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**NMIMS**  
Deemed to be UNIVERSITY

KIRIT P. MEHTA  
SCHOOL OF LAW



**NMIMS CENTRE FOR CYBER AND  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (CCAI)**

**1ST NATIONAL MOCK TRIAL  
ADVOCACY COMPETITION**

**PROPOSITION 2025**

*Hybrid Mode- 23rd March 2025*

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# FACTS

Dr. Priya Khurana, a 34-year-old gynecologist based in Bandra, Mumbai, has gained recognition for her unwavering dedication to women's health and her compassionate approach to patient care. Throughout her career, she has established a reputation that commands respect from both colleagues and patients. Priya is married to Aarav Khurana, a 38-year-old investigative journalist known for his strong work ethic and determined character. The couple tied the knot in March 2017. While their relationship appears ideal on the surface, it is tainted by underlying tensions that challenge their marital harmony.

In the initial months of their marriage, Aarav and Priya embodied the ideal couple, thriving in their careers and sharing a life filled with affection and care. However, as time progressed, subtle signs of disconnection began to surface. Family and friends noticed an underlying tone of distance between the couple during social gatherings. Priya's close friend Ananya Sharma was aware of her struggles. She often communicated her overwhelming mental burdens to her friend. This led to a significant change in Priya's demeanour—once outspoken and vibrant, she gradually became more silent and compliant, accepting Aarav's words as absolute truth. This shift resulted in her growing increasingly distant from her family and friends, especially her parents.

While Priya's mental state was evident Aarav was fighting his own battles. He found himself increasingly affected by the violent and crime-ridden narratives he reported on. His profession exposed him to the darker aspects of society, leading to significant psychological impacts. These effects manifested as temperamental changes, resulting in frequent outbursts of anger and heightened anxiety even over trivial matters. The symptoms he experienced included sleepless nights, a diminished appetite, and a growing disconnection from those around him, all indicative of vicarious trauma. This emotional turmoil not only affected Aarav but also created an unstable environment for his wife, causing him distress and annoyance at his inability to provide a sense of security at home. Additionally, the financial pressures associated with maintaining their lifestyle compounded his worries about their economic situation, further exacerbating his mental strain.

On the evening of October 14, 2024, Arav returned home at his usual time, expecting an ordinary evening. However, he met with a shocking scene: his wife lay unresponsive on the living room floor, her complexion pale. Overcome with panic, Arav frantically dialed the police. His voice trembled as he reported the incident, suggesting that it appeared to be a suicide. Within minutes, law enforcement arrived at the scene. Following standard procedure, the police initiated an investigation. The body was transported to a forensic laboratory for examination. An F.I.R. (First Information Report) was filed, documenting the circumstances surrounding the incident. The authorities awaited the results of the forensic analysis to determine the cause of death.

While awaiting the reports, the police initiated an investigation to understand the motive behind Priya's suicide and began collecting evidence. During this process, they discovered a diary in the drawer of Priya's bedside table, which revealed significant strains in her marriage. The last page of the diary raised strong suspicions that her suicide might have been linked to harassment over dowry. Consequently, the police contacted Priya's parents, which further solidified their suspicion that dowry demands were a motive for her suicide, categorizing it as a case of dowry death. The autopsy later confirmed that Priya had died from asphyxiation due to strangulation. This finding contradicted Aarav's assertion regarding the nature of her death and shifted the investigation's focus onto him as the prime suspect. As a result, the case transitioned from being viewed merely as a suicide to one involving dowry death and potential murder.

Through recent developments, Aarav has emerged as a prime suspect in the ongoing murder investigation. Given that murder is classified as a cognizable offence, this shift in circumstances led to his immediate arrest by law enforcement authorities. Following his arrest, the police proceeded to seize all of Aarav's electronic devices, which provided critical evidence that bolstered the case against him. The analysis of the recovered communications and search history revealed significant findings, particularly a search query for "how to stage a suicide." This specific evidence played a crucial role in establishing Aarav's culpability in the crime.

