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SNIPPETS – XII
(BITS & BYTES OF SHARED MEMORIES)
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Here then is another crop of Snippets to ensure that the love of the odd, the comic and the irreverent can provide the best assurance for decent, and perhaps, even efficient police services.

A few instances of piquant humour relating to the office of Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, heard by CVN from his school-mate T.B.Nagarajan(IA&AS–1949).

V.Narahari Rao was the first Comptroller and Auditor- General of independent India, and held office from 1947 to 1954. A sedate person, he had the sobriquet 'never-hurry Rao' in official circles. In the latter years of his service he had some health problems and resorted to some special poojas to get over the 'bad times' as advised by his astrologers. During this period, an LDC of Nagpur office, who had some neural problems, was dismissed from service on grounds of insanity. His appeal to the departmental authorities was rejected. He then came to Delhi and did dharna at the gate of Narahari Rao's residence but could not get reinstated. Utterly frustrated he went back to his village and from there sent Re 1/- (one) by M.O. addressed CAG's office, stating in the message portion that it was "towards the funeral expenses of V.N.Rao". This was 'routinely' received in the dak section and duly documented. Then began the tamasha. On seeing the message portion, no section in the office was willing to handle it as part of its work, fearing the reaction of the ailing CAG if the matter went up to his notice. The papers were tossed up and down at various levels but kept back from the CAG's notice. It remained without disposal for some years, presumably till 1954, and then disposed of somehow!

Around the same time as the M.O. incident another matter came up, throwing the CAG's office out of balance. The Government came out with a provisional list of dignitaries in office whose death in harness will be duly mourned by the issue of a black bordered gazette. The CAG's office noticed that the CAG was not in this list, and immediately reacted at the dealing assistant's level to suggest that the CAG should be included in the august list ! When the file went up, the officers realised the 'sensitivity' of the issue in the context of VNR's anxiety about his own health. They were hesitant to have the file duly processed. The Secretary to VNR sent down the file without any action, orally exclaiming that he didn't want to lose his job by submitting it to VNR! The ultimate disposal of that file remained unknown for a long time! Anyway the need for such mournful documentation has'nt arisen since then !

Bihar was in the grip of a financial crisis, and some one high up in Finance had advised the officials to return as many proposals as possible with the endorsement: "Can't be agreed to now. Kindly carry on as here-to fore". One day an application was received through proper channel from a lady, requesting permission for remarriage while the first husband was alive, since he had gone nuts. The dealing assistant, without reading the file, returned it with the stipulated endorsement 'No finances, please carry on as before". The furore that followed can be imagined. Heads rolled, of course!

In the early days after Independence, some officials in the Finance Ministry adopted an easy method of forestalling audit objections. They would mark the file with the U.O.note 'CAG may kindly see in the first instance' and send it on. The middle levels in CAG's office would slog over the matter and then return the file to the Ministry, with a note about a possible approach to the matter. Thereafter the Finance Minister would generally write 'We may do as suggested by CAG'. One day V.N.Rao happened to come early to office and called for the dak, wherein he saw some files of the 'first instance' variety. He saw through the game and himself wrote on those files 'only in the second instance', and sent them back to the Ministry who got the hint and stopped the practice thereafter, much to relief of the middle levels in CAG !

P.A.Rosha writes :

Purshindar Singh Phulka joined the Indian Police in 1942. He came from a well to do Jat Sikh family of Patiala. I met him briefly in 1945 when he was posted at Dharamsala (Distt Kangra) as ASP. My father was also posted at Dharamsala as the Distt Medical Officer. As it happened, my father fell ill and had to be taken to Jullundur for treatment. Purshindar helped us out and was good enough to lend us his car and driver. I remember him as a gentle, soft-spoken, handsome young man.

At the time of partition in 1947, Phulka was posted as SP of the border district of Gurdaspur. The run up to partition saw increasing polarization among the people along communal lines, which was reflected in the administration and the police. The proportion of the communities in

Gurdaspur district was almost even and the world capital of the Ahmadiyyas was located at Qadian in this district.. The Radcliffe line announced on 17th August 1947, cut through this district. It ran along the river Ravi giving one tehsil of this district to Pakistan and the rest to India.

