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# A TRUE LIFE STORY BOOK

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# True Life Stories

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## **About Me**

**B**orn on the first of nineteen sixty six, which happened to be a Saturday, I have lived a life full of incidents one too many, most of which should have terminated my life starting from a very early age of three years, as I remember.

I am a pilot by profession. So, most of my life-threatening incidents happened in the aircraft and helicopters I flew for over 30 years. But I outlived each one of them. This inspired me to write my True Life Stories of those incidents on my website <https://www.atruelifestory.com> for everyone to read and enjoy for free.

I am no superman or a celebrity. I am a normal human being, born in a middle class family. The almighty has already saved me over a hundred times from those life-threatening incidents one after the other, as he probably has some purpose for me still left to fulfil for him.

If you like my stories, **Please Share my short eBook on Facebook, twitter, Gmail, WhatsApp, etc.**, I shall be ever grateful to you.

Please email to [matstruelifestory@gmail.com](mailto:matstruelifestory@gmail.com) to send a feedback or comments on my stories.

## Chapter - 1

# *The Swing*



**T**he Swing happens to be my first true life story. This is the first ever true life story like incident in my life which I can remember. So I thought of penning it as my first True Life Story. I was in college those days probably the year was 1982. One day as I was looking at the mirror, I saw an injury mark on the top middle part of my forehead. That is when I remembered how it had happened almost five decades ago.

My mother, who standing nearby and watching me looking intently at myself in the mirror, casually said, "It happened when you were a small kid". I looked at her for a while and asked if she remembered when exactly it happened. She said, "I think it happened when we were in Hyderabad in India, where your dad was posted those days. But I don't remember much about it except that you came home one evening with a bleeding forehead".

Then I narrated the full incident to her which was running like a movie in my brain, of which she knew only the last part where I entered our house with a wound on my forehead. She sat there looking at me in disbelief for a while and said, "How do you remember an incident with so much detail. When it had happened, you were just three years old." Now you may enjoy that bleeding incident, a true life story I have named "The Swing".

My father was in the Army and those days he was posted at Hyderabad in the State of Andhra Pradesh in India. Andhra Pradesh is prominently a barren place with rocky hills and plains. Except where there are rocks, everywhere else was green. We are from the southern part of India, a state called Kerala. The port of Cochin, now called as Kochi is known as the "Queen of Arabian Sea" which is a name was given to Kochi, because there is sea port, a railway station and an airport, all three being located within just 200 meters of each other, not found anywhere else on earth even today.

And Kerala is lush green part of India mainly because of the abundant coconut trees, mango trees, cashew trees, aricanut palms, jack fruit trees, banana plants etc. Kerala is a place tourists arrive from all over the world due to these reasons.

In Hyderabad where my father was posted those days, I used to go to an Army Children's Park near our house, where the Army had put up a swing, a seesaw, a climbing ladder, a small merry go round etc.

All the equipment in the children's park were made out of scraps the army unit workshop discarded. The swing had a rectangular frame made from iron rods, with two thin chains supporting the metal piece with a rubber cushion on it, designed to be the seat of the swing. That is how the army makes equipment like swings, merry go round etc., in a children's park from the scrap and vehicle spares from their workshops.

The Swing happened to be my main attraction. There were houses to the west of the park. So the sun used to set on top of the houses before it actually set below the distant horizon. As a kid I did not know the direction, but today after thinking about it, I know that the houses were to the west of the park because the sun used to set behind them every evening. I loved that swing. I use to swing just before the sunset.

As the sun starts going down behind the buildings nearby, I start swinging with even more force to see the setting Sun, behind those buildings, every time my swing reached its peak amplitude or highest point from ground. I used to take the swing almost horizontal to get a view of the setting Sun.

It was an art I had gained over a period of few months and falling down from the swing a few times whilst trying this stunt. As usual that evening I came to the park at sunset to start my Sunset swings. The sun had just started setting over the houses near the park.

I kept increasing the amplitude of my swing with each swing, trying hard not to miss the sunset till it finally goes down. That is when a helper along with a girl smaller than me, holding a small green colored bus in her hand, came there.

A helper, is a man the army appoints to help an Officer at his house. This Officer probably did not want the helper for any help at home or for fixing his uniform etc. So he sent the helper to walk his 2 year old daughter to the park. Bad for me.

The moment the helper reached me, he very arrogantly told me to get off the swing immediately. I did not reply but continued to swing because I couldn't miss the setting sun behind those buildings. That is when this helper, wearing shorts and a T-Shirt, forcefully stopped my swing and took me off the swing.

