

A lone wolf left unguarded

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



SHAH HUSAIN IMAM

SIX days after the single-handed carnage at an Orlando gay nightclub, a coherent but incredibly bizarre narrative is emerging out of the nocturnal shadows.

At this point, operational details recede into the background as insightful analyses and interpretations of killer Omar Mateen's behaviour pattern over time take hold. Background checks, mounted seriously on Omar, however, create an impression that the bloodbath could have been averted. That is, only if the intelligence apparatus had followed up on the suspicions aroused around him earlier on. The FBI had on three occasions questioned him on his activities but every time he seemed to have allayed their concerns sneaking through their defenses in the end. Now, it has been red alert flashing on the radar.

Omar Mateen's former wife, on condition of anonymity - apparently for fear of reprisal from ISIS or may be in line with a standard official norm - has stated that Omar used to beat her and her child. His abusive treatment led her father to take her out of Omar's house and his life through a divorce in 2009. She also reveals that Omar used to visit gay clubs and was himself given to 'gay tendencies'. His ex and current spouses admitted to accompanying him on his visits to gay nightclubs including The Pulse, the target of last week-end's massacre.

All this may explain why his ex-wife in particular, disclosed that he had a 'bipolar disorder' - often obsessive compulsive behaviour marked by pendulous mood swings.

Thus he was said to be living a double life - homophobic and uninged to top it off.

His second wife Noor Salman may face an inquest into why she did not alert the authorities to his deadly plans supposedly she had an inkling of.

A person unable to come to terms with himself in a paranoid state is likely to be seeking 'imaginary retribution' through transferred anger. He chose his target aiming to maximise the effect of his atrocity on a massive group of people in the small hours of the night.



Remembrance: Orlando, Florida.

PHOTO: AFP

A parallel can be drawn to the Anders Behring Breivik's mass killing in Norway on July 22, 2011. He had killed 77 people including 69 on the island of Utøya, out of his far-right predilections tinged with Islamophobia. Omar Mateen killed 50 and injured scores in The Pulse nightclub. Both were on a one-man killing mission and both committed mass murders.

The motivations in the reverse order point to heightened ideological or symbolic prejudices harboured in both minds.

In the latter case, ISIS has claimed credit, such as it is inured to be doing after such a massacre.

Gun control regulations, under a stretched out meaning of the Second Amendment to the US Constitution (upholding the principle of self-protection) are considered too lax to curb potential gung-ho attitude in temperamental people. Omar Mateen reportedly had licensed weapons that he could be trigger happy about. Easy

availability of arms and ammunition to citizens which the gun lobby in the US advocates with vengeance may be in for a fresh relook.

An apparent detractor has argued that Breivik had used a bomb and an assault rifle to finish off a large number of his compatriots in spite of strict gun laws in Norway.

A debate accentuates in the USA political circles and leaderships over cultural diversity, immigration and security issues now bundled together. Republican presumptive presidential candidate Donald Trump has tried to exploit the situation to get a political mileage over his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton. He romped into rapping on his diabolic theme of banning Muslim immigration to the USA (from certain parts of the world). President Obama was just being measured in his reaction balking at characterising the event definitively just yet pending conclusive investigations. He merely said in the interim it was a home-

grown act with no external 'direction'. But his comment flung, as it were, a red rug to the bull. Trump fell for his 'anti-Muslim yapping' indulging in an inane semantic spat over the usage of words (albeit nuanced) by the US president.

Obama as President couldn't afford the luxury of any irresponsible utterance, so he categorically counseled caution against painting all Muslims with a broad religious brush. Similarly, Democratic presumptive presidential nominee Hillary Clinton has debunked attempted political capitalisation of the nightclub carnage by Trump forcefully adding that the entire Muslim community should not be demonised for the derailed act of a few.

