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AFFIDAVIT OF RABEA BEE BEE RAHIM

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I, the undersigned

RABEA BEE BEE RAHIM

do hereby make oath and state that:

1. I am an adult female with passport number A05446779 residing in Sydenham, London, United Kingdom. I am a retired specialist teacher/speech therapist.
2. Unless the context indicates otherwise, the facts contained herein are within my personal knowledge and are, to the best of my belief, both true and correct.

**PURPOSE OF THIS AFFIDAVIT**

3. The purpose of this affidavit is to set out important facts and events that I believe were intentionally deliberately withheld at the initial inquest into the death of Hoosen Mia Haffejee hereinafter referred to as "Haffejee". It is my belief that this conduct by the erstwhile South African Police, hereinafter referred to as the SAP, was aimed at concealing various serious crimes and human rights violations committed against Haffejee during his period of detention during August 1977.
4. I wish for these facts to be presented at the re-opening of the inquest for the purpose of establishing the truth as to what happened to the late Haffejee.

## **MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HAFFEJEE**

5. I am the second youngest of six sisters. Haffejee's mother was my eldest sister. We lived a few doors away from each other. We were a very close-knit family. Haffejee was a bright lovable child. I did not see much of him in his teenage years as I was studying in Durban. Yusuf, his eldest brother, gave up teaching to work in the family shop so that the family could afford to send Haffejee to India to study. When I moved to London, Haffejee visited me in 1976. He was just as outgoing and friendly as I remembered him.



## **HAFFEJEE'S VISIT TO LONDON IN 1976**

6. Haffejee had just qualified as a dentist in India and decided to visit me in London during July and August 1976. He had little money but possessed a spirit of adventure. He hitch-hiked his way to England. His mother, my oldest sister, was very concerned for his safety but she need not have worried. He arrived safely and we spent several weeks visiting my friends and places in London. I had previously booked a tour of Italy with my friends. He was unable to join me so we parted ways at Stanstead Airport. Whilst I was away he visited his friend Haniff Bhamjee, and his brother Yusuf in Ireland.



## **MY VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA AND MY LAST MEETING WITH HAFFEJEE**

7. Between 1976 and July 1977, Haffejee and I corresponded through post. I booked a flight to South Africa at the end of July 1977. My close friend Amina Seedat (Seedat) (a solicitor) and Kader Motala (Motala), an optician fetched me from the airport. Haffejee came to see me in Kenville Road, Sea Cow Lake. This was where my friends Seedat and Motala resided. He was a frequent visitor, being fond of their young son Siddique.

8. The following Friday Haffejee fetched me from Kenville road, Sea Cow Lake and we travelled to Pietermaritzburg to his home. We spent the weekend with his family happily meeting family and friends. On the last date I saw him alive, that Monday morning, we travelled back together in his vehicle to Durban. As I understood it, he went to the Tuberculosis hospital where he worked, and I to the residence of the Motala's in Sea Cow Lake. He was well and excited about me visiting South Africa. We had talked about the possibility of me returning to South Africa and contributing to a fairer society. We both were aware of the fact that this would have been a challenge for me as I was a non- white. I could never be recognised as a qualified speech therapist by the Medical and Dental Council because of my race. Roy Jithoo (Jithoo) and I were the first non- white professional speech therapists to qualify in this field. This pertained to the two- year post graduate course set up by Professor Elizabeth Sneddon.
  
9. On that Monday evening, Haffejee contacted us telephonically and informed us that he was working late that same evening but that he would take us i.e Seedat, Motala and Seedat's sister, Barbie, out to dinner on that Tuesday evening. I recall talking with him on that Monday and he mentioned that he would have liked to show me around Botswana. Non- whites were not allowed to travel between the provinces in South Africa without travel permits.
  
