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Azmin Ali tells of sister's behaviour

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Businesswoman Ummi Hafilda Ali who made sexual allegations against Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was disowned by her father in 1998 after he found out that she was living with a married man overseas, the High Court heard today.

Ummi's brother Azmin Ali said their father could not tolerate her anymore, especially after she confessed that she had stayed with the man for quite some time.

Azmin, who is Anwar's former private secretary and also the Hulu Kelang State Assemblyman, however, did not identify the man.

"The man later apologised to my elder brother and me," he said.

Azmin was testifying at the trial of Anwar and his (Anwar's) adopted brother, businessman Sukma Darmawan Sasmitaat Madja, who are charged with sodomising former driver Azizan Abu Bakar.

Sukma is also facing a second charge of abetting Anwar in sodomising Azizan who is the former driver of Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

The offences were allegedly committed between January and March 1993 at Tivoli Villas apartment.

Questioned by Anwar's leading counsel, Christopher Fernando, Azmin said his father, a religious teacher, was broken-hearted as a result of Ummi's behaviour and had been in and out of the National Heart Institute before he died last year.

Earlier, before allowing Fernando to ask Azmin about Ummi, judge Datuk Arifin Jaka questioned the relevance of the evidence.

Fernando said it was to show Ummi's credibility since "she started the whole thing".

"She started the letter (containing sex allegations against Anwar) and got around Azizan to write the statutory declaration... The declaration was at the behest of Ummi," he said.

(Azizan said in the declaration that Anwar had sodomised him.)

Fernando said Ummi was an important witness and her credibility went to the root of the case.

Arifin said there was no evidence that Ummi made Azizan write the declaration.

However, the judge allowed Fernando to proceed.

Questioned by counsel, Azmin said his late father wrote an open letter before he died stating that another reason he disowned Ummi was because she had conspired with Azizan to slander Anwar.

Azmin agreed with Fernando that Ummi was deceitful, a liar and untrustworthy.

Before Azmin was asked about Ummi, he was questioned on his educational background, how he met Anwar and his job as Anwar's private secretary.

Azmin said he met Anwar in the early 1980s in the United States where he was studying, through Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, whom he knew well.

Asked by Fernando, Azmin said he became Anwar's private secretary in 1989 and met several people in the course of his work, among whom was a person called Andrew Leong, who had tried several times to see Anwar, but failed.

"Once in 1993, Leong came to my office and said that the then Inspector-General of Police Tun Hanif Omar wished to see Datuk Seri Anwar.

"When I told Datuk Seri Anwar about it, he said if the IGP had really wanted to see me he need not go through a third person," Azmin said, adding that Anwar then told him to contact Hanif directly.

To another question, Azmin said many people had been to his office to seek Anwar's help in getting government projects and tenders.

However, Anwar declined to assist them and told them to go through the proper procedure.

Azmin said one of them was former Special Branch deputy director Datuk Amir Junus.

"He (Amir) had once expressed his disappointment to me over Datuk Seri Anwar's refusal to help him and his son get an equity in Repco (Holdings Bhd) which is operating in Sabah," he said.

Azmin said Amir, who had "complained bitterly" about Anwar was also not pleased with the sacked Deputy Prime Minister for rejecting an invitation to officiate Heartscan Centre for which he (Amir) had lobbied.

Questioned by Fernando, Azmin said he saw former Special Branch director Datuk Said Awang in mid-August 1997, before Said went in to see Anwar at his office.

Azmin said Said asked him if Ummi was his sister and when he said she was, Said suggested that he get Ummi to retract her allegations against Anwar.

He disagreed because he was not on talking terms with Ummi, Azmin said, adding that he, however, discussed the matter with his siblings during a family gathering later.

Azmin said he met Ummi a year later and she apologised to his wife and denied that she had written a letter containing allegations against Anwar.

He met Ummi again several days later in the office of Datuk S'ng Chee Hua and she reiterated that she did not write the letter, but admitted she was promised money and a contract to fabricate evidence against Anwar.

"I told her to stay away from the conspirators, but she said she could not since she had committed herself and some money had been paid to her," he said.

Azmin said he met Ummi again several days later and reminded her not to get involved, but Ummi told him not to worry about her since ASP Mohd Rodwan Mohd Yusof had told her that Anwar would be sacked and charged.

Hearing continues on Monday.

(END)