block.

The light in the apartment window snaps out. Sartaj waits.

A sleek, black towncar glides up to the curb. A DRIVER emerges and opens the rear passenger door.

A striking woman, MEGHA (35), emerges from the lobby. Her hair is tied back, and she wears a slim black dress to the knee. Sartaj watches, struck by her elegance.

A MAN appears behind her and opens an umbrella, shielding her from the rain. He takes her arm and holds her close.

Sartaj flinches at the intimacy between them. He feels the emotion, rising in his chest.

Megha turns and glances in his direction. They lock eyes. She turns away and gets into the car. The door slams shut.

EXT. STREETS OF MUMBAI - NIGHT

Sartaj drives his motorcycle through a flash storm. The highway is dark and hazy, the open stretches of road exhilarating. He weaves dangerously between cars, pushing the bike faster and faster, laughing at the speed.

INT. CAVE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

The Cave Nightclub is heaving. Everyone is talking animatedly, leaning close and shouting against the music.

Sartaj stands in a corner by the bar. He surveys the hip young crowd with their piercings, tattoos, shiny shirts and dresses shorter than he's ever seen and it makes him nervous.

He drinks his beer, orders another. Women hedge in on all sides. He looks at each in turn, trying to imagine himself with each one. They give him curious stares. His elegant blue trousers and button down shirt mark him fatally as an outsider. The desire that brought him across the city vanishes. He pays quickly and leaves.

EXT. CAVE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Sartaj heads back to his motorcycle. The lampposts seem very far away. He's a little drunk and unsteady on his feet.

He sees a small fish trapped in a flooded pothole. He watches it flip-flopping in the shallow water, its fate sealed.

His cell phone rings. He gropes it out of his pocket.

MAN'S VOICE

(peremptory, commanding)
Sartaj Singh.

SARTAJ

Yes--?

MAN'S VOICE

Do you want Ganesh Gaitonde?

SARTAJ

What? Who is this?

MAN'S VOICE

Do you want Ganesh Gaitonde?

Sartaj glances nervously over his shoulder, instantly sober.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

BOLLYWOOD MUSIC PLAYS OVER:

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

A handsome, rakish young GANGSTER, and his big-as-a-mountain BODYGUARD strut through a sad little rubbish dump of a village, and approach the back door of a roadside restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Three MUSCLE-BOUND THUGS in tight t-shirts frisk the gangster and his bodyguard, confiscate their pistols, and lead them into a back room.

INT. BACK ROOM, RESTAURANT - DAY

A FAT MAN sits at a table drinking beer, red-eyed and burping. The gangster puts a newspaper wrapped around twenty thousand in cash on the table in front of him.

FAT MAN

It's not enough.

GANGSTER

Bhai, I'll have the rest next week.

FAT MAN

You're a dog from nowhere, Ganesh.
You think you can come into my
village and spit in my face?

The gangster shrugs small and helpless.

GANGSTER

Sorry, Anil bhai.

The FAT MAN laughs, spitting beer all over himself.

FAT MAN

You have to grow up in this Mumbai
to know how it works. You can't
just come in and act like an
asshole, you'll end up with your
brains out on the road.

GANGSTER

Yes, Anil Bhai.

The Fat Man is all puffed up at the gangster's servility.

FAT MAN

Sit. Both of you. Have some beer.

He waves his hand. Two of his boys jump to attention and hurry to get beer, leaving one MAN leaning against the wall.

The young gangster takes a seat and surreptitiously grabs a small pistol strapped to his ankle. He brings up the gun in a flash and guns down the man leaning against the wall.

The Fat Man's eyes go wide. A GUNSHOT rings out. A small hole blossoms under his eye, blood seeps down his cheek. The young gangster stands over him, the pistol in his grip.

The image freezes.

GAITONDE (O.C.)

Five motherfucking movies about my life and they still haven't got it right.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

GANESH GAITONDE is revealed watching the movie of his life on a giant screen, the celluloid image of the young gangster projected across his face. He has a healthy swell to his belly, and the noble brow of a man born to be king.

He cradles a pale, delicate foot in his lap. A woman's foot. The rest of her body is off screen. He rewinds the movie to a shot of the Fat Man laughing and spitting beer.

GAITONDE

Bastard thought he deserved a percentage of my action, like it was his motherfucking birthright, but I didn't shoot him. No. I had an ice-pick. On my ankle. Where his boys forgot to check.

Gaitonde stands in front of the screen, a vision of manic intensity, as he excitedly reenacts the role he played.

GAITONDE (CONT'D)

I came up in a flash, too fast to see... There he was rocking back in his chair with a wooden handle sticking out of his eyeball.

Gaitonde laughs uproariously at the memory of it.

GAITONDE (CONT'D)

Ask anyone the story of Ganesh Gaitonde and they will begin it right there, with the assassination of the fat bastard Anil Kurup.

EXT. BUNKER - DAY

Sartaj and Katekar cautiously approach an innocuous single story building at the edge of a sprawling slum.

