

Animation Design, Degree Project-Stage 3

In the land of Ashoka...

*a short animation film
for exploring a narrative*

project Report

November 2009

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2009

Declaration:

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where others ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misinterpreted or fabricated or falsified any data/idea/fact/source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the institute and also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

Signature: Kunal Panda

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Roll no: 08634009

Date: 11/10.

Approval sheet

The project-II titled... "In the land of Ashoka" by Kunal Parida is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a M.Des Degree in Animation

Guide *Nirja Samrani*

External Examiner *[Signature]*

Internal Examiner *[Signature]*

Chairman *[Signature]*
11/11/10

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my project guide, Prof. Nina Sabnani for her guidance and support throughout the project. She gave me freedom to explore my ideas.

I also thank to Prof. Sumant Rao, Prof Shilpa Ranade, Prof. Raja Mohanty, Mr C P Narayan for their valuable suggestions during the process without whose guidance this project would not have been possible.

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INTRODUCTION

My short animation project is based on to show human emotion when he/she has done a sinful act. It depends on the individual psychics whether the person feels guilty or has remorse after doing something terribly wrong according to our society. If a person commits any crime, he is made to feel the pain he gave others by giving him capital punishment. My short animation project is based on to show human emotion when he/she has done a sinful act. It depends on the individual psychics whether the person feels guilty or has remorse after doing something terribly wrong according to our society. If a person commits any crime, he is made to feel the pain he gave others by giving him capital punishment.

SYNOPSIS

Remorse

Remorse is one main issue I like to include in my story, where the person though being a terrorist, has a sense of regret on his deed. Remorse is an emotional expression of personal regret felt by a person after he or she has committed an act which they deem to be shameful, hurtful, or violent. Remorse is closely allied to guilt and self-directed resentment. When a person regrets an earlier action or failure to act, it may be because of remorse or in response to various other consequences, including being punished for the act or omission. In a legal context, the perceived remorse of an offender is assessed by Western justice systems during trials, sentencing, parole hearings, and in restorative justice.

Socio-cultural views

In our day to day life, the reaction of the society where we live, towards any kind of mis-happening by any person or group depends on the scale of act of the person or group concerned. As we go through our daily newspaper, we come across many such incidents where certain section of people use to show their strong resentment towards the culprit who has done something wrong with or without his conscious effort. There are certain issues where we often come across in our news-channel and papers.

Such as: 1. Terrorism

2. Politics

3. Scandal and scams

4. Accidents

5. Murder

The person responsible for doing any kind of act which is not accepted by our society is liable to get capital punishments. He is made to pay for his sinful act whether or not he is feeling sorry for his deeds. In other case, if the person has realized of the situation he has created for other people which is unacceptable and painful for them, a sense of guilt creeps in his mind.

'Terrorism' is one such issue my project covers to show how innocent peoples are widely affected by these non-state actors who for their personal agenda, go on to disrupt social issues without feeling the guilt of committing sin.

Terrorism

Terrorism is one aspect which instills fear and hatred in not only the people of India but the people all over the world as well. Terrorism is nothing but to terrorise people and forcing constituency to agree to their political proposal and agendas by creating disarray and havoc within the people of country as a whole and carrying out unhumanic activity, such as planting bomb in crowded places like buses, train, mall and any other social gatherings is one such examples. As a result, a lot of people get killed and sorrow of their relatives follows.

Hitting planes on WTO tower in USA as well as the recent massacre in Mumbai on 26th of november, 2008 are one of such examples which have left a deep scar on those people's heart whose near and dear one suffered in the hand of terrorism. The brutality and impact of terrorism is such that we fear to go out in any kind of social gatherings and as a matter of fact we people are in one way really terrified.

Impact of terrorism

From a perspective of motives of terrorist acts are recognized as follows: publicizing a statement through acts of ruthlessness. In that way they can make fast and massive publication; act of vengeance towards groups considered disadvantageous to them; serving as a catalyst for militarization or mass mobilization; spreading hatred and inter-communal conflict; announcing a certain group as the enemy and should be held responsible; victims are not the goal but a means to create "neural war"; create mass panic, damage public trust towards the government including security and law enforcement authorities.

Trends of Terrorism

Terrorism is as old as the civilization of mankind itself and has existed in all ages in some form or other which might be known anarchists, revolutionaries, fundamentalist or dissidents against the established authority or even ruling tyrants having no tolerance or dissent. However, terrorism was not as widespread phenomenon as it is today in contemporary political system of the world.

Terrorism has, in fact, become a global phenomenon with increasing and rather well identifiable links between different terrorist group and organization. They use each other's areas for recruitment and training, exchange of illegal weapons, engage in joint planning and ventures and also provide administrative and other logistic support. This type of terrorist activities show a new dimension due to circumstances characterized by the advancement of science, technology and diverse social, economic, political and historical reasons conditioning it.

Cause of Terrorism

The history of terrorist organizations suggests that they do not select terrorism for its political effectiveness. Individual terrorists tend to be motivated more by a desire for social solidarity with other members of their organization than by political platforms or strategic objectives, which are often murky and undefined. Terrorism has been practiced by a broad array of political organizations for furthering their objectives. It has been practiced by political parties, nationalistic groups, religious groups, revolutionaries, and ruling governments.

Goal and Agendas of Terrorist groups

There are a certain key-criteria to this topic of terrorism:

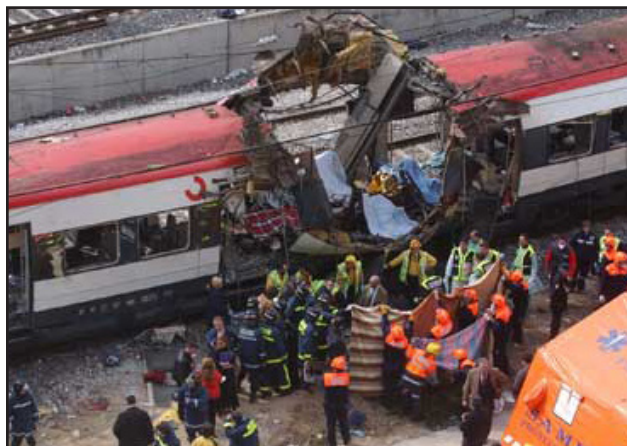
1. Instilling Violence by property destruction and endangering life of individuals or certain human section.
2. Psychological Impact: The attack was carried out in such a way as to maximize the severity and length of the psychological impact.
3. Achieving political goal: One definition that combines the key elements was developed at the George C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies by Carsten Bockstette: "Terrorism is defined as political violence in an asymmetrical conflict that is designed to induce terror and psychic fear (sometimes indiscriminate) through the violent victimization and destruction of noncombatant targets (sometimes iconic symbols). Such acts are meant to send a message from an illicit clandestine organization. The purpose of terrorism is to exploit the media in order to achieve maximum attainable publicity as an amplifying force multiplier in order to influence the targeted audience(s) in order to reach short- and midterm political goals and/or desired long-term end states."
4. Deliberate Targeting of innocent people: Their suffering accomplishes the terrorists' goals of instilling fear, getting their message out to an audience or otherwise satisfying the demands of their often radical religious and political agendas.

