

DAY 22: “WHO FOUND THE KNIFE?”**22nd Hearing, Women’s Section, Korydallos Prison, Athens, 15 October 2015****1. Court access**

Hearings continue to be accessible to members of the public, provided they present their identity cards at the entrance. The courtroom was packed.

2. Presence and representation of the defendants

Nine (9) defendants were present at the beginning of the hearing. Thirteen (13) defendants were listed as absent; the remaining defendants were represented by their counsel.

3. Giorgos Rotas’ testimony (continued): cross-examination by the defence the civil action

Before the defence began to cross-examine the witness, Andreas Tzelis (counsel for the Fyssas family) asked the court’s permission to display a printed Google map of the area around Koralli cafe. There was some commotion in the courtroom as counsels stood to get a better look. Takis Zotos (counsel for the Egyptian fishermen) seized the opportunity to announce that, given that the issue has surfaced over and over again, he will likely repeat his request for audiovisual equipment to be provided throughout the trial. His request was entered on the record and the cross-examination of the witness began.

Andreas Tzelis: To which area were you assigned during the week of 17–18 September?

Giorgos Rotas: I don’t remember; I’ll have to check.

Tzelis: What code did you communicate with?

Rotas: 410-1.

Tzelis: Did you all have walkie-talkies?

Rotas: Tzouvaras and I did.

Tzelis: Was everyone in communication with the police station? Were all the bikes large? Did they have sirens or flashing lights?

Rotas: They come in different sizes. Not all of them have flashing lights but the ones we had that night did.

Tzelis: What was your immediate assessment of the situation?

Rotas: It seemed serious to me.

Tzelis: How do you choose your route? On that night, why didn’t you choose to drive through Salaminos avenue?

Rotas: That’s up to the driver.

Tzelis: Were the officers from the Keratsini unit also on large bikes?

Rotas: Yes.

Tzelis: Where did you meet the other unit?

Rotas: On Tsaldari street.

Tzelis: Did you speak?

Rotas: No, we just followed the flashing lights.

Tzelis: You drove towards Koralli. Where were the Golden Dawners?

Rotas: They were all along the entire length of Pavlou Mela street.

Tzelis: Were the four bikes driving down the street in parallel?

Rotas: No, one after the other.

Tzelis: Were the flashing lights on?

Presiding judge: He has already told you.

Tzelis: I want you to tell us where exactly you stopped your bikes.

Rotas: I don't remember exactly. From what I can remember, we left Koliouisis to guard them.

Tzelis: Did you know your Keratsini colleagues?

Rotas: I had worked with some of them before, so I knew them a little.

Tzelis: Where did you go next?

Rotas: We were in the middle of Kefallinias street right before we started running.

Tzelis: Where was Hatzistamatis [the middleman]? On the Golden Dawners' side?

Rotas: Yes.

Tzelis: Were cars driving past?

Rotas: I can't remember.

Tzelis: Were the bikes all parked together or one behind the other?

Rotas: I can't remember.

Tzelis: Did a policeman speak with the Golden Dawners?

Rotas: No.

Tzelis: Why not?

Rotas: Why would we? Was I supposed to try and reason with 50 people holding beams? Eight people can't take on 50.

Tzelis: Were the Golden Dawners obstructing traffic?

Rotas: Yes.

Tzelis: So they were obstructing traffic and holding beams? Wasn't that enough reason for you to intervene?

Rotas: I informed the station instead.

Tzelis: Did you ask Hatzistamatis for ID when he introduced himself as a colleague?

Rotas: I don't know; Tsolakidis spoke to him.

Tzelis: What did Hatzistamatis say to you?

Rotas: I heard him say there was a fight breaking out between the Golden Dawners and some people from the “known space”.

Tzelis: What is the “known space”?

Rotas: Anarchists.

Tzelis: What were the Golden Dawners shouting? Did you hear?

Rotas: There were a screaming mob. They said, “what are you doing here?”, “what are you looking at?”. Wherever the police shows up, people who don’t like the police show up as well.

Tzelis: What did you do when they started to run?

Rotas: We followed them on foot.

Tzelis: Why didn’t you take the bikes?

Rotas: It wouldn’t have been practical.

