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# GAURI LANKESH ASSASSINATION

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<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/gauri-lankesh-s-murder-was-planned-a-year-before-exclusive-details-of-the-killing-1326868-2018-08-29>

“I will do what I can, and I will say what I should. These intolerant voices find strength in our silence. Let them learn to argue using words instead of threats.” ~ Gauri Lankesh

Gauri Lankesh, born in Karnataka on 29th January 1962, was an Indian journalist and activist who was the editor of Lankesh Patrike. She started her journalism life in the Times of India. Gauri Lankesh was a fearless journalist who openly criticized the caste system and Hindu nationalists.

## Assassination

On 5th September 2017, Gauri Lankesh was shot dead in front of her residence in South Bangalore by two people who

arrived on a motorcycle. The autopsy report revealed that three bullets pierced through her body. One of the bullets entered her body from behind her left shoulder, and the other two from the front damaged her lungs and heart. Police revealed that they were able to find four cartridges and fragments of bullets, and the fourth bullet, which missed the target, was recovered from the wall. On November 23rd, 2018, a charge sheet was prepared, and 18 persons were accused of her murder. Parashuram Waghmare was the shooter, and others like Amol Kale, Amit Degwekar, and Sujith Kumar were the masterminds behind the crime. Once Parashuram Waghmare even confessed that he didn't know who he was killing. He was told that he had to kill someone to save his religion. The statement given by Parashuram Waghmare was as follows:

“I was told in May 2017 I had to kill someone to save my religion. I agreed. I didn't know who the victim was. Now I feel that I should not have killed the women.”

He also said that he was brought to Bengaluru on September 3 and made him practice shooting using an air gun.

On examining the gun used to shoot Gauri Lankesh, the investigators were able to find out that the same gun was used to kill M.M. Kalburgi, who was a Kannada scholar, and Leftist thinker Govind Pansare, in the year 2015. The SIT (Special Investigation Team) has said in the charge sheet that the Hindu extremist organization, Sanatan Sanstha, was responsible for the murder of Gauri Lankesh. The SIT also said that the murder of Gauri Lankesh was linked to the murders of other left-leaning activists and

rationalists, Professor MM Kalburgi, Narendra Dabholkar, and Govind Pansare. The SIT had stated in court that Gauri Lankesh was targeted for opposing Hindutva vehemently in her writing and speeches.

Other related cases:

Narendra Dabholkar, M.M Kalburgi, Govind Pansare, and Gauri Lankesh were four activists who openly criticized caste systems and Hindutva politics.

Narendra Achyut Dabholka, an Indian physician, activist, and author from Maharashtra, was shot to death on 20 August 2013 while out on a morning walk. Malleshappa Madivalappa Kalburgi, an Indian scholar of Vachana Sahitya (Vachana literature) in the Kannada language and academic who served as the vice-chancellor of Kannada University in Hampi, was shot to death on 30th August 2015, by two men who came in a motorcycle in point-blank range striking his chest and forehead, and on 16th February 2015, the veteran communist leader, rationalist thinker, senior labor lawyer, and prolific writer Govind Pansare was shot at close range outside his house and was pronounced dead on 20th February.

Some of the key findings from the Gauri Lankesh investigations have a bearing on the other cases as well:

- The murder of Lankesh outside her front door by two men on a motorcycle shows a resemblance to the August 30, 2015 murder of Kalburgi at the doorstep of his home in Dharwad in north Karnataka.
- Nine day after the murder, the Karnataka Police SIT was provided with a significant forensic finding: the 7.65 mm country-made gun that was used to kill Lankesh was

the same one that was used to shoot Kalburgi two years previously, said a ballistics report from the state forensic lab.

- The ballistic evidence from the Kalburgi case had already linked the Kannada scholar's murder to those of Pansare, 81, in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, on February 16, 2015, and Dabholkar, 67, in Pune on August 20, 2013, and the SIT concluded that one group or gang was involved in all the three murders. Investigations in Maharashtra by the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) in the Dabholkar case had revealed the involvement of members of the Sanatan Sanstha.

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