



## BOOK REVIEW

### Mysteries Unrevealed

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**S. Hussain Zaidi, *R.A.W. Hitman: The Real Story of Agent Lima*, Simon & Schuster (S&S India), 2023, p. 304, ISBN13: 9789392099632, Rs 499/--**

*R.A.W Hitman: The Real Story of Agent Lima* by Hussain Zaidi, that reads like a crime novel, chronicles the real-life incidents of Lucky Bisht, an NSG commando. A bestselling crime writer, Zaidi's narrative style is gripping and fast-paced, and his language, lucid and rich. The gripping style of narration, typical of certain categories of fiction, blends with real-life incidents in his writing. Unlike many of his books that are based on Mumbai Mafia, this book narrates the parallel real-life incidents of Agent Lima— allegedly assigned the duty by the R.A.W, India to eliminate the two dreaded criminals, Raju Pargai and Amit Arya of Uttarakhand, and Lakshman Bisht aka Lucky Bisht— arrested for the twin murder of the same criminals. And the story goes on ...

R.A.W, India is said to have appointed Agent Lima to eliminate the dreaded criminal, Raju Pargai, who indulged in extortion, illegal arms trade, kidnapping and killing. If need be, he was instructed to also kill Amit Arya, a lieutenant of Raju Pargai. Well-equipped Agent Lima astutely befriended Pargai and Arya and lured them into buying Kalashnikov. On the way to purchasing the weapon, Pargai and Arya were gruesomely killed near the jungles of Bhowali (Nepal border), Uttarakhand at midnight on 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2011.

Lakshman Bisht, the PSO of the Indian politician, L.K. Advani at the time, had come home in Haldwani, Uttarakhand in the end of August, 2011 to visit his sickly mother. On the morning of 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2011, he was arrested from his residence on the charges of killing Pargai and Arya. He served as an under-trial prisoner till he

was released on bail in March 2015. On 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2018, after all the enquiries and arguments, he was acquitted from the case. The narrative alternates between the preceding events to the twin murder, Bisht's tricky, elusive play with the enquiring officers, his fascinatingly challenging training period at Tel Aviv and his notorious and frustrating period of imprisonment. This method of narration compels the reader to keep moving forward in order to finish the jigsaw puzzle, thereby making complete sense of the story. More interestingly, the enigmatic and zestful nature of Lucky Bisht and his extraordinary experiences themselves render the scope for such a pulsating, non-linear narration.

A striking feature of the book is its critical foreword by Neeraj Kumar, an Ex-Delhi Police Chief. One pertinent point Mr. Kumar makes is, he is sceptical of the details of Agent Lima's operation since no intelligence agency would reveal their modus operandi. Zaidi too, debatably, does not give specific details of his references for Agent Lima's story in "Acknowledgements" though he details all his other sources. It must also be noted here that Zaidi meticulously gives rather descriptive references than mere citations at the end in almost all his non-fictions. Further, Mr. Kumar says he could not fathom Lucky Bisht's proud revelation of his story in public keeping in mind his position, an NSG Commando. However, it is not new for an Indian commando to make his story a book since we already have Mohanlal Baskar's *An Indian Spy in Pakistan* and Maloy Krishna Dhar's *Open Secrets*. Besides, Zaidi did not only rely on Bisht's story-telling, but also on interviews with related people, photographs (included in the book) and documents. Thus, with its arguable subject, the book is intriguing to discuss. Its catering to the growing interest in life stories coupled with its unique, gripping style of narration and the unrevealed mystery whether Agent Lima and Lucky Bisht are one and the same, render it a book of interest and scope to both common readers and researchers.