POLICE with rifles stand guard, grim-faced, afraid.

KATEKAR

You sure this is the place?

Sartaj glances at a camera mounted above the front door.

SARTAJ

That's what the caller said.

KATEKAR

(uneasy)

Where are his boys? All his security? It could be a trap.

Sartaj checks his revolver, and stares at the yellow bullets sitting fat and round in the metal cylinder. He palms the cylinder back into the revolver and taps the barrel against the door. It makes a metallic ringing like a temple bell.

SARTAJ

Solid steel.

KATEKAR

Shouldn't we wait for Parulkar to arrive?

SARTAJ

The Flying Squad could get here first, and take all the credit. If Gaitonde is in there, he's ours.

Sartaj signals a crew of ROAD MEN. They wield sledgehammers against the door. The sound is deafening.

DENIZENS of the slum trickle to the scene and eye the police with hostility. A balding GRANDMOTHER shouts at Sartaj.

GRANDMOTHER

What sin did you commit today, Inspector?

SARTAJ

I'm not after your son today, Amma, but tell him I said hello.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

The loud banging reverberates through the bunker. Gaitonde sits at a bank of monitors. The screens switch through multiple cameras showing RIFLEMEN securing the perimeter. His expression registers neither surprise or concern.

EXT. BUNKER - DAY

Sartaj and Katekar watch the road crew hammering away in the blistering heat. Their blows bounce off blithely.

A voice full of booming self-importance comes over a speaker mounted beside the door.

GAITONDE (O.C.)
You're never going to get in here.

Sartaj shoots a glance at Katekar and steps up to the speaker.

SARTAJ
Ganesh... Ganesh Gaitonde?

GAITONDE (O.C.)
I can't hear you, Sartaj. Speak up.

Sartaj hesitates, stunned and rattled by the use of his name.

SARTAJ
How do you know my name?

Gaitonde laughs.

GAITONDE (O.C.)
I'm the Great Ganesh Gaitonde. I know all the cops in Mumbai.

Word travels fast through the swelling crowd. CHEERS erupt.

CROWD
GAITONDE! GAITONDE! GAITONDE!

SARTAJ
Keep those people back.

GAITONDE (O.C.)
How are you doing, Sartaj? You're looking tired.

SARTAJ
I am tired. It's hot out here.

GAITONDE (O.C.)
I don't know how you manage under
that turban.

Sartaj is unnerved by Gaitonde's friendly, avuncular tone.

SARTAJ
We have you surrounded, Gaitonde.
Might as well give yourself up.

GAITONDE (O.C.)
You think it's that easy, Sartaj?
Like I'm just going to walk out.
Ganesh Gaitonde is just going to
walk out. Are you drunk?

Sartaj is suffering from a hangover, and Gaitonde's words
strike home.

SARTAJ
What are you doing back in Mumbai,
Gaitonde?

GAITONDE (O.C.)
She is my love. This great whore of
a city. These people love me. Can't
you tell?

Sartaj glances at the angry mob surrounding them, and
threatening to overrun the barricade.

SARTAJ
You were safer in hiding.

GAITONDE (O.C.)
I'm safe right here.

SARTAJ
Safe from what?

GAITONDE (O.C.)
You'll see. You'll see. This is
only the beginning.

SARTAJ
The beginning of what, Gaitonde?

GAITONDE (O.C.)
I told you. You'll see.

EXT. BUNKER - DAY

The road crew have given up. The door is barely dented.

Katekar descends a ladder going up to the ventilator and comes around the side of the building.

KATEKAR

It's not a ventilator, sir. It only looks like one. There's concrete behind it. Same as the windows. What is this place, sir?

SARTAJ

I don't know.

Sartaj glances back at the door.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

He sounds strange.

KATEKAR

Strange, sir?

SARTAJ

Alright. Cut his power. An hour or two in this heat will sweat him out.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

Gaitonde sits beside the unseen woman, caressing her foot.

GAITONDE

Tell me Sartaj, are you married?

SARTAJ (O.C.)

(too quickly)

No.

GAITONDE

I was married once --

And his voice stops short as if cut by a knife.

The lights blink out sinking the bunker into darkness. A generator kicks in with a deep hum. The lights snap on.

EXT. BUNKER - DAY

Sartaj can hear the generator from outside.

GAITONDE (O.C.)

What, you thought it would be so easy? Just a power cut. You think I'm a fool?

SARTAJ

No, I don't think you're a fool.
This is an impressive building. Who
designed it for you?

GAITONDE (O.C.)

Never mind who designed it.
How are you going to get in?

SARTAJ

Why don't you just come out.

GAITONDE (O.C.)

Why? I'm in no danger.

SARTAJ

What else have you got in there? A
secret tunnel? A helicopter?

Ganesh chuckles.

GAITONDE (O.C.)

No, no, but I've got a fridge.

Sartaj and Katekar hear Gaitonde drinking, every long gulp
and the glass emptying. Standing in the merciless sun,
drenched with sweat, they want, with an excruciating desire,
a cold drink.

