
Ahmad Abou El Maati: Chronology

*The following chronology has been prepared by Ahmad El Maati and his legal counsel, Barbara Jackman. It is based on Ahmad's and his family's recollection, to the best of their ability, of events related to encounters with security officials in Canada, and to Ahmad's detention, interrogation and torture in Syria and Egypt. The names of some of the people Ahmad was questioned about are omitted in order to protect their privacy. **For more information please contact Barbara or Terri Jackman at (416) 653-9964.***

April, 2001

Ahmad Abou El Maati and his mother, both Canadian citizens, left Toronto for Damascus, Syria to meet a prospective bride. Ahmad met Rola, a young woman born and raised in Syria, and they were immediately attracted to each other. After spending time together, Ahmad proposed engagement, and their families celebrated with a traditional ceremony. Ahmad left Syria about a month later to return to his work in Toronto, promising to immediately work to bring Rola to Canada.

As with his past travels to Syria in 1998 and several times throughout his childhood, **Ahmad had no problems with Syrian immigration or security officials.**

While Ahmad and his mother were in Syria, **CSIS visited his father, Badr El Maati**, and his cousin in Toronto. The agents told Ahmad's relatives that they were asking questions about Ahmad because his passport has been stolen, which they later learned from Ahmad was not true. **This was the first time anyone in Ahmad's family was contacted by any law enforcement or security agency.**

May, 2001

Ahmad learned that he needed a legal marriage certificate in order to initiate sponsorship procedures to bring Rola to Canada, and **travelled again to Syria to legalize the marriage.** He spent as much time as possible visiting Rola and her family. They talked about their future life together, and chose names for the children they hoped to have. Ahmad left for Canada after about three weeks, promising to return in December in time to observe Ramadan, and to prepare for and celebrate their marriage in a formal ceremony. As in the past, **Ahmad had no problems with Syrian immigration or security officials.**

June, 2001

Back in Toronto, Ahmad hired an immigration lawyer and **initiated sponsorship procedures for Rola** to come to Canada. He and Rola talked with each other on the phone almost daily.

Early August, 2001

Ahmad was making a delivery in Montreal for his employer, Highland Transport, and had to take his truck to the Volvo dealer for repairs. The dealer said the truck needed serious repairs, so Ahmad contacted **his employer, who instructed the dealer to issue Ahmad another Highland-owned truck** and rescheduled his deliveries.

When **Ahmad got into the new truck, he found papers, maps and reading glasses in the cab, which he assumed belonged to a previous driver.** He bundled them up and put them in the cab drawer.

August 16, 2001

After making hundreds of deliveries to the U.S. since May, 1999 without incident, **Ahmad was stopped at the Buffalo border crossing by U.S. customs officials.** They searched the truck and found the bundle Ahmad had placed in the cab drawer. They questioned him about a map among the items. It was a **map of Ottawa which named several government buildings.** Ahmad explained that these items did not belong to him. He told them he did not use reading glasses, that the handwriting on the map was not his, and that he had never made deliveries in Ottawa and so would not have use for the map. The U.S. officials continued to question him and search the truck, took Ahmad's fingerprints, a retina scan, and photographed him.

They photocopied the map and returned the original to him. They **told him he may have difficulties crossing the border in the future.** He explained to them that this was how he made his living, and that he could not stop driving trucks. After this eight hour ordeal he was permitted to continue with his delivery in Philadelphia and then return to Canada.

This was Ahmad's first ever experience with law enforcement or security officials.

August, 2001

Ahmad **travelled to the U.S. twice more in August without incident.**

August 27, 2001

Ahmad and his father went to Highland Transport to tell his manager what happened at the border and to show her the map. She wrote a letter about the border incident, and explained that **the map could have belonged to a previous driver.**

September 11, 2001

On the morning of the attacks on the U.S., Ahmad returned his truck to Highland Transport. Ahmad learned of the attacks while

he was there. He was sickened by the attack, and worried that all Muslims would be blamed.

One of the supervisors approached him and said he had heard about the incident with the map, and had looked into it. He had learned that **one of their clients in Ottawa issued these maps to drivers.**

Later that day, two CSIS agents arrived at Ahmad's apartment. They asked him to go with them to a nearby coffee shop. One of them identified himself as **Adrian White.** They began in a friendly tone, questioning him about himself and his family, his travel and about the map. Ahmad showed them the letter he had from Highland Transport, and they persisted with their questions.

After answering their questions for ten to fifteen minutes, **Ahmad said that he had nothing to hide but would prefer to continue with a lawyer present to ensure he is not misunderstood or misinterpreted.** The officers seemed angry about this, and told Ahmad that they knew he was working to bring his wife to Canada, and that the application would need to go through them and **if he did not cooperate, they would block her from coming.** They told him that the **intelligence services** (they used the Arabic word for intelligence, *makabarat*) in Canada **deals with our citizens in a different way than the makabarat in Arab countries.** Ahmad felt this was a direct threat.

Ahmad then noticed that he was being followed everywhere in an conspicuous way by numerous unmarked cars. On several occasions when he was making deliveries in industrial areas of Toronto, he would count more than ten different vehicles following him at a time. He was also followed when he was with his family. This surveillance continued until he left the country on November 11, 2001.

Late September, 2001

Ahmad thinks that it was in late September when he had his first experience with the backlash he had heard was happening against Muslims since the September 11 attacks. He was making a delivery to a client's warehouse and four to five men who worked there **started shouting and calling him names because he was a Muslim.** Ahmad was shocked and felt humiliated and reported the incident to someone at the warehouse, and to his dispatcher and manager.

October 12, 2001

The *Los Angeles Times* published a front page story about the leads being followed by the FBI in their investigation of the September 11 attacks. The article included the sentence:

*In Canada, U.S. agents were briefed on a **36-year old Kuwaiti man in whose belongings were discovered documents that identified specific buildings in an Ottawa government complex** – notably the atomic energy building and the virus and disease control labs ("U.S. strikes back: The investigation," October 12, 2001, A1).*

October 13, 2001

The Globe and Mail published a front page article by Peter Cheney titled "**Kuwaiti found with papers on sensitive Ottawa sites,**" saying again that U.S. officials were briefed in Canada about the case. The RCMP said it could not confirm that the man was arrested. **RCMP spokesman Corporal Eric Simard** said that infiltration of nuclear facilities was part of their focus, and "aside from that, we can only say that [this] is an ongoing criminal investigation and that details cannot be released."

RCMP Constable Serge Lalonde also spoke about the case with media, and was sourced in articles the following day.

Ahmad was terrified when he first saw the news on CTV, and did not understand how or why this was reported.

October 15, 2001

The National Post published an article saying that according to Dave Harris, a former head of strategic planning for CSIS, "terrorists are clearly gathering information for their next move and the target could be Canada's nuclear facilities." The article said that the "information about the 36-year-old Kuwaiti man was part of a flood of tips and information intelligence officers have received since last month's terrorist attacks," and that **"officials in the United States and Canada are not identifying the Kuwaiti man, or specifying where or how he was stopped."**

The article also sourced a Canadian government official, "speaking on condition of anonymity," as pointing out that the **map must be out of date** because "there is no longer any high-security biological material at the Ottawa site," and that "Health Canada moved its high-risk virus labs from Tunney's Pasture in Ottawa to a high-security facility in Winnipeg" three years earlier.

