

Isaacs 'watching TV as girl went missing'

KARYN MAUGHAN
Staff Reporter



The Sasha-Leigh trial

ACCUSED child killer Moegamat Yusuf Isaacs spent the day of eight-year-old murder victim Sasha-Leigh Crook's disappearance smoking dagga and watching an e.tv movie, his advocate has said.

Isaacs was arrested two days after Sasha-Leigh's body was discovered in a white nylon bag in a field in Pelican Heights on the Cape Flats.

Although admitting that Isaacs spoke to the little girl during the last period that she was seen alive on July 6, 2003, Isaacs's advocate, Dirk Uijs, has said he would show that it was "impossible" that the little girl was killed on that day.

Uijs claimed that Isaacs had

left his home to visit his friend shortly after he was seen talking to Sasha-Leigh, who died as a result of being stabbed in the neck.

Should Isaacs have attacked the little girl at that time, he would have been covered in blood and would have needed considerable time to clear up the murder scene, Uijs said.

Witnesses admitted that they had not seen any blood on Isaacs - who one woman described as a "polite boy" - when he left his home short-

ly after Sasha-Leigh disappeared.

According to Uijs, Isaacs would claim that he had spoken to Sasha-Leigh when the little girl asked him about the whereabouts of his niece Ashiema, who was one of her playmates. She had been eating a "bompie" (lollipop) at the time, he said.

Uijs told the court Isaacs did not remember the events of that afternoon perfectly "because he had partaken of dagga".

Isaacs would say that he had been locked out of his home and was "slumbering" at a table in the backyard when his neighbour, Sasha-Leigh's grandmother Priscilla Heneke, came looking for the child, Uijs said.

Heneke, who was going to take her granddaughter to a birthday party at a relative's house, earlier testified that she went to look for Sasha-

Leigh shortly after 2pm "and she wasn't there".

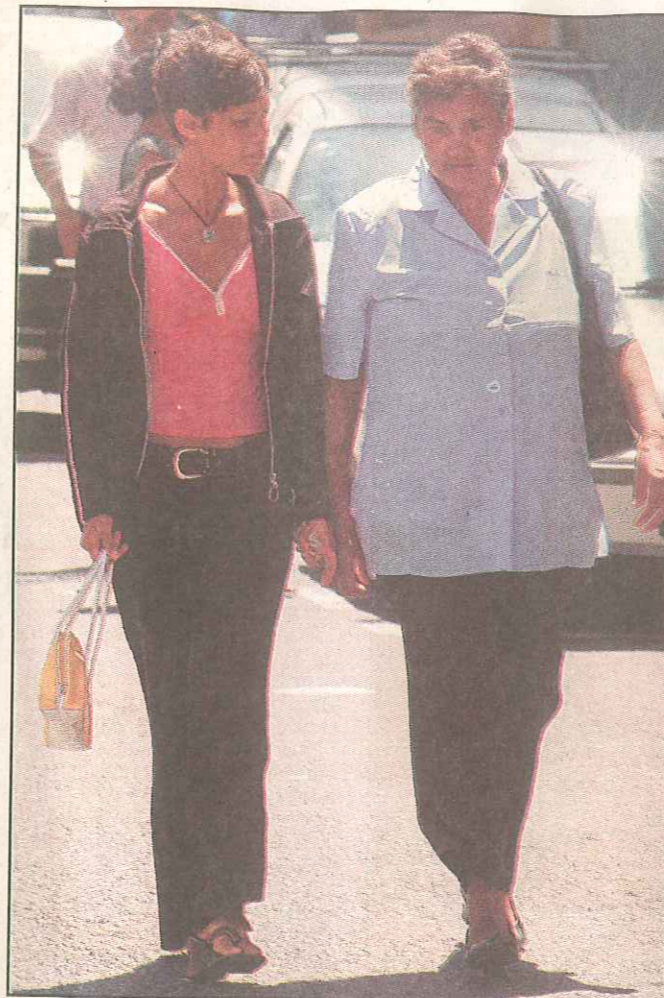
Uijs said Isaacs had looked around the back of the house before suggesting Heneke go look at another house nearby.

Looking flushed, Isaacs frequently appeared to stare at Sasha-Leigh's mother, Michelle, who sat in the front of the courtroom to hear the State's evidence about her daughter's death.

But the young woman, who has lost a dramatic amount of weight since her daughter's July 2003 killing, refused to look back - and instead concentrated on making notes.

Michelle Crook started shaking when she heard how two dogs milling about had led to a security guard's discovery of her daughter's body.

"I never got to see her body, only her feet," she told the Cape Argus yesterday.



Support: Sasha-Leigh's mother, Michelle Crook, and the murdered girl's grandmother Priscilla Heneke yesterday.

LEON MULLER, CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER

Family's quest for justice after activist's murder

ASHLEY SMITH
Staff Writer

THE FAMILY of Ahmed Timol, the 22nd person to die in police custody during apartheid's brutal "detention without trial" period, has asked the National Prosecuting Authority to reopen investigations into his death.