Approach



Inspiration







The mind of a terrorist

To understand the mind of a terrorist, it has to be understood that he has to be fully motivated and the execution of his act has to be neat. Motivation requires weakness. It could be the weakness of religion. The people who are grooming him psyche him so much continuously till he is fully committed and convinced and says 'Yes I will do it!'

If a person is psyched to such an extent, he won't even think of his parents, forget about feeling any remorse for other innocent people. He has no sense of guilt then, this is the kind of motivation that has been inculcated in him. These kinds of acts cannot be done without local support and it has to be planned for months. You may think a local will think twice before inflicting this act of terror on his own city, community etc but once a person is motivated, he is capable of any act of terror that is asked of him. He has been trained to kill.

Once he is convinced himself, he is on course. The task of the middlemen is to make the terrorist believe that what he is going to do is completely justified. They are made to believe that what they are doing is for themselves -- even causes like country or jihad get hazy here -- because that may not be the real reasons.

Another thing that is pounded into their mind is that the act has to be executed neatly. There is no room for error, because the terrorist knows that if he is caught, he will spend the rest of his life in prison or he will get killed.



Do the terrorists feel remorse or regret the guilt they have done?

The terrorists are something a non-state actor who has his own personal agendas where they are adamant to fulfill the criteria by other state government by any means. So in order to achieve their political goal they go on disrupting public society and spread violence. So most of them don't have remorse while completing their anti-social task of killing, hijacking or kidnapping targeted people.

Character Input

But in my story it's about terrorist who travels in a train in disguise in order to carry out the plot in the next platform where the train is going to halt. Though he was successful in carrying out the massacre in the platform by blindly firing bullets to every person he saw, but at the meantime a small innocent girl is standing in front of him, alive and injured. He was in crosswire, whether to hit that girl who resembles most to his late sister at her age, who died in the hand of some miscreants.

Here in my story, I tried to highlight the after effect, the terrorist goes through after carrying out the massacre. May not be due to the killing of the people around but the memoirs of his late sister which stops him to shoot the little girl in front of him. But a tremendous sense of guilt creeps into his mind after the course of rampage he carried out. He though finished the mission he was sent for, but the regret of guilt he did captures the mind, through the innocence of the little girl in front of him.

I have portrayed the character of the terrorist as an aimless person who has no idea nor future plan of himself. He has been given a mission to carry out, where he has to kill as many people in a particular platform and he has minimum notion of what he will go through after completing the act. Overall he has been brain-washed by some middle men or leaders of some terrorist group.

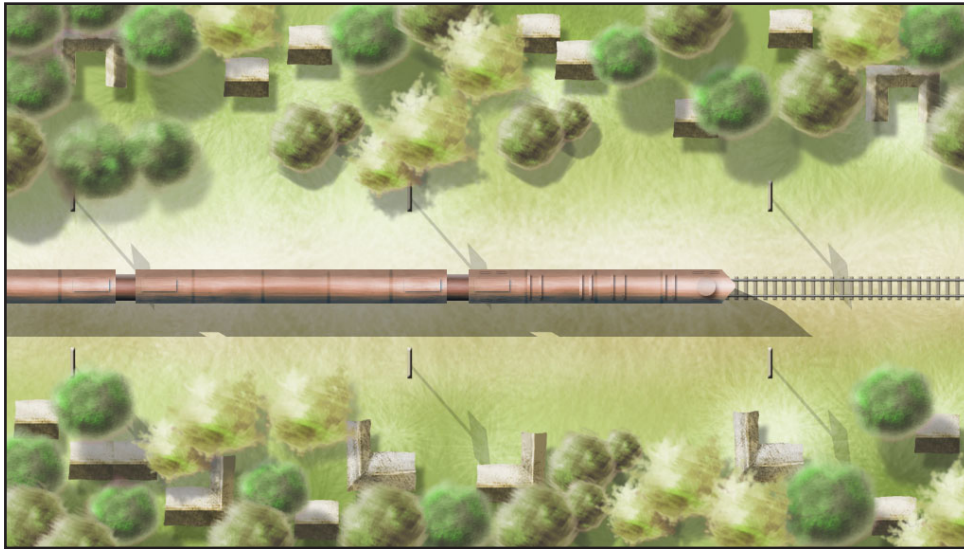


Second character

Apart from the terrorist, there is a little girl too. She happens to travel in the same train as well as bogie along with terrorist. She was with her father, who was listening her daughter reading out the story of Ashoka, the great king in Indian history. She smiles back to terrorist as he was smiling too and looking at her at that time. But after the terrorist kills everybody along with her father she is all alone. She is completely disheartened and afraid while standing in front of the deadly terrorist. Stains of blood dripping from her elbow makes the confused terrorist tremble and give-up his weapon in distress.

Turning point

As the terrorist walks away in despair leaving the weapon behind, some one shoots the terrorist from behind. As he falls down in pain, a little figure is seen standing behind him holding the weapon and the figure standing was none other than the little girl raging in anger. As the terrorist lying on the ground, flashbacks of his past passes across his mind where he too had a happy family during his childhood days and a little sister whom he was very fond of, along with their parents until when some miscreants came and finished off his so called happy family where he was hiding somewhere and watching the bloodshed of his parents as well as his dear sister and he was totally helpless. As such he remorsees after killing family as well as dear ones of other people concerned and thus creating another terrorist in form of a little girl



Summary of the story:

It was a sunny day. Morning breeze swaying past me, those green fields passing through, huts across semi-barren land, children flying kite and running across. Group of clouds flying opposite the train I was travelling. Overall it was a happy and fresh sight to see. My destination was the next platform; the train will reach in an hour. Though everything normal within my surrounding, yet some unpleasant thoughts were crossing my mind. Why the people here are more than happy, whereas the people from where I belong are pursuing happiness? Children here are playing with kites, while those children in my side have guns as their only trade of entertainment.

