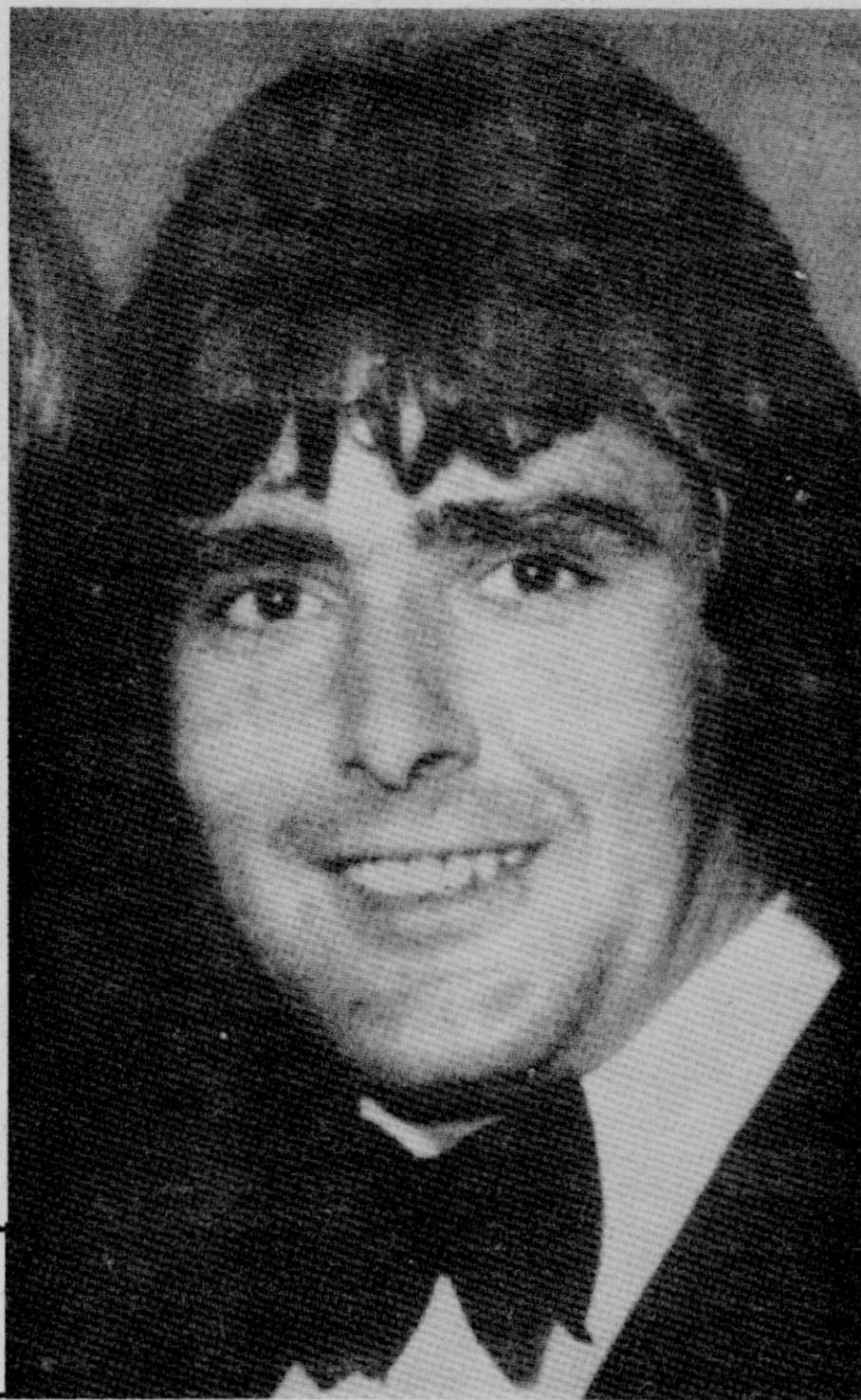


Evidence that could clear man



Alan McAleeny—ten year sentence

ALAN McALENY from Huyton is serving a ten-year gaol sentence for armed robbery. Evidence not heard in court suggests he is innocent.

At his trial, his counsel were so sure he would walk out of court a free man, they did not call all the defence witnesses.

And later William Moorcroft, who pleaded Guilty to taking part in the same raid, made two statements. Both said Alan McAleeny had not been involved.

After a visit from a senior police officer, Moorcroft withdrew these statements.

But two other prisoners have voluntarily come forward and made statements saying Moorcroft has told them on numerous occasions that McAleeny is innocent.

He has never before been in trouble with the law.

The raid was on a house in Wrightington, near Wigan, at about 6.40pm on Saturday, November 2, 1974. The victims were Mr David Ginsberg and his wife Helen.

Three men, one waving a revolver and a truncheon, threatened Mr and Mrs Ginsberg and forced Mr Ginsberg to open the safe in the kitchen.