KATEKAR

Bastard.

SARTAJ

Where are all your boys, Gaitonde?

GAITONDE

Where do you think? Behind this
door with a battery of guns to cut
you fools to shreds.

SARTAJ

I don't think so. I think you're
alone in there.

Gaitonde doesn't answer.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

How come you're alone, Gaitonde. I
thought you had friends everywhere.
In the government, the press, even
the police force. Isn't everyone,
everywhere a friend of Gaitonde?

INT. BUNKER - DAY

Gaitonde turns to look at the woman, quiet for a moment, contemplative, grappling with something deeper.

GAITONDE

I have a beautiful woman in here.
You like women, don't you Sartaj?
You should see this one. Touch her
skin and you'll get a current.
Women, men, everyone wants to be
with Gaitonde.

EXT. BUNKER - DAY

Sartaj and Katekar stand in the blistering heat, sweat-soaked and on edge. The crowd throws rocks and screams taunts at the police, on the verge of a riot.

GAITONDE (O.C.)

Look around you. All these people
were born in homes that I built. I
give them water, and electricity.
They flourish under my protection.
You police protect only yourselves.
You only show up when you hear
someone's making money and you want
a cut. Except for you Sartaj. We
are more alike than you think.

SARTAJ

I'm nothing like you, Gaitonde.

GAITONDE (O.C.)

Yes you are. Don't you see the
symmetry of it all. We are both
trapped, Sartaj Singh. You on that
side of the door and me on this.

SARTAJ

Listen, Gaitonde. There's no need
for this. Just come out. You'll be
safe. I promise.

GAITONDE (O.C.)

I'm not interested in your
promises, I know what you want, you
want to arrest me and be a hero in
the newspapers. You want a
promotion. Two promotions. Deep
down you want even more. You want
to be rich. To be an all-India
hero. To be seen with film stars.
To be as famous as Ganesh Gaitonde.

Katekar is tense. He leans into the speaker.

KATEKAR

Bastard, we'll string you up.

Gaitonde laughs bitterly.

GAITONDE (O.C.)

Are your feelings hurt, saab? How about you, Sartaj? Should I be more respectful?

SARTAJ

Stop it. Stop acting the movie villain. This isn't a game.

GAITONDE (O.C.)

It is a game, my friend, it is only a game. A Sacred Game.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

Gaitonde caresses the woman's heel. The cracks in the skin form a web of connections as complicated as life itself.

GAITONDE

Birth, life, death. It all has a shape, even if we can't see it. Everything clashes and swings apart, and loops around all over again.

EXT. BUNKER - DAY

Sartaj rubs his temples. A sweeping pulse of heat and pain surges through his head.

KATEKAR

Bastard. Let's just blow it up.

SARTAJ

That will kill him for sure.

KATEKAR

So what?

SARTAJ

He risked his life coming back here. I want to know why.

Sartaj hears a ruckus and turns to see Parulkar, Samant and the Flying Squad boys pushing through the police lines. A gaggle of REPORTERS push cameras and mics at Parulkar, their questions drowned out by the taunts of the crowd.

Parulkar approaches Sartaj and surveys the bunker.

PARULKAR
Is he alone?

SARTAJ
He says he has a woman in there.

KATEKAR
Probably one of his whores.

PARULKAR
We'll take it from here. Just get those people back.

Samant and the Flying Squad push past Sartaj and take position outside the door. Parulkar cranes his neck up into the deep, round video eye of the video camera.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)
Ganesh Gaitonde, I'm Deputy Commissioner--

GAITONDE (O.C.)
I know who you are. I'm not talking to you. I'll only talk to Sartaj.

PARULKAR
Listen Gaitonde--

GAITONDE
No you listen. Tell your dogs to back off. I'll only speak to Sartaj.

Sartaj feels all eyes on him. He glances at the agitated crowd, the nervous police. Beyond the slum heavy machinery gropes at the swamp, edging Bombay out father and wider.

He speaks privately to Parulkar.

SARTAJ
I have an idea, sir. I think I can get him out of there. But I want to bring him in myself. No Flying Squad. Just me and Katekar.

Parulkar considers it and nods his consent.

EXT. BUNKER - DAY

A bulldozer appears at the very end of the street with a throaty clanking. The driver, BASHIR ALI, has a cap on his head, worn with the flair of a specialist.

SARTAJ
 Get those people out of the way.
 And that thing up here. Pointed
 this way.

Sartaj leans close to the speaker.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)
 Eh, Gaitonde?

A moment passed and then the answer...

GAITONDE (O.C.)
 Yes, Sartaj?

SARTAJ
 Can you see the bulldozer?

The video lens moves in its housing.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

Gaitonde watches the bulldozer on his monitors.

GAITONDE
 Yes. I can see it.

EXT. BUNKER - DAY

Sartaj leans close to the speaker.