Tzelis: When you followed the mob and got to Tsaldari St, what did you see?

Rotas: I couldn’t really figure out who had gone where.

Tzelis: Which policeman was in the lead?

Rotas: Legatou, I think.

Tzelis: How did the mob leave? In formation?

Rotas: They all ran together as a team.

Tzelis: Why did it look to you like they would snatch Roupakias from you?

Rotas: Because there were many of them – many more than us.

Tzelis: Were you at the Hytirio theatre when Golden Dawners beat the police? I’m just asking in case you were afraid because of that.

Rotas: No.

Tzelis: Why didn’t the police arrest anyone after the station ordered you to bring them in?

Rotas: I don’t know.

Violetta Kougiatsou (counsel for the Fyssas family): In your testimony, you said you heard something before the mob started running.

Rotas: It seemed to me that these people knew what they were doing; they knew why they were running.

Kougiatsou: In your testimony, you said there were Golden Dawners, and there was a lot of shouting, but you couldn’t figure out whether there was a physical fight going on. And you said that you decided to intervene only in the event of such a fight. But now you say that, either way, there were too many of them for you to intervene.

Rotas: No, that's not what I said. The station gave us orders to leave. The station always gives out that order; we aren't units that intervene in mobs. But we stayed and arrested people.

Kougiatsou: And why did you say that, as you were approaching the murder scene, that your colleague, Ms Legatou, said, "no, not with knives"?

Rotas: Because it was all over the news every day.

Kougiatsou: Why did you take your phone out when the conversation with Hatzistamatis was happening?

Rotas: Because I didn't know the area and I wanted to be able to give the station the right information if something happened.

Chrysa Papadopoulou (counsel for the Fyssas family): What kinds of police units intervene in mobs?

Rotas: The Delta [rapid response unit] and MAT, YAT and YMAT (riot police) units.

Papadopoulou: How long did Roupakias and Fyssas fighting for?

Rotas: 10–15 seconds.

Papadopoulou: Then why didn't the autopsy find any signs of injury beyond a bruise?

Rotas: Because he didn't take any hits, he must be very good [Roupakias].

Papadopoulou: You said you asked him why he hit Fyssas. He answered that Fyssas had hit one of his guys; but if the two had fought, as you say, why didn't he just say, "I hit him because he hit me"?

Rotas:.....

Papadopoulou: How long did it take for you to drag Pavlos away and arrest Roupakias?

Rotas: About a minute.

Papadopoulou: It says here that the first ambulance was called by the Dias motorcycle unit at 00:04, so the murder must have happened at 00:03 and you must have got to the place at 23:57.

Rotas: Yes.

Papadopoulou: Were your orders from the station to leave?

Rotas: The orders were to observe from a distance. What I understood was that we should leave.

Papadopoulou: Was this order given after Tsolakidis informed the station that they had started to run?

Rotas: Yes.

Papadopoulou: What do you mean when you say that the groups converged around a point?

Rotas: That they were moving towards that point; that they were almost there.

Papadopoulou: From recordings of the Dias unit's communications, it seems that at 00:00:50, Tsolakidis communicated that there was an issue involving Golden Dawn. Why did you say that this involved Perama as well?

Rotas: It was a mistake.

Papadopoulou: Did you inform the station when you arrived at the scene?

Rotas: We didn't inform them because the line was busy when I tried.

Papadopoulou: Did the station know that there were eight people there?

Judge: Where are you going with these questions?

Papadopoulou: To the fact that the police station didn't know how many policemen were at the scene.

The presiding judge did not allow the counsel to ask questions based on recordings of police communications and insisted that questions be limited to the specific charges.

Counsel Tzelis vociferously objected, but the judge stood firm.

Papadopoulou: The station gave you orders to observe individuals who were running and to report back on their actions. How many of the Golden Dawners who were running did you actually arrest?

Rotas: None.

Papadopoulou: Where did the patrol car arrive from?

Rotas: From Salaminos avenue, heading towards Tsaldari St.

Papadopoulou: Who found the knife?

Rotas: We showed the patrol policemen where it was.

Eleftheria Tompatzoglou (counsel for the Fyssas family): When you saw these people casting threatening looks, did you consider going into Koralli to ask what was going on?

