



Witness Card for Investigator #3 – Saif, Age 46

I am disappointed that you are contacting me at work. Don't you know that my job is important? Here at the visitors' center, I work giving out information about Islam to foreigners – and answering their questions. You yourself could spend some time thinking about your immortal soul.

I know you've heard that I didn't like John very much. That's only half true. I know that he wasn't a bad person – in fact, he was likeable and open-minded. Nonetheless, it concerned me that he wasn't from this country and didn't fully appreciate our traditions; I was afraid he would – whether on purpose or accidentally – compromise the honor of my daughter, Amina. He allowed – even encouraged – her to spend too much time in his company, which isn't really appropriate for a man and a woman who aren't close relatives. Not that my daughter would ever do anything to shame herself or her family. God forbid! But that is all to her credit, not to his. He saw nothing wrong with talking to her, engaging her in conversation as if she was his sister, rather than an unmarried woman. (She should be married by this time, but that's another story.)

If you think I killed John, however, you're wrong. First, I don't believe in killing, which is forbidden by my religion, by almost *every* religion, though people find excuses to do it anyway. And I would never harm anyone who was innocent of wrongdoing, as he seemed to be. (As I said, I objected to his naïve misunderstanding, not to anything that he did.) Also, I was at a Ramadan *iftar*, a big dinner after the nightly breaking of the fast. My whole extended family – and a few other guests – were there and can verify this. Every minute? I'm not sure who noticed where I was that entire evening. My son maybe. My wife was mostly with the other women, not by my side.

I don't know who would want to kill him. John ran a language school and was also a writer. In fact, I helped him with the research for the book he was writing. He emailed me a few months before his death, asking for contacts in Nizwa, which is the traditional religious center of Oman, historically the place from which the head of our Ibadi Muslim faith ruled. John was researching Oman's cultural history, which of course involves religion. I had to admire him for that – he really tried to understand our culture. Anyway, I helped him by introducing him – via email – to some people. He visited them in Nizwa. Maybe someone there has some information that can help you. I'll be glad to give you their names and contact information.

Well, I should get back to work now. Would you like a copy of the Quran? I have a small pocket edition – in English – that we give out for free....