# EXHIBITS

## **Exhibit-A: FIRST INFORMATION REPORT (F.I.R.)**

(Under Section 173 BNSS)

1. Dist.: Bandra

- P.S.: Bandra
- F.I.R. No.: 1091/2024
- Year: 2024
- Date and Time of FIR: 14/10/2024 21:00

2. S.no Acts Sections

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023:

- Section 103: Murder
- Section 80: Dowry death
- Section 85: Cruelty by husband or relatives
- Section 61: Criminal conspiracy

Information Technology Act, 2000:

- Section 65: Tampering with computer source documents
- Section 66C: Identity theft
- Section 69: Powers to intercept and monitor

3. Important timings:

- Occurrence of Offence:

Day: Monday;

Date From: 07/06/2017

Date To: 14/10/2024

Time Period: During Day

Time From: 8:00 hrs

Time To: 23:00 hrs

- Information received at P.S.:

Date: 14/10/2024

Time: 19:55 hrs

- General Diary Reference:

Entry No(s): 045

Date and Time: 14/10/2024; 20:30

4.Type of information: Written

5. Place of occurrence:

- Direction and Distance from P.S.: South, 1km
- Beat No.: 11
- Address: Plot No. 1, S.V. Road, Bandra, Mumbai

6. Complainant/informant:

- Name: Aarav Khurana
- Father's/ Husband's Name: Apar Khurana
- Date/ Year of Birth: 1987
- Nationality: Indian
- Passport No: A1112223
- Date of Issue: 1 January 2023
- Place of Issue: Mumbai
- Occupation: Job
- Address: Plot No. 1, S.V. Road, Bandra, Mumbai.

7. Details of known/suspected / unknown / accused with full particulars  
(Attach separate sheet if necessary):

| S.No. | Name | Present Address |

| I. | Aarav Khurana | Plot No. 1, S.V. Road, Bandra, Mumbai |

8. Reasons for delay in reporting by the complainant / Informant: No delay

9. Particulars of properties stolen/involved (Attach separate sheet if necessary): None

10. Total value of the properties stolen/involved: Nil

11. Inquest Report /U.D. Case No., if any: .....

12. F.I.R. Contents (Attach separate sheets, if required): Written Complaint under **Section 103, 80, 85, 61 of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhitha, Section 65, 66C, 69 of the IT Act, 2000.**

Police Station Bandra

Date: - 14/10/2024

Name: Aarav Khurana

Age: 38 years;

Occupation: Job

A resident of: Plot No. 1, S.V. Road, Bandra, Mumbai

Police Station: Bandra, Mumbai

13. Action taken: Since the above report reveals the commission of the offences u/s as mentioned in Item No.2., registered the case and took up the investigation/direction/Raghav Singh to take up the investigation transferred to P.S.... on point of jurisdiction.

F.I.R read over to the complainant/informant, admitted to be correctly recorded, and a copy given to the complainant/informant free of cost.

R.O.A.C

14. Signature /Thumb-impression of the complainant/informant

15. Date & time of dispatch to the court:

Signature of the Officer-in-charge,

Police Station, Bandra

Mr. Raghav Singh

Investigating Officer

# EXHIBIT-B : CHARGESHEET

Final Form  
(Under Section 193 BNSS)

In the court of \_\_\_\_\_

1. District: Mumbai Suburb
2. Police Station: Bandra Police Station
3. Charge Sheet Number: 1012/2024
4. F.I.R. No.: 1091/2024
5. Date: 13.12.2024
6. Place of Occurrence shown by: Mr. Mohit

7. Acts:

1. Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita, 2023:
  - BNS Section 103: Murder
  - BNS Section 80: Dowry death
  - BNS Section 85: Cruelty by husband or relatives
  - BNS Section 61: Criminal conspiracy
2. Information Technology Act, 2000:
  - Section 65: Tampering with computer source documents
  - Section 66C: Identity theft
  - Section 69: Powers to intercept and monitor

