

Daniel Khalife live: Police fear prison guards helped terror suspect escape

That wouldn't surprise me in the slightest. The man who would have been my boss, were I not retired many years, stood up in the House of Commons yesterday to apologise.

[Alex Chalk](#), the matinee idol whose current role is Lord Chancellor, shimmered into the chamber to make a statement about the Wandsworth prison escape. A jailbreak is awkward for any prisons minister. After the frivolity of recent political 'scandals', this felt refreshingly substantial. Following the escape of 'a prisoner by the name of Daniel Abed Khalife', he explained, Wandsworth prison 'was put into a state of lockdown'.

Mr Chalk, in slender tie and elegant suit, was flawlessly grave. There was no acidity. We had no raging at the bunglers ... who failed to stop Khalife's kitchen-van escape. Some ministers would have named certain officials. Chalk is classier than that. He spoke softly with spotless enunciation. He was courteous, even while plainly seething. 'Daniel Khalife will be found,' he said with ice. 'He will be made to face justice.'

The catalyst for my being cast into the abyss (aka early retirement) but Jack Straw's regime was two-fold. First, the splitting of the Home Office (which ran the police and the prisons) so that the prison administration became the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice (previously the relatively non-political Department of the Lord Chancellor. We ran the courts and drafted legislation – and there I spent 30 happy and I hope, useful years). In 2006 the Home Office was described by John Reid the then Home Secretary as a [department](#)

'not fit for purpose'. Splitting its functions and giving half to MoJ gave the country two departments 'not fit for purpose' for the price of one. Second, the desire to increase diversity within this newly expanded department. 15 years later we have the situation where the Lord Chancellor (and Secretary of State for Justice – there's a fine title which finer minds never needed) has to say to Parliament

Mark Fletcher (Con, Bolsover) suggested Khalife may have had an accomplice. Mr Chalk ... with the most perfect neutrality, he said: 'I hope he will not take it as a discourtesy when I say that nothing has occurred to him about lines of inquiry that has not occurred to me and my colleagues.' Dame Diana Johnson (Lab, Hull North): 'Was he surprised Khalife was allowed to work in the kitchens?' Mr Chalk: 'That is precisely a question that has occurred to me and that I want answered by the end of the week.'

Meanwhile the police (who still come under the Home Office, as well as immigration, passports and drug policy) in the person of [Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley](#) has said police will examine whether Daniel Khalife was helped to flee Wandsworth prison by its own guards in an investigation into his escape.

Sir Mark said investigators will explore the possibility Khalife was helped by fellow inmates as his break from jail was "clearly pre-planned".



Asked if police are looking into whether Khalife's escape was an "inside job", Sir Mark said: "It is a question. Did anyone inside the prison help him? Other prisoners, guard staff? Was he helped by people outside the walls or was it simply all of his own creation?"

Speaking to LBC's Nick Ferrari, Sir Mark Rowley added it was "odd" Daniel Khalife was not held in a maximum security prison.

Justice Secretary Alex Chalk has demanded answers as to why Khalife was placed in HMP Wandsworth – a Category B jail – with the preliminary findings of an investigation expected today.

Terrorism legislation expert – Allowing Khalife access to kitchen knives is 'mind-boggling'

Lord Carlisle, the barrister and former independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, told BBC Radio Five Live it is "mind-boggling" that Daniel Khalife was able to work in a kitchen with access to knives. He said: "It causes concern on why the perpetrator was in that prison, whether he escaped solo or if there were state actors – possibly Iran.

"The idea that someone was judged for spying for Iran and terrorism offences was able to work in a Category B prison in the kitchen with access to knives is mind-boggling". Reviewing how Daniel Khalife planned his escape, Lord Carlisle added, "One of the possibilities for escape is a hostage situation

and knives play into that kind of situation”.

Breaking news – there may have been a sighting. Or then again, it may be somebody who looks a bit like, as was the young chap pulled up in Banbury yesterday.

A newsagent has claimed the escaped terror suspect Daniel Khalife may have jumped into a getaway car around two miles from Wandsworth prison, the Telegraph can reveal.

The shop assistant told his manager he saw a “tall, lanky dude with dark hair”, who he later thought he recognised from media images as being Khalife, enter a black coloured vehicle outside Wandsworth County Court, a 10 minute drive west of the Victorian jail. *(the red and white check cooks trousers might be a giveaway?)*

The eyewitness told his manager he saw the man sprinting across the street from the direction of the BidFood lorry before getting into a car on the other side of the road by traffic lights, directly next to the court building.

His colleague told the Telegraph: “There was lots of beeping by cars and people were annoyed. My friend, one of the workers at the shop, was in the shop on that morning, at around 7.30, and he went outside where he saw a man running into a black car. The man was some tall lanky dude with dark hair and there was a Bid food van. My friend didn’t see him getting out of the van but he saw him sprint across the street to the traffic lights.”

The man said they had tried to report the sighting to the police earlier on Friday but had not yet managed to talk to an officer. Police said they had not yet received any confirmed sightings of Khalife but were pursuing all leads.

Even if this isn’t he, my money is that he is being helped by da bruvverz, inside and out.