

Victim tells of fear after van attacker goes free

Haroon Siddique

A restaurant owner who was the target of a van attack by a Britain First supporter has said he fears for his safety after his assailant walked free.

Marek Zakrocki, 48, who drove his van at Kamal Ahmed after telling police he was "going to kill a Muslim", was sentenced to 33 weeks in prison on 12 January but was released for time spent on remand.

The sentence has been criticised by Muslim leaders, who claim that a Muslim who carried out such an attack would be treated differently.

"It's not enough for the thing he did," Ahmed told the Guardian. "It's really bad because he was a dangerous man, he really tried to harm me. He tried to run me over. Until last Friday he was in prison, but now my worry is, what if he wanted to come back?"

Zakrocki was originally charged with attempted murder and three racially aggravated offences. These charges were later dropped, but he admitted dangerous driving, battery of his wife and drink-driving, offences for which he was jailed for 33 weeks at the Old Bailey in London.

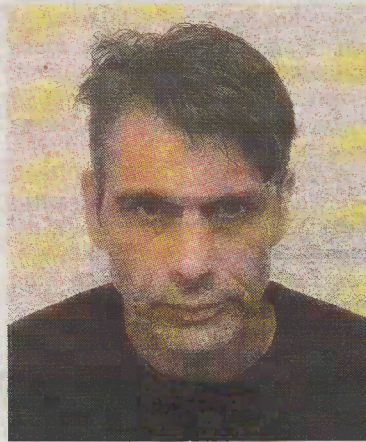
The attack on Ahmed, 42, took place outside his Spicy Night restaurant in Harrow on 23 June last year.

Before targeting Khan, Zakrocki made a Nazi salute, pushed a man he assumed was a Muslim, shouted "white power" at people outside a pub and swore at a Somali woman. He then got into an argument with Ahmed's

brother Taj outside the restaurant in north-west London, telling him: "Go fuck yourself Paki." He mounted the pavement twice in his van and drove at Kamal Ahmed.

Sentencing him, the judge, Anthony Leonard QC, said that while Zakrocki had intended to cause physical harm and there was evidence of his abhorrent racist views, the events were the result of him having consumed up to two bottles of wine. Zakrocki denies being a racist or a Nazi.

Fiyaz Mughal, founder of Faith Matters, which works to reduce extremism, described the sentence as ludicrous. He said: "It sends out completely the wrong message on extremism. The rhetoric, the targeting, the clear examples of anti-Muslim language, this was extremism even by the Home Office's own definition."



▲ Marek Zakrocki drove at Kamal Ahmed, damaging his restaurant

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