

Woman who worked in David Headley's office spilled beans to investigators

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MUMBAI: Indian authorities were able to unravel the nefarious activities of Pakistani-American and **Lashkar-e-Taiba** (LeT) operative David Headley in Mumbai mainly because of a woman he employed at his Tardeo office, according to a Mumbai police officer who probed Headley's links to the 26/11 attacks.

An intelligence agency source said that all the people who had come into contact with Headley in Mumbai were innocent and didn't know anything about his terror-related surveillance in the city. They had also cooperated with the authorities in the investigations following the attacks. "His female office employee's help was invaluable. She was admirable. She worked as an office assistant for him. She was most aware of Headley's movements and the people who visited him at his office," said the source.

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As a cover for his terror-related surveillance in the city, Headley had opened a liaison office of the Chicago-based Immigrant Law Centre at the AC Market in Tardeo. In September 2006, he appointed a female resident of Mumbai as a secretary for the office. Indian authorities would not reveal any more information about the secretary or the details she provided investigators as they didn't want to jeopardize her security.

While in Mumbai, Headley had come in contact with several locals, including gym instructor Vilas Warak and **Bollywood** personality Rahul Bhatt. A minor sensation was caused when Headley revealed, in his confession, that he also became acquainted with a political party's "PRO". He said he took the PRO out for lunch and videographed him. While the party denied any knowledge of this, the man in question admitted to meeting Headley, but said he never helped him.

Headley, aka Daood Gilani, reportedly opened the immigration agency to help skilled and unskilled workers get visas for the US and Canada. Police, however, suspect that Headley met his local contacts at the office. Headley had also befriended a woman who runs a cake shop in south Mumbai. They were close friends and Headley and she visited a couple of places where, unknown to her, Headley did recess.

Among the places Headley reced were BARC, Jalvayu Vihar in Powai, Air India Colony in Santa Cruz (E), **Shiv Sena** Bhavan (Dadar) and Siddhivinayak temple, where he purchased threads. The 26/11 attackers used those threads on their wrists to mislead investigators.

After Headley was arrested in the US in 2009, Indian security agencies started tracing his footprint in the country. The police continue to maintain surveillance at the places he visited before his arrest as the Pakistan-based LeT is expected to have information about these locations. Headley also lived near the German Bakery, in Pune, which was later attacked.

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