8. Type of Final Report: Chargesheet

9. Name of the I.O.: Raghav Singh  
Rank: Sub-inspector

10. Particulars of accused persons charge-sheeted:

- a. Name: Aarav Khurana
- b. Father's Name: Apar Khurana
- c. Year of Birth: 1987
- d. Sex: Male
- e. Nationality: Indian

Current Date: Friday, December 13, 2024, 10 AM IST

# EXHIBIT-C : POSTMORTEM REPORT

## 1. Title Page:

Title: Post-Mortem Report  
Case Number: 1091/2024  
Name of the Deceased: Mrs. Priya Khurana  
Age: 34  
Sex: Female  
Date of Death: 14-10-2024  
Time of Death: 06:45 PM  
Place of Death: Bandra, Mumbai  
Pathologist's Name: Dr. Neha Rao

## 2. Introduction:

Priya, a 34-year-old lady, died on 14/10/2024. Her body was sent for post-mortem to the hospital on 14/10/2024 and she died because she was strangled by some unknown thin object/hands (not found yet).

## 3. Internal Examination:

Head and Neck: Horizontal bruising and abrasion, fractured hyoid bone & petechial hemorrhages.

Thorax: No history of that in the body.

Abdomen:

Liver and Gallbladder: No injury or damage.

Spleen and Pancreas: No injury or damage.

Pelvis: As per the post mortem.

Musculoskeletal System: Bones, Muscles, and Joints

## 4. External Examination:

Description of the Body:

Height: 156.8 cm

Weight: 60 kg

Identification Marks: Mole on palm

## 5. Condition of the Body:

State of Nutrition: 56% of water, 16% fat, 16% protein, 4% minerals, and no carbohydrates present in the body.

Visible physical marks of injuries on the throat indicate strangulation.

## **6. Microscopic Examination:**

Partial tear of Blood vessels in the throat area, damage of the thyroid gland, fractured hyoid bone & petechial hemorrhages.

Ligature abrasions: Horizontal markings around the neck

## **7. Toxicology Report:**

No presence of drugs or alcohol in the body.

## **8. Ancillary Studies:**

Imaging Studies (X-rays, CT scans, etc.)

CT & MRI Scans: indicate marks consistent with strangulation.

## **9. Opinion:**

Cause of Death: asphyxiation caused by strangulation

Manner of Death: An object used for strangulation causing choking and death.

## **10. Conclusion:**

Based on the findings from the post-mortem examination, it is concluded that the cause of death was due to strangulation. The microscopic examination & ancillary studies revealed possible strangulation by an object. Further investigation is required to identify the specific substance and its origin. This information is critical for understanding the circumstances surrounding the death and for any potential legal proceedings.

Current date: Friday, October 18, 2024, 10 AM IST

## EXHIBIT-D : PRIYA'S DIARY ENTRIES

*When do things get better? Why is it always fights, do all marriages turn out like this? The verbal taunts initially about how my family cut corners in the wedding costs were bearable, I even tolerated the constant cribbing about the car gifted in the marriage was “not up to the standards”. Time is slipping away and I still have not got enough money to purchase a new bike for him. I cannot take these taunts anymore, I can feel my mental health deteriorating, my stress levels are constantly spiked, and I can no longer focus on my work or even have a basic conversation with my family. Today I was greeted in the evening with the usual raised voices, but the argument escalated to the point that he threw a glass, just missing my face by mere inches, I was shocked and numb and I only remember picking up the glass pieces. I no longer feel safe, not emotionally or physically.*