Rotas: Yes. But we didn't do it.

Tompatzoglou: Are there often incidents in the area involving Golden Dawners and anarchists?

Rotas: Not as far as I know.

Tompatzoglou: Did they tell you which unit was leaving when they started to run?

Rotas: Negative.

Tompatzoglou: When civilians asked you to run, did you realise something had happened? Did you realise there were two groups? Where were the 50 people?

Rotas: The groups dispersed. We got to the crossing of Kefallinis and Tsaldari and saw the incident at number 62. The others spread out into the side streets.

Tompatzoglou: When you got there, was it just the two of them? Or were there others whom you took to the side?

Rotas: I, personally, didn't take anyone to the side. The others had already started running away.

Tompatzoglou: Has your experience taught you that Golden Dawn is dangerous?

Rotas: Yes.

Tompatzoglou: Did you decide not to intervene because you couldn't take on 50 people or because you couldn't take on 50 Golden Dawners?

Rotas: Eight men can't take on 50.

Tzelis: Did Tsolakidis know you were within earshot when he spoke to Hatzistamatis?

Rotas: You should ask him.

Takis Zotos (counsel for the Egyptian fishermen): By the time you left Koralli, had you seen a group of anarchists?

Rotas: No.

Zotos: Why did the 30–50 people you saw leave? Was there some external stimulus? Did someone threaten them or did they decide on it themselves?

Rotas: I didn't notice anything external.

Zotos: In your experience, when 30–50 people start moving together, why do they do it?

Rotas: I'd say they had arranged it among themselves.

Zotos: Did you see anything else before they started to move? Did anyone else show up?

Rotas: No.

Zotos: So they all moved together in the same direction?

Rotas: Yes, and then the mob broke up and everyone ran into the side streets.

Zotos: How were you armed?

Rotas: All of us had handguns; some of us had submachine guns and bulletproof vests.

Zotos: Was it obvious that you were armed?

Rotas: Yes.

Zotos: Did the group that left initially move to the left?

Rotas: Yes.

Zotos: Are the Golden Dawn offices on Kesarias street close to Koralli?

Rotas: 2–3 kilometres.

Zotos: How did you recognise the people guarding the offices?

Rotas: They wore combat uniforms.

Zotos: Do you remember another Golden Dawn incident in Greece and how far away it was from the scene of the crime?

Rotas: I don't remember.

Zotos: Do you know if those 30–50 people showed up together and where they came from?

Rotas: I found out afterwards that they came from the party offices after receiving a text message.

Zotos: Did Roupakias give you the impression that he was a member of a group?

Judge: Next question.

[The defence objected strongly to Zotos' questions.]

Thanasis Kampagiannis (counsel for the Egyptian fishermen): Did you realise that the group was made up of Golden Dawn members?

Rotas: Yes.

Kampagiannis: All communications state that Golden Dawn members were running, that they had brass knuckles; at least three policemen mentioned that they were Golden Dawners. Is that correct?

Rotas: Yes.

Kampagiannis: About the other group, the “anarchists”. Did they remind you of people you have seen burning and breaking things?

Objections from the defence.

Kampagiannis: The question was clear. Did the group that you saw on Mela St also move as a single unit?

Judge: He said they were moving together.

Kampagiannis: Was anyone trapped in Koralli?

Rotas: No.

Here, Kampagiannis showed the witness two pictures; the witness recognised an MP5 submachine gun.

Kampagiannis: Why weren't the Golden Dawners afraid to see you carrying these weapons?

Judge: Next question.

Kampagiannis: Still on the subject of your weapons: what is the difference between the seven handguns in your group and the MP5 one of your colleagues was carrying?

Rotas: It's a bigger weapon.

Kampagiannis: Why were you afraid?

Rotas: Every incident scares me; I'm not immortal.

Kampagiannis: You were afraid, even armed as you were, but Fyssas and his friends weren't supposed to be afraid?

Judge: Next question.

Kampagiannis: The case file refers to you as being seconded from Nikea police station. What is your relationship with Nikea station?

Rotas: I was transferred to the Dias motorcycle unit.

Kampagiannis: We want to show the witness a picture of Michalaros so he can tell us whether he is carrying a walkie-talkie.