Shocked by the media reports and concerned about the continuing surveillance, **Ahmad and his father went to see lawyer Rocco Galati for advice.** Galati had distributed his contact information to the Muslim community after the September 11 attacks, offering his services. Ahmad gave him the map and the letter from Motion Supply, and **instructed him to contact CSIS and tell them he would meet with them with his lawyer.** He wanted to know how this story ended up in the media. **Galati left several messages for Adrian White, but White did not return the calls.**

On request from Galati, the General Manager of Motion Supply Inc, and Manager of Recruiting and Training for Highland Transport, each wrote letters confirming that **two other drivers used the truck Ahmad was in** when he found the map and other items, and that one of these **drivers made deliveries in Ottawa.**

October 22, 2001

The Ottawa Citizen published a letter to the editor from **Kuwait's Ambassador to Canada, Faisal Al-Mulaifi, saying:**

*The Embassy of the State of Kuwait wishes to inform that after its inquiry to Canadian authorities, it has been confirmed that **the reported individual is not a Kuwaiti citizen, but rather a Canadian citizen born in Kuwait.***

November 11, 2001

Work in the trucking business had slowed after the attacks on the U.S., and Ahmad was worried that Rola would be blocked from coming to Canada, so **he decided to go to Syria earlier than originally planned, to be with her and to prepare for and celebrate their marriage.**

Ahmad and his mother, Samira Shallash, would travel together to Vienna via Frankfurt on Air Canada. In Vienna, his mother would continue to Cairo on Austrian Airlines, and Ahmad would continue to Damascus, Syria, also on Austrian Airlines. Ahmad's mother planned to visit family in Cairo before joining him in Syria later for the wedding.

Once they were at Pearson Airport, they got their boarding passes, and were about to pass through security when **they were each pulled aside and separated. One officer in plain clothes took Ahmad's mother aside and questioned her about their itineraries. He spoke Arabic and English. Two other officers, also in plain clothes, took Ahmad downstairs into a room. They said they were with the Ontario Provincial Police. One of the officers was Scott Mills.** They

asked Ahmad where the map was. Ahmad told them that it was with his lawyer, and gave them Galati's name and phone number. They asked where he would be staying in Syria, and he told them he would stay at his grandfather's home. They asked who would be going to Syria with him, and he told them he was going alone and that his mother would join him later. They asked him how much money he had, and about his travel itinerary. Ahmad asked if they were preventing him from travelling. They left the room, and Ahmad noticed an open file on the table that had his photograph in it.

They came back into the room and told him he could go, and that they would escort him onto his flight. They took Ahmad back to security, where his mother was waiting, and **they escorted them both through security, to the gate.** At the gate the airline agent handed him new boarding passes, and their seats had been changed. Ahmad thinks he remembers being re-assigned to seat 24F, and his mother was re-assigned to 24G — both in the middle row of the airplane. The flight was full, and everyone was already seated. It appeared that the flight had been delayed because of them.

When they took their seats, a very talkative Lebanese man was sitting next to Ahmad in what he thinks was seat 24E. He told Ahmad that he was a Canadian citizen going to meet his brother in Vienna, and that he owned a courier company in Mississauga. Ahmad was not feeling talkative, because of what had happened, and found it odd that this man was so talkative with him.

When they reached Frankfurt, Ahmad and his mother had some time before they had to board their connecting flight to Vienna. They sat down to have a coffee, and then, with about fifteen minutes to spare, they started walking towards the gate. **They suddenly saw the talkative man running and looking for them. He shouted that they were late, and they had to hurry or they may miss their flight.** Ahmad told him they were coming and not to worry.

When they reached the gate, the talkative man was standing with two plain clothed German officials. One of them showed Ahmad his badge, and said he was with the border police. He asked Ahmad and his mother for their passports, and **read the information from their passports into a cell phone to someone.** Then they let them board their flight.

Ahmad noticed that the talkative man was on their flight to Vienna, but he did not sit with them.

Ahmad bid his mother farewell when they reached Vienna. They were worried about what had been happening so she went to watch him board his flight to Damascus. **This would be the last time anyone in Ahmad's family would see him until his sister visited him in an Egyptian prison almost a year later on September 1, 2002.**

Ahmad says that **another talkative Arab man sat next to him on the flight to Damascus**, and asked if he was a Canadian. Ahmad found it strange that this man asked him this, and that he sat next to him, as the plane was only half-full.

November 12 to 21, 2001

Ahmad was detained by Syrian officials when he arrived at the airport in Damascus at about 3:00 p.m. He was told at immigration that his name was "suspicious," and was asked to go into an office beside the immigration booth. He went into the office and was immediately surrounded by five very big, strong men who escorted him to the luggage area. They made him pay for his luggage trolley, and went with him to pick up his luggage. They went through customs — the officials there did not pay any attention to him. They went out of the airport, and **the moment Ahmad stepped out of the airport door they handcuffed his hands behind his back. A car sped up, and he was put inside.** Two large men sat on either side of him. There was a general in the car who later told him that he had been on the airplane with him. **As soon as the car started moving, they put a hood over his head.**

Ahmad was taken to what he later learned was the ***Far Falestin (Palestine Branch) of the Syrian military intelligence. This is the same complex in which Abdullah Almalki, Maher Arar, and Muayyed Nurredin were later detained, interrogated and tortured.*** Ahmad was taken, still hooded to an upstairs office where a high-ranking officer told him they would teach him how to speak.

He was then taken, still hooded and handcuffed, to an adjacent building and placed in an interrogation room. They took his hood off, opened his luggage, and found all of the gifts he had brought for the wedding ceremony. The gifts were worth about \$5000, and included a pearl necklace and an expensive selection of perfumes. They started distributing the gifts among themselves, leaving only some clothing. They asked him where "the documents" were. He did not know what they meant and when he asked them they did not tell him.

He was taken, still handcuffed, downstairs into a basement, and then down a hallway with common cells on either side. At the end of this hallway was another smaller dark hallway that went to the left and right. Ahmad was taken to the right down the small hallway. **The doors in this small hallway looked like they led to closets, not to spaces where humans could be kept. The guard opened the last door on the right, and put Ahmad into a very small cell that was only a tiny bit higher than Ahmad — about 190 centimetres high, and less than a metre wide.** It was very dark. There was a grate in the ceiling, and two rotten blankets. It smelled like urine. This was called "cell number five," and Ahmad was referred to as "number five" while he was at the Palestine Branch.

There were two Turkish-style bathrooms for the twenty tiny cells. They were dirty and smelled terrible. **Occasionally the lights in the hallway would go out, and rats would come running out of the bathrooms into the darkness and go into the cells through the cracks under the doors.** Ahmad once heard a prisoner in a cell next to him screaming that he had been bitten by one of the rats.

Ahmad was not given any food until about two days after he arrived and had not eaten since his flight.

Later that night, Ahmad was taken from the cell, brought upstairs, blindfolded, and put in an interrogation room. **He was interrogated and tortured for the next seven to ten days.**

His interrogators told him that they had received information about him. He was presented with details about his life and family in Canada, including their addresses, and the colour and model of his car. Ahmad corrected them because they had the right address for his apartment building in Toronto, but wrong apartment number. They asked him whether he had planned to seek political asylum in Germany — Ahmad guessed this was connected to what had happened in Frankfurt.

