



Witness Card for Investigator #1 – Zahir, Age 30

Welcome to Zanzibar. I hope you will enjoy your stay in Stone Town. How exciting for our family that you are here: the second American that we have entertained in the past few months – or *ever*, for that matter! John was the first. I brought him here to this same spot when he came to the island. My cousin, Abdullah, who lives in Oman, asked us to show John around during his visit here. Since I am a man of about the same age, I was the one who was asked to be his guide and companion.

I was glad to do it, especially after I met John and saw that he was a pleasant and interesting person. We talked about a lot of things. I told him about life in Zanzibar and about our history and culture. You know that we only became part of Tanzania in 1964. (Tanzania got part of its name from us: Tanganyika + Zanzibar = Tanzania.) But before that, Zanzibar has had a long trading history. In modern times, we were part of Oman (in the 18th and 19th centuries) and then ruled by the British. So we are different from the people on the mainland: more connected to the world outside of Africa. And we are different because of our religion too. Many of the mainland Tanzanians are Christian or practice native religions; we Zanzibaris are almost all Muslims.

Yes, I'm Muslim too though not terribly strict. I even took John to Mercury's Bar – John was staying right across the street in the Mizingani Hotel. Understand, though, that it wasn't Ramadan then, and I didn't drink alcohol, just got dinner and a coke. I don't want you to think that I'm wild! Did you know that Freddie Mercury from the rock group Queen was born here in Stone Town? John hadn't known that either. Anyway, I took him to the bar named after Freddie Mercury his first night on the island. We sat there – right near where you and I are sitting now – and, just like now, enjoyed the view of the coast and the boats.

I saw John a few more times, including the night before he left to go back to Oman – he was flying to Muscat, then catching a plane for Salalah. (I have heard a lot about that city – one of my relatives works there and another visits there often.) Anyway, while John was here, he seemed to love it. He did a lot, touring the island and meeting all kinds of people. He had learned a lot too, and some of it surprised me. Isn't it funny how sometimes you see your own homeland differently when you see it through the eyes of a foreigner? For example, I hadn't really thought about how some of our food and culture was influenced by India. Also, I hadn't realized how some Chinese businessmen were investing in the islands.

Who could have killed him? I certainly don't know. I can't believe it could be someone here. This is normally a peaceful and lovely place for visitors.