Then, he put that small girl on my swing, placed her green toy bus also on the seat next to her and started swinging her. My Sun was setting and I could not see it. This made me angry. But there was nothing I could do to this grown up man.

I stood there helpless without even being able to show my anger or emotions. That is when the God sent opportunity came. The girl's green toy bus fell down from the swing on to the ground. Suddenly, an idea came to me.



I slowly inched and crawled forward on my knees and elbows to retrieve the green bus from the ground, acting as if I was going to take it and give it to the girl. I crawled keeping well below the swing. The moment I caught hold of the green toy bus, I put my idea into practice, which was to run away with the toy bus. I stood up to run away with the green toy bus.

That is when it happened. The sharp edge of the metal swing seat hit my forehead and I fell on my back flinging the green bus far away. The helper did not help me get up. Instead he went and took the green toy bus and gave it to the small girl.

The helper seemed to me as if he was rejoicing at what happened to me. I could not take this humiliation anymore. My ego and my forehead both were hurt badly, as I walked back home slowly, crying silently due to the pain on my forehead and also the ego he hurt, in my heart.

When I reached home my mother saw my forehead bleeding and quickly gave me some first aid to stop the bleeding. I waited for my father to come home. He came very late past 11 pm, when I was usually fast asleep.

Next morning, I woke up and before my father left for work, I narrated the whole story in a way favorable only to me and portraying the helper as a big bad giant.

After hearing me out my father said, "Don't worry, I will look into it. I know that man". My ego was restored and the wound on my heart was healed the moment I heard those reassuring words from my father.

That evening, I went and accomplished my Sunset Swing. But I never really saw the Sun Setting that day, because my eyes were continuously searching the horizon to see if the helper and the girl are not coming back to the park today again. This is a true-life story.



## Chapter 2

# *The Barber*



**A**ccording to my memory it was sometime in the year 1987 and it was a Sunday, because when I got down from the train in Goa in India, there were not many people on the railway platform and it was difficult to get a bus. Not many people were there on the roads and the shops were mostly shut that day. I was selected to join the Defence Services and I somehow took a taxi and reached the Academy.

The guard room sailor gave me a paper sheet with instructions on it and told me to follow him, as he walked me into a barracks. I had a trunk full of clothing, shoes, tie, belt etc., which the academy joining instruction stated that I should carry. Those days steel trunks were in fashion when you travel. My trunk was fairly heavy, but this sailor didn't help me carry it. He walked indifferently ahead of me. I walked behind cursing him.

The handle of the box almost severed my fingers as I dragged it for over a few hundred meters till the barracks. I kept changing hands every few seconds cursing this sailor silently all through, for the next 300 meters.

On reaching the barracks, the sailor told me to choose a bed for myself and left. I kept my trunk down on a bed which had a ceiling fan over it. After keeping my trunk down inside the barracks, I looked at my palms. They were red and blue in places where the thin handle of my 40 kg trunk had almost cut through.

Then I looked at the bottom edge of my trunk which I was dragging on the road all this while. It hurt my hand as I touched it. It was super-hot due to the friction I generated by all the dragging it went through.

Although, it had become thin at the edge, but was not completely damaged. Those days, suite cases were available, but they were too expensive. But my call letter had in anyway stated a trunk to be brought along with a lock and key. That saved my dad a lot of money.

There were over two dozen beds in this old barrack, with just one occupied by a cool Sikh cadet wearing a turban and who seem to have been living there for a long time. He was reading a novel and didn't even bother to look at me, a new arrival. A Sikh is someone belonging to a Sikh religion. They wear a turban on their head as well as keep moustache and beard.

It is mandatory to wear a few items on their body as per the Sikh religion. Even the wearing of helmet whilst driving is not applicable to them if they are wearing a turban on their head. In India we have a lot of freedom and fundamental rights which most countries in the world don't give to its citizen.

There was a notice placed on the door I had entered. I went and looked at it. It was a list of instructions for those who are arriving for the course. The first order in the list was, to take a proper cadet like haircut.

I had good hair, beard and a thick moustache which I used to consider my identity as a 20-year-old civilian. I am not a Sikh. But yet loved sporting a bearded look.

I walked up to the Sikh cadet, with the instruction leaflet in my hand and introduced myself, "Hi."

The cadet shook hands with me still lying on his bed and said, "Hi."

I asked him, "No one else, other than the two of us have joined till now?"

He replied, "I had joined the yesterday. A few guys who came today and they all have just gone for taking a proper haircut. I am here because the haircut rule does not apply to me being a Sikh."

Then, I asked him, "Bro, how do I go to the barbershop?"