They started beating and kicking him all over his body and face. He was asked about the map and whether he went to Afghanistan. **Ahmad, suspecting that his answers would be passed on to Canadian agencies, volunteered anything he could think of that would help demonstrate that he had nothing to hide.** Ahmad told them about the map and his time in Afghanistan. Ahmad told them that his brother had called him from Afghanistan in 1999. **He told them he was probably suspected because he was a Muslim who took flying lessons.** He explained he had only taken about five interrupted hours of lessons because he had wanted to start an air taxi

service and that he had quit because he found he was terrified of flying. They told him this was not what they wanted to hear. **They threatened to bring in his Syrian wife and rape her in front of him.**

Ahmad told them that he had told them the truth and that he could not change what had happened. The interrogators said they would not accept that. Ahmad said he could not invent a story, and they told him yes, he could invent a story.

They told him to **strip naked except for his shorts and made him lie down, and handcuffed his hands behind his back to his legs. He was still blindfolded. They poured ice water all over him and brought in thick electric cables and started beating him with them on his feet, legs, knees and back.** They would occasionally stop and take him back to his cell. This continued for two days.

Ahmad broke down and agreed to say what they wanted him to say. He was **asked about any Syrians he knew, including Arar.** Ahmad explained that he did not know him well and met him briefly in a garage where he had worked in Montreal in 1998. He was also **asked about Almalki,** and he told them he knew him, but not well, and had once asked Almalki for advice on obtaining a Syrian visa.

The Syrian interrogators wanted Ahmad **to say he had seen both of them in Afghanistan,** although he had only seen Almalki there in passing and had not spoken with him. **In the end Ahmad said what he thought they wanted him to — that he had seen them both in Afghanistan.**

He was shown pictures of other people but he did not recognize any of them.

They told him his brother, Amr, sent him instructions from Afghanistan to take flying lessons so he could recruit Ahmad into al-Qaeda. They told him that Amr wanted Ahmad to prepare for a suicide attack using an airplane. Ahmad said this did not make sense because he had quit the lessons. The Syrians eventually agreed that this did not make sense and said Amr wanted Ahmad to launch a suicide attack **using a truck full of explosives.**

When Ahmad agreed to falsely confess to this, they told him they wanted him to confess that Amr sent him a map of Ottawa, and said the **target would be the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa.** Ahmad did not want to be turned over to the U.S., so he **falsely confessed that he was supposed to pick his own target and decided on the Parliament buildings.** (Neither the

Parliament Buildings or the U.S. Embassy are on the map, which only shows an area west of the downtown core.)

His interrogators seemed pleased with his false confession. They asked him who would help him, and he said that he did not know and that Amr would take care of this. They seemed to accept this.

The interrogators wanted Ahmad to write down their version of events. Although Ahmad had falsely confessed verbally, under torture, **he did not want to falsely implicate himself and his brother in writing**, so he wrote the truth about how the map had appeared in the truck. After he finished writing the statement in Arabic, his interrogators took him back to his cell.

Later that night, they discovered what he had written and three or four of them came to his cell. They were very angry, and shouting and cursing. They **dragged him by his hair and beard, kicking and beating him, back to the interrogation room. They handcuffed him, and started burning his shins with cigarettes** and threatened to burn his face and eyes. Ahmad's shins are still scarred from those burns.

They **wanted Ahmad to write out their version of the story in front of them**, but he was having trouble thinking and was moving too slowly. They were angry that Ahmad was so slow and continued to torture him and he suggested they write it and he would sign. **His interrogators wrote the story for him over several days, and when it was finished, made him put his thumb print on it and sign it. Ahmad was not permitted to read the final document.**

Ahmad believes this was about seven to ten days after he was detained, but he was not able to keep track of the time because of the torture. He wanted to recant his confession but was later told by other inmates that he would be killed if he tried.

Ahmad begged his interrogators to turn him over to the Canadians.

Ahmad was later brought before a general and told that **they wanted him to work as an informant, and to go to Afghanistan to find his brother and bring him to them.** Ahmad told them that he was willing to stay in this hell hole for another twenty years rather than work with them.

After the first few weeks, they shaved Ahmad's head and his beard. He tried to stop them from shaving his beard, which is important because of his faith, but they beat him.

Mid November, 2001

Rola and her family had waited for Ahmad at the airport, and had no idea what had happened to him. They contacted Ahmad's mother in Cairo, who was surprised to learn that he had not shown up. His mother immediately called his father's sister in Canada, and she contacted Ahmad's father, who was away on holidays. Ahmad's aunt and father contacted consular affairs officials at DFAIT to see if they could help locate him. **DFAIT was not able to confirm that Ahmad was in Syrian detention until the end of December, 2001.**

Within a few days of Ahmad's disappearance, his mother was called in for questioning by Egyptian security officials. She was asked about her family and her sons, and more of the same questions she had been asked at the Toronto airport.

November 16, 2001

According to FBI statements issued in November 2002, on November 16, 2001, **documents were found by Northern Alliance troops in a building in Kabul that authorities said they believed housed al-Qaeda operatives.** One was a 1996 letter addressed to **Amr El Maati** from the Canadian government, saying his Canadian citizenship document was enclosed. Another was his Toronto General Hospital patient card. *The National Post* later reported that they also found a business card and an envelope addressed to a British Columbia company. *The National Post* story reported that when the RCMP investigated the business, 4-U Enterprises, it found the company existed only on paper and that the address was a rented post-office box at a convenience store. ("FBI seeks terror suspect with Toronto ID," *National Post*, November 14, 2002, Page: A10). **In 2004 Ahmad's family heard rumours that Amr was killed around the time that the U.S. invaded Afghanistan.**

Detectives Sergeant Dave Truax and Scott Mills from the O.P.P. arrived at the Toronto residence of Ahmad's aunt, Sana Wassef. They asked her why Ahmad had gone to Syria and what she knew of his disappearance. They asked how religious Ahmad is. Ms. Wassef told the men all about the wedding plans. **Officer Mills seemed surprised and told her that if he had known that Ahmad went to Syria for a wedding he would have advised him not to go when he stopped him at the airport.**

November 26, 2001

An O.P.P. officer called Ahmad's father and asked to meet with him. Badr El Maati agreed and met with **Detectives Sergeant Mills and Truax** in a coffee shop. They were not in uniform. They questioned him for an hour about his family. They asked

about their religious beliefs and whether they pray. They asked him to rate how religious he was from a scale of one to ten, and to compare this with his sons.

Early December, 2001

Two CSIS agents, Adrian White and Rob Cassolato, went to Badr El Maati's home and questioned him about the whereabouts of his son.

It was sometime in December that Badr remembers meeting his Member of Parliament, John Godfrey, to tell him Ahmad was missing. Mr. Godfrey advised him that he would try to raise it with the Prime Minister in Ottawa, and that Badr should write to the Prime Minister and contact the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ottawa. Badr continued to contact Mr. Godfrey about Ahmad's case over the next two years.

December 3, 2001

Galati met with the RCMP and gave them the map and a report written by Ahmad's employer. The RCMP signed for the documents.

December 9, 2001

Badr El Maati wrote to then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to inform him that his son was missing. The Prime Minister's office later responded, advising that the matter had been referred to John Manley, then Minister of Foreign Affairs.

December or January

Ahmad's **cell at the Palestine branch shared a wall with the women's cell**, and he could communicate with them through the walls by whispering. He remembers sometime in December or January talking with a seventeen year-old woman who had been detained forty days after her wedding along with her husband, her sister and her sister's husband. She had been in detention for four or five months, and was four or five months pregnant. **She was taken from the cell and tortured until she had a miscarriage. She told Ahmad that they had tortured her until she lost the baby so they would not have to care for it.** This woman was still there when he was transferred to Egypt. Ahmad was heartbroken by her story, and he was thankful that his mother was not in that cell.