Judge: Where are you going with these questions?

Kampagiannis: My question has everything to do with the criminal organisation, and thus with the section of the indictment for which civil action was admitted to the trial.

Judge: No picture of Michalaros.

Kampagiannis: Then can I show the witness a picture of Golden Dawn members so he can tell us what they are carrying and if they are holding walkie-talkies?

Here, Kampagiannis approached the judge with the picture. She showed it to the witness and asked him what the members are holding.

Rotas: They are carrying walkie-talkies.

Kampagiannis: Why do policemen wear bulletproof vests?

Rotas: Because we often get caught up in dangerous situations.

Kampagiannis: I want to show the witness a photograph of Golden Dawners so he can tell us if they are wearing bulletproof vests.

Rotas: They're called carriers; they sometimes contain ballistic material. When they do, they're considered bulletproof.

Kampagiannis: Do you know if Giovanidis used to be the chief of Nikea police station?

Here the judge intervened and asked the counsel to state the purpose of his questions.

Kampagiannis: There have been reports that Giovanidis, of Nikea police station, covered up criminal acts.

Kampagiannis: Do you know if any Nikea station policemen were employed as guards for Golden Dawn MPs?

Commotion in the courtroom and the question went unanswered.

Kampagiannis: Did you frisk Roupakias? Did you see if Tsolakidis touched Roupakias' heart?

The judge did not allow the question.

Kampagiannis: It has everything to do with whether the fatal blow was delivered in cold blood; in other words, whether it was a professional job, as Roupakias' steady pulse would suggest.

Takis Sapountzakis (counsel for the PAME trade unionists): What is your opinion on the movement of the 30–50 people? Was each of them going wherever he wanted or did they have a common destination?

Rotas: They seemed to have a common destination until the junction.

Sapountzakis: You said they knew something; they had something in mind. Can you confirm that it was planned? What do you mean by that?

Rotas: That they knew where they were going.

Sapountzakis: Was the attack on Fyssas a separate incident?

Rotas: From what I could tell, they were all Golden Dawners.

Sapountzakis: Could they have prevented the murder?

Judge: The witness has already answered that question.

Sapountzakis: You refer to a “clash” between Fyssas and the others. Is there evidence of a brawl between the lone Fyssas and the 4–5 Golden Dawners?

The witness did not answer and the judge intervened to say: It looked like a clash to him because they were fighting.

Antonis Adanasiotis (counsel for the PAME trade unionists): When you were running after them and shouting at them that you were police, were your weapons clearly visible?

Rotas: Yes.

Adanasiotis: Many left the scene. Rouapakias did not run away. Did he notice your presence before the murder?

Rotas: He noticed it once it was too late.

Adanasiotis: The original communication was that Golden Dawners were fighting anarchists; was that the case?

Rotas: I don’t know. We were just running after some people and then we found Fyssas.

Adanasiotis: But is that a common trope in Golden Dawn’s activities? Why did you assume they were fighting anarchists?

Rotas: We didn’t assume it; Hatzistamatis told us.

Adanasiotis: Why weren’t the Golden Dawners more hesitant to act once they saw you?

Judge: Next question. And only questions related to the charges.

Adanasiotis: But your honour, we have to demonstrate the ease with which Golden Dawners commit crimes. It’s important.

Adanasiotis: You said that no one was arrested.

Rotas: No arrests were made by my unit.

Adanasiotis: Do you know if any Golden Dawners were arrested?

Rotas: The official announcement was that arrests had been made. Now, I can’t confirm that...

Adanasiotis: You said you were informed about the assault on the PAME trade unionists. On the night of the murder, did it cross your mind that a similar, or more serious, assault was about to take place?

Rotas: Yes, it crossed my mind that people would beat each other up – they cracked skulls when they attacked the unionists.

Adanasiotis: You figured out who they were from their appearance; what do you know about their convictions and how they relate to their actions?

Here, defence counsel Dimitra Velentza objected. The witness replied.

Rotas: I've read a lot about how they are a far-right party: Nazis.

Eleni Zafiriou (civil counsel for the PAME trade unionists): You said you couldn't intervene. Did you try to get them to stop some other way?

Rotas: We didn't have the chance. It happened too quickly.