Was Omar Mateen a 'lone wolf' detached from any network? Only time will tell, hopefully, sooner rather than later

The writer is a contributor to The Daily Star. He can be reached at shahhusainimam@gmail.com

The Final Solution 2.0

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

GETTING up at 3am for *sehri* is no problem despite the extinction of the selfless volunteer walking the neighbourhood and yelling for *rojadas* to wake up while hitting the metallic lamp

posts with his stick. Now there is the noise of trucks unloading bricks at the wee hours from the omnipresent independent-house-to-apartment-complex plots that wakes you up without fail. Once all independent houses in Bangladesh disappear while turning the country into a collection of Rubik's Cubes, there will be a mobile app to wake you up during *sehri* with a choice of the sound of a stick against a lamp post or that of bricks being unloaded from trucks.

Meanwhile the loss of revenue of mobile operators from 2 million biometrically flunked SIMs are probably recuperated within the first few days of Ramadan with the barrage of SMSs focusing on *sehri* and *iftar* while we mere mortals are scrambling during never ending hours BETWEEN *sehri* and *iftar* to restrain ourselves from fantasizing us dancing in slow motion and then diving into gluttony and food coma. Never has the barrage of *waakh thoo* spit projectiles on the streets been higher. I guess these SMSs serve some CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) purposes by putting our fasting and its main focus on restraint to the test.

It really doesn't matter if the SMS of Tk. 1,200++ all you can eat (how much CAN you really eat?) buffet *iftar* ends up on the mobile phone of someone in whose case the price of the buffet constitutes 10 percent of his monthly salary. It will take a long time, if not never, for mass marketers to update their SMS databases (who gave them my number by the way?) on the profile of their market segments. After all, my octogenarian dad just got an SMS to join the Army, which he takes as a compliment. And this is no strange phenomenon of only a developing country. In the US, I received by snail mail a package containing a sample of a female hygiene product, addressed to 'Ms Naveed Mahbub'.

Note, the SMSs need to be squeezed into 160 characters so as to bear the cost of a single SMS. Hence some creative acronyms. It took me a while to figure out the 'BIG1' on the SMSs meant Buy One Get One (Free) and not a mosquito borne virus.

And that is a daunting task. One SMS directly from a major mobile operator asked me to 'dail' a certain number for details. The poor fellow composing the SMS made the typo while probably craving *piaju* made out of *dail* (lentil).

Wading past the tsunami of food, this is a month of restraint to feel the pain of those with constraints, and restraints not only in the gastronomical sense, but in all areas flirting with evil. Of course, jacking up the prices of bare essentials to inflated levels, to some, is part of the restraining exercise - after all, they are kind enough to not take the price tag to astronomical levels.

And that is why it hurts to hear about the worst mass shooting incident in the history of the US. And it hurts further that the one billion plus Muslims who are silently practicing restraint, tolerance, peace and coexistence in the true teachings of Islam, are somehow made to collectively bear the guilt of a few gross aberrations. If the internet is so strong as to advocate hate and the wrong messages, how come the same internet is not vocal on the true teachings of peace? The 100,000 signatories of *maulavis* and madrasa teachers in Bangladesh on peaceful Islam and taking that message to social media is therefore a stellar start. Let's just hope that it is not too little, too late, as one idiot in Orlando just got Donald Trump another step closer to the White House. Heaven help us if there is a Final Solution 2.0...

The writer is an engineer at Ford & Qualcomm USA and CEO of IBM & Nokia Siemens Networks Bangladesh turned comedian (by choice), the host of ABC Radio's *Good Morning Bangladesh* and the founder of *Naveed's Comedy Club*. E-mail: naveed@naveedmahbub.com

The Loss of India's Chronicler

H K DUA

IN the death of Inder Malhotra, India has lost its most outstanding chronicler.