Many of the prisoners at the Palestine Branch had been kept in the grave-like cells for years. They seemed to be able to keep track of the passing of time and the time of day, something which Ahmad found difficult to do. They were all Muslims and took turns calling for the *Azan* (prayer) because the guards would beat whoever called the prayer.

December, 2002

According to testimony at the Arar Commission on June 17, 2005 by Gar Pardy, former Director of Consular Affairs, Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) officials had so far been refusing to confirm whether Ahmad was in detention in Syria. Pardy asked then Canadian Ambassador to Syria, Franco Pillarella, to contact high-level officials in the Syrian MFA.

Syrian Foreign Vice-Minister Haddad's office confirmed on December 29 or 30 that Ahmad was in Syrian custody. They advised, however, that consular access would be denied because, they claimed, Ahmad was a Syrian citizen.

Consular officials contacted Ahmad's family to say they had confirmed Ahmad was in Syrian detention, and confirmed with them that Ahmad holds only Canadian and Egyptian citizenship, not Syrian.

January 2, 2002

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, **Pillarella contacted Steve Covey, then the RCMP's Liaison Officer in Rome,** on January 2, 2002 to inform him that the Syrian Vice Minister had confirmed Ahmad was in detention, and that the embassy would be seeking consular access to him. It is not clear, however, that the RCMP, CSIS or Pillarella did not already know that Ahmad was in Syrian custody.

Pillarella testified at the Arar Commission on June 14, 2005, **that Covey travelled to Damascus in January, 2001 to collect information for an investigation. Pillarella introduced Covey to General Hassan Khalil, Head of the Syrian Military Intelligence.** Pillarella testified that he "opened the door but it was the liaison officer that conducted the business." It is not clear from the testimony whether the RCMP officer was in Damascus to obtain information stemming from Ahmad's interrogation.

January 22, 2002

The RCMP executed seven search warrants. The Information to obtain this search warrant relied upon reports and letters received from RCMP and CSIS and referred to a "suspected sleeper terrorist cell" operating in Canada.

Officers arrived at Badr El Maati's home and showed him the search warrant. They searched his home, copied information from Badr's computer, and seized Ahmad's trucking travel log books and other personal information and records including a will Ahmad had prepared before his pilgrimage to Mecca for the Hajj in 1999.

Every couple of months after this, **officers Scott Mills and Drew Kyle went to Badr's home** to ask him to sign renewal orders that allowed them to continue to hold those items.

January 25, 2002

Ahmad believes that it was sometime after midnight on January 25 that he was removed from his cell at the Palestine Branch, hooded and handcuffed, and taken by car to a waiting airplane. At the bottom of the steps to the airplane, Syrian officials removed his hood and asked him to identify his Canadian passport and expired Egyptian passport. They seemed to be verifying his identity. They put the hood back on and he was taken up the more than ten steps into the plane. They had his luggage as well. Ahmad remembers the plane as being a medium-sized passenger plane that would seat at least 100 people, not a small jet. He could see through the bottom of the hood as he was walking in the aisle that all the seats were empty – **he and his escorts, of which he estimated there were at least ten, were the only passengers.** Ahmad did not hear any crew or pilot during the flight. His escorts spoke in low tones and Ahmad was not able to tell which language they were speaking. When Ahmad asked to use the washroom, one of his escorts signalled with his hand that he could not. Ahmad could see his hand from under the hood. **He was hoping he was being handed over to Canadian officials, and did not know that he was being transferred, instead, to Egypt.**

Ahmad estimates that the flight took about an hour and a half, and they arrived in what he would later learn was Cairo at about three in the morning. Ahmad was taken, still hooded and handcuffed, down the airplane's stairs and placed in a van. His shoulders and wrists were in a lot of pain from being handcuffed for so long. **He heard someone speaking with an Egyptian dialect and guessed he was in Egypt.** He was forced to lie down on the floor of the van, and he was covered with some kind of a blanket.

He was taken to what he would later learn was the main intelligence headquarters — the Mukhabarat Alama — in the Abdeen area of Cairo. His hood was removed so he could be photographed, and then the hood was put back on. Someone came in the room and checked his pulse and blood pressure, and Ahmad guessed that they were checking to see if he could survive torture. He was given a blue prison uniform.

Still hooded, he was taken to an interrogation room. It was very smoky and there were about five or six people in the room. Ahmad was told to tell them his story again. **He thought this**

was his chance to recant the false confession he gave in Syria, and told them that what he had told the Syrians was false.

They immediately started beating him very hard. **The beating was very different than in Syria — it was as if they were trained in martial arts.** His hands were cuffed behind his back, and he was still hooded. They kicked him all over his body, and he was sent flying all over the room. Then they forced him to crouch down low, which caused a lot of pain in his knee. If he tried to move, or fell forward, they would beat him. They were yelling at him and insulting his family members and his religion.

His interrogators asked him about his sister, who was living in Egypt. **They said his sister was being held in the next room and that they were going to rape her.**

Ahmad felt completely broken, and collapsed, and started to repeat the false confession he had given in Syria, because he thought it was what they wanted to hear. His voice was very weak and one of the interrogators then told him they could tell he was lying because they had a lie detector. They then seemed to believe that he had been telling the truth in the first place.

He was taken to a cell that was cleaner and a bit larger than the cell he had been kept in Syria. It had a one-piece steel door with concrete floors and walls and a very high ceiling with a light. The door had a small, locked window in it. There was a cement bench, and two or three blankets. They removed the hood, but left his hands cuffed behind his back. They left him in that cell for about an hour, and then came to take him to continue the interrogation with one man in an office. This man wanted to verify the story, and seemed now to be taking a less violent approach.

Ahmad told him the truth about his false confession, and about the map and the letter he had from his employer. The man asked a guard to get the Motion Supply letter from his luggage. **He read the letter, and started cursing the Syrians, saying that they are not good at interrogating people, and obviously did not even read the letter or understand English.** Ahmad asked the man to call Canada, and to investigate and verify his account about the map. He told the man he could kill him if he was lying.

The man responded that he would verify the story, and that **if Ahmad was lying he would cut him to pieces.** He was taken in and out of four offices with four different men who seemed

to be trying to verify his account. Ahmad was taken to his cell and the guards told him they would be keeping him awake. Over the next twenty four hours they would take him in and out of his cell for more interrogation but no more beating at this time. Ahmad was exhausted, and his shoulders were in a lot of pain because he was still handcuffed.

After about twenty four hours they removed the handcuffs, brought him some food, and finally allowed him to sleep.

February to June, 2002

Ahmad was kept in this location for four and a half months; until about mid-June. He was handcuffed and blindfolded whenever being moved, so he could not see the guards or other prisoners. There were about sixteen cells in his wing, and he believes there were two other prisoners there but he never heard or saw them. **The only communication with other people was with the guard, to ask to go to the washroom, and with interrogators.** Ahmad felt completely cut off from the world. **The only connection he had to the outside world was the sound of the call to prayer from a nearby mosque, and the sound of passing trains.**

One of the guards was friendly with him and seemed to know about his story. This guard told Ahmad that he knew that **information had come from Canada** and said that our countries (the regimes in Egypt and Syria) are like boots (this is an Arabic expression to describe someone who follows blindly) that do anything the West wants.

