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### Skoda owner identifies the 'short man' who hijacked car on 26/11

Tells court how he was pulled out of the car by his collar and told to hand over car keys at gunpoint

Mumbai Mirror Bureau ★★★★★

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Posted On Friday, July 31, 2009 at 02:04:49 AM

The owner of the silver Skoda car, which was hijacked on 26/11 by Qasab and his slain accomplice Abu Ismail, deposed before the court on Thursday.

Sharad Arasa, 28, was driving towards Hotel Oberoi with his friends Samit and Megha Asgaonkar to rescue their friend Siddharth Umashankar. On the way, they learnt that Umashankar - a sales manager at Oberoi - had been rescued and taken to CR2 mall at Nariman Point.

Arasa said that at 12.15 am, when they reached the lane behind Vidhan Bhavan, they saw a police Qualis coming from the opposite direction.

"Someone from the car shouted at us to stop, and fired one round in the air. When the car had stopped, a short man came up to me and told me to get out of the car. The Qualis driver held me by the collar and pulled me out," Arasa said.

Meanwhile, Samit and Megha had already got out of the car. When Arasa got out, he realised he had dropped the key 'out of fear'. The 'short man', who Arasa identified as Qasab on Thursday, then asked him for the key at gunpoint. Arasa said he picked up his key and gave it to Qasab, after which the two terrorists drove off. Soon after, a few police vehicles arrived.

Arasa narrated the incident to the police, but left for Asgaonkar's home at Mahim as they were 'scared'.

At 2.15 am, they reported the incident to Mahim police station and later helped the police record a panchnama of the spot.

In his cross-examination, Arasa said, "Just after the car was hijacked and some policemen arrived there, I had pointed to one Skoda car which looked like mine. All the policemen present there followed that car."

Abbas Kazmi, Qasab's lawyer, put up a suggestion, "I say you identified Qasab at the police's instance." Qasab was seen shaking his head and laughing at this.

The prosecution examined two other witnesses - police inspector Abdul Rauf Shaikh and Constable Satappa Sarolkar.

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