## **EXHIBIT-E: STATEMENTS FROM PRIYA'S FATHER (VIKRAM SINGH)**

“As parents, we have always considered our daughter’s well-being to be the matter of utmost importance to us. We are always willing to do anything to ensure her safety and happiness. This also meant there were times of discomfort, we had to go beyond our capacities to support her. We ensured that she never faced any lack in terms of both physical and emotional security. Yet the concern of her sustaining a happy life with Arav still seems to be creating looming doubts in our minds. She used to share this with all of us but like every other daughter’s parents we just prayed for her well-being and told her to stick with her husband as he is her life and her life is devoted to him. This was the worst decision from our side as we prolonged her misery. We failed to understand our daughter, we could not sympathize with her situation. Aarav used to harass my daughter for money making extraordinary demands despite knowing our economic background and our financial crunch post-retirement. Aarav strategically exploited the emotional dynamic I held with my daughter, to fulfill his exorbitant demands. In retaliation from my daughter, he used to directly reach out to me and corner me into providing him with more money.”

## EXHIBIT-F : PANCHNAMA

Sooraj, a 45-year-old accountant at MIH in Bandra, had just finished his afternoon coffee break and decided to take a shortcut through the residential area near Plot No. 1 on S.V. Road to return to his office. Known for his disciplined and approachable nature, Sooraj was a respected member of his community and often found himself helping others, whether with financial advice or simple neighborly gestures.

On the same day, Kavita, a 38-year-old shopkeeper, was busy with her regular deliveries to customers in the Bandra area. She was well-known in the neighborhood for her friendly demeanor and reliability, often stopping to chat with residents as she made her rounds. While delivering groceries to a client near Plot No. 1, she noticed a police van parked outside the building and stopped briefly to see what was happening.

As Sooraj walked through the corridor of the building, he too noticed the police presence and paused, curious about the unusual activity in the quiet residential area. It was at this moment that Investigating Officer Raghav approached both Sooraj and Kavita. He introduced himself, explained that they were conducting a Panchnama related to a case involving Aarav, and asked if they would assist as independent witnesses.

Both Sooraj and Kavita, being responsible and civic-minded citizens, agreed without hesitation. They accompanied Officer Raghav to ensure that the seizure of Aarav's mobile phone and laptop was carried out transparently and documented properly. Their coincidental presence in the area turned out to be crucial in supporting the investigation, as they both signed the Panchnama and served as witnesses to the lawful seizure of evidence.

# Exhibit-G : FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY REPORT

## 1. Case Information:

Lab Reference Number: 15

Case Title: S.C. No: 1091/2024

Date of Examination: 25/10/2023

Submitted By: Bandra Police Station

## 2. Reporting Officer:

Name: Vikram Kolte

Designation: Assistant Director, Department of Digital & Cyber Forensic  
Forensic Science Laboratory: Santacruz, Mumbai.

Years of Experience: Practicing Since 2004

## 3. Examination Details:

On 26/10/2023, I received 2 sealed items for analysis. Upon inspection, I confirmed that the seals were intact and matched the sample seals provided by the police.

Item No.	Description	Status
----------	-------------	--------

1	Mobile phone	Received
---	--------------	----------

2	Laptop	Received
---	--------	----------

## 4. Findings:

Mobile Phone

The recovery of chats between Aarav and Priya depicts harsh and harassing messages.

The call logs show a call between Aarav and his father-in-law, which, on average, lasts 5 to 15 minutes.

Laptop

The recovered search history, which included one of the searches as "how to stage a suicide" as searched on (insert date)

## 5. Conclusion:

"Evidence of searches such as 'how to stage a suicide' points towards premeditation."

Seal: Deemed to be affixed Signature of the Officer

Date: 24/10/2024 Sd/

# Exhibit-H : Evidence Collected During Investigation

## 1. Digital Evidence from Aarav's Devices Search History on Aarav's Laptop:

On October 07, 2024, Aarav searched for "How to stage a suicide to look natural" and "Signs police look for in fake suicides."  
These searches occurred just a week before Priya's death.