Next to my seat, I saw a person talking with his little daughter with upmost care and love. That little girl was looking at me and smiling. Her smile reminds me of my little sister whom I lost when I was a kid. People here have sense of love and care, then why we people there are fighting for our day to day life to survive the cruel harmony of nature. I could sense jealousy creeping in my mind for these people. I have nothing to cherish, rather I am living my own part of life. I had no aim in my life. I still had no idea what was store for me in future. Worse than that, what was disturbing me most was the voices prevailing in my inner self. Those voices were pursuing me to carry out the orders and to finish the operation without any kind of failure or delay. Those voices were overpowering my mind. The only question, coming to my mind is that what I would prove to myself and my people, after completing the responsibility I am given for. Will that bring peace to my people?

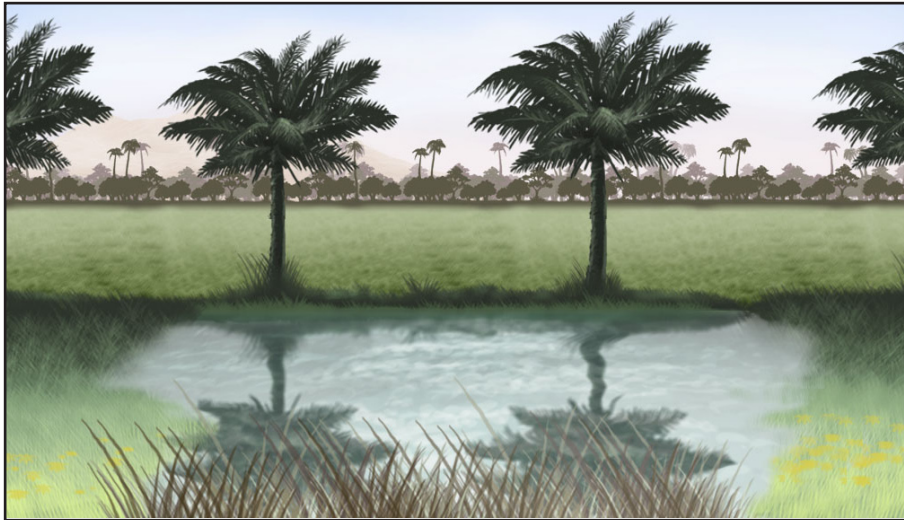
*While those random thoughts were playing in my mind, suddenly I was brought to the sense by the announcement of the train arrival to my destination platform. A whole bunch of crowd was waiting for the train. People were rushing here and there. Switching off the thoughts for a while, I went ahead towards the crowd. I was experiencing a devilish attitude in myself for that moment. Now I was ready for the action.
BANG BANG BANG!!! (Sounds of bullet firing)*



Half an hour later, there was complete silence except some faint noises and cry.

I was still searching if anyone was alive. But still my job was less than done. I was taken aback when I saw a small figure standing in front of me facing the nozzle of my gun. It took me few seconds to realize that she was the same little girl in the train, which reminded me of my late sister. Though her father was dead, she was searching him, blood dripping from her soft hand. My finger still on the trigger ready to shoot, was giving me different answer. It was shivering. Water drops coming out of my forehead, increasing my heartbeats which I felt never before. The crying face of my dead sister was dominating my senses. That moment was something very different, where my body felt numb. What have I done? Was it the guilt of the crime I committed? Why am I feeling the guilt now? Is there any kind of repentance for a terrorist like me? I had no answer.

After that the terrorist was taken aback by the sudden shock he got for which he was responsible. He then left his gun in a dust-bin and walked away in despair. Someone other than terrorist picks the gun in the dust-bin, the scene fades out and a random gun-shot is heard, which indicates that someone killed the terrorist too.



Why 'In the land of Ashoka'?

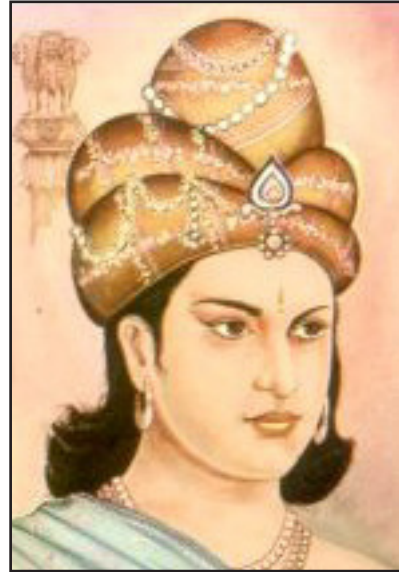
My story revolves round a terrorist who is about to carry out mass killing operation in a particular railway platform. In the land of Ashoka indicates my country, India. Presently, terrorism is the common topic in almost every people's view in here. The dark memories of 26/11 is very much fresh in people's heart which took place in Mumbai itself. It has not only created havoc but also brought mass resentment against these non-state actors.

The terrorist after killing people feels remorse but his inner repentance is not heard by any one. He gets killed in the hand of little girl who also lost his father in the massacre. So public tolerance is not there for a hardcore criminal like him, though he remorseful for his guilt he did.

This complete scene creates a situation where we, as common people learn that terrorism never ends until somebody doesn't retaliate to violence created on other end of line, which is difficult. So revenge is the main aspect which brings out a terrorist in a normal person's mind. Though it is impractical that a small girl picking up a gun and shooting the person responsible for killing the people around, but in the short animation film of mine I want to convey the message to the viewer by showing this act of revenge which ends in creating another terrorist by killing the former one.

As we all know that Ashoka was one of the great ruler in Indian history. He is famous for his remorse. Aftermath of kalinga war he embraced buddhism and worked for the welfare of his citizen. The transformation of Chandashoka (devil Ashoka) to Dharmashoka (religious Ashoka) was due to the Kalinga war where he and his soldiers defeated and killed huge number of enemy soldiers.

But in present context there is no social tolerance for the person committing sin. Though Ashoka was a king so he chose transformation path and did welfare for his people and spread buddhism. Here the character is aimless and he has no future plan for himself. He went on to kill and be killed. But he couldn't capitalize on the remorse he felt later and got killed.



Ashoka

The son of Bindsara and the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya achieved greater name and fame than his father and grandfather. He is not only one of the greatest kings of India but also of the entire world. He was born in 273 B.C. and died in 232 B.C.

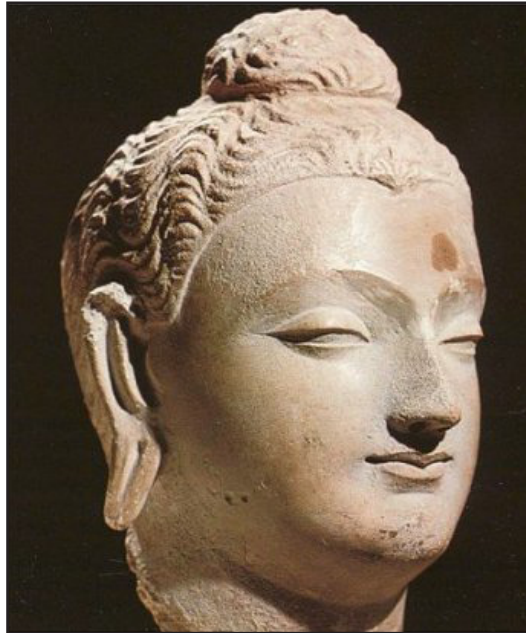
After the death of his father, Bindsara - the king of Pataliputra, Ashoka's elder brother Susima contended for the throne. But most of the ministers and prime minister Radha Gupta, in particular were against Susima. They considered Ashoka more capable and discreet. Therefore they helped him attain the reins of power.

