

Defendant ended up at Pakistan training camp 'by accident', jury told

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Wednesday 29 April 2009 00.01 BST

Huddled on a freezing Pakistan mountainside with just a couple of sleeping bags for warmth after getting lost hiking to the summit as night fell, the group of young men must have cut sorry figures. They sang jihad songs to keep themselves awake, for fear they would die of hypothermia if they slept, and screamed if they heard a sound, nervous that mountain lions and bears would attack them.

But the group included members of Britain's two most notorious terror cells. Omar Khyam, who headed up the party, would go on to be the ringleader of a foiled plot to explode fertiliser bombs in the UK. By his side was the 7 July suicide bomber Mohammad Sidique Khan, who would mastermind the worst terrorist atrocity on mainland Britain since the Lockerbie disaster.

Also present was his friend, who was involved in those attacks, and Mohammed Shakil, who struck a deal with the US to inform on his former friends in return for a heavily reduced jail sentence, and gave evidence in Shakil's trial via video link from detention in New York.

At the summit the next day they joined other men who would go on to be convicted and jailed alongside Khyam over the fertiliser plot. Together, they practised firing weapons and took part in heavy physical conditioning exercises including push-ups and runs up and down the mountainside - although Shakil, who has a bad leg after childhood polio, avoided the workouts. In the evenings they prayed, and listened to talks about the virtues and rewards of jihad.

The bonds formed on the trip were the beginning of an association between Khan and Khyam that would see them meet again the next year - this time in Britain, and under MI5 surveillance.

Waheed Ali told the jury: "When they got back, Sid was well happy because he told me they had met a new contact Ozzy [Khyam] and they were going to use him to get us all back out to Pakistan."

Babar told the court he and Khyam came across Shakil, who was using the pseudonym Zubair, and Khan, who called himself Ibrahim, when they went to Islamabad airport to meet three other British men flying in to attend the camp.

Khan was said to have been given contacts in Pakistan by a Luton man known as "Q" who was accused at Khyam's trial of being one of al-Qaida's leaders in Britain, and told Babar that they were interested in finding out whether foreign fighters were needed in Afghanistan.

But Shakil told the jury he ended up at the training camp "by accident" after being convinced that it was just "British lads from back home" and not an "Arab geezers, proper al-Qaida militant-run type of camp", and had only been in Pakistan to pay his respects to his recently deceased grandfather.

The radical road

1999 Mohammed Shakil attends three-day militant training camp in Kashmir, where he learns to fire a gun. He describes the thrill as being "like a bungee jump".

July 2001 Mohammad Sidique Khan and Waheed Ali spend a fortnight at a training camp in Kashmir before travelling into Afghanistan. They return to the UK a week before the September 11 attacks on the US.

July 2003 Khan and Shakil travel to Pakistan. They meet Mohammed Junaid Babar and the fertiliser

bomb plotter Omar Khyam, telling them they are on a fact-finding mission. They attend a training camp, however, and there they take part in firearms training using light machine guns, AK47s and rocket-propelled grenades.

February 2004 Khan, Shehzad Tanweer, Ali and Khyam meet several times in the UK and are caught on police surveillance discussing how to raise money for jihad by defrauding builders' merchants and banks.

November 2004 Khan makes home video recordings for his baby daughter, saying goodbye before he goes to fight jihad. In one, he introduces the six-month-old to her "uncles": Tanweer, fellow 7 July bomber Hasib Hussain, and Ali.

16 December 2004 Ali, Sadeer Saleem and Shakil drive to London with Hussain on a trip described by the prosecution as a reconnaissance mission.

17 December 2004 Saleem, Shakil and Hussain go on the London Eye, and leave the city at lunchtime.

December 2004 Ali and Saleem fly from Manchester to Islamabad. They claim that while in Pakistan they spent several weeks at a training camp, where they say they were visited by Khan and Tanweer, and were told the pair were returning to the UK to "do a couple of things for the brothers".

April to June 2005 Khan, Tanweer, Hussain and Germaine Lindsay are captured on CCTV visiting the second bomb factory in Leeds.

28 June 2005 Khan, Tanweer and Lindsay make a final trip to London.

7 July 2005 Khan, Tanweer, Lindsay and Hussain detonate suicide bombs on London's transport system, killing 52 people.

March 2007 Ali and Shakil are arrested as they prepare to board a flight to Pakistan. Saleem is taken into custody.

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