

Jaya Sinha

ARTHUM 1020E

Professor Faflak

April 15, 2023

## **EVIDENCE**

TO BE OPENED BY AUTHORIZED AGENTS ONLY

**Submitting Agent:** Detective Hamm Napoleon

**Case #:** 68

**Item #:** 1

**Description of Enclosed Evidence:** Interrogation room transcript (pre-incident)

**Description of Offense:** Identity theft, impersonation of an intellectual

**Suspect's Full Name:** Jaya J. Sinha

**Date Submitted:** 10/4/23

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### **TRANSCRIPT BEGINS**

**Suspect:** *Fury said to a mouse that he met in the house, "Let us both go to law-*

**Detective N:** *-I will prosecute you."*<sup>1</sup>

**Suspect:** Very good! Way to enter the interrogation room with style.

**Detective N:** Do you know why you're here?

**Suspect:** Yup.

**Detective N:** You've been charged with identity theft. Specifically, the impersonation of an intellectual.

**Suspect:** 'Yup' means yes.

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Mouse's Tale', Lewis Carroll

**Detective N:** I trust that you're aware that identity theft can be a felony.

**Suspect:** Well it could be if I was guilty. But your accusations are groundless, Officer.

**Detective N:** Detective. Detective Napoleon.

**Suspect:** *Napoleon* Napoleon?

**Detective N:** Exactly. "If you want a thing done well, do it yourself."<sup>2</sup>

**Suspect:** Funny, I was thinking more, "Four legs good, two legs bad."<sup>3</sup>

**Detective N:** Orwell? Seems like an unwise choice for somebody trying to convince me they're not passing themselves off as an intellectual.

**Suspect:** You're well-read.

**Detective N:** I have to be, otherwise I wouldn't be able to manage assholes like you. That should make you nervous.

**Suspect:** Nothing shivers my timbers like a man who reads Orwell.

**Detective N:** You know what else should make you nervous?

**Suspect:** Don't tell me you read Huxley too.

**Detective N:** My automatic weapon.

**Suspect:** Are you allowed to... threaten to kill me?

**Detective N:** Right now, I'm your fucking *God*. I can do whatever I want.

**Suspect:** So what, you're going to call backup so you can shoot me eight times in self-defence after I 'violently attack' you?

**Detective N:** Please, I'm in the police union. I don't need backup to shoot you eight times. The last time I committed a wrongful homicide, I spent my week's *paid* leave in the Bahamas.

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<sup>2</sup> "Napoleon Bonaparte" Goodreads

<sup>3</sup> *Animal Farm*, George Orwell

**Suspect:** Right. So, are you gonna get on with it? Or am I just going to sit here handcuffed to the desk while you try to romance me?

**Detective N:** Your tough act won't get you very far in here.

**Suspect:** Will anything? This whole situation seems kind of like a lose-lose for me.

**Detective N:** Now you're on the right track.

**Suspect:** Detective, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

**Detective N:** Let's get this over with. Why were you reciting 'The Mouse's Tale'?

**Suspect:** *That's* your first question?

**Detective N:** Correct. Now what's your first answer?

**Suspect:** I don't have a ton of poems in my repertoire, and that one's fun.

**Detective N:** What else do you know?

**Suspect:** I can do 'Alphabet Aerobics'<sup>4</sup> until M. But I can also do the letter U.

**Detective N:** That's not a poem.

**Suspect:** No, but it sure is catchy.

**Detective N:** So it's the *only* poem in your repertoire. Why 'The Mouse's Tale'?

**Suspect:** I read it in a book.

**Detective N:** *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.*

**Suspect:** Actually, no. *The Ocean at the End of the Lane.*

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<sup>4</sup> Blackalicious, *Nia*, 1999

**Detective N:** Care to elaborate?

**Suspect:** I mean, not really, but I don't have much choice, do I?

**Detective N:** Correct.

**Suspect:** I was obsessed with Neil Gaiman as a kid. I started with *The Graveyard Book* and never looked back. Anyway, this particular book, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, was my favourite. And in it, this kid has a bunch of weird shit happen to him. Like, mega-weird. And so when he'd get nervous, he'd recite 'The Mouse's Tale' to distract himself. He could do it all in one breath. So I learned, and when I got freaked out, or bored, I'd just do the same thing.

**Detective N:** So you started doing it because you read it in a book?

**Suspect:** Yeah, pretty much.

**Detective N:** Do you do that often? Mimic what you read?

**Suspect:** I feel like we all do, don't we?

**Detective N:** Sure. Have you picked up any other insufferable habits from books?

**Suspect:** It's not just reading, it's everything. Whatever you consume consumes you back.

**Detective N:** What are you, a Dollar-Store Nietzsche? When I heard that my case today was some girl playing dress-up with the title of 'intellectual,' I was expecting some pretentious bullshit. Somehow, you've already managed to surpass my expectations.