Ashoka had already gained experience of administration during his father's rule. Therefore, he had no difficulty in managing the state affairs when he ascended the throne. The first thing that he did was to restore peace in the kingdom. It took him full three years to do so. In fact the coronation ceremony was performed when he had established peace in his kingdom.

Ashoka was a great philanthropist. He used to take his meal after feeding many thousands of Brahmins. He had a very busy schedule of work, which started very early in the morning and went up to midnight. He remained very active and kept himself informed of the latest goings on in the land.

People were very honest during his reign. The incidents of theft were unheard of. People had religious bent of mind and were truthful. Science had also made a good progress. Technology, medicine and surgery had also developed appreciably.

Ashoka had a vast stretch of land under him to rule over. On the north side was snow-capped Himalayas, besides Nepal and Kashmir. His southern boundaries extended up to Mysore State. In the north-west were Baluchistan and Afghanistan. In the east flowed river Brahmaputra, while in the west were Saurashtra and Junagarh, which formed part of his kingdom. In fact his empire was more extensive than the Moghals', or the Britishers'. It was a vast empire and needed the capabilities of a person like Ashoka to rule over it.



Kalinga war brought great fame to Ashoka.

It is, in fact, due to this war that he became Ashoka - the great. It was not so because he won the war, but because he gave up fighting after winning this war. It was because of the transformation that occurred in him. It was because of the reaction that war had on his mind.

Kalinga was a small kingdom between Godawari and Mahanadi near the Bay of Bengal. Its land was fertile and its people were prosperous. They were very brave and patriotic people. According to Magasthenese Kalinga had an infantry of 60000 men, 10000 horsemen and about 600 elephants. Its independence was an eyesore to Ashoka. In the eighth year of his rule Ashoka surrounded Kalinga on all the four sides. In fact on the three sides his territory was already protruding towards Kalinga, it was only on the fourth side that navy had to be sent to surrounded it fully.

The people of Kalinga refused to submit. They were ready to die but not prepared to lose their independence. At last the inevitable happened. A fierce battle ensued, which lasted for many days. Many persons were killed, wounded and crippled. Many women were widowed and many children were orphaned. About a lakh and a half were made prisoners of war. There were sorpses all around. Suddenly Ashoka's conscience was jolted. A great transformation came in him. Now he was a different Ashoka. He started hating violence. Kalinga was the first and the last war waged by Ashoka.

Dhramashoka- *Dharm-Ashoka*

Ashoka embraced Buddhism. According to one version he got initiation from his sister - Anandiji, while according to another version he got it from his nephew i.e. brother's son. It brought him spiritual awakening and his entire course of life was changed. He contemplated welfare measures for the people. He was not a religious bigot. He was tolerant and wanted all religions to develop.

In his view, religion meant doing good deeds and keeping away from sins. According to him kindness, charity, truth and purity constituted religion. By doing good deeds he meant serving parents, brahmins, saints and the aged and sick people, respecting and obeying teachers and treating lonely people with love and humility. It also meant observing norms of good conduct.

He propagated such principles of Buddhism as were non-controversial. He got them engraved on the pillars throughout the length and breadth of his empire. These pillars were normally more than forty feet high and were very heavy. The language of these edicts is Prakrit. He wanted to raise the moral standard of the people through religious preaching. He sent religious teachers not only in the four corners of his kingdom but abroad also. It was mainly due to his efforts that Buddhism spread in many Asian countries.

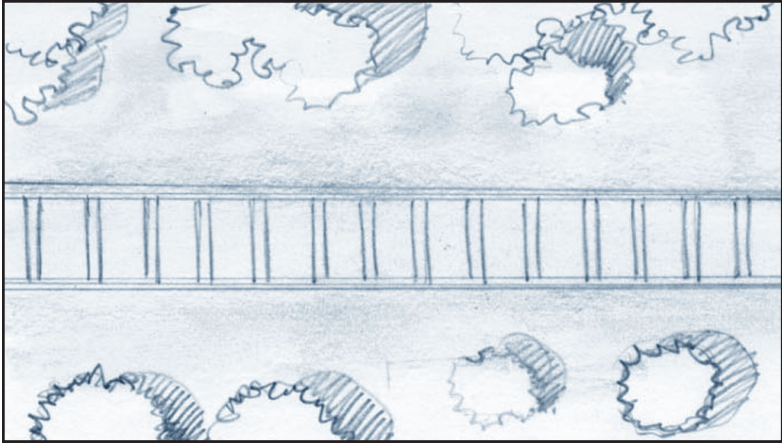
In tune with his religious fervor, he plunged himself in welfare measures for his people. He opened hospitals and dispensaries where the rich and the poor alike could get free treatment. Similarly there were dispensaries for birds and animals. Gardens and parks were laid out throughout the empire. Inns were constructed for the travelers; shady trees were planted alongside the roads. Walls and tanks were sunk for the benefit of the people, since he believed in non-violence, he banned animal sacrifice.

Though he hated violence and observed law of Piety i.e. Dharma in his personal life, yet it does not mean that he was lenient in administration. He was a hard task-master and never hesitated from awarding suitable punishment to the corrupt and guilty.

Ashoka has attained unprecedented fame not only in India but also in the whole world. He is truly a world figure. The government of India has rightly honored his memory by adopting 'Ashoka Chakra' as national symbol.