### Call Logs :

Call Log Summary

Date: 25nd October 2024

Prepared by: Digital Forensic Team

Call Date	Caller Name	Receiver Name	Duration
January 14, 2024	Aarav	Priya's Dad	12 mins
March 9, 2024	Aarav	Priya's Dad	10 mins
April 18, 2024	Aarav	Priya's Dad	15 mins
June 3, 2024	Aarav	Priya's Dad	20 mins
August 20, 2024	Aarav	Priya's Dad	18 mins
September 1, 2024	Aarav	Priya's Dad	15 mins
October 1, 2024	Aarav	Priya's Dad	Missed
October 1, 2024	Aarav	Priya's Dad	Missed

Here's how the abusive chats between Aarav and Priya can be presented as authentic recovered WhatsApp chat screenshots:

#### Chat Screenshot 1

Date: January 14, 2024

Time: 3:45 PM

“Aarav: Why don't you understand? I married you for peace, not to deal with your constant whining.

You better learn to make yourself useful. Don't think I'll tolerate your nonsense forever.”

#### Chat Screenshot 2

Date: March 9, 2024

Time: 5:12 PM

“Aarav: Your best isn't good enough! You're just a burden on me.

I expected you to contribute more financially after we got married.”

#### Chat Screenshot 3

Date: April 18, 2024

Time: 7:30 PM

“Aarav: Managing the house doesn't pay the bills!

You're earning a salary, Priya. Start acting like a partner in this marriage instead of living like a guest.”

#### Chat Screenshot 4

Date: June 3, 2024

Time: 2:15 PM

“Aarav: I've been trying to work out a plan with you for months!

You just keep brushing it off. If you don't want to contribute financially, then why are we even in this together?”

#### Chat Screenshot 5

Date: August 20, 2024

Time: 6:45 PM

“Aarav: It's already ruining things, Priya.

I'm tired of feeling like I'm in this alone while you prioritize yourself over us.”

Chat Screenshot 6

Date: September 1, 2024

Time: 11:00 AM

“Aarav: Trying isn’t enough! If you can’t meet my expectations, then maybe you should rethink what you bring to this relationship.”



# EXHIBIT-I : FORENSIC REPORT ON DIGITAL EVIDENCE TAMPERING

Prepared by Mr.Ajay Mehta  
Title: Cyber Forensic Expert  
Date: January 19, 2025  
Case Number: 1091/2024  
Defendant: Aarav Khurrana

## Executive Summary

This forensic report presents the findings of my analysis of the digital evidence submitted by the prosecution in the case against [Defendant's Name]. Upon a detailed technical review, I have identified significant concerns regarding the authenticity and integrity of the evidence. Specifically, I have found indications of possible tampering through the use of specialized software tools and data refining techniques. These findings raise substantial doubt about the reliability of the evidence and its admissibility in court.

## Findings

### 1. Indicators of Tampering Software Usage

- Evidence suggests that tampering may have been facilitated by specific software tools designed for data manipulation. These tools are widely available and can alter file contents without leaving obvious traces. Examples include:
  - Hex Editors: Tools like HxD or Hex Fiend allow users to modify binary files directly. For instance, if a video file was altered to remove incriminating content while keeping its size consistent, a hex editor could be used to achieve this without detection.
  - Timestamp Manipulation Tools: Software such as BulkFileChanger allows users to adjust file creation, modification, and access times easily. If a file's modification date was changed to coincide with a fabricated timeline presented by the prosecution, this tool could have been employed.

## 2. Use of Automated Data Alteration Tools

- Forensic analysis revealed traces suggesting automated tools may have been used to alter multiple files simultaneously. Such tools are capable of making bulk changes to timestamps, file properties, and even content without leaving obvious signs for non-expert reviewers.
- An example includes using scripts in PowerShell or Python that can automate changes across multiple files in a directory. If a batch script was run to change timestamps on all relevant files at once, it would create a uniformity that might appear suspicious during an investigation.