SARTAJ
 Listen, Gaitonde, we've spent the
 afternoon talking. Let's be
 gentlemen. There's no need for
 this. Just come out.

GAITONDE (O.C.)
 I told you. I can't do that.

Sartaj approaches the driver of the bulldozer.

SARTAJ
 All right. What's your name?

BASHIR
 Bashir Ali.

SARTAJ
 You know what to do?

Bashir twists his cap in his hands.

BASHIR
 (tentatively)
 But that's Gaitonde in there.

Sartaj takes Bashir by the elbow and walks him to the door.

SARTAJ
 Gaitonde?

GAITONDE (O.C.)
 Yes, Sartaj?

SARTAJ
 This is Bashir Ali, the driver of
 the bulldozer. He's afraid of
 helping us. He's frightened of you.

GAITONDE (O.C.)
 (commanding)
 Bashir Ali.

Sartaj points up at the camera and Bashir blinks up at it.

BASHIR
 Yes, Gaitonde Bhai?

GAITONDE (O.C.)
 Don't worry. I won't forgive you--

Bashir Ali blanches. Gaitonde chuckles...

GAITONDE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 ...because there's nothing to
 forgive. Do what they tell you, and
 go home to your children. Nothing
 will happen to you. I give you my
 word. The word of Ganesh Gaitonde.

Bashir climbs up on the bulldozer. The engine grunts and
 settles into a steady roar.

SARTAJ
 Last chance, Gaitonde. Come on.
 This is stupid.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

Gaitonde watches the movie playing on the screen, his hand
 gently cradling the woman's foot.

GAITONDE
 I'll beat you, Sartaj. You'll see.
 This is one game you can't win.

SARTAJ (O.C.)

All right, just stay back from the door when we come in. And have your hands up.

Gaitonde's voice becomes quiet and urgent.

GAITONDE

Listen to me, Sartaj, and I'll tell you the real story of Ganesh Gaitonde. Listen to me or Ganesh Gaitonde will escape you, as he escaped every last assassin, as he almost escaped me.

Gaitonde gently releases the woman's foot. It thuds on the ground. Dead-weight.

JULIET 'JOJO' MASCARENAS (35) is revealed, sprawled on the ground, her pupils quite still, a gaping hole in her chest.

Gaitonde stares at her, his face a portrait of despair.

EXT. BUNKER - DAY

Sartaj stands up straight, his back to the door and checks his revolver. He glances at the bulldozer shimmering on the black road, flanked by anxious policemen.

SARTAJ

(shouting)

All right. Let's go, let's go, let's go.

Sartaj points a rigid finger at Bashir.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

Come on Bashir, move. Get that thing moving.

Bashir crouches in his seat. The behemoth lurches forward.

EXT. BUNKER - DAY

Suddenly the speaker crackles to life again.

GAITONDE (O.C.)

Sartaj Singh, do you believe in God?

Sartaj turns back, surprised...

The bulldozer rumbles past and smashes against the building with a dull crunch, raising a soaring cloud of plaster.

Sartaj stares at the building with astonishment...

The structure stands complete and sacrosanct, the door not even dented. The video camera and speaker are pulverized.

A LONG JEER rises from the crowd down the street.

CROWD
GAITONDE! GAITONDE! GAITONDE!

It grows louder when Bashir switches off his engine.

Samant has a smug smile on his face. Sartaj wipes plaster from his nose and approaches the driver.

SARTAJ
What the hell was that?

Bashir shrugs and plays with his cap.

SAMANT
It's reinforced concrete, Sartaj.
What do you expect?

Parulkar steps in to take over.

SARTAJ
Wait.

Sartaj stares at the bunker and turns back to Bashir.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)
Do it this way...

EXT. BUNKER - MOMENTS LATER

Bashir spins his steed on the gravel, an artist, operating with flicks and thumps of his hands on the driving sticks. He positions his blade precisely and reverses ten feet, twenty, thirty, his arm jauntily on the back of his seat.

He comes at the building at a diagonal, and as he trundles past Sartaj he gleams a white grin.

The bulldozer ploughs into the door with a scream of metal. The violent shuddering ceases. The metal door is rent apart.

Sartaj pushes past the Flying Squad, revolver in his grip.

Parulkar steps in front of the Flying Squad, blocking them.

PARULKAR
(shouting)
Get back, get back.

Sartaj leans against one side of the doorway. Katekar is on the other side. An icy wind comes out.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

Sartaj steps into darkness. He's nervous, trembling, trying to hear above the thunderous unclenching of his heart.

Katekar is right behind. It is very cold. The light is low and luxurious. There's carpet under their feet. They sweep through four rooms, all white, all empty.

A metal staircase spirals downwards through the floor. Sartaj nods to Katekar and follows him down.

The staircase ends at a metal door as solid as a hatch to a bank vault. Katekar shakes his head.

KATEKAR

You sure you want to do this?

Sartaj nods and Katekar leans his shoulder against the heavy steel. Surprisingly the door glides open easily.

