

Are you experienced, by William Sutcliffe – Pure blind fear

Delhi airport was... it was just taking the piss. That number of people simply couldn't fit into such a small space and not end up eating each other. It wasn't possible. And no one else even seemed to notice that it was crowded.

After queuing for several hours at immigration, we escaped the airport and discovered that it was even madder outside. The minute we were in the open air, several rugby teams of smelly men launched themselves at us and tried to pull us to bit, so that we could send separate limbs to town on different forms of transport. It was disgusting. I felt like I was being mugged. Mugged while inside an oven. And all the guys who were trying to get us into their taxis looked so poor and desperate that I just wanted to go home straight away.

Liz noticed that the other backpackers from our flight had got on a bus, so we breast-stroked through the crowd and clambered in behind them. The engine was already on, and we took our seats, relieved that we had made it in time. The driver pointed angrily at our bags, then at the roof of the bus. I noticed that no one else on the bus had their bags with them, so we got out of the bus and found ourselves back in a different crowd of people, all of whom seemed to be offering to put our stuff on the roof of the bus. I was convinced that they'd steal our rucksacks the minute I turned my back so I tried to climb up myself, but some guy with a red turban on, which gave him the appearance of being the chief bag-putter-on-the-roof, pulled me off the ladder and tugged at my bag. I relented, and let him take our rucksacks. I watched him all the way and saw him lash down the bag with a rope. He looked as if he knew what he was doing, and there were several other bags up there already, so I decided that maybe it was all reasonably legal. When he came back down, he started doing a strange upward nodding gesture and saying "munee – munee".

"He wants money", said Liz.

"Why should I give him money? It's his job. I was quite willing to put it up there myself."

"Just give him some money, for God's sake. I'll get in and grab some seats."

"I haven't got any money yet, have I? It doesn't exactly look like he takes traveller's cheques."

"Just give him anything."

"Like what? A roll of loo paper? Yesterday's *Guardian*?"

She ignored me and got on the bus.

"Munee. Munee."

"I haven't got any."

"Munee."

He was beginning to tug at my clothes now, and the crowd of onlookers was closing in.

"Look mate – I haven't got any money yet. I have to go to a bank."

"MUNEE!"