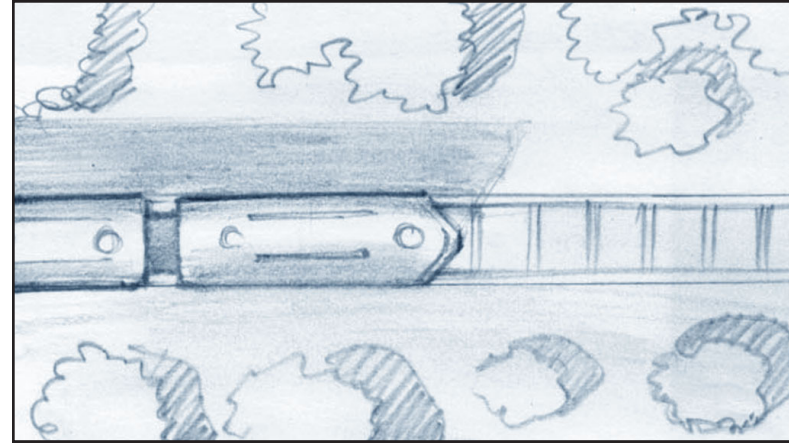
Story Board



Railway track across semi-barren land

Camera moves from tops view passing through clouds

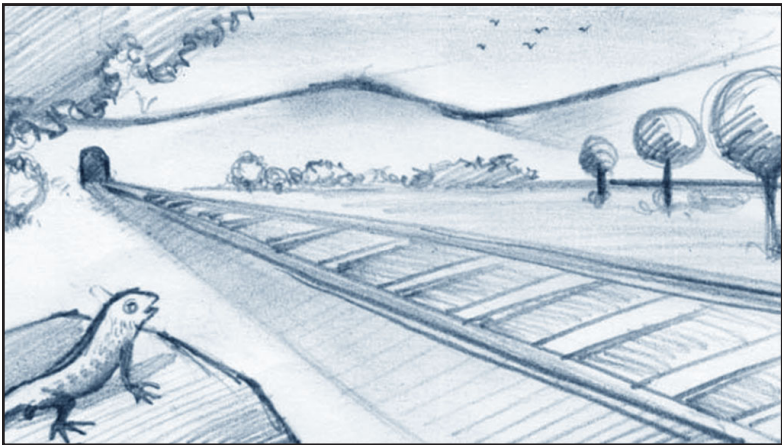
Sound: slow wind



A train passes through the track

Camera zooms to the track

Sound: wind along with sound of passing train

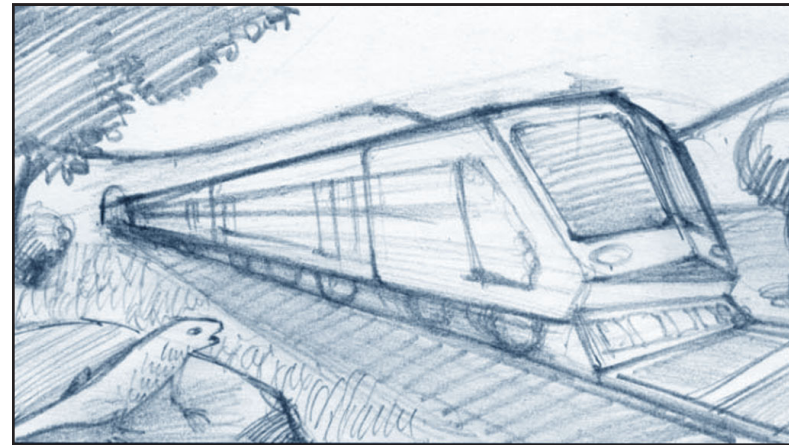


Track running through tunnel

Camera still

Sound: slow wind along with faint noise of train approaching

1 2
3 4



Suddenly fast moving train again passes through

Camera still but shakes a little when the crosses

Sound: approaching train



Camera moves along with train

Sound: train sound and wind



A person is sitting alone in one of the bogie of the train

Camera zooms to the person sitting

Sound: wind and train movement accelerating



The person covered with shawl is in deep thought

Camera zooms his face

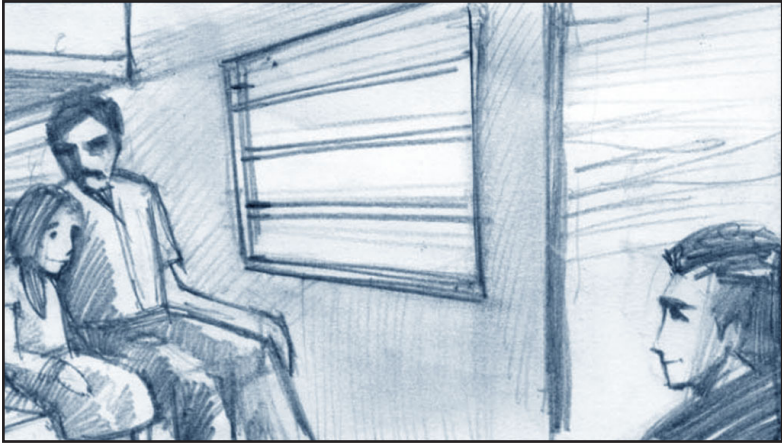
Sound: train sound as well as passenger chatterings

5 6
7 8



He is observing the outside ambience from the train

Sound: continues



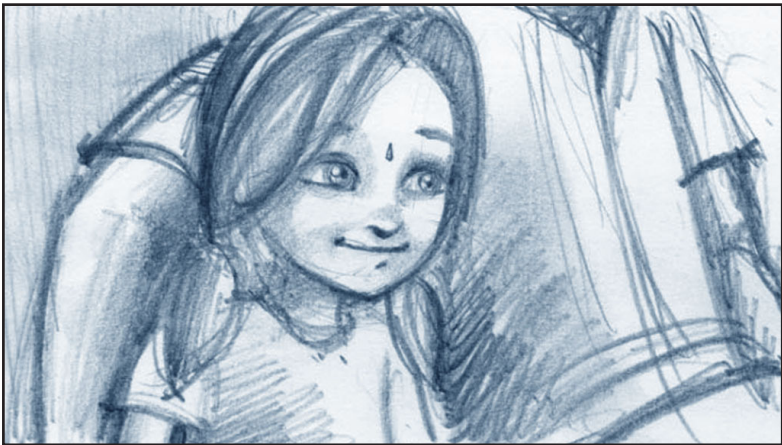
He look towards a little girl who is cuddling her father and talking to him

Sound: train sound as well as girl's talking



He smiles after looking at her.