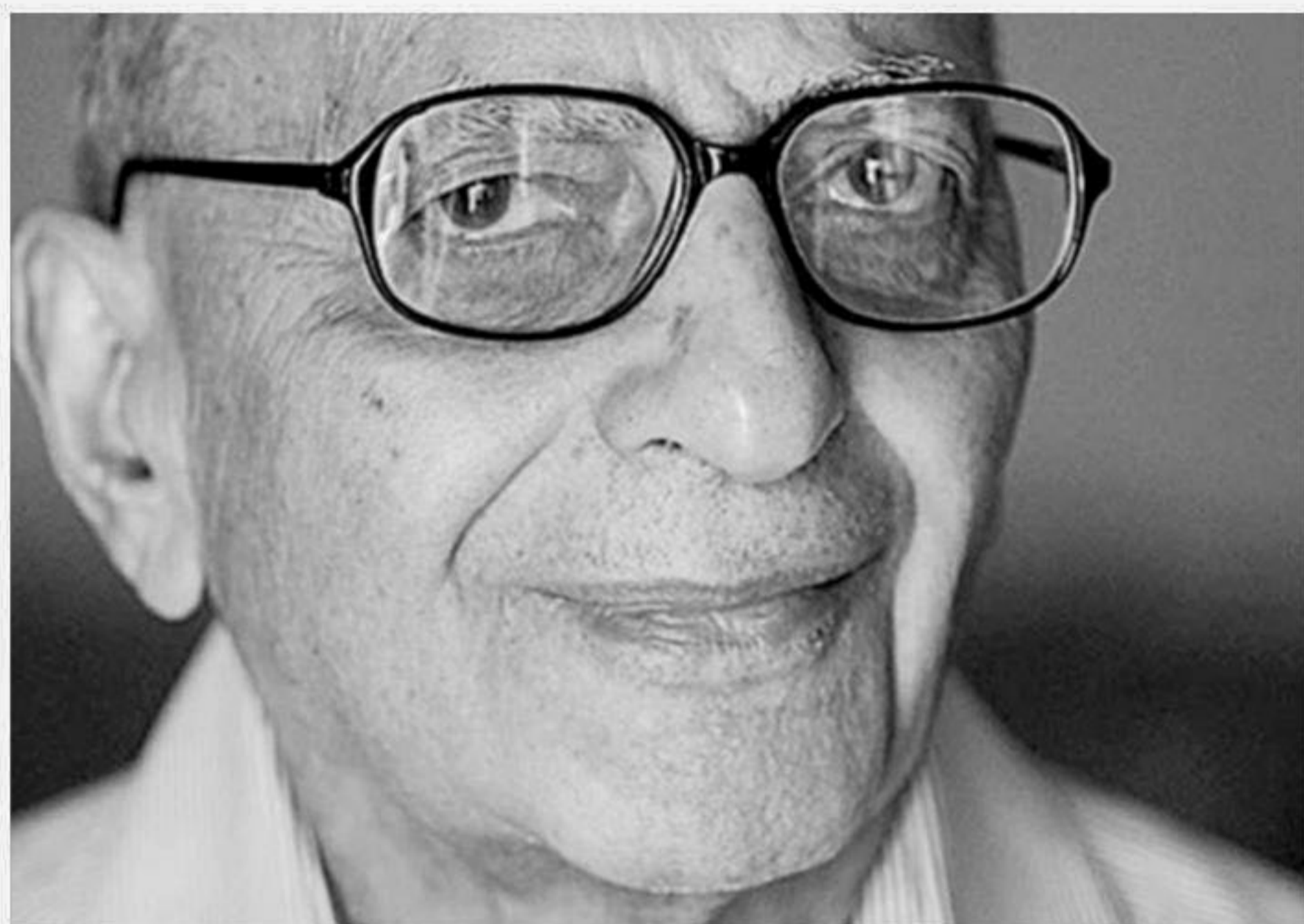
As a young man of 17, he was there somewhere in the multitudes of people who went up Raisina Hill to watch the birth of free India at the stroke of midnight of August 14-15, 1947.

From then, the careers of both India as a free nation and Inder as an aspiring journalist ran parallel to each other - until Saturday, when he breathed his last.

Nearly over 70 years, Inder watched and reported on the shaping of a new India, and analysed and commented on the nation's travails of Partition, its ups and downs, its hopes and moments of despair as faithfully as he could - first as a young reporter in UPI, precursor to the UNI, and later, in The Statesman and The Times of India.