He said, "Go from this door then turn left, go for another 50 feet...."

He did not just tell me the general direction of the Barber shop. In fact, he told me the route to the barbershop in so much detail as to where all I should turn and how many steps I should take before each turn, till I reach the barber shop, which was just 60 yards away in the same building. I felt as if he was instructing a blind man.

I left my trunk there requesting the Sikh Cadet to look after it, even though it was locked and highly unlikely to be stolen because of its heavy weight and also because of the edge damage which happened during the dragging it went through on the road.

Then I went to the barbershop, counting my steps as instructed. There was a long queue at the Barber shop waiting for the barber to turn up. I found out from some new hippies with hair much longer than my hair, that the barber had gone for a tea break at 10:30 am and will be back at 11:00 am, pointing at the working hours written on the door of the barbershop.

I thought, "Oh God, even the barber here is so disciplined."

I patiently waited for my turn with some 50 odd guys from the Stone Age standing in the queue, waiting for a haircut. My turn came in just about 45 minutes. The Barber was too fast and took just about a minute or two with each newly joined cadet.

I sat on the Barber shop throne when my turn came. This Barber's chair was made of leather which was torn every inch, with foam sticking out of each tear and even had both its broken rear legs, replaced by a stack of bricks.

The barbershop mirror was so old that it could show only parts of one's face because the mercury coating on its rear side had worn out badly.

So, I asked the bald barber who was chewing Paan, "Why don't you change this chair".

Paan is beetle leaf with some tobacco and Aricanut in it, which is chewed by a lot of people in India, especially the old ones. Paan generates some dark red color in the mouth despite its ingredients being green beetle leaf and white lime.

He replied smiling and displaying his Paan rusted teeth, "Aapko, Kya dekhne ka hai, Sahib?" in Hindi Language, which means, "What do you want to see in it, Sir?" "Sahib" in Hindi Language, means "Sir".

I didn't really understand what he said. But I felt completely elated for being addressed as "Sir", even though he was just a barber. Despite all my resistance, he cut all my hair, rather shaved off my hair and beard in a few seconds to a length of just about 4 or 5 millimeters. On the sides no hair was visible now.

Even after putting up a short physical fight with him, the old man managed to completely shave off my moustache which stood as a reflection of my manhood. It was all over in 90 seconds.

After haircut I came back and started opening my trunk. That is when Sikh Cadet who thought I was somebody else as he did not recognize me with my changed personality with my all long hair, beard and moustache shaved off for good, shouted at me reflecting some anger in Hindi Language, "Abey, voh hair cut lene gaya hai. Aane wala hoga. Chhodhde uska trunk."

The meaning of what he said in Hindi language was, "Hey, that guy has just gone for his haircut and should be coming back anytime. Don't touch his trunk".

I turned and looked at him not knowing why he was shouting at me, when I am opening my own trunk, which I had trusted him to guard, when I went to get a haircut and it was, he who told me how to go to the barber shop.

After he said that, I looked at him. He was staring at me in surprise for about 5 seconds silently and said, "Sorry" and continued with his novel.

A few seconds later, I saw him staring at me again, in some sort of disbelief this time. I ignored him and went to take bath.



As I looked at the mirror, it was my turn to be surprised and stand in disbelief for a few seconds. I was looking a strange man in the mirror, staring into my eyes, whom I had never met before in my entire life.



## Chapter 3

# *The Job Interview*



**T**he year was 1985. This is a true life story. My dad was in the Army and was posted at a Cantonment in Ambala, a place in the state of Haryana, India. His posting out from Ambala Cantonment was waiting just for my Graduation to finish as he had written to the Army Headquarters on the application he had given, stating that his transfer be deferred till I, his son finishes Graduation. I was studying in Sanathan Dharm College in Ambala Cantonment, in Haryana.

My graduation completed that year and promptly my father was posted out to a remote place called Raiwala, a place located between two holy places called Haridwar and Hrishikesh both places being Hindu pilgrimage in India. We got a house just 10 yards from the river Ganga, the most respected river in India.

The whole place was and is lush green with forests, infested with monkeys, elephants, deer etc. Any time you take a train or walk along the railway track or the road, which I used to do with my friends, we used to see fresh elephant droppings each weighing over three kg along the railway track. Another holy place called Motichur between Raiwala and Haridwar along river Ganga is famous for its Laddoo which, is a yellow sweet is found in almost all bakery's, all over India especially near temples.

Once we settled down in Raiwala, I went to a College at the nearest city called Dehradun about an hour away by train, to get an admission for Post-Graduation. I, like any other teenager hated studies. I just want to relax and play around whiling away time.