Sartaj passes him and steps inside, pistol ready, eyes afire.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

Ganesh watches Sartaj on the monitors.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

Sartaj shuffles forwards, weapon on a hair-trigger.

A bluish light from the movie screen pulses in an adjacent room. The movie is still playing, the sound down low.

Sartaj takes another step and in the new angle, he sees a figure illuminated in the glow of the movie screen...

SARTAJ

(shouting)

Gaitonde!

Sartaj inches forward, heart in his throat, fighting the urge to fire.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

Gaitonde. Gaitonde.

(squeezing his voice down)

Put your hands up. Slowly.

Gaitonde sits perfectly still, pistol in hand. He brings up the gun and locks eyes with Sartaj...

GAITONDE

Enough.

He puts the barrel in his mouth...

Sartaj charges forward...

SARTAJ

GAITONDE! NO!

INT. BUNKER - DAY

The GUNSHOT reverberates though the airtight space.

Katekar comes through the door behind Sartaj.

Sartaj stands frozen in the glow of the movie screen.

Katekar finds a switch. The room is flooded with light.

Ganesh Gaitonde sits revealed, Glock pistol in hand and half his head gone. A tooth winks pearl-like, whole and undamaged, from the raw red where his tight-lipped grimace stopped abruptly. From the back of his chair there is a steady drip on the floor.

Sartaj sees a shining seep of fluid from the inside corner of his eye, which despite himself, he thinks of as a tear. A small shudder of sympathy courses through him, but fades quickly when he remembers all the misery Gaitonde caused.

KATEKAR

Sir--

Sartaj follows the rigidly pointing barrel of Katekar's revolver... In the shadows are two small bare feet, toes pointing up at the ceiling.

Sartaj steps closer and sees the cuff of white pants, the spread of the hips, a perfect navel and the hole in Jojo's chest. Her face is turned to the left, with long highlighted brown hair falling over her cheek.

KATEKAR (CONT'D)

She must have been standing in the doorway when he shot her.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

Sartaj and Katekar do a methodical inspection of the bunker:

The control room with the surveillance monitors, computers and gas masks. A steel cabinet containing an arsenal of weapons. The dried fruit stores and sealed bottles of water.

A shelf of DVDs, of old movies. A small gymnasium. Showers and western-style toilets, and closets full of clothing.

In the central room, Katekar finishes his survey, and they stand together over Gaitonde. Sartaj opens a drawer in the desk and finds a black book.

KATEKAR

Diary?

It's an album of glamorous young women in posed studio shots.

SARTAJ

All his women.

KATEKAR

All his whores.

Katekar edges opens a filing cabinet. Sartaj hears the sharp intake of his breath.

The cabinet is full of money. New money. Bricks of five-hundred-rupee notes in crisp shrink-wrapped plastic.

SARTAJ

How much?

KATEKAR

Five hundred thousand? More.

Sartaj glances at Katekar. A decision must be made.

SARTAJ

Too much money. Not enough information...

KATEKAR

...invites disaster.

Sartaj nudges the cabinet shut.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. BUNKER - DAY

The bunker is a hive of activity. Forensics work the scene. Parulkar is in his element, glorious and jovial again.

PARULKAR

Do you know what this is? It's a gift. The great Ganesh Gaitonde has given us a gift.

He pats Sartaj on the shoulder.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)

Gunned down in my zone by my most daring officer. The government can't get rid of me now.

SARTAJ

Gaitonde shot himself, sir.

Parulkar waves off the inconsequential detail

PARULKAR

You'll get the police medal for gallantry. I'll see to it.

He moves on to discuss the successful operation with those who matter.

Samant approaches and looks at Sartaj very hard.

SAMANT

If you're interested now in all this company business, Sartaj, we can work together. Exchange information.

Samant hands him a card. "PRAKASH V. SAMANT", according to the elaborate gold lettering.

THREE MEN come down the staircase, behind them, moving fast, sporting identical haircuts and shoes. The one in the lead, MAKAND, approaches Parulkar and flashes an I.D. Card.

Sartaj sees Parulkar becoming very still. Parulkar nods and leads the men over.

PARULKAR

This is the officer. Inspector Sartaj Singh.

MAKAND

(curt)

SP Makand, CBI. Did you find anything?

SARTAJ

The money, an album. We didn't go through his pockets yet, we were waiting until--

MAKAND

Good. We'll take over now.

Sartaj looks to Parulkar to raise some objection.

SARTAJ

Sir--?

Parulkar offers no resistance.

PARULKAR

I'll have my men clear the scene.

Makand's men are already moving around the room, telling the technicians to pack up. Sartaj follows Parulkar's lead, summons Katekar and gets out.

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

Sartaj stands in the shadows of the metal door. He can see the reporters waiting outside. Parulkar stands next to him, tucking in his shirt and smartening himself up.

SARTAJ

Why did you let them kick us out?

PARULKAR

When someone is willing to be that rude to us, it usually means they are trying to hide something.

Parulkar tilts his head and looks canny.

