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'I was saved because of my Indian looks'

Prasanna D Zore in Mumbai | December 01, 2008 18:21 IST

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Line Kristin Woldbeck, a marketing and communications expert from Norway, believes that she was the only customer who escaped unhurt on the night of November 26, when terrorists attacked Cafe Leopold.

"As soon as the terrorists entered Cafe Leopold, they began firing indiscriminately," she says. While she was left unscathed, her Indian friend -- whose name she refused to divulge -- and her Norwegian boyfriend Arne Stromme, were not so lucky.

The terrorists fired four to five times, she recalls, with an interval of about three minutes between each attack. Line admits that she is not sure about the timing or the exact number of rounds fired by the terrorists.

"We all ducked under a large table as soon as we heard gunshots and people

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screaming," she adds. "Nobody was hurt in the first bout of firing that must have lasted for over 60 seconds," says Line.

"My Indian friend (a girl from South Mumbai) was lying still after the second bout of firing was over," she remembers sadly. When Line checked her pulse, she realised that her friend had succumbed to the bullets.

Her boyfriend Arne Stromme lost three fingertips of his left hand. Another bullet grazed Arne's face, leaving a pool of blood around Line.

Line recalls the ruthlessness of the terrorists, who not only sprayed bullets 4-5 times, but came back to do a recce of the damage unleashed by their bullets and grenades.

"Though I don't remember the number of terrorists who attacked us, I can say for sure they fired inside the cafe over four times, each time after a small interval."

As Line was struggling to get back on her feet and trying to make sense of her surroundings, one of the terrorists came back. "He was standing just three metres behind me. He saw me getting up, but was not interested in me. He had come to survey the damage done by them. He checked the casualties for about two minutes, by then I was again lying on the floor, expecting the worst," says Line.

"Some people say they came into the restaurant four times, though I think they came in five times," she says. However, Line fails to recollect why the terrorists came in for the fifth time.

Line believes that the pool of blood surrounding her eventually saved her life. "I was spared because my hair was soaked in blood (she is a blonde) and I was wearing an Indian outfit. The terrorists must have assumed that I was an Indian. Perhaps they only wanted to kill white people," she says, heaving a sigh of relief.

In spite of being close to them, she could not hear what the terrorists were saying to each other, because of the noise and commotion after the firing and explosion of grenades.

The terrorist who came in for the recce was well-trained and well-built, with a military-like posture, informs Line. "He was stocky and stood in an upright posture. He was well armed and I could see an AK-47 strung across his shoulders. I don't remember his features as it is difficult to keep one's senses intact in that atmosphere. He surveyed the scene for over two minutes," she says.

Line and her boyfriend have been traveling across India for over a month and are determined to come back again. They will be leaving for Norway by the second week of December as she wants her boyfriend, who is recuperating at Bombay Hospital, to recover fully before taking a flight back home.

Ironically, Line and Arne had come to Cafe Leopold only to meet their Indian friend.

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"We came back from Diu to Mumbai, barely two hours before the firing began, to meet our friend. We had planned to fly back to Delhi [\[Images\]](#) the next day (November 27) and take a connecting flight to Norway," Line explains.

Line is sure that she and Arne would come back to India. "Such kind of attacks happen all over the world and India is no exception. We will be back soon to enjoy the Indian hospitality," she promises, as she returns to tending to her injured boyfriend.

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Additional info/correction to the report,

by [Line](#) on Dec 26, 2008 10:59 PM [Permalink](#)

No newsreport reveals every detail of what really happened, nor what the subject told the reporter word by word.

The heading are not my words. I made a suggestion, not a statement.

Though, I regret not using the word "appearance" rather than "looks" (English is not my native language).

Unbelievable and sad, at some discussionboards my "stupidity" (:"haha, she believes she looks Indian") is major subject, the terrorattacks are hardly mentioned. Hence, I have an urge to say this.

The report doesn't say that my Indian friend who was slaughtered with a bullet in her neck, had western outfit. Neither that my dupatta fell over my face as I dived back under the table, that my skin was quite dark/tanned nor that the room was badly lit.
No, I don't look Indian, - the circumstances made me appear like an Indian.

As I turned around to get back under the table, the terrorist spitted out one single word; "Tourist!" (pronounced "touristsch").

We chose to remain in Mumbai till Dec. 22. It's been important for us to heal together with the city and it's wonderful people.

As my boyfriend stayed in hospital till Dec. 16., I had time to read whatever was written about the attacks incl. statements from other survivors. Not the least, time to talk to people with more backgroundinfo than me.

The more I learn to know, the more sure I am that my Indian appearance helped save my life.

Wishing Mumbai, it's citizens and all affected by the terrorattacks all my best!

Line

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How long can we keep donating our people as scape goat to these devils from pak

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