I entered the gates of the college I found near the railway station after asking many people I met along the way. I walked directly into the Principal's office and requested him for an admission. He shouted at me and threw me out, for not taking permission from his staff before entering his office.

Now I was a bit scared. Anyway, I calmed myself down and went to his staff office. They said I can enter his office after half an hour. I waited outside his office and saw no one entering or leaving his office. The Principal just wanted to teach me a lesson on patience. I never really understood why he wanted me to knock at his office door, which is always left fully open to allow cross ventilation perhaps.

Anyway, after the stipulated half an hour I took permission from his staff in the next room, knocked gently at the open door and went in. The principal looked up and nodded. I went in and introduced myself and told him that I wanted an admission for my post-graduation. He did not even tell me to sit down.

The Principal curtly said, "I cannot give you admission to this college. We have just surrendered two Army quota seats the yesterday, as no one had claimed it."

He continued, "Every year we keep two seats reserved for students of Defence Service personnel as per government orders. No student from claims these two seats and the seat goes waste. Other seats are already filled up. Please go and try in some other college."

I came out of that college trying to understand as to why he made me wait outside for 30 minutes, if he had no seats. I walked the roads of Dehradun asking people the address of any other college in the city.

I went to two more colleges and tried my luck. The date for admission was over a month back and even though the people in the college were not very strict, they told me that the rules were very strict and I could not be admitted one month after the session has started, unless I am coming from some other college I had already joined.

That was the last of my hope shattered for a post graduate degree. I did not know what to do. Even today, three and a half decades later, as I write this incident, I feel sad that I don't have a post graduate degree. This is one occupational hazard of any one serving in the Army and his children have to live with.

But that does not mean that every child of every Army father has had the same experience. In India, the sons and daughters of Army personnel are famous film actors, doctors, engineers, business tycoons and even Army Generals. I too became an Officer, Pilot and a Qualified Flying Instructor well known in the small circle of my friends.

After trying in three colleges, I walked straight to the employment exchange in the city center and registered my name as a Class X pass, because I had not got my Graduation certificate till that day and in the Employment Exchange, they don't consider XII Grade examination Certificate as any qualification.

Then I took a train back home. I picked up a newspaper from a fellow passenger in that ordinary compartment of the train, to pass time. As I was going through the newspaper, I saw that small "Medical Representatives required in Punjab" advertisement which was an advertisement I did not know at that moment that, it would change my life forever, a few months later. I asked the man if I could tear and keep that job advertisement from his newspaper. He readily agreed.

I went home, picked up a plain paper and wrote an application for getting that job. Then, I showed the application I wrote, to my father for corrections. He said, "You need to study further before I retire." He did not even look at the job application.

For a couple of weeks more I was going to one college after the other in all the nearby towns, trying for an admission for doing my post-graduation. I used to walkover 20 km every day searching for colleges even in towns, where no college ever existed those days.

And the Principals in every college I entered, told me that I have come late and they can't admit me because the session has already started more than a month back. I was almost fed up of hunting colleges. I had grown thin in those few walking weeks.

About six months later, my dad said that his whole unit has got a transfer letter and his entire Army unit including all the families of Army personnel will be shifting to a place called Bhatinda in Punjab. I also started helping my parents in packing the house for the transfer a month later.

That is when I tumbled upon the application I had written for a Medical Rep's job in Punjab, about six months ago, but did not post it because my father did not approve my application and wanted me to do further studies.

I found that piece of paper with the advertisement on it, which I had put into a cupboard along with the application I had written months back. I immediately went and posted the application without asking my father.

Another reason for posting it was that I was fed up of listening rubbish from my father every day for neither going to college nor having an employment. He would often say that I am a burden on earth for everyone.

Whilst posting the advertisement, I was not sure if my application for that six-month-old job advertisement would be accepted in the first place because the vacancies would have already been filled up months ago by deserving candidates.

Amazingly, I got a reply after two weeks which said, Interview will be at a place called Mohali, in Chandigarh city in India, which was just a night's journey by train from Raiwala. Chandigarh is probably the first well planned man made city, which is divided into sectors and all roads crossing each other at 90 degrees.

Those days Chandigarh only had a few sectors and far apart. Today, the number of sectors in Chandigarh is over a hundred and are separated from each other by just a ten meter wide road in between. This also means that the houses across the street are in different sectors.

I went to Mohali with just enough money in my pocket for a return ordinary train ticket plus one basic food, from Raiwala to Chandigarh, an overnight journey. I boarded a night train and was in Chandigarh by morning. I took a bath and changed in the train toilet itself.