Zafiriou: You said Hatzistamatis told you there were anarchists there. Did you communicate that to the station?

Rotas: Yes.

Zafiriou: So did the people you decided to qualify as anarchists have any kind of insignia or characteristic?

Rotas: Yes.

Zafiriou: Do you know the ideological differences between the two camps?

Rotas: Yes.

Zafiriou: Do you know what Golden Dawn's units are called?

Rotas: Assault divisions.

Zafiriou: When Roupakias said he beat up Fyssas because Fyssas had beaten up one of his guys, did you understand what he meant?

Rotas: No.

Zafiriou: Do you know who the leader of Golden Dawn is?

Rotas: Yes. Michaloliakos.

Zafiriou: Do you know about the hierarchy?

Rotas: I know that there is a leader and that he issues orders.

Zafiriou: Have you followed a Golden Dawn demonstration? What can you tell us about the way they move?

Rotas: They shout out slogans – the usual stuff: blood, honour, Golden Dawn. They wear combats.

Zafiriou: Do you know if Golden Dawn MPs have ever appeared in public wearing similar clothes?

Rotas: Yes, they have.

Zafiriou: You said Roupakias wasn't seriously injured because he was "good". What did you mean by that? Good at what? At beating people up? At stabbing them?

Rotas: Well, he could have avoided being hit because he knows boxing.

Zafiriou: Can it mean that he received training?

Judge: Next question.

Haris Stratis (counsel for the PAME trade unionists): Do you know if weapons were used in other attacks, such as the Luqman murder, or in the attack on the PAME trade unionists?

Rotas: I know about it from the media.

Stratis: Could the police have known that weapons would be used?

Judge: Next question.

Thodoris Theodoropoulos (counsel for the PAME trade unionists): Who called the station about the situation outside Koralli?

Rotas: Someone who was in the area.

Theodoropoulos: Did you think it was a dangerous situation? Did you call for backup?

Rotas: Yes. Tsolakidis called for it.

Theodoropoulos: When was the backup supposed to show up?

Rotas: They wouldn't be here in time.

Theodoropoulos: Regardless, tell us when, specifically.

Rotas: It depends on their point of departure. Probably five minutes.

Theodoropoulos: What did you hear Roupakias say after his arrest?

Rotas: I heard from the media that he said to the arresting officer, "I'm a Golden Dawner; I'm one of you."

Theodoropoulos: Does that statement please you?

Rotas: No.

Angelos Vrettos (counsel for the PAME trade unionists): Why, after 2012, were the police routinely asked to follow Golden Dawn demonstrations and to go to their offices?

Rotas: We had to go every time something happened – a demo or something else organised by the party.

Vrettos: Did you hear anything about its leadership? Had you heard about Lagos?

Judge: Next question!

Vrettos: What about the slogan, "blood, honour, Golden Dawn"? What do they mean by "blood"?

Rotas: That they are fanatics for their organisation?

Vrettos: You said the police could not have averted the murder. Is there any chance they knew about it but did not want to prevent it?

Judge: Don't answer.

Zafiriou (supplementary question): Given the call to the police station concerned a mob – and one holding weapons – why wasn't the riot police sent in?

Rotas: I don't know.

5. Cross-examination by the defence

Giorgos Sotiropoulos (counsel for Ioannis Aggos): You say you recognised the 50 people as being Golden Dawners on the basis of their appearance and your experience.

Giorgos Sotiropoulos: Did you recognise anyone in particular? Someone you had seen somewhere else?

Rotas: No.

Sotiropoulos: What was the difference between the Golden Dawners and the anarchists you mentioned.

Rotas: They don't hang around in one place – they hit and run, they wear black and red clothes.

Sotiropoulos: Do they ever carry wooden batons?

Rotas: Yes.

Sotiropoulos: Were there other patrons outside Koralli?

Rotas: Yes.

Sotiropoulos: You said that the clothes of the people outside Koralli were also black.

Rotas: The situation at the site of the murder and the one outside Koralli was very different.

Sotiropoulos: You said the order from the station was to arrest everyone who matched the profile.

Rotas: The order was to arrest all those with particular features.

Sotiropoulos: You told the investigator that, after the murder, Golden Dawners showed up to look around. Weren't they afraid?

