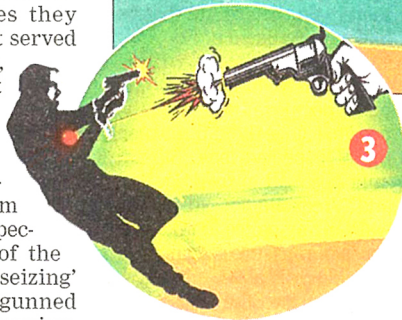
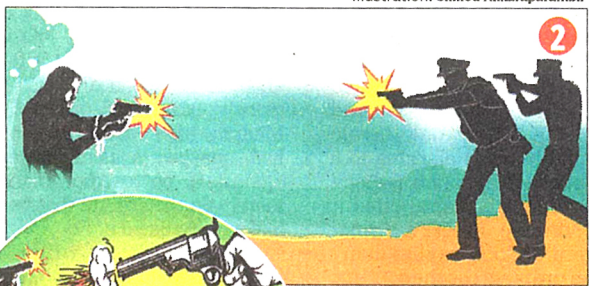


# 'Raja was a 'master'; police keen to dismantle his 'school'

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**A**ctor Vijay's blockbuster Master (2021) was about gangsters using juveniles to either commit crimes or surrender for offences they never committed. It served twin purposes – one, the main culprit would remain untouched by law; and two, the juvenile could only be sentenced to a maximum of three years, irrespective of the gravity of the crime. Gangster N 'seizing' Raja, 51, who was gunned down on Monday morning, had a similar modus operandi for years, say veteran police officers.



## JAAC condemns encounter

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A magistrate, Karthik, visited and examined the encounter location. He also visited the GRH where Raja's body was kept for autopsy.

Police said Raja, 51, of East Tambaram had 10 non-bailable arrest warrants pending against him, and that he was wanted in connection with an extortion bid, wherein he had threatened a Tasmac employee at gunpoint last month.

This is the third encounter-killing by the city police since the July 5 murder of BSP leader K Armstrong. On July 14, police had shot dead Thiruvengadam, an accused in the Armstrong murder case. A total of 16 history-sheeters have been gunned down in police encounters across the state since May 2021 when the DMK govt came to power in Tamil Nadu.

Joint Action Against Custodial Torture (JAAC) has condemned the extrajudicial killing of Raja saying it is 'extremely concerning and against the rule of law'.

early 1990s, tasked with tracing and seizing vehicles financed by them in cases of loan defaults. During this work for a commission, Raja got involved in cases of assault and then a murder. His mentor was 'Market' Siva, 72, now retired after dominating the crime world in Tambaram, Perungalathur and Maraimalai Nagar on the fringes of an expanding Chennai. His legacy was continued by Padappai Guna and a few others including Raja. While Guna operated in the suburbs, Raja formed his team of juveniles and specialised in making 'sketches' to eliminate people. Most times, he would not go to the spot, but would sketch out the modus operandi for field operatives.

Police say Raja had at least four families that he maintained separately. At the time of his arrest on Sunday, he was at a house at Rajampet near Kadapa in Andhra Pradesh, with Jhansi, one of his wives, and two children.

Police say their target now is to identify his army of juveniles and dismantle it, lest someone fill the vacuum and emerge as the next headache



A fitness freak and karate master, Raja apparently had an army of about 300 juveniles under training. Recollecting one incident, an officer said that in the aftermath of the murder of DMK union secretary Aravamudan near Padappai in March, police tracked a juvenile, in school uniform, who maintained surveillance near the spot. Later, the juvenile and four others surrendered before a Sathyamangalam court in connection with the murder.

How did a Class IX dropout turn into the feared 'seizing' Raja? An officer said he