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## **Grief of September 11 families stuns German courtroom**

[The Guardian \(U.K.\)](#) ^ | 01/31/03 | John Hooper

Posted on 01/30/2003 7:28:50 PM PST by [Pokey78](#)

Interpreter breaks down during testimony in trial of alleged plotter

The pain and rage of the relatives of the victims of September 11 swept into a German courtroom yesterday, engulfing the trial of the first man to be arraigned for complicity in the attacks.

**Such was the emotion unleashed that at one point the court's interpreter broke down as he struggled to translate a New York mother's cry of despair for her dead son, a firefighter.**

**Joan Molinaro was one of five Americans who lost their loved ones on September 11 and who yesterday were given the chance to tell a court of their suffering in the past 16 months.**

**They had previously made themselves party to the trial in Hamburg of Mounir al-Motassadeq, a young Moroccan friend of the principal plotters, who is accused of aiding and abetting their conspiracy.**

**"I have watched my son die a hundred times - every time they show those takes of the towers falling," said Ms Molinaro, whose son Carl was last seen racing up the stairs of the World Trade Centre's north tower.**

**"Even now, when I watch - and I always do - I lean towards the television and in my heart and my mind I scream, 'Run, Carl, run. This time you'll make it out.'"**

**As she went on to say that she would never again hear her son say that he loved her, the German interpreter at her side choked on his words and came to a halt.**

**The presiding judge asked if the interpreter would like the hearing to be suspended so that he could recover his composure.**

Sitting less than three metres away, the defendant studied the proceedings attentively, but betrayed no emotion. Only at the end, when the presiding judge was thanking the American witnesses for their contribution, did Mr Motassadeq react by gently shaking his head in a gesture that could have signalled either disagreement or despair.

Notwithstanding yesterday's electrifying testimony, the substance of the case against him is fragile. The sole firm evidence offered to the court of his involvement has been that he arranged a transfer of 5,000 marks (£1,600) between two bank accounts owned by acknowledged conspirators.

One of them, the Yemeni Ramzi bin al-Shibh, was seized in Pakistan last September and handed to the US.

But attempts by Mr Motassadeq's lawyers to call Mr al-Shibh as a witness or obtain a copy of the statement he is known to have made to his interrogators have been blocked. Germany, as an ally of the US, had been notified of Mr al-Shibh's testimony by the US; but Mr Motassadeq's counsel, Hans Leistriz, said this week that the German chancellor's office had told him that if they handed the documents over for use in the trial, "the Americans would withhold further cooperation with [German intelligence]".

But such intricate considerations of national security and international relations evaporated yesterday in the heat of the passion generated by the co-plaintiffs' testimony.

Stephen Push, a public relations executive whose wife was a passenger on the aircraft that hit the Pentagon, said after the hearing: "We didn't want this trial to end with the victims and their families being just a statistic in a legal brief." There was certainly no danger of that by the time the court rose.

Deena Burnett, whose husband, Tom, led the revolt against the hijackers of United Airlines flight 93 which crashed in Pennsylvania, gave much of her testimony fighting back tears. She described how her three children attached crayon drawings to helium-filled balloons "with the childish belief that an angel will carry them to Tom".

Michael Low's daughter, Sara, was a flight attendant on the plane that was flown into the north tower of the World Trade Centre. He told the judges how he and his wife were tortured by not knowing what happened to her in the last minutes, even though they had pictured "every cruel scenario imaginable".

Perhaps the most harrowing testimony of all came in a broad New York accent from Maureen Fanning, a nurse and the widow of Captain Jack Fanning, the head of the city's Hazardous Materials Unit.

She recounted how his death left her to bring up two severely autistic sons, and how she had placed one of them in a home within six weeks of the attacks.

She was later approached by the director of the home who doubted that her son, Sean, understood what had happened and felt that he needed to be shown. She prepared a series of pictures, of which the last showed the Twin Towers engulfed in smoke.

With the aid of social workers hemming him in to prevent him from bolting, she "explained to Sean that Jack was hurt in the bad smoke.

"Sean screamed 'No' repeatedly as we all watched in tears. We did this twice to make certain Sean understood that Jack was not coming home again, and both times his reaction was the same as he screamed and cried, 'No.'"

**U.S., Saudis not helping in 9/11 suspect's trial, Germans say**

[New York Times / Minneapolis Star Tribune ^](#) | 8 Dec 2002 | By DESMOND BUTLER

Posted on 12/11/2002 9:41 PM EST by [dagnabbit](#)

BERLIN -- German authorities investigating a Moroccan man on trial on charges that he was involved in the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States say there is evidence that he had contact with a Saudi diplomat as well as the leaders of an extremist group in Saudi Arabia.

But despite their requests for help following up on these leads, German officials said, responses had not been forthcoming from U.S. or Saudi authorities.

In Washington, a Justice Department spokesman named called questions about the German authorities' requests "too sensitive" for comment.

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