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'I would have run over the terrorists'

December 10, 2008



Maruti Madhavrao Phad is 32 years old and has been employed by the Maharashtra health department as a driver for ten years. He is married and has two small sons. He lives on the 11th floor at the GT Hospital staff quarters. His current employer is the state medical education secretary.

On the night of November 26, when Mumbai was under attack, his boss called Phad and said he wanted to visit the JJ Hospital and St George's Hospital and asked him to come with the Honda City car assigned to the official.

"I could hear firing," Phad says, nearly a fortnight after the attacks. "I knew people were dying. This was an emergency, I am a government servant, how could I even think of staying at home?"

Phad drove the the Honda City car which the terrorists fired at that night, shortly before they killed Mumbai Anti Terrorist Squad chief Hemant Karkare [[Images](#)], two other police officers and two constables.

This is what he saw:

I pulled out of the gate (to the G T Hospital staff quarters) and turned right towards St Xavier's College. As I reached the end of the road, I saw them.

They were firing at a policeman across the road. If they had been on the road, I would have run them over, but they were on the footpath. They saw me. As they pointed their guns at me, I ducked.

I pulled my seat back; thank god it went back. Then I put the car in reverse gear. I was holding the steering wheel with one hand, the other hand was on the gear. The car reversed for 25 metres before they shot the tyres and the car stopped.

I had received two bullets in the hand and it was bleeding badly. Though the windshield was broken, I still put on the power lock. They tried to open the door, they could not. And with the flat tyre the car was useless to them.

As I had my bleeding hand on my head there was blood all over me. They must have thought that I was dead. I froze.

They went further down the road. There was no electricity and the area was drowned in darkness. I could see them go towards the Cama Hospital. Then I saw headlights. They too saw it.

They could not hide in the bushes as there is an iron net covering the bushes. They stood between the bushes opposite an ATM. There is a gap between the bushes to cover a drain. When the police Qualis was close to them, they both fired.

They pulled out bodies from the Qualis and threw them out. Then, they drove off as I ducked again.

My younger brother, wife and son had seen the firing from our window. They were hysterical. My brother called me on my

mobile. I took the call. I said I was alright, but he should not try to rescue me.

I called my boss and told him where I was. He called the police and they came looking for me. Before they came, four Qualis cars passed that way. I did not come out of the car because I don't know who were in those cars.

Only when I heard the assuring sirens of the Mumbai police did I come out with my hands up. They immediately took me to the GT Hospital.

The doctors put a steel pin in my finger. My ring finger is broken. I took one bullet in my finger and another in my palm. A third bullet was lodged in my back.

"I took it (*the bullet in his back*) out myself. I wasn't scared that it would explode. From my NCC (*National Cadet Corps*) days I know that once a bullet is fired, it becomes a spent force. It is harmless. The police took that as evidence.

My back aches, but I am okay. The doctor said my hand will heal in 45 days and I can go back to work.

Thank god, they fired at me. If they had not, they would have gone down the road and killed about 25 boys from my building who were standing near the gate out of curiosity. The Corporation Bank [\[Get Quote\]](#) ATM has a watchman on duty. He ran away when my car was fired at.

Image: [Maruti \[Get Quote\]](#) **Madhavrao Phad at his home. Text:** [A Ganesh \[Images\]](#) **Nadar. Photograph:** Uttam Ghosh

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