

HOME

Written by

Abhi Kumar

abhi@warrior9.com

EXT. AIRPORT LANDING STRIP - MORNING

A commercial plane lands.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (V.O.)
Ladies and gentleman thank you for
flying with us and welcome to
Mumbai. The current temperature is
38 degrees Celsius, 100 degrees
Fahrenheit and the humidity level
is 97%. Have a wonderful day.

INT. MUMBAI AIRPORT ARRIVALS IMMIGRATION - MORNING

A never-ending immigration line that inches forward. Everyone
looks the same - tucked-in shirts, jeans and white sneakers
as if part of some assembly line.

AVI is an Indian man in his 20s and stands out in his t-shirt
and shorts. He fills out an immigration form while chatting
to his colleague, NICK, on the phone.

AVI
You see the second file? It's got a
tab in there with the various
structuring options for the deal.
You see it?

NICK (V.O.)
Yeah, I found it. How do you keep
all this data straight in your
head? It's insane.

AVI
Relax, he'll just want to see the
first three options. Ignore the
rest. You'll be fine. It's just a
few days.

NICK (V.O.)
What they need is the guy who knows
these numbers inside out. I'm not
the structuring hotshot.
(whispers)
And I tell you something else, I
think they are seriously talking
about cut backs at the bank this
time.

AVI
Why are you whispering? You know
compliance record all calls right?

(MORE)

AVI (CONT'D)

You need to relax. It's a bank. We work like dogs all year and we're expected to be happy we got jobs.
(sighs)
What time is it there?

NICK (V.O.)

(yawns)
10.30. If I'm lucky I can actually get home before midnight for once.

AVI

Oof. How's Maria handling that?

NICK (V.O.)

How do you think? I haven't seen my wife and little girl in 6 months and we live in the same house. I can't go on like this man.

AVI

Yeah. I hear you.

NICK (V.O.)

Anyway, enough about my troubles. How was the flight? How's Mumbai? You enjoying your holiday yet?

AVI

Well, it's nine in the morning, I didn't sleep the entire flight and now I'm standing in an immigration line that I'm sure can be seen from the international space station. So all standard fare for India.

Nick laughs.

NICK

When was the last time you went back?

AVI

Honestly I don't remember. But I am looking forward to seeing my dad again.
(beat)
Are you worried? You're not worried are you?

NICK (V.O.)

Of course I'm worried. But you know what, let me handle stuff here. Nothing you can do from there.

(MORE)

NICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'll hold the fort down, you go and
have a good time with your parents.
And try and enjoy India!

Avi looks down the line at a WOMAN yelling at a MAN.

WOMAN
What are you just standing there
for? Can't you see the line is
moving ahead?

MAN
Ok, ok. Why are you yelling? What's
the problem?

WOMAN
I've been standing in this line for
an hour and a half and you're
asking me what's the problem!?

MAN
Madam, we're all in the same line
nah?

AVI
Yeah. I'll try. Go home and spend
some time with your family Nick.

NICK (V.O.)
Will do buddy.

INT. MUMBAI AIRPORT TERMINAL IMMIGRATION - DAY

Avi comes out of immigration and sees another queue. He
bypasses it. A SECURITY GUARD yells out at him.

SECURITY GUARD
Sir! SIR!

Avi looks back at him.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)
Can't you see there's a line here?

AVI
I-I'm just, uh, I already stood in
line. For immigration?

SECURITY GUARD
This is the immigration stamp
confirmation line. We need to check
your immigration stamp. Go please.

Avi looks at him in confusion.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)
Come on, come on! End of line!

Avi sighs and heads to the back of the queue.

INT. MUMBAI AIRPORT TERMINAL BAGGAGE COLLECTION - DAY

Avi stands impatiently waiting for his luggage. He sees his bag and grabs it with joy. He rushes towards the exit before a CUSTOMS OFFICER steps into his field of view.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
Sir! Customs line sir.

Avi looks and sees another long line of people with their carts going through a scanner. He sighs in defeat.

INT. MUMBAI AIRPORT CUSTOMS - DAY

Avi stands in another line to exit the airport. People hand customs forms to a JUNIOR OFFICER who lets them pass. A FAT MAN with greasy hair, tight white shirt, an enormous pot belly and large gold chain sits near the exit ominously eyeing everyone. He stands and approaches Avi.

FAT MAN
You!

He indicates for Avi to step out of line. Avi looks around, no one is paying attention. He nervously steps out.

FAT MAN (CONT'D)
Passport.

Avi hands him his passport. Fat Man flicks through it.

FAT MAN (CONT'D)
Avimanyu Ghosh. Bengali?

Avi nods.

FAT MAN (CONT'D)
[in Bengali]
I can speak a little bit of Bengali.

AVI
[in Bengali]
Very good.

FAT MAN
And why have you come today?

AVI
It's my dad's birthday.

FAT MAN
Oh really? How old is he?

AVI
He's turning 70.

FAT MAN
Very good. And did you bring him
any presents?

Avi swallows.

AVI
He's in the hospital getting a
checkup. I just need to go pick him
up. It's a surprise.

FAT MAN
Hmmm. So if I open your bag I won't
find any gold or other such goods?

AVI
Gold?

FAT MAN
Yes, gold. So many people bringing
in so much gold jewelry now-a-days.

AVI
No. I'm just here to see my dad.

FAT MAN
You come to India often?