## 3. Lack of Validation Through Independent Review

- The prosecution's forensic analysis was conducted by a single entity without independent oversight or peer review. This lack of validation introduces a significant risk of bias or errors in interpretation.
- In forensic investigations, it is standard practice to subject critical evidence to independent verification to ensure objectivity and accuracy.

### **Conclusion**

Based on my analysis, there are substantial grounds for concern regarding possible tampering with the digital evidence submitted by the prosecution. The use of tampering software, data refining techniques, and automated alteration tools undermines confidence in the authenticity and reliability of this evidence. Furthermore, the absence of independent verification further weakens its credibility.

It is my professional opinion that these findings create reasonable doubt about the integrity of the digital evidence presented in this case.

Signed  
Mr. Ajay Mehta  
Cyber Security Expert

# EXHIBIT-J: RECOVERED BANK STATEMENTS

Bank Transactions

Bank Transaction Statement

Account Holder: Aarav Khurana

Account Number: 81022300198254

Bank Name: HCFT Bank

Date: January 19, 2025

Transfer Date	Description	Amount(₹)
January 15, 2024	Transfer from Vikram Singh	₹3,00,000
March 10, 2024	Transfer from Vikram Singh	₹2,00,000
April 20, 2024	Transfer from Vikram Singh	₹4,00,000
June 5, 2024	Transfer from Vikram Singh	₹6,00,000
August 25, 2024	Transfer from Vikram Singh	₹5,00,000
September 2, 2024	Transfer from Vikram Singh	₹5,00,000

## **Exhibit-K: PICTURES OF THE ACCUSED**



# WITNESS STATEMENTS

## **PROSECUTION WITNESS 1 (Ms. Ananya Sharma)**

Throughout the course of the friendship, Priya consistently exhibited resilience; however, a noticeable decline in her mental health became apparent as her marriage progressed. A particularly significant phone call remains vivid in memory, during which Priya expressed profound distress, repeatedly stating, "I can't do this," while sobbing uncontrollably. This unprecedented display of despair indicated a deep-seated emotional turmoil, suggesting that she perceived her life to be in jeopardy. The intensity of her emotions was alarming and underscored the seriousness of her situation.

The following day, Priya characterized her previous distress as an "overreaction," which raised concerns regarding the authenticity of her emotional state and highlighted an internal conflict. This sudden shift in demeanor was perplexing and suggested a struggle to reconcile her feelings.

Subsequent to this incident, interactions with Priya changed markedly. Conversations became infrequent and brief, creating an atmosphere that felt distant and strained. The transformation in her voice, once vibrant and full of life, now carried an unsettling air of isolation and indifference. This stark change illuminated the emotional distance that had developed in her life, raising significant concerns for her well-being.

Upon reflection, it is evident that the vibrant individual previously known had begun to fade away, replaced by someone who appeared emotionally detached and disengaged. The alarming signs of distress were not merely transient but rather indicative of a deeper struggle for help that remained unaddressed. This situation highlights the gravity of the emotional battles Priya faced, as she seemed trapped in a cycle of despair while remaining largely silent about her suffering.

## PROSECUTION WITNESS 2 (RAGHAV SINGH – IO)

Upon arrival at the scene, I observed the husband exhibiting signs of distress. He had initiated the call to law enforcement. As I approached, it was clear that he was in a state of shock and fear. When I inquired about the events leading to the situation, he stated that he had entered the residence using a duplicate key he routinely carried and discovered his wife in a compromised state. Following established protocols, we ensured that her body was sent for a post-mortem examination to ascertain the cause of death. During a systematic search of the premises, my team located a diary in Priya's side table drawer, which contained pertinent information regarding their relationship.

To further understand the context, we contacted Priya's parents to collect their statements. Although these statements would not be admissible in court, they were necessary for gaining insight into family dynamics. The parents described Priya as resilient and practical, asserting that she would not have taken her own life. They also noted that she had increasingly isolated herself from them as her marriage progressed.

