

Christchurch mosque attack sentencing: Eftpos hero Abdul Aziz tells Brenton Tarrant - 'Never forget these two eyes you ran from'

By: [Kurt Bayer](#) and [Anna Leask](#)
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GRAPHIC CONTENT WARNING: THIS STORY CONTAINS DETAILS WHICH READERS MIGHT FIND UPSETTING

An Afghan refugee who chased and challenged the mosque gunman has had his remarkable bravery acknowledged by a judge.

Abdul Aziz Wahabzadah was hailed a hero in the wake of the March 15, 2019 attacks for saving lives at the Linwood mosque in Christchurch.

He chased the rampaging shooter and drew gunfire from just metres away.

Desperate to defend himself, Wahabzadah grabbed an Eftpos-card reader and threw it at him.

The High Court in Christchurch where Brenton Harrison Tarrant, 29, is being sentenced this week has already heard how Wahabzadah then picked up a discarded firearm and tried to fire it at the killer.



Abdul Aziz Wahabzadah tells gunman Brenton Tarrant: 'Never forget these two eyes you ran from.' Photo / Pool

Wahabzadah told Tarrant in the dock on Wednesday he should feel grateful there were no bullets left in the gun, "or it would have been a different story".

Instead, he chased after him and speared the gun through the fleeing gunman car's side window.

It was then Wahabzadah saw "fear in his eyes for his own life" before the killer gestured at him and said: "I'll f***** kill all of you."

On the third day of the unprecedented sentencing hearing, more victims and family members have given harrowing accounts of how the shootings have affected their lives.

Australian national Tarrant initially pleaded not guilty to his offending but later admitted 51 charges of murder, 40 counts of attempted murder and one of engaging in a terrorist act laid under the Terrorism Suppression Act 2002. He will be sentenced to life in prison.



Abdul Aziz Wahabzadah called Tarrant a 'coward' and 'gutless' at the Christchurch High Court. Photo / Pool

On Wednesday, Wahabzadah stood in court to challenge Tarrant again, saying he must remember his face as "the one who chased you out".

He repeatedly called Tarrant a "coward" and "gutless".

On March 15, 2019 Wahabzadah had been to pick up some posters for a mosque fundraiser.

He saw fellow worshipper Linda Armstrong who asked about the posters and Wahabzadah then checked everybody had parked properly outside the mosque building.

He was the last person to go back inside for Friday prayer.

During the prayer, he recalls hearing the sound of gunfire and Imam Alabi Lateef telling everybody to take cover.

"No one believed him," said Wahabzadah, who recalled seeing "this coward, gutless person" **shoot through a window** and kill a worshipper who was located beside one of his sons.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Which window was this? The window in the former KFC building (see above)?

Wahabzadah went to run outside, grabbing the Eftpos-card reader to defend himself.

He saw an elderly couple shot dead on the ground.

"I was screaming, yelling, swearing," said Wahabzadah who challenged the gunman to fight.

He then saw Tarrant, wearing a bulletproof vest, army clothes and helmet with a camera on it. He thought at first it was "someone from the government for our protection".

The shooter swore at him and talked to himself, Wahabzadah said. That was when he threw the Eftpos-card reader at him.

The gunman started shooting at him from 3-4m away, Wahabzadah told the court.

Wahabzadah ducked down between cars as two of his sons who had been inside the mosque begged him to come inside.



'This man is not one of us' - mosque victim's message to the killer. Video / Chris Tarpey

"I said, 'Go inside, I will be alright'," he recalled.

After challenging Tarrant as he fled in his car, Wahabzadah said he continued to chase him, making him speed through a red light.

"He act very tough but to be honest with you, he is nothing," Wahabzadah said on Wednesday.

He returned to the mosque and saw a lot of dead and injured, including Linda Armstrong.

One worshipper told him he was dying and asked for water.

Wahabzadah went to find water and was arrested by police who saw him with a gun – and thought he was the terrorist.

He told the court he was held in a police car for nearly two hours.

EDITOR'S NOTES: (1) If he wanted to find water, why did he have to go all the way to the carpark of Value Mart (a nearby Indian-Asian supermarket)? Surely, the center had at least an outside tap at which congregants could perform their wudu and/or obtain drinking water? (2) Which gun was he seen with? The one he earlier "speared ... through the fleeing gunman car's side window"?

But he doesn't blame police for what happened in the chaos of the attacks.

He later asked police for 15 minutes in a cell with Tarrant to "see how much guts he has without a gun".



'My 71-year-old dad would have broken you in half' - the son of Haji-Daoud Nabi addresses the Christchurch terrorist. Video / Chris Tarpey

On Wednesday, he told Tarrant that his idea to breed hate between religions has failed.

"Everybody got together on that day as one brother," he said.

He felt sorry for his family but felt nothing for the killer, saying he should feel grateful he didn't catch him that day.

"It would've been a different story. The government would've saved a lot of money," he said.

Wahabzadah ended by telling him: "Never forget these two eyes you ran from."

As he left the courtroom, Justice Cameron Mander stopped him.

"Before you go," the judge said, "I've seen the video and I want to acknowledge what courage."

It prompted a spontaneous round of applause in the public gallery.

The sentencing hearing will wrap up today.



Brenton Tarrant in the Christchurch High Court. Photo / Pool