Horror Tambola Story

The story goes back 36 years. I was in the prime of my youth of 37 educated and a modern young

woman. It was night 17/18 December 19 71. I was on my way home away from my office, on some

leave to my village which was around 3 hundred miles, called BALACHAUR. A small village with around 4

hundred houses. My village had 53 wells, 55 temples, 58 playgrounds, 63 grand size banyan trees, 67

apple gardens, 80 peach gardens, and more than 78 fruit sellers.

The village has now overgrown into a township of around 44 thousand people. 28 nearby villages have

been swallowed by it and it threatens to eat a few more. Just on the previous day i.e.16 December,

INDIA had won a great victory in the BANGLA DESH war. Whole Nation had gone crazy—MILITARY MEN

were the heroes everywhere. More than 10 Radio stations were blaring out around 40-50 patriotic

songs with soldiers as heroes. During the immediate wake of this HYPE of VICTORY SONGS and

perceived GREATNESS of SOLDIERS, at around 08 35 hours, a poor me, landed at SRINAGAR Bus Stand

hoping to catch some bus to go to JAMMU which was around 85 miles from here.

I booked a taxi with number plate 68-39 and took off at around 9 AM and made it to PATHANKOT—then

a RAIL HEAD FOR J&K, at about 20- 45 hours. It was an awesome journey with army vehicles being given

preference everywhere. I shared my taxi with a needy and a well behaved MARWAARIS couple.

They had plenty of eatables and we had our fill every hour. In this taxi journey we had 6 burgers, 13

packets of chips, 7 bottles of coke, 34 thepla and around 22 khakdha and 14 kachoris

At Pathankot, the couple bid me goodbye and I left.I moved to a road side DHABA and hoped to catch a

truck to HOSHIARPUR. While having a cup of tea, a JALLANDHAR BOUND truck with number plate 70- 46

came and I asked SANTOKH Singh, the driver, if he could take me up To DASUYA. He readily agreed. The

tea stall owner did not take from me 25 paisa for the excellent cup of warm tea he had given me. I got

into the truck of SANTOKH SINGH around 21.30 hours. Instead of getting down at DASUYA, It was

around 12 55 on the morning of 19 December. My place was still some 86 Kms away—on Road

Jallandhar-Chandigarh. Luckily, a small convoy of military vehicles came by. They were empty vehicles

which were returning to Command HQ at Shimla (HP). They offered me a seat in the last 24 th seat of

the leading vehicle. It was around 1 AM we started. At around 02-42 AM I was dropped at the

HOSHIARPUR. This canal takes off from River SATLUJ, some 41 kms away towards CHANDIGARH.

There were around 48-49 millitary vehicles on the road filled with more than 87-88 army men. I also saw

that the vehicles had labels mentioning 73 guns, 76 rifles, 84 hand grenades, 82 bombs and 61 other

ammunitions.

After midnight, in the wintry night there was no means of conveyance. In the bus I met one of my Village

UNCLES—who was going to his fields. Zaildar Balwant Singh was a man of around 72. When He saw me,

he instantly recognized me and fired me in anger. “What are you doing here at this unevenly hour?” he

had shouted. I explained to him as to how I had made it in one day from SRINAGAR to BALACHAUR. He

couldn’t believe that I had come in a day.

He was not convinced. He started talking of the war with PAKISTAN. I started narrating to him stories of

our valor in the KASHMIR VALLEY. He started walking with me. He then, narrated to me the story of one

MUSLIM boy, called YOUSOUF age 38—the ONLY GRADUATE of the VILLAGE with 75 thousand men and

56 thousand women and 29 thousand children. Then, he talked of some CAPTAIN RAO FARMAN ALI of

ASRON village (MUSLIM RAJPUTS of age 51.

The RAO SAHIB of ASRON was a friend of ZAILDAR BALWANT SINGH age 57. His stories were interesting.

As we came near the bylane of the SAINI MOHALLA, he bid me farewell and cautioned me not to move

alone at such oddly hours. He told me he had to go to his fields for SUGAR CANE CHURNING. I touched

his feet and carried on my way home which was around 32- 33 minutes away but I reached home in

more than 41-43 minutes. My family was very happy. We talked and talked of the war for more than 60

minutes. I fell to sleep after some time.

Next day, I got up did prayer for 24 minutes and spoke to my father age 64 and mother of age 62 I talked

about BRIGADIER YOUSOUF of Pakistan army . He confirmed and also added that YOUSOUF at age 43

was his his friend and he had got VICEROY COMMISSION (VCO) while in BRITISH ARMY when he was of

age 47. VCOs were the forerunner of JCO rank of INDIAN/ PAKISTAN ARMY. He remained in touch with

his village friends even after migration and retired as a brigadier around 19 69. I asked him about

Captain RAO FARMAN ALI—my father laughed on my ignorance. “BUDDHU (DUFFER), He is the same

Major General RAO FARMAN ALI, who was the Chief of Staff of PAKISTAN ARMY in EAST BENGAL (now

BANGLA DESH). I was flabbergasted at such crass ignorance. He had been in the news for more than 51-

52 days before surrender of the PAKISTAN.

Then my father snapped, “why are you asking me all this after 26 long years. I said “Oh, I was just

confirming because Uncle Balwant Singh, Zaildar uncle, had told me about them last night”. I told my

father that uncle zaildar told me more than 31 stories in the bus.

“Shut up, don’t talk nonsense”, my father was suddenly serious. I was utterly confused. I told him that

he had narrated these stories to me just last night. “What? Last night you met him?” my father was

shell-shocked. “Yes, He walked with me” I replied. “I don’t believe this” uttered my father. “Why”, I

asked.

“Because, he died on 15 December this year. I was stunned and shocked. It was unbelievable. How could

that be? There was nothing like GHOST about him. He was a normal man walking with his stick, as I had

always seen him before this.

Then the fear overtook me and I went silent. I fell sick for around 53-54 days and my leave was a waste

of time. I remained fearful of his coming again but he never came back. Whenever I narrate this story, it

raises a number of questions. Do you have any? Tell you frankly; thereafter I never came across any such

phenomenon but this incident and episode keeps haunting me that I have walked with a ghost for a

distance of 5 KMs. for the last 36 years. There is no falsehood about this—MANO YA NA MANO (BELIEVE

IT OR NOT)