No response.

Sotiropoulos: How do you explain the fact that the murderer was driving on the wrong side of the road?

Judge: What does that have to do with your client, Aggos?

Sotiropoulos: I want to prove that the murder was an isolated incident and that this is an instance of conspiracy and provocation. That's my position.

Sotiropoulos: Tell us again what you saw in the fight between Roupakias and Fyssas.

Rotas: I said I saw a mob and that as soon as I approached, most of them started to run, leaving only Roupakias and Fyssas.

Sotiropoulos: Could those who ran have been running because you showed up rather than because they were Golden Dawners?

Judge: Don't phrase the question that way. He has already said that the people running looked like Golden Dawners to him.

Sotiropoulos: What were they wearing?

Rotas: Dark clothes. Black and dark blue.

Sotiropoulos: Despite not coming under any pressure to drop the knife, he threw it because he wanted to?

Judge: How is that relevant?

Sotiropoulos: Between his stabbing Fyssas and his arrest, was he pressured by anyone? Did anyone bother him?

Rotas: Not that I saw.

Sotiropoulos: Is common to find the murder weapon covered in blood at the scene of the crime?

Rotas: I've never witnessed another stabbing.

N. Kontovazenitis (counsel for Anastasios Anadiotis): Did you hear words or phrases during the fight? "Fascist scum?"

Rotas: No.

Kontovazenitis: How far were you from the fight?

Rotas: About 50 meters.

Kontovazenitis: You said you can't remember if the car's engine was still running.

Rotas: Yes. I said I went to get him out of the car and I can't remember if the engine was on.

Kontovazenitis: Did the people on Mela St join the others on Tsaldari St?

Judge: He has already said that if they had, they would have passed by him and he would have seen them.

Kontovazenitis: Were they carrying beams?

Rotas: No.

Kontovazenitis: When you got there, did the Roupakias–Fyssas fight seem to be personal?

Judge: The witness described what he saw; we can decide the rest for ourselves.

Kontovazenitis: Did you hear anything being said during the Fyssas–Roupakias fight?

Rotas: No.

Dimitra Velentza (counsel for Ioannis Kazantzoglou): The call you got from the station was that 50 people were moving towards Koralli?

Rotas: That's what I remember, but not word for word.

Velentza: Do you know if the call was based on information from a member of the public?

Rotas: I don't know.

Velentza: Did Hatzistamatis use the word "anarchists"?

Rotas: Yes.

Velentza: You were briefed on the situation by Hatzistamatis. Did he tell you about a verbal clash or a physical fight?

Rotas: A verbal altercation.

Velentza: Did your communications with the station contain any reference to Golden Dawn?

Rotas: Tsolakis informed them that we were dealing with Golden Dawn members.

Velentza: So you confirm that these people had no distinguishing features?

Judge: No. Where do you get that? Rephrase.

Velentza: Why didn't you tell Attica General Police Headquarters (GADA) about it?

Rotas: I'm just telling you what I saw.

Velentza: What kind of insignia were they wearing? What characterised them as Golden Dawners?

Rotas: They had buzz cuts and they were dressed in black. I have some experience with these people and I know how they move.

Velentza: So, what's the verdict: did you or did you not see wooden beams that night?

Judge: We all have the witness' statements in front of us. The first doesn't mention beams and a subsequent one does.

Velentza: Did you speak with people from the area? Did they tell you about particular features of the group?

Rotas: No.

Velentza: So it was just the clothes, really; you didn't see wooden beams.

Here Tzelis intervened: "No; he said he did see wooden beams."

Here the judge read out the statement in which the witness clearly refers to wooden beams.

Velentza: What was each group wearing?

The witness did not reply.

Velentza: When you got to Koralli, were any of Fyssas' friends there?

Rotas: No one came up to us to say, "I am Fyssas' friend."

Velentza: Can you confirm that what you saw in the picture you were shown is a bulletproof vest?

Rotas: I said they contain ballistic material.

Velentza: So you don't really know.

Rotas: That's not what said.

Velentza: Could the walkie-talkies you saw in the photographs have been purchased from Jumbo or some other toy store?

Here the courtroom burst into laughter.

Velentza: Is the walkie-talkie market free?