AVI
(shakes his head)
This is the first time my entire
family will be together in years.

FAT MAN
You came to your dad's 70th
birthday after a long time, family
reunion. And he is in the hospital.
And you don't have a present?

Avi starts digging through his bag and pulls out a box.

AVI
It's a- it's a pen.

The Fat Man plucks it out of his hand and opens it.

FAT MAN
Very nice. Very fancy.

He slips the pen into his front pocket, closes the box and hands it back to Avi along with his passport.

FAT MAN (CONT'D)
Okay, move on.

Avi just stares at him. The Fat Man leans in menacingly.

FAT MAN (CONT'D)
The exit is there. Go through it.

Avi moves on.

EXT. MUMBAI AIRPORT - DAY

Avi looks lost as he scans the mob against the sweltering heat for his driver. He sees a small man, smoking a bidi (a pungent Indian rollie), wearing aviator shades with an upside down sign reading: AVIMANYU GHOSH. This is DITIN, the driver.

INT. MUMBAI AIRPORT CARPARK - DAY

Avi gets into the back seat of a small sedan and pulls the seat belt and can't seem to find the buckle. Ditin gets in after throwing the bags in the trunk.

AVI
This seat belt...

Ditin looks back at him blankly in the rear view mirror. Avi abandons his efforts. They drive off at high speed.

EXT. MUMBAI AIRPORT - DAY

Their car pulls out at high speed and drives to the highway.

INT. CAR - DAY

AVI
Is dad still at the hospital?

Avi's phone starts to ring.

DITIN

Yes, he is.

AVI

Let's go there first then.

He answers his phone.

AVI (CONT'D)

Hello?

It's Avi's friend, VINNIE, a boisterous and lively soul. As they speak Avi's car starts to swerve in and out of traffic. Avi stares in horror as the car runs red lights, almost hits a number of other vehicles, jay walkers and so on.

VINNIE

Hey man, you in town?

AVI

Vinnie! Holy shit, how long has it been? What you been up to?

VINNIE

Nothing much man. Keeping busy. You came with your sister?

AVI

Pavi? No, no. She gets in later tonight.

VINNIE

Cool, cool. Listen, I know you're in town for a family thing. I know how those can get. I'm just saying, you wanna take a break, grab dinner, smoke a j or something then just gimme a call. Would be nice to catch up. It's been a while.

They stop at a traffic light about an inch away from a bus. Avi stares at the bus wanting to reach out and touch it.

AVI

Yeah, yeah. For sure. You got it. We definitely need to meet up.

VINNIE

You heading home?

AVI

Yeah, just gotta pick up dad from his checkup. Gonna surprise him.

VINNIE

Nice! Nice!

AVI

Yeah, he's not expecting a thing so it should be good.

VINNIE

Best birthday present a father could have. What about Sunny? She come with you?

AVI

Sunny? Uh no, she couldn't make it. Hey, I better go man. I'll call you later all right?

EXT. MUMBAI CITY

They drive past some major Mumbai landmarks and see posters of Bollywood films. He also notices the poverty of the people and the shiny new malls that stand in their midst. They eventually turn into the hospital.

CUT TO:

INT. GALAXY HOSPITAL ICU

Avi stands over the body of his father, GOPAL, in shock. He tears up but doesn't cry. Gopal's body is covered with a sheet. Gopal is a senior citizen but in good health. He could be asleep if it not for the thin trail of blood coming out of nose.

DOCTOR (O.S.)

I'm sorry for your loss. It was a heart attack.

AVI

But-but I thought he was just here for a checkup? He had a-an infection or something?

DOCTOR (O.S.)

In his condition, any kind of infection could be serious. His heart was only functioning at 25% capacity after all.

AVI

What?

DOCTOR (O.S.)
He... didn't tell you?

AVI
N-No. I mean, I know he had an incident last year but he said...he said he was fine.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
He refused to discuss surgical options. He knew there was a risk his heart could give out under stress. That's unfortunately what happened in this case.

AVI
I don't...?

DOCTOR (O.S.)
His heart gave out. His gall bladder infection complicated by his diabetes, high blood pressure and other issues...his heart just couldn't take it. You know he was hospitalized for almost a month earlier this year?

AVI
I-I didn't know that. I don't live here. I just got in. It's his birthday tomorrow.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Would you like me to inform your mother?

AVI
What?

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Your mother. She just arrived. She's in the waiting room.

AVI
She doesn't know? Shit, I-, no, I'll tell her. I'll tell her.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
She's going to want to see him. If you can, give us some time to...clean him up.

Avi nods.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You have a sister as well? Is that correct? Living overseas also?

AVI
Yes. She's flying in tonight.
(Silence)
What-what happens now?

DOCTOR (O.S.)
You tell us whether you want to take him home or if you would like to cremate him today. We can also keep him in the morgue for 24 hours.

AVI
Take him home?

DOCTOR (O.S.)
There are various prayers that some families... your mother can tell you more. We'll wrap him up in the mean time and get you the relevant documents for the death certificate.

AVI
Wrap him up?

DOCTOR (O.S.)
There is... one more thing.

AVI
What's that?

DOCTOR (O.S.)
You'll need to make a police statement...confirming there were no... issues with his medical care. He has been in and out of the hospital for some time now. It's standard procedure.

The doctor pauses.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
He was a...he was a good man.

Avi looks at the doctor then goes back to staring at his dad.