PARULKAR (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go tell our new friends from the press how you brought down the great Ganesh Gaitonde.

Parulkar ushers Sartaj toward the press line. Sartaj steps apprehensively into the glare of flashbulbs.

INT. STATION HOUSE - NIGHT

Back at the station house, Sartaj is lauded as a hero. The constables snap to attention and stay there.

KAMBLE

Tell us, boss, how much money did you make for putting a bullet in the bastard's head?

SARTAJ

Gaitonde shot himself.

Kamble lets out a snort of disbelief. Sartaj is on edge, it's been a long exhausting day.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

Listen, I didn't kill him and nobody paid me.

KAMBLE

All right, boss. Alright. But everyone's saying it. Even the journalists.

SARTAJ

What exactly are they saying?

Kamble raises his hands to creates an imaginary headline.

KAMBLE

"Mumbai Cop Takes Ganesh Gaitonde's Wicket, Earns Big Money from Criminal Rival Suleiman Isa."

Katekar shoots Sartaj a concerned glance.

KATEKAR

These rumors are no good, sir. Gaitonde's boys will want revenge. They'll be out for your blood.

INT. STATION HOUSE - NIGHT

Sartaj works late typing a report. Memories of Gaitonde penetrate his thoughts, his voice low and powerful...

GAITONDE (V.O.)

We are more alike than you think, Sartaj. We are both trapped--

Sartaj stares out the window at the low sprawl of lights, the city spreading, working itself into the soil.

GAITONDE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...Birth, life, death, it all has a
 shape. Everything clashes and
 swings apart, and loops around all
 over again.

FLASHBACK:

INT. BUNKER - DAY

Ganesh Gaitonde sits in his chair, illuminated in the blue glow of the movie screen, Glock pistol in hand and half his head gone. His right eye snaps open, bulging and bloodshot, fixing Sartaj with an intense gaze...

BACK TO SCENE:

INT. SARTAJ'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Sartaj jolts awake. The phone is RINGING. He gropes for the receiver, trying to shake Ganesh Gaitonde from his mind.

RANJANA (O.C.)
 Inspector Singh? Ranjana Mitra,
 Mumbai Mirror. I'd like to speak
 with you about Ganesh Gaitonde.

SARTAJ
 No comment.

Sartaj slams the phone down.

EXT. STREETS OF MUMBAI - DAY

Sartaj weaves his motorcycle through the rabbit-warren streets. The hawkers have their fruit piled high, and the fishsellers are gutting and slicing on slabs.

EXT. BAZAAR - DAY

Sartaj eats at a chat stand and reads the *Indian Express*. Gaitonde is front page news. Sartaj scans the copy and finds his name mentioned, along with an old photo of himself looking young and handsome, beside a mugshot of Gaitonde.

A group of YOUNG WOMEN pass by, powdered and dressed for shops and offices. Sartaj watches the swish of red and yellow fabric. One of them glances his way.

Sartaj is pleased with the attention, until he notices her eyes dart behind him and the almost imperceptible nod of her head. He glances over his shoulder...

The bazaar is crowded. He thinks he sees someone looking his way. He isn't sure. He pays quickly and leaves, scanning every face as he threads through the marketplace.

The narrow street is choked with stalls, rabbles of merchants and bargain hunters. Coppersmiths pound out a treasure trove of gleaming wares. Old men sip Chai from clay teacups.

Sartaj picks up his pace, certain he's being followed. He makes it out to the main road. His bike is parked next to a line of auto-rickshaws. He straddles it and guns the engine.

A TRUCK lurches in front of him, cutting him off. Sartaj whips the motorcycle around, the rear wheel ripping asphalt...

A PANEL VAN screeches to a halt, blocking his retreat...

THREE GUNMEN leap out...

Sartaj drops the motorcycle and tries to run. A gun is jammed into the back of his neck...

GUNMAN

Get in the van.

INT. VAN - DAY

Sartaj is forced to sit with his head between his knees.

GUNMAN

Keep your head down.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - DAY

Sartaj is forced at gunpoint down a staircase. He is sweating profusely, his breathing shallow and rapid.

SARTAJ

Where am I?

GUNMAN

Shut up.

Sartaj glances around nervously. Low lighting illuminates a series of surveillance photographs of Gaitonde and his associates. The images are accompanied by maps, spreadsheets, and notations; a visual time line of his illustrious career. The attention to detail is remarkable. This is someone's lifetime obsession.

Sartaj hears a woman's voice behind him.

ANJALI

Please sit down, Inspector Singh.

ANJALI MATHUR (35) steps into the room with Makand, the curt CBI agent from the bunker. Sartaj is struck by Anjali's fair skin and bright eyes. She hands him a BUSINESS CARD.

ANJALI (CONT'D)

(dry; firm)

Anjali Mathur. I work for the Research and Analysis Wing. I'd like to speak with you about Ganesh Gaitonde.

Sartaj feels relief washing over him. He glances at Makand.

