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Living those 14 hours of terror

Vaishali Bhambri, Hindustan Times November 25, 2012 First Published: 17:31 IST(25/11/2012) | Last Updated: 01:35 IST(26/11/2012)

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On November 26, 2008, when Ankur Chawla, a 25-year-old trainee at the Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai, sat down with a hotel guest to discuss Indian history, little did he know that he was going to be a part of it himself.

"I heard a sound and thought that a champagne bottle may have been broken. When I went outside, I saw a man with a gun running behind another. Being from Delhi, I thought that two guests may have had a heated argument. Not for once did I think it could be a terrorist,"

he says, describing his first brush with the attacks. And what unfolded through the night was a tale of grit and determination of these regular hotel employees going beyond their professional brief.

And now, the Delhi-based Chawla has penned down the nerve-chilling experience in a book titled, 14 Hours: An Insider's Account of the Taj Attack, which is set to release soon.

Speaking on the execution of Ajmal Kasab, the only terrorist who was captured alive after the attacks, Chawla says, "I am happy it happened secretly. We should celebrate the peace that many people would have got and not celebrate his death. A weight from our hearts has been removed with this."

The experience, however, has made him a stronger person. "Ever since, I have learnt to face things and take life easy," Chawla signs off.

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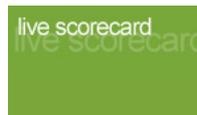


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