It is the phenomenal extent of violence and atrocities which will mark partition as an event in history. Twelve million people were forced to move, both ways, across the bifurcated Punjab by the end of November while lakhs lost their lives. 83,000 women were officially verified to have been abducted and kept back on both sides. Each side sought to legitimize itself by stories and rumours of aggression by the other. Communities' complicity was visible everywhere and the rioters had a sense of immunity.

Some abiding images of the time are battered bodies lying on the roadside and on railway platforms; trains moving slowly across the countryside with people clinging like flies on the roofs ,windows and buffers; stray columns of smoke arising from burning homesteads; harmless looking men and women turned looters; and the miles long kafilas of the wretched ousted from their lands and homes. The old , sick and exhausted died in hundreds and the passage of these caravans was marked by hastily improvised cremations and graves.

Soon afterwards, it is said that Purshinder started having nightmares He said he was haunted by the faces of the dead, and kept hearing the cries of the women and children. He just could not sleep. Then one day early in 1948, he just disappeared, deserting his post and leaving behind his wife and children . Frantic efforts were made by the family and the govt to find him. They searched far and long but found no trace.

Years later, in 1951 a friend spotted him. in Jullundur wandering in saffron robes in the garb of a sadhu. He was re-united with his overjoyed family. The govt was sympathetic and after some time accepted his request for re-instatement in service. At that time the office of the Director, Medical Services, Punjab, was located at Kasauli .and Purshinder was called to appear for a medical examination. The evening before he was to appear before the board of doctors, Pushindar died of an overdose of opium. He would have been hardly 33 years at that time..

P.S. This Snippet may please be treated as strictly for private circulation. Even at a distance of half a century I would not like to hurt the sensibilities of the family.

P.A.Rosha writes :

In 1965 I was posted as SSP Ferozepur in Punjab. Ferozepur has a 110-mile long border with Pakistan, mostly along the river Sutlej – the town itself is hardly 4 miles from the border. On the morning of the 2nd September, 1965, I got a call to attend an urgent meeting in the Chief Minister's office at Chandigarh at 10 pm that night.

The DCs and SPs of the three border districts had been summoned for this meeting.

There was an air of suppressed excitement among the participants. The Chief Minister introduced Maj-Gen SN Bhatia, the Area Commander, who had come to brief us. He told us that on the 31st August the Pakistan Army had launched a major attack from Chhamb (north-east of Sialkot) across the international border towards Akhnur on the river Chenab. To hold this surprise attack it had

been decided to launch a massive counter-attack towards Lahore at dawn on the 6th Sept. The 15th Div would attack from Attari, the 7 Div from Khalra and 4 Div would open a bridge-head at Khemkaran, all in Amritsar district. The army had already started moving and we were required to give them full cover to maintain secrecy and all their requirements like trucks, sandbags, maps, guides, labour for digging trenches and bunkers,, keeping the roads clear, etc. The paramount consideration was that total secrecy about this attack had to be maintained and the advantage of a surprise counter attack must not be lost. We were given the discretion to evacuate the population in vulnerable pockets across the river but only if could be done without jeopardizing secrecy.

This story really starts on the 8th August 1965, when some Gujjars spotted heavily armed intruders in the heights above Gulmarg in Kashmir, and ran all the way down to Tangmarg to inform the authorities. By that time more than 3000 armed guerillas had already penetrated deep into our territory. This was Op Gibraltar – deliberately planned and executed by Pakistan. It failed because the people of Kashmir never rose to make common cause with the invaders. In the course of mopping up operations, our Army took the opportunity to capture the Haji Pir pass – one of the main routes of infiltration. As Op Gibraltar fizzled out, Pakistan put into effect the next stage - Op Grand-slam with the attack towards Akhnur across the international border.

The next three days passed like an unending stream of camouflaged men, material, guns, tanks, etc. Lt.Gen Harbaksh Singh, who was the Army Commander during this operation, says in his book “War Despatches”, that as many as 200,000 Army personnel and supplies had to be moved to forward locations. This meant mobilizing 200 trains, over 4000 civilian trucks/oil tankers in addition to army transport, etc. moving mostly at night.

The 7 Div which was located at Ferozepur moved out on the pretext of an exercise. The Div Commander, Maj-Gen HK Sibal, who is still a very dear friend, would often come over and the hardest part was to pretend in front of our wives. I remember him pacing through the night, timing the first light for the attack. He left his wife Tara with us. One brigade was deputed from Rajasthan for the defense of our district. I recall a typical snarl. The heavy guns for Fazilka arrived on time but the civilian trucks carrying the shells went astray and we went frantic searching for them.