The interrogations continued intermittently. They wanted to know if he knew any Egyptians when he was in Afghanistan. They asked him about his brother and if he knew where Amr was. **Ahmad was not questioned about Arar, Almalki or any other Canadians while he was in Egypt.**

They brought him a pen and paper and asked him to write his life story. Ahmad took his time because he thought it would hold off the torture. He wrote for a month about everything he could think of about his life. He did not write a false confession. In the end it was about seventy or eighty pages. He found it very difficult to concentrate and write.

In late February or early March the questions changed. A guard took him to an interrogation room. There was a television in the room. The guard removed his handcuffs and told him to sit in a chair and then the guard sat in a chair behind him. A man told him over a speaker to take off his blindfold. The television power came on and there was a part of a map on the screen. It was zoomed in very close, and Ahmad did not recognize that

this was the map of Ottawa. The man asked him if he recognized the map, and Ahmad said he did not know what this was. The man started yelling and accused him of lying. Ahmad said show it to him without the television. The man asked the guard to replace the blindfold and someone brought the map into the room and put it on a desk. They told him to remove his blindfold and look at the map. Ahmad immediately recognized it and was relieved and said yes, this was the map he had told them about. He was taken back to his cell.

He was later taken and **questioned about a remote control he had bought for his television sometime around September, 2001 in Toronto.** They wanted to know why he bought a remote, and he explained that the remote that his mother and he had for their television had not worked and so they had replaced it.

Ahmad had to find ways to stay human. He begged and begged for a Quran, but they refused until about a month after he arrived. When they finally gave him one, Ahmad felt as if his life had been saved. He also had a pen in the cell with him. He wrote the words "*Allah Jallah Jalaloho*," (God Almighty) on the wall above the door. About two months into his stay there, the guards discovered what he had written during a routine search of the cell. They started yelling and brought supervisors and other guards into the cell. They were very concerned that he had done this and it caused a big commotion.

Ahmad was questioned about his Canadian passport. They accused him of having tried to destroy the passport that was issued by the Canadian Embassy in Pakistan. He explained it had gone through the wash because he had forgotten to take it out of his pocket. He explained that this was why he had to apply for a new passport in Toronto in 1999. **He was beaten and kicked in the stomach and the Egyptians had him sign a "confession" that he had deliberately destroyed the passport.** This was the first time he was beaten since the first day there, and the first time in Egypt that he was made to sign a false confession.

Around June 10, 2002

Ahmad guesses that it was about four and a half months after he had arrived in Egypt, around June 10, that he was **transferred to the Markaz Amen El Dawla (State Security Headquarter)** in Nasr City. The guards came to his cell with some clothes and told him to change. They handcuffed and blindfolded him and put him in a van, where they made him lie on the floor and covered him with a blanket. In less than a half hour they arrived at the headquarters. **Ahmad was fearful**

because he did not know where he was or why he had been moved.

He was taken inside a building and placed in a cell. They removed his clothes and gave him a blue uniform. The cell was about three to four feet wide and about ten feet long. There was Turkish toilet, and a bench. The toilet didn't stop running the whole time he was kept there and the noise drove him crazy. There was a small tap on the wall. **If he wanted to drink, Ahmad would have to push the tap with his leg, and suck from it like an animal.** The walls were concrete. It was one of many cells and **he could hear other prisoners being tortured and screaming** – the torture room was close by and they used electric shock on the prisoners. Ahmad believes he lost a lot of weight there.

Here Ahmad experienced the worst torture of his entire ordeal. His hands were kept handcuffed behind his back all the time except for about ten minutes per day when the cuffs would be switched to the front so he could eat and use the toilet. **The cuffs were tight and made his wrists bleed. His shoulder felt as if it were coming away from his body.** He begged and begged for the cuffs to be moved to the front or taken off, but he was ignored.

He was also kept blindfolded for the whole time and the blindfold was tight. It was an old piece of a rotten blanket and hurt his eyes and caused a rash on his face. **Ahmad was in extreme pain and could not help but scream and cry out in his agony.** The pain was intense and prevented him from sleeping, though he would occasionally pass out.

The guards would sometimes throw his food into the room on the floor of his cell, and cockroaches and rats that would eat the food with Ahmad.

Ahmad's interrogation continued, sometimes for more than ten hours at a time, which was unbearable. He was given **electric shocks — he was blindfolded, but could feel that his interrogators had a metal stick with an electrical current in it, with which they touched his handcuffs, hands, shoulders, legs, stomach and genitals with.**

The Egyptian interrogators seemed highly skilled. Ahmad felt like he was rotting away. It was very hot and humid and he was sweating a lot. His t-shirt had rotted. **One interrogator refused to question him because he smelled so bad,** and asked the

guards to let him wash. They resisted but later Ahmad was allowed to wash, the only time at this facility.

This interrogation focussed on the same things as previous interrogations in Egypt. They did not show him the map again.

July, 2002

In July, after about a month and a half, the guards came to his cell and gave him some clothes, took off his handcuffs and told him to change. They put the handcuffs back on and took him in another van, again making him lie on the floor with blankets and a spare tire on top of him.

He was **moved to the Lazogley State Security Branch for Cairo**. They did not take him to a cell, but put him in a hallway with other prisoners. He was still handcuffed, but in the front, and was still blindfolded. **He was kept in the hallway for about two weeks, sitting on the floor, packed next to other prisoners**. He could whisper with the other prisoners but had to be very careful because they would be beaten if they were caught. This is how he learned where he was. This was the first time he had spoken with prisoners since Syria, where they were able to communicate between cells. There were interrogation rooms off the hallway, and **he could hear other people being tortured and screaming**.

It was very difficult to sleep because they were not able to lie down. **If anyone started to lean to the side, they would be beaten**.

Ahmad developed anal inflammation and bleeding and remembers other prisoners saying they had the same problem. (Ahmad later learned that he had developed an anal fissure and had surgery for this in July, 2005).

Ahmad was only interrogated once or twice here, and only briefly. He told them he had nothing new to say.

Later he was taken to a bigger cell crammed with people.

The cell was about fifteen by twenty feet with a smaller room inside with a toilet and a tap to drink from and wash with.

This was the first time since his arrest in Syria eight months earlier that he could freely see and speak with other people. The prisoners were very kind to each other and helped Ahmad by giving him clothes to replace the rotting ones he was wearing. The stronger prisoners always helped the weaker ones, by giving them their food and clothes. They were especially nice to Ahmad because he was not from the country.

July 31, 2002

At one point there were so many people in the room that it became very difficult to breathe. **Ahmad and others had asthma attacks** and the other prisoners screamed for the guards to help. The guards opened the door to the hallway that connected that cell to another the same size but it did not help much. **There were about 120 people crammed into the two cells.** They had to take turns lying down to sleep – about forty people could sleep at a time while the others were standing. It was impossible to stand without touching each other.

The guards came to the cell on July 30 and called Ahmad's name. He was taken upstairs and they showed him his luggage and asked him to verify it was his. He was taken back to the cell, and other prisoners told him he was likely being sent to the Tora prison just south of Cairo, as this is what happens to political prisoners. They were all political prisoners and knew the process. They said that Tora was like a sorting facility. The guards came back for him the next day on July 31. These guards were wearing uniforms. They had a uniformed officer with them. Until this time, all the guards Ahmad had seen in Egypt had been in plain clothes. **He later learned the Ministry of the Interior had taken over his case from the intelligence.**

They took him to an official prison truck and he could see out the window. **This was the first time Ahmad saw daylight since he was travelling to Syria more than eight months earlier.** He could see people on the streets, and saw the Nile River. He had not seen the Nile since he was in Egypt as a teenager. He was the only prisoner in the truck.