When I joined the profession, Inder Malhotra was a big name as the political correspondent of The Statesman, a job to reckon with in those days of the early 1960s. He went on to become its Resident Editor, before migrating to The Times of India to work with two other giants of the newspaper world, Sham Lal and Girilal Jain. Later, he branched off as a syndicated columnist, a Nehru Fellow and a writer. All along, he continued to report on India for the most respected British newspaper, The Guardian. He also wrote a substantive political biography of Indira Gandhi.

During his last few years, he regularly wrote an immensely popular column called 'Rear View' in The Indian Express, where he was Contributing Editor - a gripping narrative of some of the most



Inder Malhotra

significant events of the history of contemporary India, curated from the pages of his reporter's notebook. He looked back and forth like any good chronicler ought to, commenting on how India was facing succession battles, the making of the Constitution, the course India had chosen in the 1971 War, the Emergency and its aftermath, the era of coalitions and instability, the rise of dynasties, and much else that goes with a big emerging nation's career.

He also recorded the plus points and shortcomings of leaders, their ego clashes, and how these had an impact on decisions. Politics, ambitions, at times

behind-the-scenes intrigues, did not escape his sharp eye.

He closely followed the war with China in 1962, the 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan, and the negotiations with Pakistan in Kashmir with a rare objectivity that can be emulated even now.

By 1965, he had become a formidable journalist. I was just two years into the profession when UNI told me to cover infiltration in Kashmir. I found myself on the same flight as Inder Malhotra. For a while, I did get a kick that I was on the same assignment as Inder. But later, some trepidation sneaked in that Inder, with his immense contacts, would do a much better

job. Luckily, he was too senior to stay away from Delhi for too long.

I spent three weeks more in the Valley, and went on to cover the Hajipir Pass battle. On my return, I found him very appreciative of my efforts, which was encouraging.

Besides being an outstanding political correspondent, he has been perhaps the best defence correspondent since independence. His commentaries on India's defeat in the 1962 China War were unsparing. Despite being a Nehruvite - who wasn't those days? - he was critical of the policy and the flawed decision making at high levels.

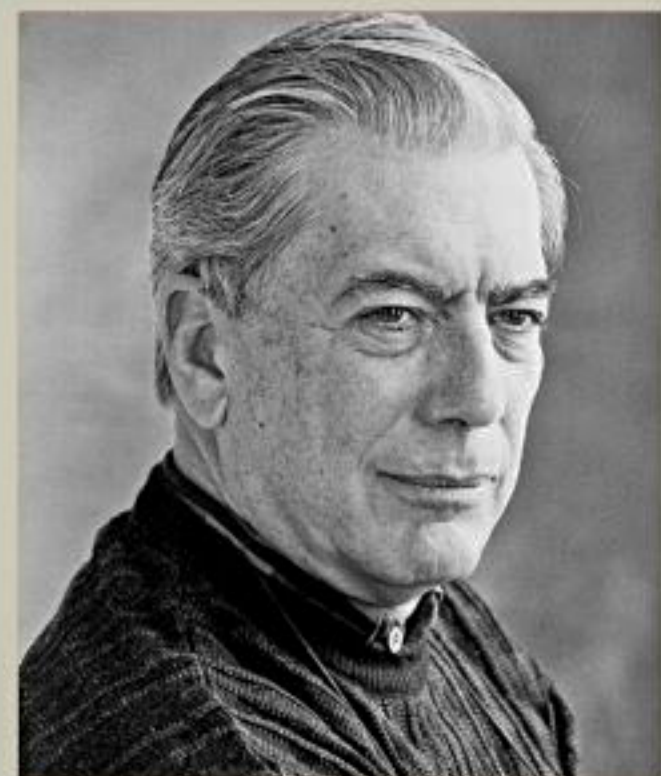
Unlike these days, Inder never mixed comments with news reporting. He never got too close to a political leader. He chose to be a detached observer. He never disclosed his sources.

It is not just Prime Minister Narendra Modi who can call President Obama 'Barack', Inder would not hesitate to call his interlocutors by their first names, sometimes surprising his colleagues at press conferences.