Like I said, the hardest part was keeping all this a secret from my wife. It was only at dawn on the 6th morning when we could hear the firing from the Khemkaran border, that I unburdened myself. Both the attacks across the border, along the Attari-Lahore and Khalra-Lahore roads were carried out in total surprise and went clean up to the main defence line on the Ichogil canal with hardly any resistance. The sentries were at their routine patrolling and the Pakistan Rangers fast asleep!

NK writes : A clash of two probationers : (names not given for privacy reasons)

ABC was an ASP in charge of his first sub-division. Still raw and full of himself with a sense of high superiority, he took delight in teasing his subordinates to the point of even openly questioning their integrity. He was, of course, able to get away with this most of the time, as subordinates valued their jobs and submitted meekly. But he was soon to meet his Waterloo!

XYZ was a Sub-Inspector in charge of his first police station in ABC's sub-division. Receiving an anonymous petition alleging that XYZ was receiving monthly collections from local shopkeepers, ABC proceeded to visit the Police Station determined to make an example of XYZ. In a literal confrontation he asked XYZ whether the allegation was true. XYZ, being a high-spirited youngster full of idealism, bristled and protested. Raising his voice ABC said he was sure the allegation was true. Words were exchanged, tempers rose and at one point, unable to take any more, XYZ landed a strong slap on ABC's cheek. Totally taken aback, ABC said he would see to XYZ being sacked very soon, walked out and sent a strong report on the incident to the SP.

DEF was the SP of the district, a veteran risen from the ranks, and a man of sterling qualities. In the enquiry he conducted, both ABC and XYZ gave a truthful account of what happened. DEF then proceeded to hand down to both ABC and XYZ the dressing down of their life, and told them that both of them could choose between expressing regret for what they did, or be ready to be sent out of service. Good sense prevailed on both, and they went on to serve full and successful careers.

T.Ananthachari contributes this : How to catch a lion

Newton's Method:

Let, the lion catch you.

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

Implies you caught the lion.

Einstein Method:

Run in the direction opposite to that of the lion.

Due to higher relative velocity, the lion will also run faster and will get tired soon.

Now you can trap it easily.

Software Engineer Method:

Catch a cat and claim that your testing has proved that its a Lion.

If anyone comes back with issues tell that you will upgrade it to Lion.

Indian Police Method:

Catch any animal, interrogate it and torture it to accept that its a lion .

Rajnikanth Method :

Keep warning the lion that you may come and attack anytime.

The lion will live in fear and die soon in fear itself.

Jayalalitha Method:

Send the Police commissioner around 2AM and kill it, while it's sleeping

Mani Rathnam Method (Film director):

Make sure the lion does not get sun light and put the lion in a dark room with a single candle lighted.

Keep murmuring something in its ears.

The lion will be highly irritated and commit suicide.

Karan Johar Method (Film director):

Send a lioness into the forest.

Our lion and lioness fall in love with each other.

Send another lioness in to the forest, followed by another lion.

First lion loves the first lioness and the second lion loves the 2nd lioness.

But second lioness loves both lions.

Now send another lioness (third) into the forest.

You don't understand right... ok....read it after 15 yrs, then also you wont!

Yash Chopra method (Film director):

Take the lion to Australia or US.. and kill it in a good scenic location.

Govinda method:

Continuously dance before the lion for 5 or 6 days.

Menaka Gandhi method:

Save the lion from a danger and feed him with some vegetables continuously.

George Bush method:

Link the lion with Osama bin laden and shoot him!!!.

T.Ananthachari contributes this :

A disappointed salesman of Coca Cola returns from his Middle East assignment. A friend asked, "Why weren't you successful with the Arabs?"

The salesman explained :

"When I got posted in the Middle East , I was very confident that I would make a good sales pitch as Cola is virtually unknown there. But, I had a problem I didn't know to speak Arabic. So, I planned to convey the message through three posters..."



First poster: A man lying in the hot desert sand...totally exhausted and fainting.

Second poster: The man is drinking our Cola.

Third poster: Our man is now totally refreshed.

And then these posters were pasted all over the place

"Then that should have worked!" said the friend.

"The hell it did ! said the salesman. "I didn't realize that Arabs read from right to left"