10. I had never visited Johannesburg before. At the airport in Johannesburg, all I ever did was to board an interconnecting flight to the United Kingdom. I heard later that he was planning to escape to Botswana. To my knowledge, he only mentioned Botswana because I had not seen much of Africa and this was a place popular with tourists. After Haffejee passed away, I carried a great amount of guilt. I heard that the special branch had bugged many telephone lines and put their own interpretation on messages and that perhaps our conversation had somehow led to his death. I was desperately trying to find some explanation for his sudden detention and death.

## THE DEATH OF HAFFEJEE

10. On that Tuesday when we should all have gone out, I accompanied Amina and Kader to their offices and we returned home at 5pm. It was strange that we had not heard from Haffejee by then. We rang his flat several times but there was no answer. We just assumed that he was involved with work at the hospital.
11. Later we learned that he had been picked up early on Tuesday morning. On the morning of Wednesday Kader dropped Seedat and I off at the museum in Durban. He had barely arrived at his rooms before he rushed back to Inform us that there were rumours that Hoosen had been arrested and that I should return to his rooms and phone home.
12. When I phoned home, Ahmed a family friend answered and said 'Don't you know Hoosen is dead'. The phone dropped from my hand and I was left in a state of shock. I was told that Hoosen's eldest brother Yusuf, was on his way to the mortuary in Durban where I should also go. He would be there with a hearse. I could not decide anything as I was in a complete state of shock. Kader and Seedat took over. Kader closed his rooms and took us to the mortuary where we had to identify Haffejee.
13. Once again, Kader and Seedat had to handle everything. Amina spoke to them. I am uncertain as to whether he was a detective or a special branch officer. He did not wear a uniform. Seedat told him that she was an attorney. He then spoke to her in another room whilst Kader identified Haffejee's body. I remember that there was some difficulty releasing the body without his identity card. I found this ludicrous and demanded an explanation as to why this was necessary to produce his identification as they had killed him

without it. An enormously built white police official in civilian clothes whom I assumed to be a security branch police official moved aggressively towards me and told Seedat that he would not deal with me. Seedat moved me away.

- 14 Yusuf and the hearse driver went to Haffejee's flat in Overport to fetch his identity card. After Seedat and Kader identified Haffejee's body, they promised to meet me in Pietermaritzburg. I remember sitting in the hearse with Yusuf as we travelled to Pietermaritzburg where family and friends were waiting, traumatised. We were also grieving and in shock. Just days ago, I had come to Durban with a healthy excited young man. And there I was, taking his corpse home to find horrendous torture marks.
- 15 On finding so many torture marks and wounds on Haffejee's body, Yusuf and other family members contacted doctors to assist with a private post mortem. Most doctors did not want to get involved. Doctor Motala, who himself has suffered at the hands of the infamous security branch, together with Doctor Biggs, an orthopaedic surgeon, agreed to assist. People said that the friends who were washing his body were shocked at the number of wounds on it..
- 16 Photographs were also taken of Haffejee's body. I also obtained a copy of the photographs. I returned to England with the set of photographs. My very close friends, Professor Jack Boag and his wife saw the photographs and were horrified by what they saw. They had met Haffejee when he visited me and were very impressed by him. I was interviewed at Amnesty International and a full report was made. Malcom Smart arranged a press conference and the photographs were displayed. Specialists were consulted. They examined the photographs. Lord Avebury travelled to South Africa to attend the inquest. The court returned a verdict of suicide. Amnesty international published their report. It did not agree with the findings of the South African court. I recall that the report stated that some kind of instrument used by post offices were used to inflict injury on his hands and back.

- 17 Another friend of mine, Ranjith Dheer had also met Haffejee at my place and immediately took a liking to him. He had given me money to buy tobacco for Haffejee from the airport. Haffejee was a smoker at the time. He used to roll his own cigarettes and was not a heavy smoker.