SARTAJ

I would've been happy to come to your office.

Anjali pours cold water into a glass and passes it to him.

ANJALI

Yes. Sorry about the extreme measures. The case is such that we have to be very careful.

Anjali removes a folder from a brown leather satchel. Sartaj recognizes his report on the Gaitonde incident.

ANJALI (CONT'D)

You received a call yesterday leading you to the location where you found Gaitonde.

SARTAJ

Yes.

ANJALI

Why you, inspector?

SARTAJ

I don't know, madam.

ANJALI

Do you know Gaitonde from before?

SARTAJ

No.

ANJALI

Never met him?

SARTAJ

No.

ANJALI

Yet, he knew your name.

SARTAJ

I told you. I've never met him.

ANJALI

Did you recognize the voice on the phone?

SARTAJ

No, madam.

ANJALI

Do you know why he was in Mumbai?

SARTAJ

No.

ANJALI

Did he say anything else about his purpose? Anything else at all?

SARTAJ

Just that it was only the beginning.

ANJALI

What did he mean by that?

SARTAJ

I don't know.

Sartaj looks blandly at her and waits.

ANJALI

What about the dead woman? Do you know her?

SARTAJ

No, madam. I don't know who she is.

ANJALI

Any ideas?

SARTAJ

No.

Anjali stays perfectly still, picking her moment.

ANJALI

We traced the call, Inspector Singh. The call to your cell phone originated in Gaitonde's bunker.

Sartaj is stunned, numb, the news too surreal to comprehend.

ANJALI (CONT'D)

Why of all the policemen in Mumbai, did Ganesh Gaitonde call you?

SARTAJ

I've no idea.

ANJALI

There's obviously a reason.

SARTAJ

I told you. I've never met him.

ANJALI

He knows your name. He calls you. And you expect me to believe that?

SARTAJ

Believe what you want. I have no ties, no connections with Ganesh Gaitonde, or any other gang.

She is skeptical, steady in her evaluation of him.

ANJALI

Then tell me, Inspector, how do you afford that swank apartment on a policeman's salary?

Anjali's eyes are very direct, as she waits for him to say something. Sartaj sips his water and looks back at her, not contesting her stare, but casual and drinking and yet not giving way.

ANJALI (CONT'D)

You're either a dirty cop or a lazy bum who's living off his ex-wife's money.

Sartaj feels the bile rising in his throat, the burning rage.

SARTAJ

My wife left me the apartment out of pity. And yes, I take the money, because State Funds aren't enough to pay for the paper I wrote that report on.

(MORE)

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

My monthly allowance from the great Government of India doesn't cover three days of fuel to get me around this stinking city, or the countless bribes I have to drop into the hands of greedy informants, just so I can do my job. So I take the bribes, I take every fucking rupee, and I'm grateful for it.

Sartaj stands abruptly.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

Are you going to accuse me of anything else, or can I go?

Anjali studies him closely. Deliberating. She makes a decision.

ANJALI

Sit down, Inspector. This information is only for you. Clear?

Sartaj picks up the decided urgency in her voice. He has the uneasy feeling of wading into swiftly pulling waters.

SARTAJ

Yes, madam. Very clear.

ANJALI

The money you found in the bunker is counterfeit. Identical notes have been traced to Hizbuddeen, The Army of The Final Day, a terror cell operating out of Pakistan.

SARTAJ

Why would Gaitonde be linked to Muslim terrorists? He was known as the patriotic Hindu don.

ANJALI

Gaitonde loved money more than India.

Anjali spreads out a set of blue-prints.

ANJALI (CONT'D)

These are blue prints of the bunker. It was built to withstand a nuclear attack.

Sartaj feels the dread in his chest; coughs his throat clear.

SARTAJ

Is Mumbai a target?

ANJALI

We've been hearing increased chatter indicating that Hizbuddeen may be planning something big, but we have nothing specific.

SARTAJ

Why are you telling *me* this?

ANJALI

I want you to help us with the case.

Sartaj looks at Anjali and Makand and laughs with irony.

SARTAJ

Why would Indian intelligence need any help from me?

ANJALI

We need to keep our exposure to a minimum. You are already connected to Gaitonde, you have local sources and can ask questions without drawing too much attention.

SARTAJ

What do I tell Deputy Commissioner Parulkar?

ANJALI

Nothing. You are to report to me and only to me.

Sartaj is angered by the implication.

SARTAJ

You expect me to run a secret investigation behind his back?

ANJALI

You can work with your partner Katekar, but no one else in the station is to know anything. It's an issue of National Security, you understand?

Sartaj nods, but he knows she sees his nervousness.

ANJALI (CONT'D)

Look, I read your file. I know what a good cop you were, and I know why you're stuck with dead puppies and girlie bars. This is your chance, Sartaj. It's is a big case. There will be credit, commendations...

SARTAJ

Big cases have a habit of eating up small inspectors.

Anjali smiles for the first time.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

I appreciate the offer. I'm sorry. I'm not the man for the job.

