The inspiration for this website comes from a personal incident.

On my birthday In 2011 I received a phone call while having lunch with my friends. Without knowing who that call was from, I realized something was wrong. Call it sixth sense or what you will, I was about to be proven right.

The voice at the other end said just one thing, “I am calling you from hospital X. Your mom has met with a serious accident. Please come over as soon as possible.” Fearing the worst, I rushed over to the hospital and found my mother inside the dressing room, having a plaster cast over her left hand.

As she narrated her story, a chill ran down my spine. She was on a rickshaw coming back from the market when a couple of guys on a bike started to ride parallel to her. All of a sudden, the pillion rider lunged for her purse and grabbed hold of it. Slung over her left shoulder, the bag would not come off so easily.

Always practical, my mother let go of her bag, allowing it to slide from her shoulders, while shouting for help.

Panicking, the chain-snatcher made one last effort and yanked the bag forcefully out of my mother’s grasp, stuck as it was around her fingers. The force caused her ring finger to snap, breaking it in two and leaving the finger dangling from her hand.

While people stood and watched the scene unfold, it was the rickshaw-wallah who ran after the thieves and tried his best to catch hold of them. Somehow, my mother managed to get herself to a hospital and was getting a plaster cast over her broken hand when I found her.

Medications included powerful painkillers and sedatives. After having satisfied myself that she was comfortable, I dialled 100 to register a complaint.

In about 5 minutes, an asst. sub-inspector of the Preet Vihar police station called asking for directions to my house. He came over with a head constable and asked for more details of the crime. It was surprising that they knew nothing, given that the incident occurred about half a kilometer from the police station.

The ASI took down all details on a plain sheet of paper and asked my mother to come over despite knowing that she was heavily sedated. She was drowsy, drooping and barely conscious while the ASI asked her questions like if she was able to take a good look at the criminals.

Round of questioning over, he asked her to go back to sleep. One would think the police would now make out a complaint and nab the criminals. Little did I know how the tables would be turned, and on us!

After ensuring that my mother was out of earshot, the ASI proceeded to ask me general questions - what I did and so on. Acting as if he was making a very important phone call, he went out into the balcony. He came back out and asked me to come to the balcony to “discuss some important matters”.

I thought the normal routine, that of a cop asking for money to register a complaint would play out. Steeling myself, I went into the balcony where he said, “There are two ways we can go about this. Either we file a CR or an NCR. If you file an NCR, your mother will still be able to present it in the office and get her ID etc. re-issued. A CR on the other hand will only cause more tension and hassle.”

I had no idea what the ASI was talking about. CR, NCR was unknown to me. All I could do was ask the officer to file a report detailing the incident as it happened. He asked me to accompany him and the constable on their bike to the police station.

At the police station the situation turned 180-degrees. The officer insisted an NCR would be filed. To the stenographer on duty at the police station, he began dictating a complaint that my mother had ‘dropped’ her purse while on a rickshaw and had lost it when it fell into the drain.

It is here that the police machinery kicked in, with a series of officials coming over and saying that the false complaint would result in a lot less headache and be convenient since the police would anyway not be able to crack the case. Imagine that coming from a cop!

Given the pressure exerted by the cops which included a blunt refusal to write the correct version of events, I was left with little choice but to take the false NCR and return home.

As citizens of the world’s largest democracy, we strut about and proclaim to the world the rights and freedoms we enjoy. We rattle off fundamental rights like those of free speech and proudly display our ink-stained fingers come election time, but few of us understand the laws that sustain our democratic rights and give us the space needed to exercise them.

The fractious nature of all democracies extends also to the delicate balance of power that exists between the four ‘estates’ - executive, legislature, judiciary and the polity. Though all democracies exist for the people, it is only a good understanding of the laws and an assertion of one’s rights coming from such an understanding that helps tilt this balance of power in favour of the polity and prevents abuse by the executive.

The injustice perpetrated by the executive flourishes because people choose to turn a blind eye and make up excuses like ‘the law is too complex’ or ‘I am not a lawyer’ to compensate for ignorance. As the above incident highlights in ample measure, these excuses are inadequate and leave us ill-equipped to assert our rights.

Into such a vacuum step in organizations like the people’s committee against police atrocities (PCPA) that convert the masses to their twisted ideology and proceed to wage war against the state. Needless to say, us common citizens are the biggest losers in all this.

After coming back home, I looked up the meaning of the word NCR in the context of Indian law, and realized how the police had washed its hands clean of the entire incident. The actual thieves may never be caught and justice may never have been done, but in writing a false report of the incident, the police officers on duty that night did the biggest injustice to me. It was unexpected and let me down, but I have resolved to never let it happen to me again. And we hope you find the information in this website useful and informative and are better equipped to deal with the police on their own turf.

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