



Witness Card for Investigator #1 – Younis, Age 35

I must tell you that I am shocked and upset by what happened to John. I didn't know him long, but I liked him a lot. And I enjoyed talking to someone so knowledgeable and interested in my country. We had a real connection – a shared passion for Omani history. We would have been good friends, possibly colleagues doing a joint writing project that we'd talked about.

Anyway, thank you for agreeing to meet me now, just when I'm getting off work here at the Al Hazm Castle. You looked surprised that we close so early. But that's how it is during Ramadan fasting. As you can see, it is very, very hot – I think, 109 degrees Fahrenheit – and without being able to drink anything, we have to be careful to avoid dehydration. But please, you aren't a Muslim, so take this bottle of cold water. It doesn't bother me if *you* drink or eat.

I met John a few months ago when he was here doing research for his book. This region of Oman is the center of the Ibadi Muslim leadership. You know that most people in Oman are Ibadi Muslims, not Sunni or Shi'a, right? Anyway, this region was kind of like Vatican City is to Catholics. It's the place where the imam, our religious leader, lives. Further, this was sometimes also the national center of Oman's government – when it was a theocracy. Our imam lived right here in this castle.

John was in this region for a week or so researching his book. I don't think it was too controversial – definitely not a reason for someone to kill him. I mean, you will always find some religious fundamentalists, who don't trust Westerners to talk about Islamic issues knowledgably and with respect. And John *did* ask a lot of detailed questions about the imam's lifestyle when he and his family lived in this lovely castle. That could have upset some very conservative religious people. However, John was generally well-regarded, so I don't think it bothered anyone that a Westerner was researching our country.

We spent two days together, and on the last night, he joined my family for dinner. During that time, he mentioned that he was planning to go to Zanzibar since that East African island was such an important part of the Omani Empire in the 19th century. I told him how much I wished I could go with him. We used to email each other once every week or two after we met. He sent pictures of Zanzibar and urged me to go there some time. He seemed to love it – though he mentioned that he had found some disturbing cases of international dealings in East Africa. It was just a passing reference, but intriguing. I'd meant to ask him about it someday. You're welcome to read the emails we exchanged – I'll forward them to you – but I don't think there's anything other than what I told you. I wish I could be more help because I really want you to get the person who did this.