Sound: continues



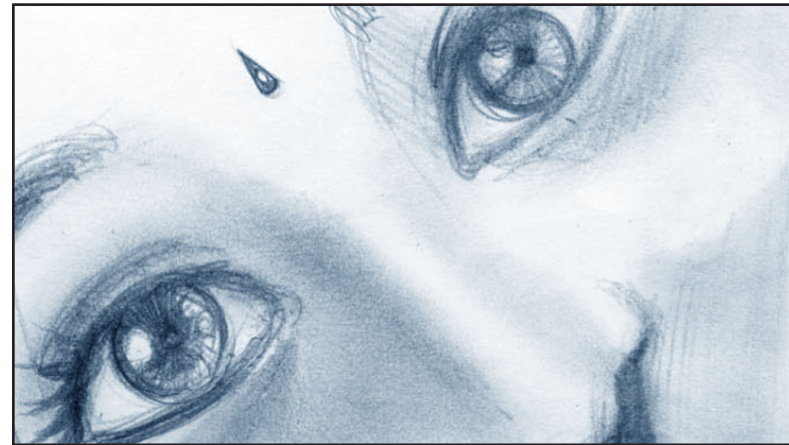
The little girl also smiles back

Camera zooms to little girl's face

Sound: train sound continues

9 10

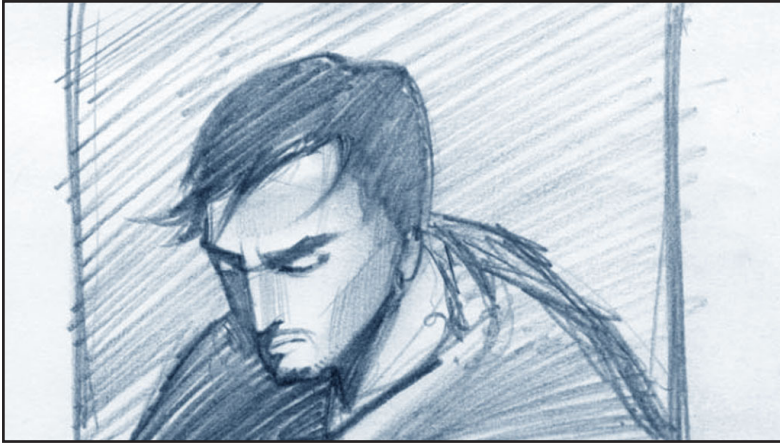
11 12



Zoomed view of the girl's innocent and cute face

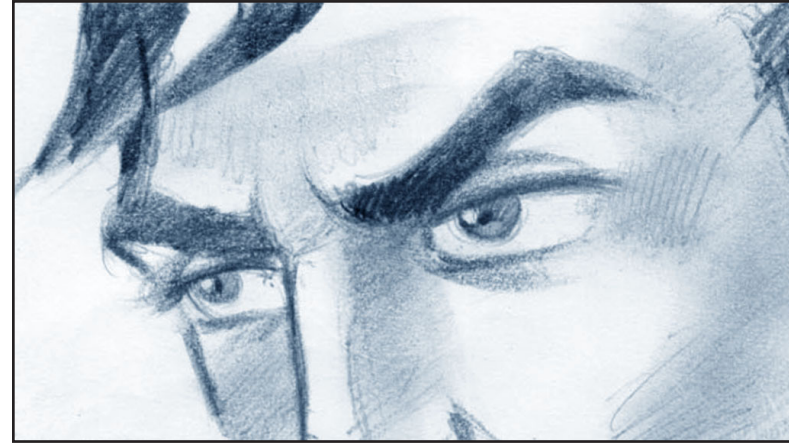
Camera moves and rotates slowly

Sound: sweet theme music



But the person is again brought back to sense and he is sad, disturbances and parallel thoughts continues in his mind
Camera showing the person

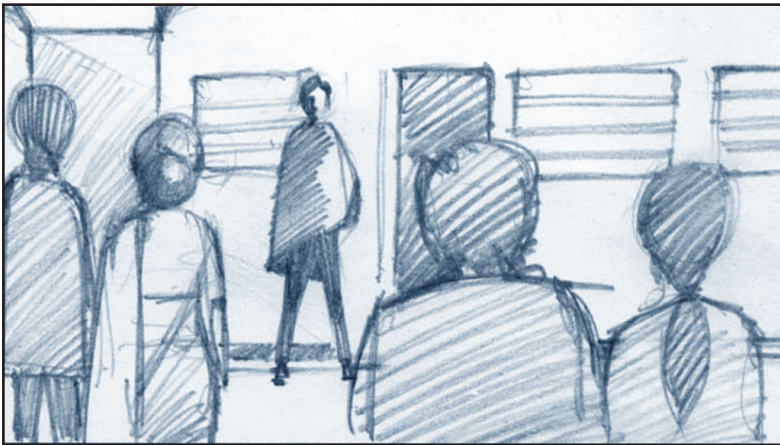
Sound: accelerating theme sound along with weird voice overs