During the last two or three years of his life, he was in and out of hospital, fighting a battle against the odds. However, he did manage to write his columns whenever he was able to physically, drawing from his tremendous memory and lifelong habit of keeping notes. At the end of the day, he would still like to write a column or two more. The spirit was willing but the flesh was weak. However, there comes a time when even the spirit gives in.

The writer is an Adviser in Observer Research Foundation (ORF). He is a former Editor-in-Chief of The Indian Express.

QUOTABLE Quote

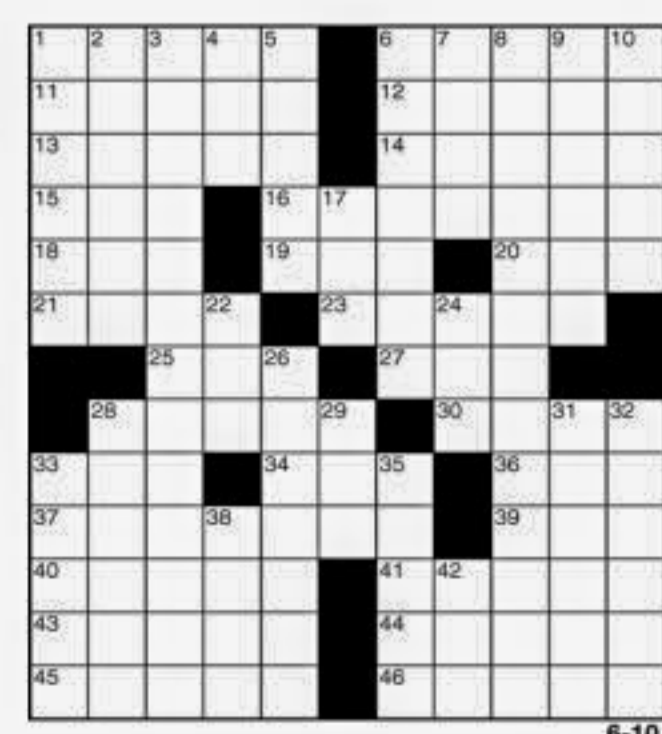


MARIO VARGAS LLOSA

But what do I have? The things I'm told and the things I tell, that's all. And as far as I know, that never yet made anyone fly.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS
- 1 Repair bill line
 - 6 Must
 - 11 Tickle
 - 12 Take, as advice
 - 13 Urban of country
 - 14 Printer's need
 - 15 Wing
 - 16 Placate
 - 18 Free
 - 19 Garden visitor
 - 20 Rent out
 - 21 Go to sea
 - 23 Writer Nin
 - 25 Simple denials
 - 27 -- Juan
 - 28 Eyeballs
 - 30 A long time
 - 33 Lingerie item
 - 34 Energy
 - 36 Museum stuff
 - 37 Quartet offering
 - 39 Hotel feature
 - 40 Gladden
 - 41 Humiliate
 - 43 Useful skill
- 44 Attendance count
- 45 Judges
- 46 Sanctify
- DOWN
- 1 2010 NBA champs
 - 2 Activist Bloomer
 - 3 Detective activity
 - 4 East, in Germany
 - 5 Addict's program, for short
 - 6 Occurs
 - 7 Lot unit
 - 8 Base runner's activity
 - 9 Flings
 - 10 Beginning
 - 17 Stew sphere
 - 22 "Very funny!" in a text
 - 24 Bond rating
 - 26 Big singing groups
 - 28 Ultimatum words
 - 29 Salt source
 - 31 Makes blank
 - 32 Accent
 - 33 Sandwich start
 - 35 Fallback strategy
 - 38 Article
 - 42 Arg. neighbor



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

MALE RICES
EDIT RADISH
SAME ATEASE
AMBROSIA
NAPOLION
SPEARS APON
HURLS LATIN
ICI SENSES
PECANPIE
TIRAMISU
ANGLEE ORES
MENACE NORE
PAUSE ENDS

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

