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'A nightmare but I could not wake up' - Briton describes horror of hotel massacre in which his friend was killed

By [Mail On Sunday Reporter](#)

UPDATED: 00:15 GMT, 30 November 2008

A businessman who survived the massacre at the Oberoi Hotel in a dramatic escape told of his horror at discovering that his friend and dining companion that night had been killed by the gunmen.

Before he learned of his friend's death, Briton Alex Chamberlain, 38, had been on TV telling viewers about their terrible ordeal.

He had been enjoying a meal with Indian media salesman Rohinton Maloo, 51, in the hotel's Kandiha restaurant when they heard gunfire and hid in the kitchens.



Devastated: Londoner Alex Chamberlain has described the horror of being caught up in the Mumbai terror attacks

Discovered by the gunmen, they were ushered up an emergency stairway but Mr Chamberlain became separated from Mr Maloo before managing to escape.

Speaking from his home in Clapham, South-West London, Mr Chamberlain, the commercial director of Global Cricket Ventures, said a friend had phoned to say that Mr Maloo, a Mumbai married man with two teenage children, was among the dead.

Last night he said: 'It is absolutely horrific. He was a lovely, charismatic man.'

Talking about the events that night, he said: 'It was 10pm when I heard the gunshots. Then a waitress staggered into view covered in blood.'

'The waiters calmly ushered us into the kitchen. I rang my girlfriend Sarah in London and told her something terrible was happening. Then a gunman burst in. He shouted that we should all go out to the emergency stairwell.'

There were about 40 people out there – men and women, guests and staff, Indians and foreigners.



Carnage: A view of the damaged lobby of Trident-Oberoi hotel where Mr Chamberlain was caught in the massacre

Mr Chamberlain added: 'The gunman ordered us to go up the stairs, where another armed man was waiting. He told everyone to put their hands up and stand against the wall. I thought he was going to shoot us.

'Pointing the gun at us he asked: 'Where are you from? Are any of you English or American?' He was speaking in Urdu – my friend was translating – but I could hear the venom in the gunman's voice.

'Then he marched us up the stairs again. Smoke was billowing down. I could not see Rohinton. There was a moment or two before the gunman who was bringing up the rear rounded the corner. I and another guy both slipped through a door into a tiny alcove.

'It was a nightmare – but not one from which I could force myself awake. The horror unfolding around me was really happening. I honestly didn't think I would live.

'My companion, Rakesh Patel, and I were choking from the smoke. We went down the stairs.

It was pitch-black. We carried on until we reached what we thought was the basement.

'We moved forward gingerly and found we were in the lobby. In a shock, we walked on to the street. Now I am home and I feel incredibly lucky.'

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