Opens his eyes as his train reaches the platform, his destiny

Camera zooms

Sound: Crowded area sound as in platform



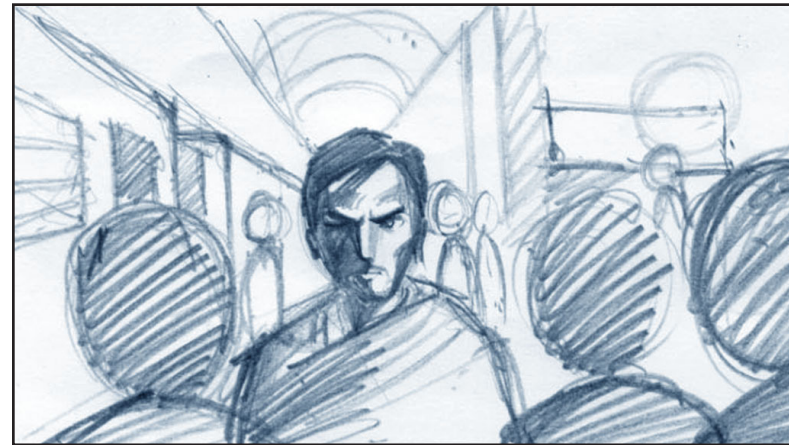
Gets down the train

Camera shows the heavy crowd and the person

Sound: continues

13 14

15 16



He moves past the crowds looking in a suspicious manner

Camera focuses on the man amidst crowd

Sound: continues



He suddenly flings his shawl and has a gun in his hand

Camera low angle

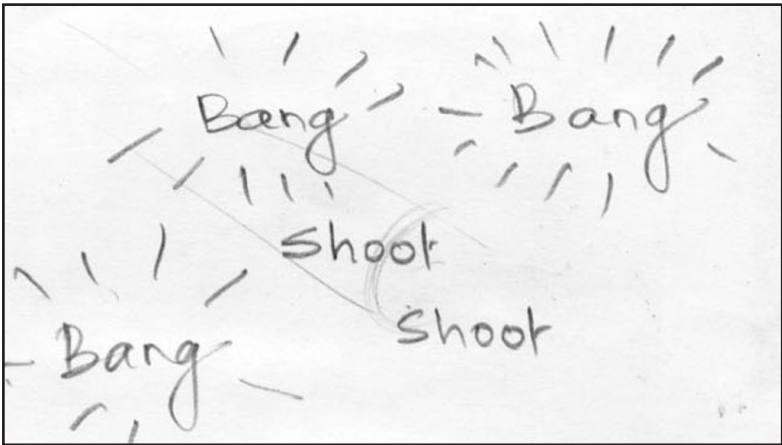
Sound: fast paced theme sound



The person is a terrorist about to strike

Camera still and little shakes

Sound: chaos and panic everywhere in platform. People screaming

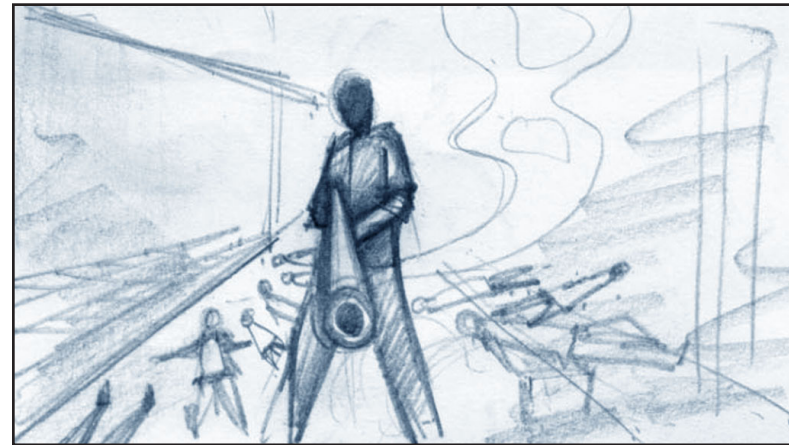


He fires blindly

Sound: Machine gun sounds and shouting of peoples.

17 18

19 20



After half an hour of firing , he is standing still ready to shoot anyone if alive

Camera still

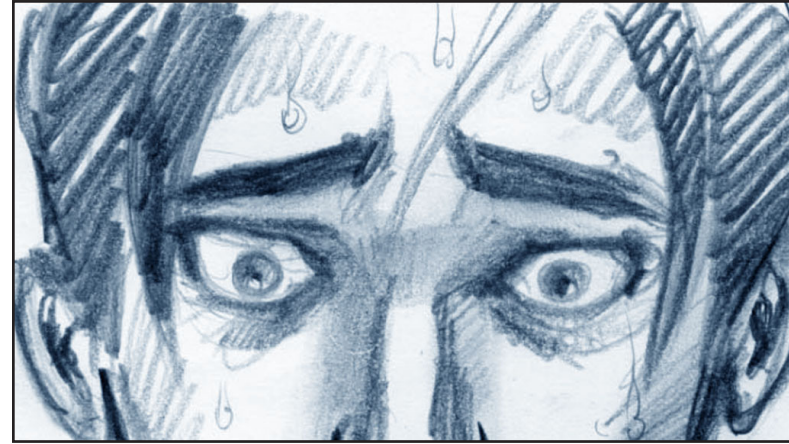
Sound: silent theme track



Devilish attitude in his face ready to strike again

Camera zooming on his face

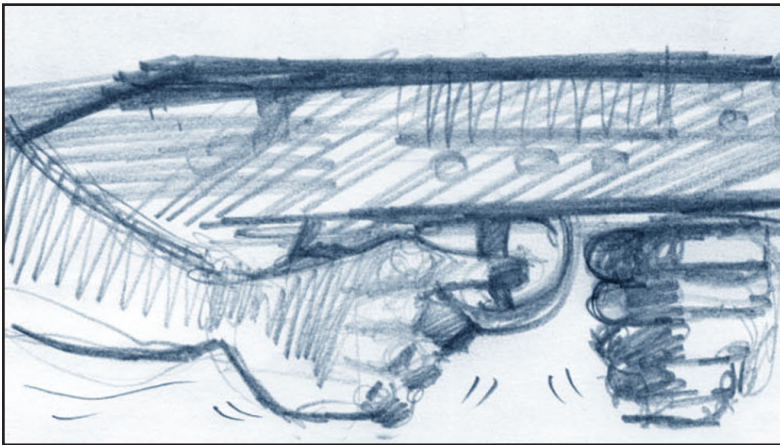
Sound: continues



Expression of the person changes suddenly

Camera stills

Sound: continues with acceleration



His hand trembles in disbelief and confusion

Camera focus on his hand on trigger

Sound:

21 22

23 24



His face get pale and sweats

Camera focus on his side face

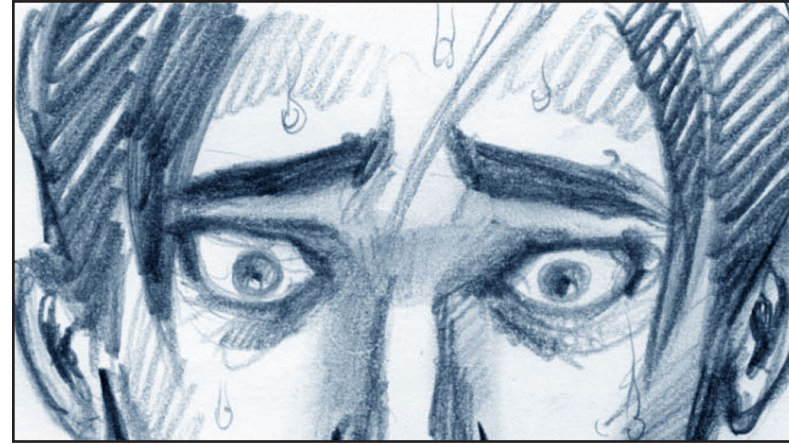
Sound:



The girl he met on train journey stands in front of him, crying

Camera zooms out

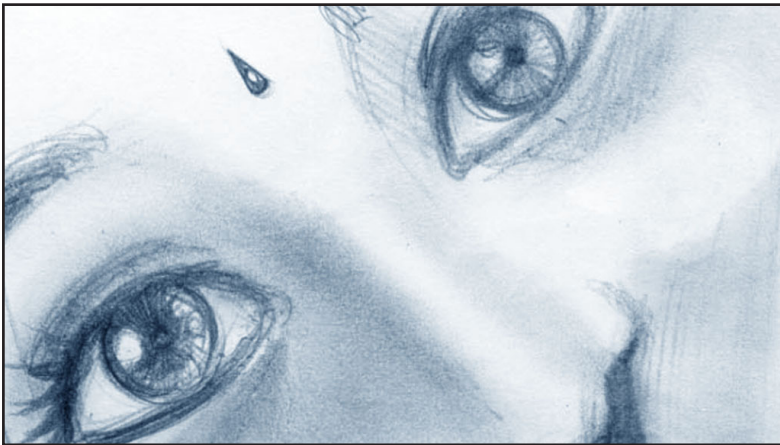
Sound: slow theme track



He is confused whether to shoot or not

Camera zooms to his face again

Sound:



