

A Lost 5-yr-old Finds Family 25 Years Later by The Week

□ The man who used Google Earth to find his long-lost family

□ Saroo Brierley was only 5 when a train zoomed him hundreds of miles from home. It took 25 years and a technological revolution for him to get back

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□□□ Using Google Earth, Saroo Brierley identified the Indian town he grew up in, though he inadvertently left it behind when he was only 5. Photo: CC BY: Johan Larsson

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□ An Indian man separated from his family for 25 years has defied the odds by tracking them down — using little more than a vague recollection of his childhood and some help from Google Earth's mapping technology. Here's what you should know about one man's miraculous journey home:

□ How was he separated from his family?

□ One day in 1987, 5-year-old Saroo Brierley spent the afternoon begging for change with his brother at a local train station. When it was time to go home, the boys boarded what they thought was the correct train. They were wrong. Exhausted, the young brothers fell asleep, only to wake up 10 hours later on the other side of India, hundreds of miles away from their family.

□ What happened when they got off the train?

□ The details are "sparse," says Kyle Wagner at Gizmodo, "but the few glimpses we get aren't happy ones." For a month, young Brierley and his brother tried to find their way back to their parents. At one point, the 5-year-old almost drowned in the Ganges river. At another, a stranger tried to abduct him and sell him as a child slave. His brother died. Eventually, Brierley was found by authorities and declared a lost child. He was placed in an orphanage, where he was adopted by Tasmanian parents who whisked him out of the country to start a new life.

□ How did he start searching for his parents?

□ Today, Brierley owns an industrial supplies store in Tasmania. But he never stopped thinking about his long-lost parents. In recent years, he started to remember the Khandwa

train station where his journey began. And that's where he started looking.

□What did he do then?

□Brierley used Google Earth and some fragmented childhood memories to hunt in towns around the train station. "I kept in my head the images of the town I grew up in, the streets I used to wander and the faces of my family," he tells Tasmania's The Mercury. Brierley spent hours on Google Earth zooming around for clues, obsessively looking for something, anything that he recognized. Finally, he identified his hometown: Ganesh Talai.

□And he found his family?

□He sure did. Brierley joined a Facebook group for Ganesh Talai, says Chris Roberts at NBC Los Angeles, and began piecing together more clues from emails he sent to group members. Soon, he booked a plane ticket to India, roaming the streets of his childhood town until he located his family. "To this day, I still can't believe I managed to find my family, considering India's population size and how young I was when I lost them," he tells The Mercury. Brierley now plans to make a movie about his story.

□What was his family doing all these years?

□His mother says they searched endlessly for the boys, only to discover that one had died, with no leads regarding the other's whereabouts. Fortune tellers assured her that one day her son would return. "And he did," says Roberts. "With an assist from Silicon Valley."