

03 DEC 1998

LEAD Court-Anwar

SODOMY EXPOSED WHEN ANWAR ALLEGEDLY HAD AN AFFAIR WITH A MARRIED WOMAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 3 (Bernama) -- Azizan Abu Bakar, who made a sworn statement that he was sodomised by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, told the High Court here today that he exposed the matter only five years later when Anwar allegedly had an affair with a married woman.

Azizan, who was the former driver of Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, said that he realised he should expose the matter after he was told by Ummi Hafilda Ali, the sister-in-law of his subsequent employer, Shamsidar Taharin, that Shamsidar might be having an affair with Anwar.

"I made a decision to bring up the allegations after five years because it (the alleged affair between Shamsidar and Anwar) made me realised the despicable act that he has done to me," he said.

Azizan, an administrative and marketing executive in a company in Alor Gajah, Melaka, was testifying against Anwar, 51, charged with four counts of corrupt practice by abusing his position to interfere in police investigations into allegations of sexual misconduct against him.

The former deputy prime minister and finance minister is charged under Section 2(1) of the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance No 22 of 1970 which carries a maximum jail term of 14 years and a fine of RM20,000 or both on conviction.

The case is heard by Justice Datuk S. Augustine Paul.

Azizan, the 12th prosecution witness, was cross-examined by Christopher Fernando, one of Anwar's nine lawyers.

Ummi Hafilda is the writer of the letter "Perihal Salah Laku Timbalan Perdana Menteri" (The Matter of the Misconduct of the Deputy Prime Minister), dated Aug 5, 1997, addressed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. She is the sister of Anwar's former private secretary, Mohamed Azmin Ali, who is Shamsidar's husband.

Azizan said that he informed Ummi Hafilda that he had been sodomised by Anwar without revealing the times but only the places where they were committed, before he made the sworn statement.

He said that Ummi Hafilda told him that she wanted to find out about Shamsidar as she pitied her brother if her sister-in-law had actually been involved.

He said that Ummi Hafilda told him that she would tell her brother and her family members if it was true.

Azizan said that he was ashamed to tell everyone of the matter but this feeling vanished when he thought of his own integrity and that of his religion and made a sworn statement to bring up the despicable act committed on him by Anwar and other victims, without any other motive.

Asked whether he was not ashamed to tell the whole country that he had been sodomised without any other motive, Azizan said: "Yes, I felt most ashamed to tell everyone of the act but for the sake of my integrity and the religion, I was not that ashamed to tell everyone of the despicable act".

To an earlier question, Azizan said no one told him to make a sworn statement alleging Anwar sodomised him. He said he made the statutory declaration on his own free will after discussing with Ummi Hafilda.

Azizan said he met Ummi Hafilda at her office sometime in July 1997 where at first Ummi wanted to know if her sister-in-law was having an affair with Anwar.

Fernando: With regard to the statutory declaration, how did you

approach the subject or how did she do it?

Azizan: I was the one who related to Ummi the incident that happened to me. I told her to make the statutory declaration because Ummi is proficient in language.

Fernando: How many meetings did you have with Ummi before the statutory declaration were made?

Azizan: As far as I can remember, two or three times.

Azizan also said he did meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad regarding Anwar on Aug 24 and the meeting with the Prime Minister occurred only once.

However, Fernando did not ask further question relating to the meeting between Azizan and the Prime Minister.

Before that when asked whether he met Datuk Aziz Shamsuddin (political secretary to the Prime Minister) and Tun Daim Zainuddin (economic adviser to the government), he said: "I have never met them."

He said that even though at first Ummi Hafilda did not tell him that she would convey the information given to the Prime Minister, she later him that the statutory declaration about the despicable act would be forwarded to the Prime Minister.

Questioned by Fernando, Azizan said that even though he was not with Ummi Hafilda at the time she was composing the statutory declaration, it was prepared on his approval.

Asked about his statutory declaration not being made before a magistrate or commissioner of oath, Azizan said he did not because "I didn't know whether it is valid or not under the law but I swore it in the name of Allah".

Azizan also told the court that he took up directorship of a company owned by a good friend to help him out as the company was facing financial difficulties.

He said that he was also appointed by Omar Veran Kutty as director of Azariq Sdn Bhd as he was interested in business.

"When I was appointed, I did not receive any allowance and I also did not perform any duties of a director or provided any perks," he said.

Azizan said that the company offers installation and recovery services, radio and telecommunication products, heavy machinery for factory and exhibition, trading services and is also a specialist in the supply of manpower.

Fernando: Explain to the court why were you appointed as a company director if they do not pay the allowance or fees and you don't perform the director's duty.

Azizan: Because I know the company was experiencing financial difficulties and at that time I was working as a driver. The friend who appointed me is a friend and I don't have the heart to ask for any fees from him.

He also said that as one of the four directors of the company, he was responsible in helping to revive the company which was experiencing financial problems.

Fernando: Were you required to provide funds.

Azizan: No, I was not required to provide financial assistance to the company.

He said that when he was appointed director, the company had already been established for some time and he felt that its funds came from the three other directors.

To another question, Azizan testified that he had not read the controversial book titled "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM" (50 Reasons Why Anwar Cannot Become PM). He also he did not know Khalid Jafri, the author of the book.

"I told him (Anwar) that I don't know the writer of the book and I did not read the book," he said.

He said Anwar had told him that investigations would be carried out against the book and wanted him to deny what had happened when called for police questioning.

On his meeting with lawyer Karpal Singh, Azizan said he and Ummi Hafilda accompanied by Dr Ristina Majid met the lawyer in connection with their allegations of sexual misconduct against Anwar.

Azizan told Senior DPP Datuk Abdul Gani Patail they met Karpal at his office in Lorong Pudu here several days before they were arrested at the house of Dr Ristina Majid.

He said he and Ummi sought legal advice from Karpal "because we were constantly followed by people whom we don't know".

Karpal, said Azizan, looked at the letter and statement written by them and then said that since they were addressed to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, "let the PM resolves this problem because the PM knows how to resolve it".

Gani: Why did you meet lawyer Karpal Singh?

Azizan: As we all know, lawyer Karpal Singh is the best lawyer in this city. Therefore we went to his office to obtain legal advice.

The answer was greeted with smiles and laughter by those present in the court including the judge.

Hearing continues at 9.15am tomorrow.

--BERNAMA

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