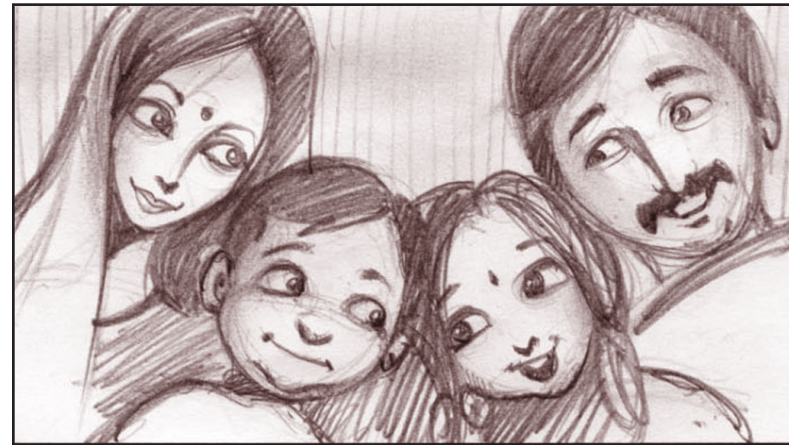
Her innocent face dominates his mind

Camera focus on girl's face

Sound:

25 26

27 28



Flashback of terrorist's life where he led a happy life with his parents and sister

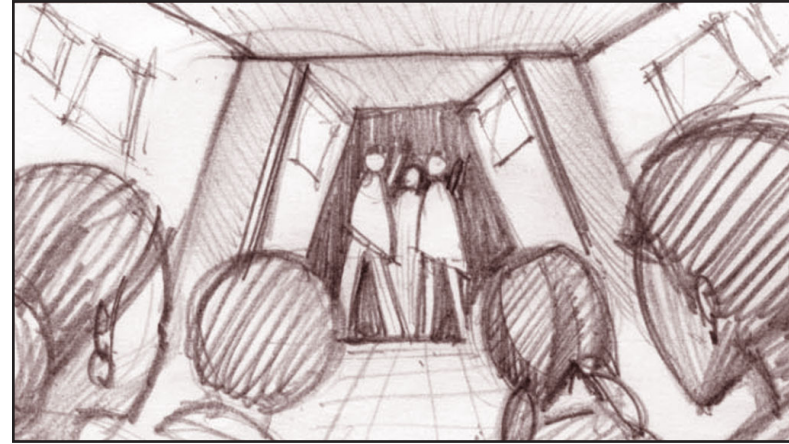
Camera still

Sound: heart beat sound with voice of girl's laughing



Camera still

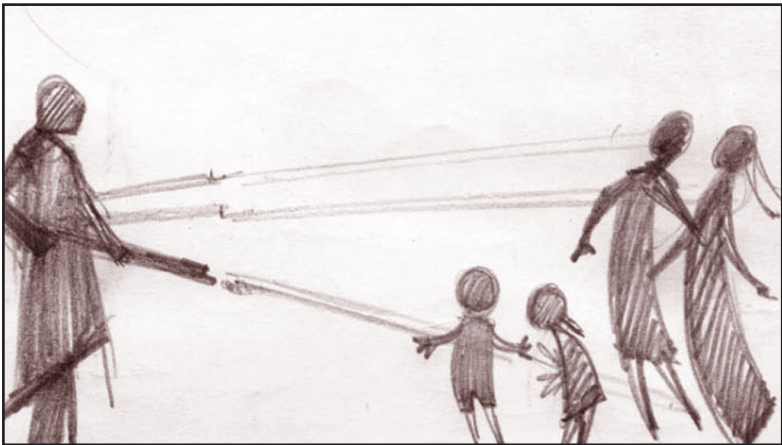
Sound:



Miscreants enter his house suddenly

Camera still

Sound: rhythmic sound as heartbeat increases



Miscreants start firing

Sound: fast theme track along with heartbeat

29 30

31 32



His sister get hit by those miscreants and she dies in front of his eyes

Camera still

Sound: girl's crying



Present situation, the terrorist standing still and confused as well as disheartened as the little girl looks up sadly
Camera still

Sound:



He gives up his gun

Camera from back side of girl

Sound: Sad music track



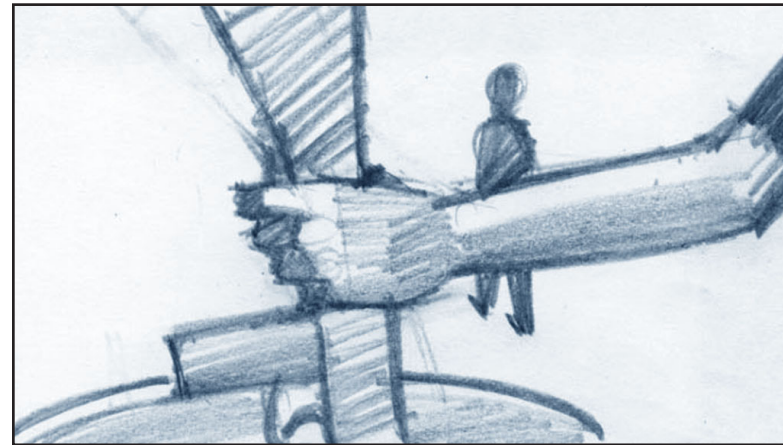
He dumps his gun into the dust-bin and walks away slowly

Camera pans slowly

Sound: continues

33 34

35 36



Suddenly someone holds the gun

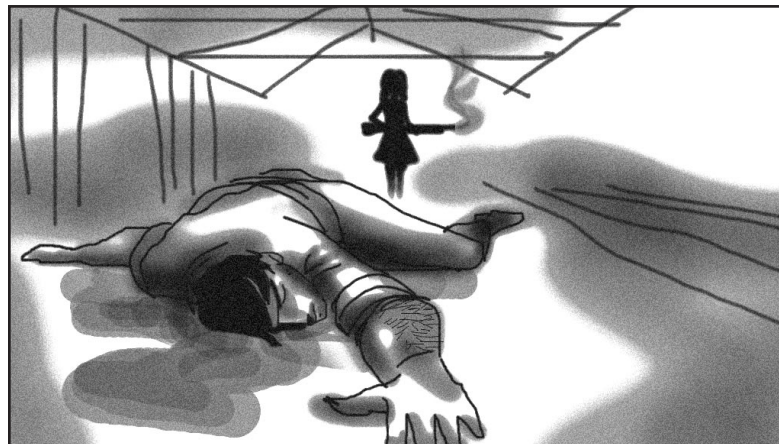
Camera panning

Sound: suspense track



Frame fades out and a gun shot is heard

37 38



The terrorist got hit and that too by the same girl whom he didn't shoot

Camera lower angle

Sound: slow track.

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