When they arrived at Tora, they opened his luggage, and took out any clothing that was white. All political prisoners being held under the martial law had to wear white clothing. Anyone who had been convicted of a crime and sentenced had to wear a blue uniform. Prisoners who were going to be executed wore red. Ahmad did not see anyone in red but was told this by the other prisoners. He changed into his own *galabi* – a traditional Arabic long white shirt, with white pants underneath. They let him wear his sandals too.

He was kept in a cell that was about fifteen by twenty feet, and there were an average of ten people kept there at a time. The conditions were more relaxed. There was no interrogation at this prison.

He met a Canadian political prisoner at Tora — a young man in his early twenties. He was able to talk to him for about ten minutes, and gave him his name, passport details and his father's phone number so that he could follow up with the

Canadian Embassy if he was released. Ahmad remembers the young man saying that he was serving a three year sentence. He told Ahmad he received regular visits from Canadian embassy officials.

Not long after this Badr El Maati did receive a phone call from this prisoner's family in the U.S., telling him Ahmad was in prison in Egypt.

Badr El Maati thinks it was later that he was contacted by Canadian consular officials who told him that they had confirmed that Ahmad was in Egypt but that they did not know where he was being held.

August 12, 2002

Canadian consular officials visited Ahmad for the first time since he was detained in November, 2001. The meeting took place in the State Security officer's office at the Tora prison. The Canadian representatives included Stuart Bale, another officer with a French name, and an interpreter named Mira Wassef. Ahmad remembers there being three Egyptian officials present — at this and at future consular visits, **some, not all, of the officials would wear big dark sunglasses.** Ahmad imagined that it was because they did not want him to know what they looked like.

He quickly told the consular officials he had been tortured and forced to make a false confession in Syria — he wanted to say it before he was stopped by the Egyptian officials. Bale asked what the substance of the confession was, and Ahmad said he would not discuss the details with him. **Bale suggested that Ahmad speak with Canadian intelligence officials in Egypt. Ahmad said he would only speak with Canadian officials if he was on Canadian soil.**

Ahmad did not feel able to speak freely about his torture in Egypt but told the Canadians that although he had been treated well there, he was having trouble with his asthma, and had not had fresh air or sunshine since he had been first detained.

He told them to contact his family and tell them he was okay. **Bale said they had not known where he was and had been looking for him.** Ahmad felt very frustrated and told Bale that CSIS had known all along where he was, and exactly what had happened to him.

Consular officials later informed Badr El Maati that the Canadian Embassy had confirmed Ahmad was being held at the Abou Zabel Jail in Cairo and they had had their first consular visit with him.

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, **Project A OCanada was informed that Ahmad told consular officials he was tortured while in detention in Syria**, and that he was forced to make a false confession.

Mid August, 2002

A few days after the consular visit, guards came to the cell and let all the prisoners in that wing out into a closed courtyard for 30 minutes. The guards asked for Ahmad by name and asked if he was the man who had complained about them to the Canadian embassy. They made sure he went out into the sun. **The other prisoners were very happy and treated Ahmad like some kind of a hero.** This was overwhelming for them, as many of them had not seen the sun for years.

August 15, 2002

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, **A OCanada discussed media lines concerning Ahmad's allegations that he had been tortured** by Syrian authorities.

September 1, 2002

Ahmad received his **second consular visit** at the Tora prison. His sister and brother-in-law attended along with consular officials Stuart Bale and Mira Wasseff. It was a very emotional meeting as **this was the first time Ahmad had seen any of his family since he left his mother ten months earlier in Vienna.** Bale again asked if Ahmad would meet with a Canadian Intelligence officer, and Ahmad again said he would, but only in Canada.

Mid-September, 2002

Sometime later in September, Ahmad was **transferred to the Abou Zabel prison in Cairo.** The guards came to his cell, and called out the names of Ahmad and some other prisoners. They were put in a truck. They asked the guards where they were going and were told they were being taken to Abou Zabel. Ahmad had heard about this prison since he was a child — it is well known as the worst prison in Egypt. When they arrived, the guards went through his luggage and stole some of his clothes. They **put him in solitary confinement in a small cell for two weeks or more.** The conditions were poor. Ahmad thinks he may have been sent here because he spoke about his asthma and not seeing the sun during the consular visit.

September 26, 2002

Arar was detained by American officials at JFK Airport in New York. Officials from the New York Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigations **questioned him about Ahmad and Almalki.**

October 15, 2002

Egypt's State Security Supreme Court issued orders for Ahmad's release. Ahmad's family had hired an Egyptian lawyer to push for the order. The guards took Ahmad from his cell, handcuffed him and took him in a truck with other detainees who had received release orders. They drove them to the Lazogley prison where he was held in a common cell for five days. **A new detention order was issued and Ahmad was taken back to Abou Zabel and into solitary confinement.**

November 3, 2002

A second release order was issued by Egypt's State Security Supreme Court, after a second lawyer had been hired by Ahmad's family. Ahmad was again transferred to Lazogley and again a new detention order was issued and he was sent back to Abou Zabel. Ahmad learned from **other prisoners that they looked forward to these release orders, even though they knew they would not be released** — this was an opportunity to see other prisoners and see the city from the truck.

November 11, 2002

The FBI issued an alert for Ahmad's brother, Amr El Maati.

The notice, which remains on the FBI's web site at <http://www.fbi.gov/terrorinfo/elmaati.htm>, is signed by Robert Mueller, director of the FBI, and says "Amer El-Maati [sic] is being sought in connection with possible terrorist threats in the United States."

Media reported that shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks, the FBI inadvertently posted on the Internet a memo listing 345 people it wanted to question in connection with the attacks, and the list included Amr El Maati. The FBI did not again state publicly it was looking for him until this alert was issued a year later. When questioned by reporters, an FBI spokesman Paul Bresson would not say why there was suddenly interest in Amr, saying **"Information continues to pour in and, over time, it becomes more specific, corroborated, and substantiated"** ("FBI won't explain sudden interest in terrorism suspect," *Edmonton Journal*, November 13, 2002).

CBC's *The National* and several other Canadian media reported on the alert. *The National* reported that the RCMP did not have a warrant for Amr El Maati's release, and did not have information for public use at this time.

Late November, 2002

A few days later, **Ahmad was transferred to Tora.** The first night he was there, around midnight, the guards came and handcuffed and blindfolded him and took him out into a van. He was forced to lie on the floor and was covered. He was **taken**

to the State Security Headquarters in Nazr City where he was placed in solitary confinement.

He was taken out of his cell for interrogation. Ahmad does not recall the focus of the questioning, except that it was likely a repeat of the previous questions.

