

The First Defense

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8M6XwVhcQI>

As the hearings continued, the prosecution called in their eye-witness, Mustaq Ahmed Fateh, the only victim who has been attending court regularly despite serious injuries (as the others went back to Pakistan). Mustaq, a god-fearing Muslim, has constantly refused to identify any one of the 17, even in the lower courts. Standing in front of Judge Shamshi he reiterated his answer when questioned about identifying the 17 accused. He explained his stance. Informing the courts that it was extremely dark and he was unable to see any of the assailants, he also explained he didn't want to lie about this to strengthen his case as he was responsible to Allah.

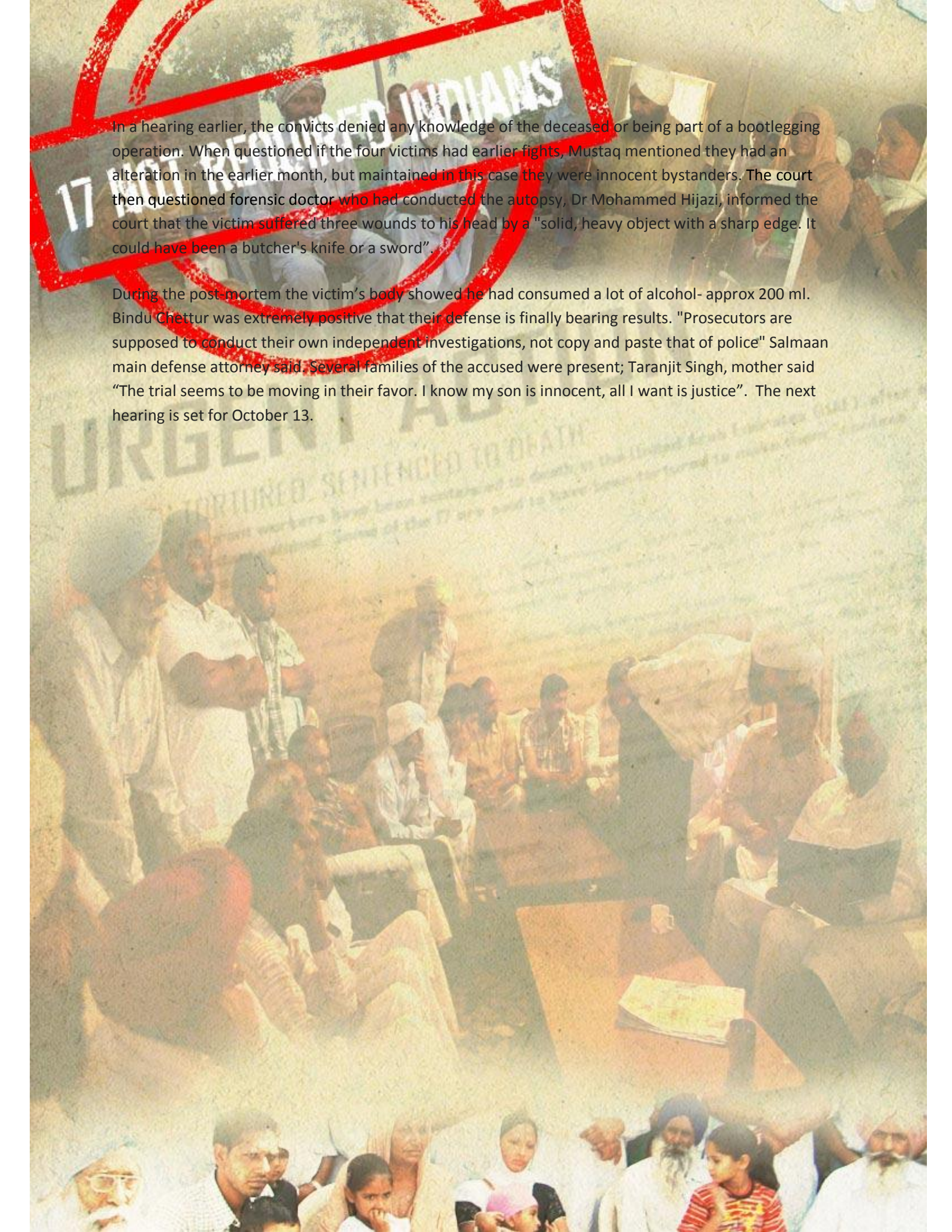
Eye Witness Byte- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I00lsjMM108>

Mustaq's testimony has been consistent even at the risk of losing the case, "The incident took place in the evening and it was dark, four of us were walking and we saw a group of 30-35 drunken Sikhs beating a well-known bootlegger in the area, S Raju. When we asked them why they're beating him, they attacked us thinking that we have come to his defence," he said. "Every one of us had six or seven men beating him, the attackers used "swords, iron bars, and wooden sticks,". Questioned if he knew the 17 accused earlier or if they had earlier fights with the accused, Mustaq maintained that they were innocent bystanders and he didn't know any of them.

Mustaq a Good Man <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WJkDIPCTN0>

Urging the court to produce Dr Mohammed Hijazi, the forensic doctor that conducted postmortem of the victim's body and the fingerprints experts' alongwith the evidence of the crime, copy of all proof and documents in the court, he insisted that the doctor should be there to explain how the victim was killed. Salmaan has also asked for the family members of the victim- Misri Khan- to be present for the next hearing. Currently a distant neighbor from his village, Ramzan represents Misri's family and he has no power of attorney to do the same. Mustaq Ahmad—one of the victims- was also in court and had to prove his identification. When asked what the deceased's family wants –Blood Money or Retribution, Ramzan said that they wanted Justice and Retribution. This should put to rest the loose talk that's been going around as money mongering institutions and individuals were trying to 'fix' a blood money settlement.

Misri Khan, the deceased was reportedly killed in this turf dispute between two rival bootleg liquor gangs but Mustaq's testimony maintains different, "The incident took place in the evening and it was dark, four of us were walking and we saw a group of 30-35 drunken Sikhs beating a well-known bootlegger in the area, S Raju. When we asked them why they're beating him, they attacked us thinking that we have come to his defense," he said. "Every one of us had six or seven men beating him, the attackers used "swords, iron bars, and wooden sticks," Fateh told the court.



In a hearing earlier, the convicts denied any knowledge of the deceased or being part of a bootlegging operation. When questioned if the four victims had earlier fights, Mustaq mentioned they had an altercation in the earlier month, but maintained in this case they were innocent bystanders. The court then questioned forensic doctor who had conducted the autopsy, Dr Mohammed Hijazi, informed the court that the victim suffered three wounds to his head by a "solid, heavy object with a sharp edge. It could have been a butcher's knife or a sword".

During the post-mortem the victim's body showed he had consumed a lot of alcohol- approx 200 ml. Bindu Chettur was extremely positive that their defense is finally bearing results. "Prosecutors are supposed to conduct their own independent investigations, not copy and paste that of police" Salmaan main defense attorney said. Several families of the accused were present; Taranjit Singh, mother said "The trial seems to be moving in their favor. I know my son is innocent, all I want is justice". The next hearing is set for October 13.