## HAFFEJEE'S OUTLOOK ON LIFE

- 18 After Haffejee passed away, I found it difficult to grasp how what was supposed to be a happy holiday, could have resulted in something so traumatic. It affected my health permanently. (please elaborate). His death had a profound effect on me. I still cannot understand how this caring young man was taken so unlawfully and cruelly in his prime. **And how could his tortured body have been returned so ungraciously to his family.** I questioned how many others had disappeared. I knew that Yusuf had uncovered information about a gentleman named Mkize who died in the same cells. Yusuf tried to trace his family to let them know. We believed that Mkize died because he had witnessed Haffejee's torture and that is why he was "disposed off."
- 19 Haffejee and I had the same dreams of an equal and just society for all people regardless of race and of having full access to education and health. He was a true socialist working for a fair and just society. He was keen for me to return to South Africa and work towards this aim. We saw many of our friends end up in jail or killed. Much evidence of course is still being unearthed. **We heard stories of people slipping on soap, falling off buildings and committing suicide.** We knew the reality. **The man who conducted the state autopsy on Hoosen was the same who as head of the medical school that had expelled Steve Biko.** This whole period was full of people informing on their friends while pretending to be on their side.

- 20 Haffejee worked with poor patients at the TB hospital and in prison. He was not recruiting them. He really cared for them. He challenged people with servants about treating them humanely. The plates he ate from he washed himself. He was just and caring.

## POSSIBLE ENTRAPMENT

- 21 After Haffejee died, rumours abounded that he had been "sold out" by a woman had been "planted". At the time of Haffejee's funeral there was a woman who turned up asking for a duvet. I recall it was a strange request at a funeral. Several months later I think I saw the same woman on an escalator in Selfridges in London. She and the man who was with her, avoided me.
- 22 Haffejee had never mentioned any girlfriend/s to me. The only woman I know of is the one who turned up after his funeral a day later. When asked by the family as to why she had come, she informed us that she had come to pray. I remember telling her that the prayer was for family only. I think it was Sarah who remarked that it was the same woman who had asked for a duvet.

## HAFJEJEE'S FUTURE PLANS

- 22 Haffejee was planning to bring a young woman named Vasanti Godbole from India whom he had met and hoped to marry. He had all these dreams which were not those of a man contemplating suicide.

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Prior to Haffejee's death in 1977 I was a healthy person. Almost immediately after his death I was in extreme shock. I suffered from back pain and experienced repeated episodes of iritis. A haematologist found protein in my blood and I was diagnosed with MGUS (Myeloid gammopathy of unknown significance). This deteriorated and now presents into smouldering myeloma. I have had Polymyalgia Rheumatica. I am of the view that the severe shock of losing Haffejee contributed to all my illnesses. Life was just never the same again. The death of Haffejee had a traumatic effect on the entire family. For years, I carried the guilt of being unable to find justice for his family. His parents always held out the hope that I would be able to expose the injustices committed against him. They died not knowing the truth. A part of me died too because I did not fulfil that expectation. It was a huge cross to carry.

That is all that I wish to state.

I know and understand the contents of this declaration.

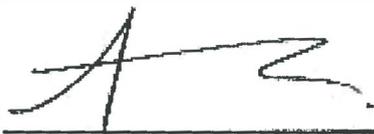
I have no objection to taking the prescribed oath.

I consider the prescribed oath as binding on my conscience.

R. Rahim

Thus signed and sworn to at SYDENHAM on  
this 12<sup>TH</sup> day of JANUARY 2018.

The Deponent having knowledge that she knows and understands the contents of this affidavits, that it is both true and correct to the best of her knowledge and belief, that she has no objection to taking the prescribed oath and that the prescribed oath would be binding on her conscience.

  
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12/01/2018  
COMMISSIONER OF OATHS

FULL NAME: MR OLAMIGUKE AKINYODE

BUSINESS ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Rose, Samuel, Odote & Partners Solicitors  
252 Kirkdale, Sydenham  
London, SE26 4NL  
Telephone: 020 8678 3449  
Fax: 020 8678 3448  
Email: info@rsosolicitors.com  
www.rsosolicitors.com

CAPACITY: SOLICITOR  
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