There was no beating or physical torture at this time. **He was kept there for a week to ten days before being sent to Tora and then back to Abou Zabel.**

Badr El Maati believes that it was around this time that **two CSIS agents, Adrian White and "Steve" called and asked to meet with him** in a coffee shop. He agreed. **The agents told Badr they might go to Egypt to convince the Egyptian authorities to release his son if he would promise to stay in Egypt and not return to Canada.** They asked Badr if his son would have somewhere to stay in Egypt, and hoping it would help his son, he said yes, Ahmad's mother had a house there where Ahmad could stay and that there were other relatives there. He asked the officers why they wanted to know this, and White responded that they expected that they might have to travel to Egypt to try to get Ahmad released. They also **expressed concern that the media might find out about the case. Badr felt they implied that they would help get Ahmad out if he stayed in Egypt.** When he asked how long Ahmad would have to stay in Egypt and they did not answer.

December 2002

The TV show **America's Most Wanted reported that Amr El Maati was an airline pilot** who may have "snuck back into the U.S." to work with al-Qaeda sleeper cells.

January 2003

Ahmad believes it was in January 2003, while he was in Abou Zabel, that he received his first visit from his mother. Ahmad's mother found that Mira Wassell at the Canadian embassy was very helpful in securing that visit, especially as visits to Abou Zabel were very rare. The visit was very emotional. She had not seen him since November, 2001. **She remembers that Ahmad's face was blue, and his feet looked terrible.** She was able to visit Ahmad about once every two months after the first visit. All visits were monitored by Egyptian officials and Ahmad was never permitted to speak to his mother alone. During the second or third visit by his mother, however, Ahmad told her that he was severely tortured in Syria and described the cell he was kept in there — he said it was like living in a grave. He also informed her that after he was tortured in Syria he was forced to sign a false confession.

January 21, 2003

Ahmad received his third consular visit, and again he felt that consular official **Bale seemed preoccupied not with Ahmad's well being, but with whether he would allow a Canadian intelligence officer to question him.** Ahmad again told Bale that he would only meet them in Canada.

February 27, 2003

Ahmad received his fourth consular visit, this time with consular officials Bale and Anna Papas. **Bale asked Ahmad again if would meet with Canadian intelligence officer, and again this seemed to be the main preoccupation of the Canadian officials.**

After the visit the State Security Officer had Ahmad brought back into his office. He asked why Ahmad would not agree with the consul's suggestion that he meet with Canadian intelligence officials in Egypt.

March, 2003

A few days later, **Ahmad was transferred again to Tora.** The first night he was there, around midnight, the guards came and handcuffed and blindfolded him and took him out into a van. He was forced to lie on the floor and was covered. He was taken to the State Security Headquarters in Nazr City where he was placed in solitary confinement.

Ahmad was taken for interrogation. He was given electric shock and questioned about having prepared a will before going to the Hajj in 1999. The will had been **seized by the RCMP** when they searched Badr El Maati's home in January 2002. **They also asked why he kept refusing to meet with a Canadian intelligence officer in Egypt.** Ahmad said he did not want to do this without the Egyptians being aware of it – he did not want to antagonize them. They told Ahmad that they knew about the request and that he should agree, and Ahmad said that the next time they asked he would agree.

This was the first time he saw an interrogator face to face in Egypt. He also saw that there was a one-way window in the wall.

After about ten days, he was **transferred back to Tora and then to Abou Zabel.** He was sent **to a different branch of the prison complex this time – the Leman Abou Zabel.**

This is an older part of the complex, built by the British when they were in Egypt in the nineteenth century. He was put in a cell that was about six feet wide and about ten feet long. There was a bucket for a toilet and nothing else in the cell. He was kept there for one night before being **transferred back to where he had been previously kept at Abou Zabel.**

Ahmad believes that it was sometime late in March, 2003 when he was **transferred back to Tora where he was kept in a common cell for about five months.**

April 7, 2003

An Action Memorandum prepared for the Minister of Foreign Affairs by Gar Pardy, then Director General of the Consular Affairs Bureau, and released by the Arar Commission, says that **"Mr. El Maati seems to be a case of little evidence to support the allegations of involvement in terrorist activities but rather one of associating with others who may have."**

July 25, 2003

The *National Post* and the *Ottawa Citizen* published a front page report by Robert Fife in which unnamed sources said **Syrian authorities provided information to the CIA which helped avert an "al-Qaeda conspiracy" to attack the US Embassy in Ottawa.** In the same article, Fife reports that Ahmad Arnous, Syrian Ambassador to Canada, says Syria gave "classified information" about Arar to the CIA and CSIS. Fife's unnamed US source says the Canadian government "*knows much more about Arar than they are telling Canadians,*" and **"the RCMP quietly asked the U.S. government to arrest Mr. Arar in New York City and deport him"** ("Al-Qaeda targeted U.S. Embassy: Syrian tip led to arrest of accused terrorists planning Ottawa attack," *National Post*, July 25, 2003: A1).

RCMP Inspector André Guertin said there was never a plot to attack the US Embassy, and "if there were, we would know" ("No Al-Qaida plot in Canada: RCMP," *Canadian Press*, July 25, 2003).

August, 2003

Ahmad believes that it was around August, 2003 that **he was transferred back to Abou Zabel.** During the day, he was permitted to walk around in a common area, but would be placed back in his cell alone from four in the afternoon until ten in the morning.

August 20, 2003

The El Maatis' Egyptian lawyer obtained a **third release order** from the Office of the Public Prosecutor in the Egyptian Ministry of Justice. Ahmad was transferred to Giza branch of the State Security Branch, and again **a new detention order was issued and he was sent back to Abou Zabel.**

September 18, 2003

According to documents released by the Arar Commission, the Canadian consul went to visit Ahmad but he was not there.

September 24, 2003

Ahmad received his fifth consular visit from R. Chen and Anna Pappas. Chen again asked him if would meet with a

Canadian intelligence officer. He agreed because the Egyptians had instructed him to.

October 5, 2003

Arar was released from Syrian detention and returned to Canada the next day.

October 16, 2003

Media reported that the FBI has issued a report saying that an FBI informant has told them that Adnan El Shukrijumah was seen at McMaster University in Hamilton in 2002, seeking nuclear material to make a "dirty bomb." The university has a five-megawatt research reactor. He was apparently posing as a student. The informant also said that three other "Al Qaeda terrorists," **Amr El Maati**, Jaber A. Elbaneh and Anas al-Liby were also seen in Hamilton in 2002. The report said that El Shukrijumah was part of a terrorist cell in Canada.

Ahmad believes that it was in October 2003, that he was **sent to Nasr City for the last time**. He was told by Egyptian officers that **they knew that Canada has done this to him**, and that this was happening with many cases in the U.S. They said that people were being coerced into agreeing to be informants and to implicate others. They advised Ahmad to go back to Canada, get a good lawyer and "fight back."

October 23, 2003

CTV News reported that CSIS had received a transcript of Arar's confession, and that "senior government officials in various departments" told Craig Oliver that Arar "provided information to the Syrians about al Qaeda cells operating in Canada," the Muslim Brotherhood, and four other Canadians: **Ahmad, Arwad al-Bushi, a Syrian-born Canadian being held in a Syrian jail; Almalki, and Mohamed Harkat**, born in Algeria, who was being held at the time under an anti-terrorism security certificate at the Ottawa Detention Centre.

October 29, 2003

Badr El Maati was interviewed on CBC's *The National*, saying that until recently he believed that quiet diplomacy would help his son, but seeing that publicity led to the release of Maher Arar, he had decided to speak out.

He had been advised by consular officials in Ottawa that he should not speak publicly because to do so could hurt Ahmad. Instead, he had been told, diplomatic channels would be most effective. He was told that speaking out could hurt their positive relations with Egypt and jeopardize the chances of Ahmad's safe release.