As the investigation continued, we received the autopsy report dated December 18, 2024. This report facilitated connections among various pieces of evidence and prompted us to consider the husband as a potential suspect in this case. Consequently, we proceeded with his arrest on October 20, 2024. On the day of his arrest, we seized his laptop and mobile phone for further examination. The digital evidence was transferred to a specialized cyber forensic team for analysis under the Information Technology Act.

The cyber forensic team conducted a thorough investigation and uncovered critical information, including deleted search histories that indicated the husband's involvement. This evidence significantly contributed to our understanding of the case. Combining findings from the diary and statements from Priya's parents with forensic data allowed me to construct a narrative based on circumstantial evidence. The subsequent report from the cyber forensic team reinforced this narrative, shifting the case from an apparent suicide to one involving criminal conspiracy—specifically, an alleged attempt by the husband to stage his wife's murder as a suicide.

## **PROSECUTION WITNESS 3 (DR. NEHA RAO – DOCTOR WHO CONDUCTED THE AUTOPSY)**

I conducted the autopsy on Priya Khurana and determined that her death was caused by asphyxiation due to manual strangulation. My findings reveal significant external injuries, including pronounced horizontal bruising and abrasions on the neck, indicative of force applied by hands or a ligature. These injuries often present as linear, parallel bruises corresponding to fingerpads and may be more prominent on one side of the neck, reflecting the nature of manual strangulation. Notably, there was a complete absence of evidence for suspension points or materials typically associated with hanging, such as ropes or fabric. Internally, I observed a fractured hyoid bone, a critical indicator of manual strangulation; the hyoid bone is a small U-shaped bone in the neck that supports the tongue and is crucial for swallowing. Such fractures are rarely seen in cases of suicidal hanging.

Additionally, I noted petechial hemorrhages in the conjunctiva of the eyes, which are small red or purple spots that appear due to bleeding under the skin, and further support my conclusion that significant pressure was exerted on the blood vessels in the neck during the strangulation process. The internal examination revealed damage to the neck muscles and potential hemorrhaging in associated glands, which are common findings in manual strangulation cases. The horizontal nature of the marks on her neck is inconsistent with suicidal hanging, which typically presents with diagonal ligature marks ascending towards a suspension point. Based on these comprehensive and corroborative findings, it is my expert opinion that Priya Khurana did not die by suicide; rather, her death was the result of deliberate and forceful strangulation, confirming this as an act of homicide beyond reasonable doubt.

## DEFENDANT STATEMENT (ACCUSED)

I stand here today, burdened by the profound loss of my beloved wife, Priya. The accusations against me—that I could ever harm the person I cherished most—are not only unfounded but deeply painful. While I acknowledge that our marriage faced challenges, particularly financial difficulties, my unwavering intention was always to support Priya and ensure her happiness. She was an extraordinary gynecologist, celebrated for her dedication and compassion toward her patients, and I admired her immensely.

Priya valued her privacy when it came to financial matters, rarely discussing her earnings with me. I took on the responsibility of managing our household expenses, from groceries to bills, with pride and without expectation of anything in return. The day I found Priya unresponsive at home is etched in my memory as the darkest moment of my life; the shock and grief were overwhelming.

I want to make it clear that I never asked for or received a dowry from Priya or her family. As a middle-class man, I have always believed in building our life together based on mutual respect and love, not material gain. The suggestion that I sought financial benefits is not only false but also deeply hurtful.

These allegations contradict everything I stand for as a husband who has lost his partner and best friend. Priya was my anchor, and her absence has left an irreplaceable void in my life. I implore you to look beyond these accusations and see the truth: my love for Priya was genuine, and I would never harm her. Our bond was built on trust and respect, not societal expectations or financial interests. My grief is immeasurable, and the thought of being accused of ending her life is unbearable. I hope that the truth will ultimately be recognized and that justice will prevail.