**Suspect:** Thank you.

**Detective N:** That was not even remotely a compliment.

**Suspect:** I just mean that when you watch movies, or read books, or whatever, it's inevitable that you pick things up. I never put a hat on the bed again after watching *Drugstore Cowboy*<sup>5</sup>. Every sketch I do looks like it was done by

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<sup>5</sup> Gus Van Sant, 1989

Beardsley<sup>6</sup> after the TB. Would you like to hear about my N.W.A. phase, or have you had enough chit-chat?

**Detective N:** So your personality is just a collage of things you've seen and heard.

**Suspect:** Isn't that just what a personality is?

**Detective N:** To some degree, sure. But there's absolutely *nothing* original about you. You act like some brooding thoughtful academic, but it's all just high-brow nonsense regurgitated, isn't it?

**Suspect:** Brooding?

**Detective N:** You were spotted on campus multiple times underlining a copy of *Notes from Underground*, with the book angled to make sure that the title was visible.

**Suspect:** The 'book angled'? Are you being serious right now?

**Detective N:** It's a performance. You don't read because you love it. You read because you want people to see you reading. Your annotations aren't thoughtful or compelling, your underlines are meaningless. You just like the look of scribbling in a Dostoevsky.

**Suspect:** I don't care if people see me reading.

**Detective N:** Even if I believed that- which I *don't*, by the way- the charade runs deeper than that. You're not trying to fool anybody as much as you're trying to fool yourself. You're vain.

**Suspect:** Reading is an exercise in vanity? You are the Nadia Comăneci<sup>7</sup> of mental gymnastics.

**Detective N:** Nadia Comăneci? Are you fucking serious? *Nadia Comăneci*? It is 2023! *Way* too late to be making a Nadia Comăneci reference! This is exactly what I'm talking about. Everything you do is a calculated contribution to the image you're trying to cultivate. You're not reading to learn how to better

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<sup>6</sup> "Aubrey Beardsley" Encyclopedia Britannica

<sup>7</sup> "Nadia Comăneci" Encyclopedia Britannica

the world, or make any legitimate change, you do it because you want to be superior. You think you're better than people.

**Suspect:** I don't think I'm better than people. I would actually say that-

**Detective N:** Spare me, I know what comes next. You think that you're worse. Defective. Psychologically deformed. And it all comes back to Dostoevsky. I bet you just *love* the Underground Man. Socially inept, deeply flawed. You'd like to think he's just like you, a fellow 'troubled soul'.

**Suspect:** You're making me sound like a douchebag.

**Detective N:** It's not hard.

**Suspect:** Fine. So, whatever, my self-image is a little... unconventional. That doesn't make me an identity thief.

**Detective N:** Sure it doesn't. What does make you an identity thief is the fact that then you don't have an original thought in your head. Not only did you just recite a poem that you didn't write, but you got the habit of reciting the poem from *another* book. You're a copy of a copy. Also, there's the fact that you are obviously, undeniably, obsessed with yourself.

**Suspect:** You just told me that I think I'm 'psychologically deformed' and now you're telling me that I'm obsessed with myself. Pick an insult and stick with it!

**Detective N:** Compulsively ripping yourself to shreds with constant psychoanalysis is self-obsession. You read fancy books and make esoteric references to pad your ego and use your downtime to tear yourself apart because you think it makes you some kind of martyr.

**Suspect:** I'm not padding my ego. I just like to read.

**Detective N:** Now I'm going to ask you a question, and you're going to be honest. Do you truly, genuinely, not believe that you're better than other people?

**Suspect:** I honestly don't know. Sometimes a little part of me thinks that I am, and I hate that part of myself. Like, do I think I have two brain cells to rub together? Yeah, sure. But I'm not exaggerating when I tell you that even just now, it's painful to admit.

**Detective N:** It's painful for you to admit that you think that you're intelligent.

**Suspect:** Yeah.

**Detective N:** So you would have people believe that you think you're an idiot?

**Suspect:** No. Well, maybe, but I know it's not plausible.

**Detective N:** You think you're so intelligent that it's implausible for anybody to think you're an idiot? Modest.

**Suspect:** You're twisting my words. It's just that the people around me are attached to the notion that I'm intelligent. For some reason, I have a knack for tricking people into believing it. And people know that I know that they believe I'm intelligent.