Rotas: The things I saw were walkie-talkies.

Velentza: After the murder, did you remain on the scene until 01:00?

Rotas: Yes.

Velentza: Are you sure?

Rotas: Yes.

Vasilis Oplantzakis (counsel for Ioannis Kazantzoglou): [Referring to the map] You said you didn't know Hatzistamatis. When you started chasing the Golden Dawners down Tsaldari St, what did he do?

Rotas: I can't remember.

Oplantzakis: Who picked up the knife?

Rotas: The patrol car; it arrived two minutes after we called for it.

Oplantzakis: Did a van show up as well?

Rotas: Later, the specialised OPKE police unit showed up.

Oplantzakis: Did you see Hatzistamatis on Tsaldari St afterwards?

Rotas: Not on Tsaldari St; in Attica General Police Headquarters.

Oplantzakis: Were there other policemen on Tsaldari St before you got there?

Rotas: Not that I saw.

The defence repeated a series of questions, and the judge intervened constantly to insist that they move on.

Oplantzakis: Given you didn't see other policemen on Tsaldari St; if the 40 Golden Dawners had stayed on Tsaldari St, would you have gone?

Rotas: No.

Oplantzakis: On Tsaldari St, did Roupakias have his back to the people who were approaching?

Rotas: I couldn't see.

Oplantzakis: Once you started chasing them and they turned into Tsaldari St, how did they behave?

You are calm and experienced; would an organised crime have happened there?

Rotas: ...

Oplantzakis: These 30–40 people drew you to the crime scene.

Judge: Next question. That was conceited and daringly so.

Oplantzakis: You approached and saw Roupakias with Fyssas. Which of the two had his back to you as you approached?

Rotas: Neither. We were approaching from the side.

Oplantzakis: Did the 4–5 people who left notice your presence?

Rotas: I imagine so.

Oplantzakis: When were Roupakias and Fyssas left by themselves?

Rotas: A little after we began to approach them.

Oplantzakis: Could the four people who started running have known that Fyssas had been stabbed, or even prevented it?

Rotas: I can't know that.

Oplantzakis: How did you realise a murder had taken place?

Rotas: Fyssas was crying out, "He stabbed me, he stabbed me."

Oplantzakis: Were there people nearby shouting something along the lines of "Kill him, don't hesitate, destroy him!" etc?

Rotas: I didn't hear anything like that.

Judge: Enough.

Oplantzakis: Did you ask around to find out if anyone had seen anything?

Judge: The witness has already answered the question.

Oplantzakis: Did any friends of Fyssas come up to you and say they had seen what happened?

Rotas: At the time...

The judge interrupted and did not allow the question to be answered.

Valentza: You assume that of the people on Tsaldari St, four to five were Golden Dawners?

Rotas: Yes.

Valentza: How do you explain the fact that Fyssas' friends say it was just them and then they left. Is it possible that those people weren't Golden Dawners?

Rotas: No. I'm sure they were.

Ioannis Pagonas (counsel for Ioannis Komianos): So Fyssas was stabbed after those four–five people had left?

Rotas: I've told you: we didn't actually see the stabbing or the knife.

Christoforos Tsagkas (counsel for Konstantinos Korkovilis): Are black clothes, even with Golden Dawn insignia, worn only by members or supporters of the party?

Rotas: I don't know.

Tsagkas: Were the people running carrying helmets?

Rotas: I wouldn't exclude the possibility. The ones I saw on Mela St were carrying helmets. We had taken off our helmets. I can't remember where we left them.

Tsagkas: As far as concerns the purported killer: did you see Roupakias use martial arts?

Rotas: No.

Here members of the civil counsel protested loudly: "What do you mean 'purported'? He has already confessed!"

Tsagkas: Did the killer have a beard?

Rotas: I think he was unshaven.

Tsagkas: After you separated Roupakias and Fyssas...

Judge: They weren't separated by anyone.

Tsagkas: Was Roupakias in uniform?

Rotas: No.

Tsagkas: When did you realise Fyssas had been stabbed?

Rotas: When Fyssas pulled up his shirt and cried out.

Tsagkas: Was the stabbing the first thing Tsolakidis communicated to the station?