This follows three decades after an apartheid state cover-up found that he had committed suicide by jumping from the 10th floor of the infamous John Vorster Square police headquarters in October 1971.

Timol, a teacher, talented cricketer, Muslim and Communist Party member, died at the age of 29.

The call by the family for the investigation into his death to be reopened comes after Timol's nephew Imtiaz Cajee wrote a book documenting reams of research he had conducted.

The alleged perpetrators, named in the book, never applied for amnesty as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process.

The book on Timol's life, *Timol, a Quest for Justice*, is to be launched in Cape Town on Thursday at 6.30pm.

The launch at the Cape Town Civic Centre is to be attended by senior ANC and government politicians including several national ministers and the Premier of the Western Cape, Ebrahim Rasool. Also present will be the families of victims of torture.

Timol was the close friend of Essop Pahad and Aziz Pahad, the Minister in the Office of the President and the deputy minister of Foreign Affairs respectively.

Timol also studied politics with President Thabo Mbeki at the International Lenin School in Moscow during 1969. He left behind the love of his life in London to return to South Africa in 1970 to start the underground structures of the Communist Party and the ANC in Roodepoort, Johannesburg.

But a few months later Timol

was the 22nd person to die in police custody since 1963.

The book lists 50 people who died in detention between 1963 and 1990 - also victims from the Western Cape, including Imam Abdullah Haron who the apartheid state claimed died of "heart failure" when he "fell" down a staircase.

In an interview with the Cape Argus this week Essop Pahad said the book, the research and investigations around it were "not a quest for revenge" but a quest for justice. He confirmed on behalf of Timol's close friends and family that the Department of Justice was looking at Timol's matter and several other outstanding matters in terms of torture and deaths in detention during apartheid.

'The book is not a quest for revenge, but for justice'

About Timol's murder Pahad said: "These people who claim they were alone in the room (with him when he 'fell' from the building) should come out and say what happened."

Pahad said the story of Timol was the story of many other detainees who had been murdered by the security police acting under instructions from the apartheid regime.

Research for the book has uncovered that Timol had been brutally tortured and may have been tortured to death and then thrown out of the 10th floor window at John Vorster Square.

Mohammed Khan who had been given instructions to collect Timol's body from the Hillbrow Mortuary said: "I noticed that Ahmed's eye was out of the socket, his body had blue marks, his nails were removed, and he had burn marks over the body as a result of shock treatment."

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I would not bribe my special comrade Zuma, says Shaik

THOSE who thought he had bribed Deputy President Jacob Zuma did not understand their special kind of comradeship, Durban businessman Schabir Shaik told the Durban High Court.

"The ANC is very dear to me. The party (taught) me to put my brothers before myself," he told his corruption trial yesterday.

Shaik explained what he believed to be the context undermining allegations that led to corruption and fraud charges being brought against him.

He said he had first decided to join the ANC after his brothers were detained "as a result of a decision taken by Zuma".

"I don't believe that Zuma knew the gravity or the

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consequence of his decision," Shaik said.

He further explained that his relationship with Zuma began during the struggle, when Shaik and the late Thomas Nkobi were also involved in channelling funds to South Africa for the party's operations. "We literally placed our lives in Zuma's hands," Shaik said.

When Zuma returned to South Africa after the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, it was the Shaik family that took him in.

"There was no infrastructure for him. Helping him financially was an extension of our



Forging friendship: Shaik

comradeship," he told the court, adding that it was more specifically his brother Mo who at this stage rendered financial assistance to Zuma.

Shaik said those who construed these payments as bribes were wrong.

"Such an allegation clearly does not reflect the relationship I had with the Deputy President."

Shaik also explained some notes he had made showing plans to give a shareholding in his Nkobi group of companies to the ANC, saying he wished to make the party financially independent.

But he recalled a previous conversation with President Thabo Mbeki, who was deputy president at the time, that it would be counter-active to government efforts to establish a free market economy.

"I first thought of giving the ANC shares in the

company, but I had to respect Mbeki's view. But at the same time I knew about the ANC's need for funds.

"At one stage I considered a nominal shareholding for the party. I tried to set up some form of empowerment structure. The shareholding as planned did not materialise," he said.

At one stage he had planned to give shares in his company to Zuma. "I tried to set up some form of empowerment structure. The shareholding as planned did not materialise. Zuma's shareholding did not materialise."

"He was my friend. I knew of his financial constraints. I was looking for a way to empower him. It did not materialise. I was a young comrade with a very good

standard of living. I tried to address Zuma's financial difficulties."

Shaik also told the court that he had gone to Malaysia with Zuma, who was then KwaZulu-Natal MEC for economic affairs, in July 1995.

"He asked me to go with him. It was a party meeting for the ANC. I accompanied him as his economic adviser for KwaZulu-Natal. Zuma was looking at developing his own capacity to understand."

"But why did you go with him as the KZN adviser if it was a party meeting?" presiding Judge Hilary Squires asked.

"I was quite involved with Zuma. We discussed many things," Shaik said. The trial continues.