**Detective N:** What the *hell* are you talking about?

**Suspect:** Ugh. People around me believe that I'm smart, and they know that I'm aware of that belief. Claiming that I think I'm stupid is like a deliberate challenge to an established belief for the sake of starting a fight. It feels like fishing.

**Detective N:** Is it?

**Suspect:** Sometimes. Mostly it happens by accident, but it disgusts me. Do you understand now? I could never impersonate an intellectual, because the thought of promoting myself as one makes me nauseous.

**Detective N:** Why wouldn't you want to brand yourself as an intellectual?

**Suspect:** It feels presumptuous. What good does it do anyone for me to run around proclaiming my own intelligence? *That* feels like an exercise in vanity to me.

**Detective N:** I think you're a coward hiding behind the guise of humility.

**Suspect:** You sure do have a lot of thoughts about me.

**Detective N:** You've got that right. The first and foremost of those thoughts is that you're guilty, and I'm going to nail you for it.

**Suspect:** Okay, so let me see if I follow: not wanting to shout from the mountaintops that I'm "the holy messiah of intelligence here to defend the people from the evils of ignorance" or whatever makes me a coward?

**Detective N:** What makes you a coward is that you want to have it both ways. You want to mouth off about Dostoevsky and Beardsley and Carroll, but you don't want any of the responsibility that comes with your admittedly evident intellect.

**Suspect:** You think my intellect is evident?

**Detective N:** Of course, that's what you heard. You are a complete and utter narcissist. You want to hide behind the assumption that you're an idiot so you don't have to do any actual thinking, or solve any problems. And by the way, admitting that you think you're worse than other people doesn't make you any less terrible. It's a cop-out. You want all of the praise, the status, but you won't do any of the work. You want to sit in your ivory tower and pull yourself apart for fun while people throw roses at your window.

**Suspect:** Is it so awful that I just want to live for myself? Does that make me bad?

**Detective N:** Okay, fine. You want to live for yourself. But let me ask you this: what do you stand for? What exactly do you believe?

**Suspect:** I don't know.

**Detective N:** Come on, try. What's your personal manifesto? What are you fighting for?

**Suspect:** I didn't know I was supposed to have one of those.

**Detective N:** No fundamental truths, unshakeable beliefs?

**Suspect:** I don't think the world is simple enough for fundamental truths, and my beliefs are extremely shakeable. Mostly, I just tend to go with my gut.

**Detective N:** So all you fight for is yourself. No moral code. Nothing is sacred to you?

**Suspect:** I don't know. I just...don't really know anything.

**Detective N:** Very original, Socrates<sup>8</sup>.

**Suspect:** I just think that belief systems are a little too static for me. I just can't wrap my head around any of these ideological football teams that people all seem to just *know* that they're a part of. I don't feel like I can randomly throw myself behind a cause just for the drama of it all, you know? I won't fight for something I can't understand, and I don't understand anything. Everything changes too much. I change too much.

**Detective N:** Belief systems are 'a little too static'? So what, you do nothing instead? Just sit around and read Dostoevsky, calling yourself an intellectual for cool points while making no effort to contribute to the world?

**Suspect:** I'm not claiming to be an intellectual, and I already told you, I don't really think being an intellectual is cool. The whole thing just seems a little self-congratulatory.

**Detective N:** Who do you think you are? You call people genuinely trying to do something self-congratulatory while you sit around passing judgment, doing fuck-all?

**Suspect:** Just because I'm not throwing myself entirely behind an agenda doesn't mean I'm doing 'fuck-all'.

**Detective N:** Okay, so you're not behind an agenda, but you claim you're not doing nothing. Then what's the point? What are you *doing*?

**Suspect:** Right now, I'm getting a startling amount of your spit launched at my face, listening to an excellent impression of my extended family.

**Detective N:** Charming. What I meant was, what are you living for?

**Suspect:** I don't really know if I can put that into words.

**Detective N:** Then do what you do best. Use somebody else's.

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<sup>8</sup> *Apology*, Plato

**Suspect:** Let me think.

**Detective N:** There's a first time for everything, I guess.

**Suspect:** You really don't take a second off, do you? Alright, I've got it.

**Detective N:** Excellent. Now why don't you enlighten me with your genius?

**Suspect:** Jeez, I was going to. Ready?

**Detective N:** Spit it out.

**Suspect:** "One must cultivate one's own garden."<sup>9</sup> *Candide*.

**Detective N:** *Candide*. Of course it's Voltaire.

**Suspect:** You think that's pretty assholeish, don't you?

**Detective N:** Haven't we already established that I think you're an asshole?

**Suspect:** Yeah, fair. Anyway, the idea of just... cultivating my garden is a nice one. Not having to save the world, or whatever. Just working on small things instead. Keeping a little distance from the world, you know?