Rotas: He was communicating the entire time.

Tsagkas: Did Roupakias' car have license plates?

Rotas: Yes.

Tsagkas: If you hadn't caught him then, would it have been easy for you to find him?

Rotas: Yes, from the license plates.

Dimitris Gavelas (counsel for Giorgos Patelis): Did you know that the people with bats showed up after having received a text message telling them to?

Rotas: I found that out from the media.

Gavelas: At police headquarters, how did you describe the moment that you turned onto Tsaldari St?

Rotas: Yes, I remember that. It was after 24 hours of sleeplessness. It was a very cursory statement – almost entirely about the final stage involving Roupakias and Fyssas.

Gavelas read out the statement and Rotas' description of seeing two men wrestling.

Rotas: The statement was cursory – with very little detail. I hadn't slept in 24 hours.

Gavelas: How did you remember what you claim to remember now, months later and after the case has been extensively covered by the media? Let's assume that the fatigue you describe had influenced your sight, such that the four people you thought you saw were not actually there?

Judge: Next question!

Gavelas: Don't people who listen to heavy metal and hip hop also wear black t-shirts? Don't hip hop artists also have shaven heads?

Judge: He's not just talking about t-shirts; he said there were several things that made it clear they were Golden Dawners.

Here there was a clash in the courtroom between the civil action and defence counsels.

Gavelas: You said that your experience of Golden Dawn is based on just one demonstration you followed.

Judge: That's not what he said; he spoke of other experiences as well.

Gavelas: Have you ever been involved in an incident following a football match? Do all of them move together, in formation?

Rotas: I've never served at a match but I know they don't run in formation; it's total chaos.

Giorgos Roumpekias (counsel for Giorgos Roupakias): How long did it take you to run those 50 metres?

Rotas: You have to be able to run 100 metres in 16 seconds to be admitted to the police force.

Roumpekias: And were these people hitting each other the whole time?

Rotas: Yes. And they stopped just before we got there.

Roumpekias: You based your assumption that they were Golden Dawers on their clothes, haircuts and beards? Seirlis, the witness who was here the other day, also had short hair and a beard and wore a black shirt. Would you think he was a Golden Dawner?

Rotas: Yes.

Roumpekias: Who was doing the beating and who was being beaten?

Rotas: It seemed to be coming from both sides, but I couldn't see properly.

Roumpekias: Could you tell if Roupakias was delivering professional blows?

Rotas: I couldn't say.

Roumpekias: You said that Legatou and Deligiannis [police officers] tried to drag Fyssas ... what was going on? Was it violent?

Rotas: Yes.

Roumpekias: Until when did you see life in Pavlos Fyssas?

Rotas: I don't know whether he died on the spot or in the ambulance.

Roumpekias: Do you think Fyssas' murder was a random incident or was it premeditated?

Judge: Don't ask such questions.

G. Papadimitriou (counsel for Giorgos Stampelos): Did you hear anything being said?

Judge: He has talked about all this.

D. Bonis (counsel for Leon Tsalikis): Was this specific incident the most important?

Rotas: Yes.

Bonis: Then why didn't you describe it?

Rotas: I described everything, but not in detail.

Bonis: When you got to Koralli, had something already happened?

Rotas: From what Hatzistamatis said, yes.

Bonis: You said the Golden Dawners weren't discouraged. When did they start running?

Rotas: Once we had already been there for three minutes. Why would they start running because of us?

Bonis: You said they all left together in the same direction.

Rotas: Yes.

Bonis: Then why did they split up at the turn?

Rotas: Perhaps because we were chasing them.

Bonis: You can find walkie-talkies on the market; what is the significance of the photographs?

The witness did not reply and there was commotion in the courtroom.

The judge called the room to order.

Bonis: Who arrested Roupakias?

Rotas: Tsolakidis and I.

Bonis: How many people in the area were wearing black shirts?

Rotas: I didn't notice the neighbours.

Velentza: Do you remember if there were people around the crime scene?

Rotas: Some people were watching from a distance a few moments after it happened.

Here the court adjourned to 21 October, when Giorgos Rotas will continue his testimony. The judge asked that Mr Melachrinopoulos, Fyssas' friend who is also an eyewitness to the murder, be present.