November 4, 2003

Arar told his story publicly for the first time.

November 12, 2003

Ahmad's father, Badr El Maati, visited the Toronto constituency office of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bill Graham, in Toronto. He asked the Minister to work to release his son as he had done for Arar.

Late, 2003

Ahmad remembers there may have been another consular visit in November or December, 2003, at Abou Zabel, but is not sure of the date. He believes that the issue of meeting with the Canadian intelligence officers was not raised again and no one from Canada ever came to question him.

Ahmad remembers that it was late in 2003 when **his mother, during a visit, finally told him that Rola's family had annulled the marriage.** Rola's father had personally delivered the news to Ahmad's mother in Cairo, telling her that he could not have imagined a better husband for his daughter, but that they were frightened for their safety and felt that the family had no choice but to seek an annulment.

Ahmad was devastated, because his memories of Rola had helped him survive.

January 11, 2004

Egypt's Minister of the Interior ordered Ahmad's release. He was handcuffed, blindfolded and taken to the State Security Branch in Giza, where he was interrogated again. They reviewed everything with him, and asked new questions about his brother, Amr. They wanted to know if Ahmad knew where he was. When Ahmad said he had no idea where his brother was, the officer ripped part of his beard out.

When they finished their interrogation, Ahmad was released from detention and sent out the door with his mother's address. His family was not told and was therefore not able to be there to meet him. Canadian officials were not there either, but knew about his release, and Mira Wasseff telephoned his mother to congratulate them just a few minutes after he arrived home.

January to March, 2004

Throughout this time **Ahmad had to report every four to five days to state security at Giza.** He was supposed to tell them where he had been, who he had talked to, and who had called him. He did as they asked.

About three days after Ahmad was released, **he and his mother went to the Canadian embassy.** They had called and asked to see him. They asked Ahmad how he was treated in Egypt, and Ahmad did not provide details but was clear that he had been tortured.

Ahmad had contracted severe bronchitis, and he explained that he was worried that it was Tuberculosis. They were alarmed and referred him to a doctor they dealt with in Cairo.

Ahmad also asked them to renew his passport. Egyptian officials had given him back his Canadian passport, which was due to expire the next month, and his old Egyptian passport, but his citizenship card and other documents were not returned to him. Embassy staff explained they needed his citizenship card in order to renew his passport, and Ahmad did not have one, so they told him he could only have a travel document. Ahmad told them that the Egyptians had kept his Canadian citizenship card and his other identification. After a long delay he was issued a passport that was valid for six months.

Ahmad heard through his family that Arar and Nurredin had been accompanied by Canadian officials when they returned to Canada. He was very frightened he would be prevented from leaving the country, or worse, re-arrested or kidnapped, and **pleaded with the Canadian officials to have someone accompany him home.**

The officials said instead that they would accompany him to the airport, and give him a letter he could take with him to present in Frankfurt so that the embassy would be contacted there if there were any problems.

March 7, 2004

Ahmad went to the airport with Canadian embassy officials Papas and Chin, but **was prevented from leaving the country.** His luggage was already on the plane and he had his boarding pass when he was stopped.

March 29, 2004

Ahmad and his mother went again to the airport to try and leave Egypt. Despite what happened on March 7, **Canadian officials still refused to accompany him home to Canada**, but did try harder to help him get out successfully. **They were able, this time, to successfully leave Egypt and return to Canada on March 30.**

March 30, 2004

Ahmad landed in the Toronto airport with his mother. They were directed to immigration. When they reached the counter the officer asked him his story. He told him he had been detained for two and a half years. While he was talking, another man came with a card from Paul Copeland, a lawyer who was waiting for him. The man told the immigration officer that Ahmad's lawyer was waiting outside with some media people. After some discussion between the two, the first officer

advised the second officer that he did not have any choice and that he had to let Ahmad into the country, because he was a Canadian Citizen. They went through customs, who thoroughly searched their bags for over an hour before they were finally allowed to go home.

DFAIT officials never contacted Ahmad to de-brief him, or to recommend or check that he was seeking professional medical or psychological help. Myra Pastur-Lupul did help Ahmad get his Ontario Health Insurance Plan and Social Insurance cards renewed.

May 26, 2004

FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III and Attorney General John Ashcroft held a prime time news conference to warn of an impending "hard" attack on the United States. They asked local law enforcement and the public to help track down seven terror suspects including two Canadians, **Amr El Maati** and Abderraouf Jdey. Mueller described **Amr as "an al-Qaeda member and a licensed pilot**, is believed to have discussed hijacking a plane in Canada and flying it into a building in the United States." Colin Freeze later reported that he could find no official record of Amr El Maati having a pilot license. **The warning of an impending attack was greeted with some scepticism because it coincided with mounting criticism over US policy in Iraq**, and because the warning **did not prompt a change in the U.S. national terror alert**. Ashcroft linked the men to the "Abu Hafs al Masri Brigade" a so-called terrorist cell based in Boston.

2004

An FBI internal document listed as "not for public release" issued by Washington's FBI Counterterrorism Division was posted to web site of the sheriff's office in Jonesboro, Georgia in 2004 saying that Ahmad's brother, **Amr El Maati, was "last known to have entered Toronto" on November 9, 2001**. His family does not believe this news, as they have not spoken with Amr since 1999, and the last they heard from him was an email sent in 2000.

May 29, 2004

CSIS agents identifying themselves as Justin Wallace and William Jones visited Badr El Maati's apartment at 4:00 p.m. They asked if he had heard the news from the FBI about his son, Amr, and when he last heard from him. Badr explained the last time they spoke with Amr was in 1999. The agents told him they were concerned about Amr's safety, as **they would not want him to end up in the hands of the Americans and end up dead or at Guantanamo Bay**. They told Badr that if he

is in contact with Amr to ask him to report to the nearest Canadian consulate so he could return to Canada.

They asked about Ahmad's condition, and Badr responded that he was doing as well as could be expected given that they had destroyed his life. The agents disagreed. Badr recalled for them the surveillance and pointed out that **they could have just sat and talked with him if they had had suspicions.** The agents asked if Ahmad was working and whether he prays and which mosque he was attending, saying that some mosques are more radical than others. The agents asked if Ahmad had a grudge and Badr said no more than could be expected. They said they wanted to speak with Ahmad, and Badr advised them to contact his lawyer, Galati.

Wallace later called Ahmad and told him he had been unable to reach Galati and that they could just meet without him, to make things simple. Ahmad insisted he speak with his lawyer.

August 21, 2004

The Inquirer and *Mirror* newspaper of Nantucket reported a **"possible sighting" of Amr El Maati** at the Nantucket Memorial Airport.

Dec. 2004/Jan. 2005

It was in late December, 2004 or early January, 2005 that Randy Walsh returned the original of Ahmad's papers to Badr El Maati. He told El Maati that they had no basis on which to lay charges and were therefore returning the will and the trucking log books.

May 25, 2005

At around noon, CSIS agents Justin Wallace and one other officer named Ian came to Ahmad's home to ask him about Amr. They accused Ahmad of knowing where his brother was. They asked Ahmad to tell his brother to contact the closest Canadian mission and turn himself in, which would be better than if the Americans, Pakistanis or the Afghani security agencies caught him. Ahmad told him he did not know where his brother was and that his family had not spoken with him since 1999. He said that he had been through a lot because of CSIS and that they should contact his lawyer.