



# ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS

## Hasib Hussain (7/7 suicide bomber)

### The boy who didn't stand out

The struggle to understand who, and what, transformed such an unremarkable 18-year-old into one of Western Europe's first suicide bombers is just beginning

For most of his short life, Hasib Hussain's horizons stretched little further than the lattice-work of narrow streets and Victorian terraces of Holbeck, on the southern outskirts of Leeds city centre.

Like his older brother and two older sisters, he went to a nursery 200 metres from home while his father, Mahmood, and mother, Maniza, were at work.

At the primary school next door he was said to be a normal, unremarkable pupil. After school he bought his sweets from Ajimal Singh's corner shop, like all the other children, and kicked a plastic football around the street.

When he moved to Matthew Murray high school it was apparent he was never going to stand out as a scholar or a sportsman. Many who taught him assumed he would never stand out in any way at all.

Holbeck is a poor area, left behind during the revitalisation of the city. When Hussain left school two summers ago, without a single GCSE and with just one GNVQ in business studies, it appeared that Holbeck and the wider world held few opportunities. It was around this time, according to neighbours, that Hussain "went a bit wild", drinking and swearing.

The Hussains are said to be a close-knit clan. Hussain, 18, lived with his brother Imran, 24, and sister-in-law, Shazia, in the family's four-bedroom, house in Colenso Mount, and several members of the extended family are understood to live nearby.

Mahmood Hussain, a factory hand who bought the house shortly after his first child was born, apparently decided that his son needed a little more discipline in his life. The family decided that Pakistan, where Mr Hussain and his wife were born and grew up, was where he would find it. Hussain is known to have spent time in Pakistan during the past two years.

One man in Holbeck, who described himself as a cousin but would not give his name, said Hussain, returned from Pakistan a devout Muslim. "I thought he had been brainwashed," he said. "I do not know who by."

By now the security service had started taking a close interest in the radical young Muslims of Leeds. Hussain, however, does not appear to have crossed the radar screens of any of the British authorities.

At some point in the past two years he forged a close friendship with Shehzad Tanweer and Mohammad Sidique Khan, two of the other members of the suicide bomb gang.

When the three left their homes early last Thursday, they told their families they were attending a religious studies seminar in London. With the fourth member of the gang, they reached King's Cross station shortly before 8.30am, each carrying a rucksack. They then headed in separate directions. Police believe Hussain intended to take the Northern line tube, but was frustrated as the line was not working properly. Instead, he got on a number 30 bus.

Hussain's family first realised something was wrong within hours of the blast that killed him and 12 other passengers on the bus when they rang his mobile telephone and that found it was not responding.

Within 13 hours, his distraught mother was reporting her fears to police.

What remains far from clear is the identity of the people who persuaded Hussain that he should turn his back on his life in Holbeck in such a murderous fashion.

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