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Mumbai Diaries 26/11 Review: Mohit Raina, Konkona Sen Sharma's Series Could Have Been Tighter

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Mumbai Diaries 26/11 review: It is a bit of shame that the series has not been adequately tightened up, because we

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Mumbai Diaries 26/11 is streaming now on Amazon Prime Video.

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GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN

Mumbai Diaries 26/11

Directors: Nikhil Advani, Nikhil Gonsalves

Cast: Mohit Raina, Konkona Sen Sharma, Shreya Dhanwanthary, Mrunmayee Deshpandey, Natasha Bharadwaj, Satyajit Dubey, Tina Desai, Prakash Belawadi

To begin with, it is difficult to slot Mumbai Diaries 26/11, now on Amazon Prime Video. Is it a medical thriller or a crime story? Set during the Mumbai terror attacks in November 2011, most of the eight episodes, stretching between 30 and 55 minutes, unfold in the Bombay General Hospital; some veer towards the Palace Hotel (Taj Mahal), in front of the Gateway of India. It would have been prudent to have focussed on the hospital scene, cutting down on the number of episodes. This could have turned the series, helmed by Nikhil Advani and Nikhil Gonsalves, into a tighter and more effective work.

The plot revolves around Dr Kaushik Oberoi (Mohit Raina), who delivers, even opening up the chest cavity and getting the heart pumping again, but throws protocol to the winds. This angers the hospital chief, Dr Mani Subramaniam (Prakash Belawadi), and the law enforcement agents. But when pandemonium sets in with several terrorists waging a war against India's financial capital, the hospital, swamped by the injured and the dying, have to look the other way when Oberoi works in ways that may be highly questionable. He performs surgeries outside the operation theatre, and even revives a 77-year-old destitute patient by performing a procedure that is just unthinkable.

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Woven into these episodes are stories relating to three freshers who join the hospital on the day of the murder and mayhem. They are completely confused how to handle a situation of this magnitude, and one them, Ahaan Mirza (Satyajit Dubey), is a Muslim — and religious baiting comes to the fore when he slips up while performing a life-saving technique on a hospital nurse wounded by the gunmen on the streets of the city. And not to forget how television channels messed up the police operations all in order to get their ratings up!

With Oberoi's wife, Ananya Ghosh (Tina Desai), trapped at the hotel along with dozens of guests, and social worker Chitra Das (Konkana Sen Sharma), having her own issues with the hospital management, things get pretty hot for the medical staff. Their sense of frustration is humungous.

A frightening picture of life and death emerges out of the hospital wards when terrorists enter it to try and rescue one of their own men, wounded in the police firing. A tense and dramatic scene is enacted when Oberoi tries to save the injured man and a cop points a gun at the doctor ordering him to let the man die.



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It is a bit of shame that the series has not been adequately tightened up, because we have some wonderful performances. Raina is superb as the brooding Oberoi, who curses freely, but does his job with brilliance. Sen Sharma brings in a touch of humanity when she stresses that every life matters, age does not matter. Belawadi has a lovely arc that extends from anger to the genteel. The way he turns around as the bloody night with hundreds of wounded being rushed into the hospital, is worth a watch.

Otherwise, Mumbai Diaries 26/11 has nothing new to offer; we have read and re-read about the carnage so many times that the series fails to evoke even a remote sense of curiosity. This is where it is vastly different from Delhi Crime that zeroed in on the investigation post the horrendous rape of a young medical student. It was refreshing and had a lot to offer.



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(Gautaman Bhaskaran is a movie critic and an author)

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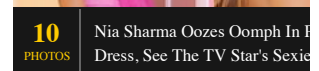
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