INT. GYPSY JEEP - MOVING - STREETS OF MUMBAI - DAY

Katekar and Sartaj ride in the police jeep.

KATEKAR

Where to boss?

SARTAJ

Bengali Bura. We picked up a murder.

Katekar shoots Sartaj a look of disgust.

KATEKAR

Dead bodies in the slum are just dead, sir. No chance of promotion, no headlines... no cash.

SARTAJ

No one else wanted it.

KATEKAR

So it falls to us assholes.

Katekar keeps driving.

KATEKAR (CONT'D)

Gaitonde, on the other hand. It could be exciting to work on a big case.

SARTAJ

Excitement is one thing. When big agencies are involved, you have to watch your back.

KATEKAR

We could make some connections,
move up...

SARTAJ

I can't lie to Parulkar.

KATEKAR

You think you owe him, sir, but you
don't. Besides, I like the idea of
going undercover.

Sartaj takes in Katekar with his crumpled shirt and his
paunch pressing against the steering wheel.

SARTAJ

Hate to tell you, but you're no
Desi James Bond.

Katekar smiles. A group of college girls skip through cars,
calling out to each other and laughing. The Gypsy's
headlights catch a band of pale flesh between a high sock and
a short skirt. Sartaj and Katekar share an appreciative nod.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

What was that song? You know the
one that Shah Rukh sings, *Bas Khwab
itna sa hai...*

Katekar nods, and Sartaj knows that Katekar understands why
he's asking, they have spent so much time together, on these
drives across the city, that they followed each others leaps
and conceits. He hums the tune, marking time with a
forefinger across the steering wheel.

KATEKAR

*Bas itna sa khwab hai... shaan se
rahoon sada....*

Sartaj picks up where he leaves off.

SARTAJ

Bas itna sa khwab hai...

Sartaj notices two women in an auto rickshaw staring at them,
surprised by the loud singing, coming from policemen in a
Gypsy. Sartaj and Katekar look at each other and sing louder.

THE SONG CARRIES OVER...

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

A train rumbles slowly out of the station with its early-
morning crowd hanging precariously from the doorways.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

HAWKERS shoulder baskets of wares and weave through the crush of COMMUTERS braving the stifling heat. A cluster of OLD MEN sing hymns. A WOMAN in a sari, one of the fortunate souls to have a seat, peels vegetables for dinner.

A LOUD BLAST like an earthquake rocks the train sending it careening off the tracks.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

All the phones start ringing at once in the station.

INT. GYPSY JEEP - MOVING - STREETS OF MUMBAI - DAY

Katekar drives the jeep over pavements, passed stalled traffic, and people running. Sartaj rides shotgun watching a cloud of thick grey smoke rise in the distance.

EXT. RAILWAY BED - DAY

The burned, twisted carcass of the train lies derailed at the edge of a slum. UNIFORMED POLICE and RESCUERS hunt through the debris for survivors.

Sartaj runs down the road, past a Fiat exposing its rusty innards like a tipped over crab. His feet begin slipping, and he looks down, and he is walking in blood, splashing through it. Body parts litter the wreckage. An upper arm. A foot.

A cricket bat.

Sartaj picks up the bat, wipes off the blood and sees a distinct pattern of cracks in the wood.

INT. SARTAJ'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sartaj enters his apartment carrying the cricket bat. He's filthy and bloody from the crash site, his eyes dark and haunted. He pours a whiskey. Downs it. Then another. His gaze never leaves the bat.

He picks it up and swings it violently against a cabinet. The wood splinters, shards of glass fly. He goes berserk smashing all the furniture he and Megha chose together; the night stands, the lamps, the framed photographs of a happier time.

INT. SARTAJ'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is thrashed. An empty bottle of whiskey rests on the remains of the coffee table.

Sartaj is sprawled in his chair, service revolver in hand, illuminated in the blue glow of the television screen. A musical number with dancing girls is on screen with the volume down low.

Sartaj stares at the revolver in his grip. His gaze falls on a shattered photograph of himself as a boy, standing beside his father, dressed in all his finest. He sets down the gun and digs Anjali's business card out of his pocket.

EXT. SARTAJ'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sartaj leaves his apartment. He's impeccably turned out, with a trim beard, crisp turban and a new purpose in his step.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Sartaj walks down a dark corridor and through double glass doors marked 'NO ENTRANCE'. Anjali is waiting for him.

ANJALI

Ready?

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - DAY

A series of overhead tube-lights click on one by one illuminating a long white-tiled room lined with gurneys.

Sartaj stares unflinchingly at a body draped in a sheet.

A MEDICAL EXAMINER yanks back the sheet exposing...

Ganesh Gaitonde.

SARTAJ

The Great Ganesh Gaitonde. If you could see yourself now.

Sartaj stares at Gaitonde's face, studying every line, every pore, like a man gazing into a mirror.

SARTAJ (CONT'D)

What do you want from me, bastard?
Why me? Why did you call *me*?

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW