

Ilford terror accused shared 'attack, attack' video in group chat, court hears

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An Islamist extremist shared a home-made video of the Royal Festival Hall with the chilling message "attack, attack", a court has heard



Shehroz Iqbal, from Ilford, is on trial at the Old Bailey accused of encouraging terrorism by posting the mobile phone footage to a group of like-minded friends on WhatsApp. Opening the case, prosecutor Kate Wilkinson described

Iqbal as someone with extremist views who is "volatile and prone to act in his extremism".

On March 11, the 28-year-old visited the Hayward Gallery on the South Bank, near the Royal Festival Hall and Waterloo Bridge, the court heard. He spent about an hour and a half at the popular art attraction and made a video on his phone, it is claimed.

Ms Wilkinson said: "It was a calm video, it was short and its message was clear. It spanned from across his vista as he stood there at Hayward Gallery and focused on the traffic passing on Waterloo Bridge, and then he spoke rather chillingly."

In the footage played in court, Iqbal allegedly said: "This is my spot Akhi (brothers) Central London. Attack, attack."

Ms Wilkinson told jurors: "The Crown say this was the defendant telling his 'brothers', his like-minded associates on his WhatsApp thread, that this place, Royal Festival Hall – Hayward Gallery – Waterloo Bridge, was his 'spot', a very public popular attraction. To do what? He goes on to say 'Attack, attack'.

The court heard that Iqbal posted the video to a WhatsApp group of 22 associates called From Dark To Light.

Iqbal has denied encouraging terrorism on WhatsApp and disseminating terrorist material on Facebook.

The second charge relates to a propaganda video depicting Islamic State fighters in 2015 posted just as the nation went into lockdown in late March. The court heard that the video, which featured an image of a dead body, was viewed more than 200 times on the defendant's Facebook page. On his arrest in April, Iqbal claimed he had been high on drugs when he posted the Facebook video without looking at it.

He explained the video at the Hayward Gallery, saying he had gone for a ride that day and made the film to show off his bike.

But Ms Wilkinson told jurors: "The Crown suggest that was a video not showing off his bike but rather saying to his friends 'Look what I might do' – carry out an attack in central London in a public spot just like the Royal Festival Hall or Waterloo Bridge, just as others who shared his extremist Islamic views had done before on 9/11, in Manchester and on London Bridge."

The trial continues.