**Detective N:** Is that what you think it's supposed to mean?

**Suspect:** I think so. It's what it means to me, at least. And it helps.

**Detective N:** That's pretty selfish, isn't it?

**Suspect:** I don't think it's selfish to want to live a peaceful, fulfilling life of my own.

**Detective N:** It's not intellectual. It's lazy, and it's cowardly. 'Keeping a little distance from the world' is pathetic.

**Suspect:** Oh, I'm sorry. I forgot that the intellectual is in a constant battle to protect those who aren't righteously endowed with the flaming sword of logic and reason.

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<sup>9</sup> *Candide*, Voltaire

**Detective N:** The intellectual isn't flippant about the idea of using their life to help others, or being invested in the well-being of our species.

**Suspect:** Can't someone be intellectual and also do what they want sometimes?

**Detective N:** So you admit that you'd like to consider yourself an intellectual?

**Suspect:** No. And that is *so* not the point. The point is, what does 'using your life to help others' entail? Aren't your precious intellectuals allowed to be happy?

**Detective N:** Happiness is a luxury. Intellectuals are heroes, and heroes make sacrifices.

**Suspect:** A *luxury*? Do you know how insane that sounds?

**Detective N:** Of course it sounds insane to you, you've never made a sacrifice in your life. Being an intellectual means being in a constant state of alertness. Questioning everything. Happiness is complacency.

**Suspect:** That seems wildly unsustainable.

**Detective N:** Intellectuals aren't concerned with sustainability. They pursue change.

**Suspect:** *What* change? What is this great crusade that you're talking about?

**Detective N:** Truth. Justice. Equality. It doesn't matter. It's not the crusade. What makes a person an intellectual is the choice to give yourself to it.

**Suspect:** 'Give myself to it'? What, in ritual sacrifice?

**Detective N:** Which is exactly what makes you a fraud. You're selfish. You won't commit to anything.

**Suspect:** Yeah, I don't really want to give my body and soul to a crusade. Sue me. But Christ, how many times do I have to tell you I'm not pretending to be

an intellectual? What is this, a police interrogation sponsored by Samuel Beckett<sup>10</sup>?

**Detective N:** Wow, what a hilarious joke! I'm sure it would be an absolute hit with *literally nobody*. You claim you don't want to be an intellectual, but in the same breath make some esoteric throwaway joke about the theatre of the absurd in a deliberate effort to isolate yourself.

**Suspect:** But you got the joke.

**Detective N:** Do you know how many bullshit absurdist existentialist post-post-modernist jokes I put up with in this line of work?

**Suspect:** Ah. Fair enough. But can we go back to this whole crusade thing? Why does change have to be in huge showy all-at-once giant sweeps? Why all the drama?

**Detective N:** What you call 'drama', the intellectual calls necessary. The fight happens at any cost, no matter what's going on in 'your garden'. No compromising values, no bowing to institutions.

**Suspect:** Isn't that a little extreme?

**Detective N:** Not if it's what's right. Sometimes you have to be extreme.

**Suspect:** You're starting to sound a little, uh, "man has the right to deal with his oppressors by devouring their palpitating hearts."<sup>11</sup>

**Detective N:** Now *that's* a real intellectual.

**Suspect:** Bathtub boy?

**Detective N:** Marat paid the ultimate price for his cause, and he didn't do it in vain. Even in death, he galvanized the people for what he believed was right.

**Suspect:** Huh. I guess.

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<sup>10</sup> "Samuel Beckett" Encyclopedia Britannica

<sup>11</sup> "Jean-Paul Marat" Goodreads

**Detective N:** The reason you're a fraud is that you suffer for yourself, to feed your own masochism. It's a gift, and you waste it.

**Suspect:** You'd call suffering a gift?

**Detective N:** It's a necessity.

**Suspect:** I cannot overstate how much I *hate* this whole tortured genius fetish that everyone has. Why do you have to nail yourself to a cross to be seen as legitimate? What's the point of that?

**Detective N:** Van Gogh, Hemingway, Cobain, Plath, Kahlo. All the best suffer.

**Suspect:** Suffering can be compelling, and something can be made of it, but why do you want people to *aspire* to it? It's not a good thing.

**Detective N:** Now you're acting like *you* don't bask in your own sadness? Like you don't wear it as some badge of honour?

**Suspect:** I don't *want* to be upset all the time. No matter how much fun you think I have dissecting myself, I don't enjoy it.