## DEFENCE WITNESS 1 (Aarav's sister)

I stand before you today as Aarav's sister, having witnessed his life and his relationship with Priya. Aarav has been married to Priya for six years, and their relationship has been characterized by mutual respect and admiration. He has consistently expressed deep affection for her, often speaking of her accomplishments and celebrating her successes.

Throughout their marriage, Aarav has demonstrated a commitment to Priya's happiness. He worked diligently to provide for her, even during periods of financial hardship. For example, he took on double shifts to meet their needs, illustrating his dedication to their relationship.

Aarav has never exhibited any behavior that would suggest malice or intent to harm. The accusations against him lack credible evidence and are riddled with inconsistencies. The evidence presented appears unsubstantiated and does not align with the character I have known him to possess.

Your Honor, I respectfully urge you to consider the facts surrounding Aarav's character and his relationship with Priya. He is not the person he is being portrayed as; rather, he is a compassionate individual who has been wrongfully accused. My brother is already enduring the profound pain of losing his wife, and the allegations against him add a burden to his grief.

I trust in this court's ability to uncover the truth and ensure that justice prevails. Aarav deserves to be exonerated based on the principles of fairness and truth that are foundational to our justice system.

## **DEFENCE WITNESS 2 (EXPERT WITNESS):**

I have 25 years of experience in digital forensics and have conducted a thorough review of the forensic report submitted by the prosecution in S.C. No: 1091/2024. Upon examination, I identified several critical deficiencies that significantly undermine the reliability and authenticity of the digital evidence presented.

### **Lack of Methodology Transparency:**

The forensic report lacks transparency regarding the methodologies employed in the analysis of the digital evidence. Specifically, it does not specify the tools or techniques utilized, which is essential in forensic science. For instance, if a forensic investigator used software such as EnCase or FTK without disclosing this information, it raises substantial concerns regarding adherence to industry-standard practices. The absence of this information prevents verification of whether scientifically valid methods, such as disk imaging or file carving, were employed during the investigation.

### **No Verification of Data Integrity:**

The report fails to address whether the integrity of the digital evidence was verified through established practices, such as hash value calculations or digital signatures. For instance, without applying a cryptographic hash function (e.g., SHA-256) to generate a unique fingerprint for each file, there is no assurance that the data remained unaltered from the time of collection to analysis. This omission fundamentally undermines the credibility of the evidence presented and violates fundamental principles of digital forensics.

### **Search History Context:**

The recovered search history includes queries such as "How to stage a suicide"; however, the report does not clarify whether these searches were conducted intentionally by a specific individual or could be attributed to any other person with access to the device. The absence of definitive user attribution introduces significant room for reasonable doubt regarding the context and relevance of this information. For example, if multiple users had access to the device, it remains unclear who executed these searches and for what purpose. Furthermore, no contextual analysis was performed to determine whether these searches were part of legitimate research or malicious intent.

### Failure to Conduct Comprehensive Analysis:

The forensic report does not indicate whether a comprehensive analysis was conducted on all relevant artifacts. For example, critical areas such as volatile memory (RAM) analysis or network traffic logs may provide essential context but appear to have been overlooked. The failure to analyze these aspects can result in an incomplete picture and may omit crucial evidence that could either support or refute allegations.

### Lack of Peer Review:

Additionally, there is no indication that the findings presented in this report underwent any form of peer review or validation by an independent forensic expert. The absence of peer review raises questions about the objectivity and reliability of the conclusions drawn from the analysis.

In conclusion, I professionally assess that the deficiencies identified in the prosecution's forensic report—specifically, the lack of methodology transparency, inconsistent timestamps, absence of data integrity verification, ambiguous search history context, inadequate chain of evidence handling, failure to conduct comprehensive analysis, and lack of peer review—introduce substantial, reasonable doubt concerning the authenticity and reliability of the digital evidence presented. Without strict adherence to established forensic protocols, I determine that the evidence cannot be deemed trustworthy.