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'Follow that rickshaw'

Protected by surly bodyguards **Brad Pitt**, **Angelina Jolie** and their three children kept the press at bay for four days. Finally they decided to get away from the shooting of their film on journalist Daniel Pearl and get some of the fresh Pune air – in the back of an autorickshaw.

When they started off their security detail trailed them in other autorickshaws. The panting paparazzi set off in hot pursuit of the convoy. At each traffic light, the guards leapt out of their vehicles, threw a protective ring around the autorickshaw carrying Pitt, Jolie and their adopted son **Maddox**, and glowered at everyone around – till the lights changed, forcing the guards back to their own autorickshaws.

Twenty minutes of this was more than enough for the pair with their convoy beginning to look like something from a vaudeville show.

The couple's security, while much more unobtrusive than the 'Z' category measures that Indian VVIPs get, is still pretty tight and very little is known about their itinerary.

But a shooting location was revealed when someone found a yellow car with a faux Karachi license plate (Pearl had been kidnapped in Karachi before he was killed). Quiet Pune is doubling up for Karachi in this film.

Jolie is starring in the film as **Marianne Pearl**. Irrfan Khan and **Aly Khan** get to provide some South Asian flavor.

The paparazzi better get used to hunting down stars in India. For soon after Pitt and Jolie leave, **Catherine Zeta Jones** and **Michael Douglas** are planning to go over to shoot *Racing The Monsoon*.

The Madhur side of dry meat

Here's a bit of trivia for you: **Madhur Jaffrey**, that priestess of haute Indian cuisine (oh, yes, and a great actress, too) snacks on beef jerky – those thin strips of dried beef with salt, spices and sugar, and a cheap southern snack – while she sips her whiskey. And she chomps diligently through the rubbery things every night.

Jaffrey made this startling revelation at the launch of her autobiography – *Climbing the Mango Trees: A Memoir of a Childhood in India* (Alfred A. Knopf). The event was hosted by the Indo-American Arts Council at Manhattan's Tamarind Art Gallery. Jaffrey revealed her snacking habit while responding to a question about whether she has ever explored southern food.

Later, some of Jaffrey's friends were joking with her. "Really? Beef jerky? And every night?" one person asked. "Well sometimes it is with whiskey," she responded with a charming smile.

The event, with nearly 250 people, was a huge success, one of the best-attended South Asian book launches in New York City. Only **Jhumpa Lahiri** and **Arundhati Roy** have attracted more crowds in recent years. Jaffrey's film and writing career brought so many celebrities

to the event – actors **Wallace Shawn** and **Sarita Choudhury**, model and cookbook writer, **Padma Lakshmi**, authors **Suketu Mehta** and **Pankaj Mishra**, and screenplay writer **Tracey Jackson**. Also in the audience were Jaffrey's husband – violinist **Sanford Allen** and her writer daughter **Zia Jaffrey**.

Madhur Jaffrey looked glamorous, dressed in a pink-fuchsia sari with gold embroidery, and wearing an antique gold necklace.

"When I was asked to do an autobiography, I thought I did not want to share my life with anyone," she said while introducing the book. "My life is messy. It is not so wonderful in many places."

But then she thought she could write about her childhood and growing up in Delhi. "I decided I would not go beyond 18 years," she added. "Until then it was not so bad."

After the reading Desai was joined by **Judith Jones**, an editor at Random House, for the questions and answers session. Jones asked Jaffrey about taste memory and why it is so strong with people who have been uprooted or transplanted?

Jaffrey said while she has very strong recollections of the food she ate as a child, especially the many varieties of mangoes available in Delhi, the memories were enhanced when she left India to pursue studies in England. Her mother began to mail her recipes, the first of which was for Heeng and Jeere ke Aloo.



PARESH GANDHI

"Then the files began to open in my mind, one after another," she said. "And I realized that even if I couldn't cook, I could still taste the food. With food you get your memories back, your childhood back."

When Jaffrey was young, the food at her home was mild. Her father did not like hot food with chilies, she said. Chilies, she added was not Indian food. It came to India in the 16th century. Prior to that Indian food had black pepper in it.

"The magic of Indian food is what we do with our spices, and how we can get three or four tastes out of cumin or coriander," she said.

One member of the audience asked why it was important to learn to cook Indian food, when it is easy to buy at a restaurant down the street. "And what street are you talking about?" Jaffrey shot back as the audience started to laugh.

Preserving the Rushdie legacy

Emory University gets to retain the legacy of Indian-born author **Salman Rushdie**. The writer is selling his personal archive, which includes two unpublished novels, to the university for an undisclosed sum.

According to a report in Britain's *The Sunday Times*, the archive includes personal diaries written during the decade that he spent living in hiding from Islamic extremists.

"There is worldwide interest in Rushdie. We are catering for the long-term care of the archive and will welcome scholars from all over the world," **Stephen Ennis** of

Emory University said.

The sum involved is likely to match or exceed similar deals. In 2003 Emory bought the archive of Ted Hughes, the British poet, for a reported \$600,000. **Julian Barnes**, the author of *Flaubert's Parrot*, is said to have sold his papers to the University of Texas at Austin for \$200,000.

Rushdie's two unpublished novels – *The Antagonist*, influenced by **Thomas Pynchon**, the Garboesque American



EVAN AGOSTINI/GETTY IMAGES

writer, and *The Book of Peer* – were written in the 1970s.

Rushdie, 59, said his priority had been to 'find a good home' for his papers, but admitted that money had also been a factor. 'I don't see why I should give them away,' he said. 'It seemed to me quite reasonable that one should be paid.'

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