**Detective N:** But you can't help it.

**Suspect:** Do you think I would be like this if I could help it?

**Detective N:** I think you would if you cared. I think if you were an intellectual, you would suffer with purpose instead of just wishing things were different. You would make yourself into something.

**Suspect:** But I don't know what I could possibly make myself into! Why does everything have to be so absolute?

**Detective N:** So you're not an intellectual, and you don't want to be.

**Suspect:** Yeah. Took you long enough. I'm a lazy leech on society, a pompous ass, I'm whatever names you want to sling at me. Whatever. Can we just be done with this?

**Detective N:** Not quite.

**Suspect:** Ugh. Alright, ask away.

**Detective N:** What do *you* think you are? You're not a hero, you're not a martyr, you change too much to believe in anything. You like to learn, but only with the purpose of tending to your own 'garden'. What does that make you?

**Suspect:** I-

**Detective N:** Table the bullshit, and really think about your answer.

**Suspect:** Alright. I think the best way to describe it would be...a cut.

**Detective N:** A cut of what?

**Suspect:** I mean like a wound. An open wound.

**Detective N:** Oh, Christ.

**Suspect:** No, not in a self-pitying manic-pixie-whatever-the-fuck way. In a literal way.

**Detective N:** You're literally an open wound?

**Suspect:** No, figuratively. But...literally figuratively.

**Detective N:** Please, for the love of God, *try* to make sense.

**Suspect:** It's like when you have a cut and you don't put a Band-Aid on it. And all sorts of dirt and bacteria and stuff gets in it.

**Detective N:** That's disgusting.

**Suspect:** Bear with me. So it's an opening in the skin, right? And your body's trying to close it. But during the healing process, it's not closed completely. It stays open and all the shit gets in it. It hurts, but it's good for your immune system and stuff.

**Detective N:** "It helps your immune system and stuff"?

**Suspect:** I'm not a doctor. And I said bear with me. But anyway, so the cut is like this accidental door, straight into the bloodstream. So I kind of

imagine myself as the wound, and stuff that happens to me as whatever ends up in it: dirt, grime, bacteria. And what you're left with is a better immune system. Or like, 'a posteriori knowledge' if you're an asshole. Some people would rather just heal right away, because that's easier, but then they're stuck that way forever. Keeping yourself *healed*, or static, means nothing else can get in the cut. It doesn't hurt, but you don't get any stronger, right?

**Detective N:** Sure.

**Suspect:** Personally, I'd like to think of myself as turning the wound into an orifice.

**Detective N:** That's disgusting.

**Suspect:** Hey, you asked. But anyway, the goal is to always be *healing*, never *healed*. Does that make any sense?

**Detective N:** Eh.

**Suspect:** Sure. It's dirty, and it's grimy, but it's dynamic. I don't really ever want to be fully healed, because that means I can't grow. I want all the dirt, bacteria, and venereal diseases that the world has to offer.

**Detective N:** That is the most unhygienic thing I've ever heard.

**Suspect:** Exactly. It's gross and it hurts. I think that embarking on whatever crusade you're talking about would be letting the wound close.

**Detective N:** So this is all a fancy way of saying you're afraid of commitment.

**Suspect:** I mean, I'm not really ready to get shanked in the bath for any great crusade. No matter how heroic you think that is.

**Detective N:** So you're going to meander through life without accomplishing anything meaningful? That's what you want?

**Suspect:** I'm going to tend to my garden.

**Detective N:** Not this crap again.

**Suspect:** I'm not saying I'm *never* going to do anything for the 'greater good'. I try, and I'll keep trying. But sometimes I'll read Dostoevsky in a teen-angsty, melodramatic, insufficiently deep way. Whatever. Sorry, but I don't always want to give a shit! That is an objectively insane commitment to make! Do you know how angry and confused that would make a person all the time?

**Detective N:** Angry and confused is the state that produces the best intellectu-

**Suspect:** Remember two seconds ago when I said I don't always want to give a shit? Now is one of those times! I don't give a shit! I just want to wander around as a gaping, infected sore all the time. Is that too much to ask?

**Detective N:** Honestly? Yes.

**TRANSCRIPT ENDS**

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**Case #:** 68

**Item #:** 2

**Description of Enclosed Evidence:** Newspaper headline (post-incident)

**Description of Offense:** Identity theft, impersonation of an intellectual, assault of a police officer

**Suspect's Full Name:** Jaya J. Sinha (DECEASED)

**Date Submitted:** 11/4/23

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## **IDENTITY THIEF DEAD AFTER VIOLENT ATTACK ON ESTABLISHED DETECTIVE**

*Respected police union member Detective Hamm Napoleon shoots criminal eight times in self-defence*

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