Indian trains are not very clean. But I had no choice but to take a bath inside the toilet at 4 am, when everyone else in the train were still fast asleep. I alighted looking immaculate in my dark brown pants, a pink shirt and my father's striped neck tie from the train.

From the station, I took a bus which cost me Rupees 1.50 to Mohali which was an industrial area. As on 2019 one US Dollar is around Rupees 71.

From there, I took a cycle rickshaw to the exact building I was to attend the interview which cost me just half a Rupee. A cycle rickshaw is a tricycle pedaled usually by an old man with a sofa type cushioned seat for two people to sit behind the cyclist. The seat has a retractable canopy over it to protect the passengers from rain and Sun.

So, in other words, a cycle rickshaw is a human powered convertible tri-cycle. There was a tall boy wearing a tie and suite, standing in the shade of a tree in front of a big old building. I asked him if this is the place where MR interview is on.



The boy said angrily, "Yes, but it is rigged, they have already chosen who they want. This was a fake interview."

A few minutes later a peon came and called him in. Another few minutes went past and I saw him coming out of the building murmuring the same dialog he had delivered to me before going into the building, "It is rigged..... They have already taken..... Blah, blah, blah".

The peon now looked at me and told me to come in. A gentleman in a grey Safari suite sat on a big chair or rather a small sofa more than a chair, with a small table in front. He gave me a form to fill. I filled my name, address and the expenditure from home till that moment. I attached the Rupees 35 which I had spent on train ticket, Rs 1.5 which I spent on bus tickets and the 50 Paise (100 Paise makes an Indian Rupee) for cycle rickshaw without ticket.

After that, he showed me a pamphlet to read, which I didn't know then, that it is a Medical Representative's, only equipment to teach and argue with doctors in the field. He casually told me to go through it and went away.

I read the first page. It looked Greek to me. I didn't understand head or tail of anything that was written on it. The pamphlet was talking about some beta blockers and there was a picture of a heart made on it. I turned the page and there was a stomach and acid bottles with a write up on some H2 receptor blockers. I understood nothing from it.

I went back to the first page and read it six more times. I still did not understand much what was written in the pamphlet. I read it so many more times that I could read it even with my eyes closed. But now I was understanding what those few lines meant.

By then the gentleman came back and asked very gently, "Can you tell me what you read till now?" I was surprised. I never knew I was supposed to memorise it. I was just trying to understand the meaning of what was written on the first page and I had not even turned that page. I did not in my wildest dreams would have ever known that the Safari suit guy was taking my test. But I knew the first para verbatim by then, as I had read it at least twenty-five times in all and so was able to rattle it out confidently.

He seemed to be happy to hear me. Then he looked at my form and told the peon to give me the cash refund towards my travel expenses. The peon came back and gave me many times more money than I had indicated on the form which was my actual expenditure. I took double the amount I had spent actually whilst coming from home till this building I was sitting in, catering for my return journey and returned the rest of the money to the peon. That is when the Safari suite man asked me why I returned the money.

I said, "I have taken the amount which I have spent till now and the same amount for my return journey."

The Safari suited gentleman took the money back from the peon. Then he put that money inside another envelope he had with him and handed it over to me and walked away without saying anything.

I thought, "That suited angry boy whom I met under the tree half an hour back, who took the interview before me was actually right. It is all rigged and they probably have already selected the candidates they want."

I too came out of that old building completely dejected at my bad luck, cursing myself for being so honest and having returned the money to the peon and which I thought was taken as an insult by the gentleman on the sofa chair. Probably that was why I was not selected for the job.

I did not open the envelop with money because of my bad feeling about the whole affair and having wasted two days with absolutely zero achievement. I had adequate money in my pocket for a return train ticket and a small lunch, given by my father, still secure in my pocket, including the bus fare and the auto rickshaw fare.

Now that I had nothing else to do and nowhere else to go other than board the late-night train back home, I went walking to the bus stop two kilometers away in that scorching sun to punish myself for my failure in the interview.

I reached home the next morning and my father asked, "How was the interview?"

I said, "They refunded the travel money" and gave the envelope to him which I had not opened till then.

Without my saying it aloud, my father understood that I have not landed the job. He opened the envelope and I was in for a surprise this time as my dad pulled out a letter along with the money, in which was written, "You are appointed. It is a pleasure to have you onboard. You are requested to join our 28 days Medical Representative orientation program starting from the first of next month....."

That is a true-life story It actually happened. I joined and did the job for about a year before joining the Defence Services as an Officer and later I became a pilot.



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