

'It felt like my own personal October the 7th': Gang jailed for kidnapping Jewish-Israeli music producer

The Israeli press had this sentencing hearing a good 12 hours yesterday before the British newspapers. This is [Sky News](#) and the [Daily Mail](#)

A Jewish-Israeli music producer said he felt like he experienced his own "personal October 7" when he was kidnapped by a gang in West Wales and held captive.

Faiz Shah, 23, from Leeds, Mohammad Comrie, 23, from Bradford, and Elijah Ogunnubi-Sime, 20, from Wallington, were jailed at Swansea Crown Court on Friday.



Mohammad Comrie, Faiz Shah and Elijah Ogunnubi-Sime admitted kidnap. Pic: Dyfed-Powys Police

During sentencing, Judge Catherine Richards said the planning

was “significant and highly sophisticated”, targeting an “entirely innocent, hard-working music producer” based on the gang’s understanding of his wealth and his Jewish heritage.

The group – who all pleaded guilty to kidnap – each received a sentence of eight years and one month.

Falsely claiming to be a Polydor Records executive, the three friends invited Mr Kashti to a music event which would be attended by music producers and other musicians. . . a kidnap plan, described in court as ‘highly sophisticated in its planning but highly amateurish in its execution.’

Swansea Crown Court heard the three kidnappers made a shopping list which included handcuffs, a blindfold, gag, zip ties and ketamine to drug their intended target.

Mr Jones said: ‘They emailed Mr Kashti claiming to be a fictitious A&R man from Polydor Records by the name of Lucas Winslow inviting him to a recording camp in Wales. They told him it was a gathering of a group of producers and songwriters for a collaboration. He would be picked up by a driver, given a remuneration package and they requested an invoice.

‘Mr Kashti responded and said he would be happy to participate – as far as he was concerned he was attending a legitimate music recording event.’

Mr Jones said: ‘Their motivation was two-fold. Firstly they intended to extort money from the individual who they perceived to be wealthy.

‘But there was a clear political and religious motivation. In the discussions between the defendants they refer to him attending pro-Israeli marches in London and one of them said:”I know this guy is involved in West Bank settlements, taking Palestinians land.” They also made allegations about “Palestinian land” and said they had “no remorse” for what they were going to do.

The three kidnapers, who met online, planned to launder the ransom money by converting it into crypto-currency.

One message on an encrypted Telegram group stated: 'All three of us have complete, 100 per cent faith in Allah so we can't fail.'

But the kidnap on August 25 last year went badly wrong when the taxi driver who took the composer to the cottage helped him inside with his guitar and luggage and found they had walked into a 'well-laid' trap. The driver was attacked by the gang but managed to escape and raise the alarm. By that time Mr Kashti had also been taken to the floor where he was kicked and punched and threatened with death if he tried to escape.

Mr Jones said: 'They handcuffed him to a radiator but he was able to lift himself up and free himself from a pipe. He took his mobile phone from a table , escaped and hid in bushes where he called his wife to tell her what had happened to him.'

In a statement Mr Kashti said 'As an Israeli, this incident felt like my own personal October the 7th. I was kicked to the head several times, handcuffed to a radiator and forced to lie down on the floor. I was threatened and told if I were to try and escape, I'd be killed. The awful attack of 7th of October was flashing through my mind as I lay restrained on the floor in handcuffs. . . ."

Judge Catherine Richards said the offence 'involved significant and highly sophisticated planning'

"It seems to me that you justified your actions against the victim based on his background, as if he was less worthy of your respect and compassion. That is utterly abhorrent. I have no doubt that the victim was targeted . . . based on your understanding of his wealth, his Jewish heritage and your racial hostility".

Mr Kashti was supported by the Community Security Trust, a charity that protects British Jews from terrorism and antisemitism.

Thanking police and prosecutors for bringing the kidnappers to justice, CST Chief Executive Mark Gardner said 'The combination of criminality and anti-Jewish hatred could easily have resulted in a far worse, perhaps even fatal outcome. We will continue to work with the police and all other partners to ensure the safety of our Jewish community and to bring perpetrators of antisemitism to justice.'

Inspector Gareth Jones of Dyfed Powys Police said: "This sentence today reflects the severity of this offence and the ordeal the victim suffered – and we hope it gives the victim a sense of justice. We thank him for his strength, bravery and patience whilst we carried out a thorough investigation into what was an extraordinary crime."