The three men then tied up the couple and left with £5,200 in cash.

Two men, William Moorcroft and Tommy Griffiths were quickly arrested. Both were identified by the Ginsbergs.

A month passed before McAleeny was arrested at his home at 39 Greenfield Drive, Huyton.

The case against McAleeny rested almost entirely on identification. Both the Ginsbergs picked him out instantly at a parade.

Both said McAleeny was the leader, the man with the gun and truncheon.

All the other evidence against McAleeny was circumstantial.

- He was a doorman at Allinson's Club. He knew Griffiths who had also worked as a doorman there. Both knew Moorcroft who went to the club.

- He had a yellow Capri car which he bought from Griffiths. A 'similar' car was used by the raiders.

- McAleeny had a brown sheepskin coat. So did the gunman.

- McAleeny had a brown briefcase and a truncheon. So did the gunman.

This seems enough circumstantial evidence to condemn anyone. But none was positively proved. And McAleeny's defence proved absolutely that he could not have been wearing that sheepskin coat because it was at the dry-cleaners.

And the truncheon the police found in McAleeny's car was black rubber, whereas Mr Ginsberg said the one used in the raid was "like a police truncheon with a leather thong".

If the Ginsbergs hadn't been so positive in their identification there would have been no prosecution case.

And yet none of their statements at the time of the robbery described the gunman. And a police description issued after the raid said the gunman was "28-31, 5ft 10 inches, with dark hair over the ears, a drooping moustache, a medium-tan sheepskin jacket, and had a dark, formal tie with red stripes."

McAleeny was only 24, although of the right height and hair colour. There is some uncertainty about whether he had a drooping moustache at the time.

Even more odd, McAleeny had been in a serious car accident earlier that year and had a large number of stitches around his mouth and above his chin. Even when he had a moustache some of his scars were visible.

The Ginsbergs never mentioned them.

McAleeny's defence rested on his alibi.

Every Saturday night he used to leave home about 6.25pm and drop his son at his mother's. Both his wife and his mother swear this happened on the night of the raid.

McAleeny usually arrives at Allinson's about 7.00pm when the club opens. On Saturdays, he always took the tickets at the top of the stairs. On November 2 there was a star attraction and the club was packed.

No one else collected the tickets. And other members of the staff say they would certainly have noticed if McAleeny had been absent after 7.30.

One waitress, Winifred Lee, swears she took McAleeny a cup of tea as usual at about 7.15. She went to the trial as a defence witness... But she was not called to give evidence.

Could McAleeny have been on the raid, and then got to the club even by about 7.30. The police obviously thought so.

The raiders left the house in Wrightington at 7.10. The police said the trip to Allinsons took 26 minutes 51 seconds. But McAleeny's solicitor says it takes 31½ minutes travelling as fast as possible, and about five minutes longer on Saturdays because of the traffic.

At the trial Moorcroft did not give evidence against McAleeny or Griffiths although he admitted the crime. Then afterwards he told another prisoner he felt guilty about not speaking up for McAleeny.

On March 4, 1975, and on May 29, he made statements to McAleeny's solicitor saying McAleeny was innocent. The solicitor sent copies of these to Detective Inspector John David Philips, who had arrested McAleeny.

Almost immediately, Inspector Philips visited Moorcroft and persuaded him to withdraw the statements.

Why did Moorcroft agree? That June, two other prisoners made statements about conversations they had had with Moorcroft. These are revealing. Neither knew McAleeny, nor had any apparent reason to lie.

Henry Hill is serving seven years. He met Moorcroft in Risley Remand Centre. His statement says:

"I asked if McAleeny was the fellow (on the raid) and he said 'No'. I asked if he was giving evidence and he said 'No'."

"I came to Liverpool prison several weeks later and I was in the next cell to Moorcroft. Our friendship resumed. He then told me that he felt guilty about McAleeny getting 10 years. He told me that he was going to make a statement telling the truth about McAleeny..."

"... the day before he went on protection (solitary), Moorcroft told me

that the police had been to see him and told him that if he withdrew the statements he had made they would do their best to get him parole...

"Moorcroft has told me on at least a dozen occasions that McAleeny was not involved."

Another prisoner, Anthony Carey, who is doing two years, made a similar statement.

Carey shared a cell with Moorcroft in Risley. "He told me that Griffiths and he had done the job and that another person was involved. He did not tell me who. He did, however, tell me that it was not McAleeny."

"He was afraid to give evidence for McAleeny in case he got a heavier sentence or in case the police put pressure on him."

These two prisoners were quite prepared to repeat this at the Appeal Court. But, amazingly, their evidence was not heard.

The three Appeal judges decided after a long wrangle that their statements were inadmissible because Moorcroft had withdrawn his.

Moorcroft did appear. He said nothing. He would not even answer to his name. (After the visit by police he had asked to go into isolation cells.)

These statements, made quite freely by Hill and Carey, suggest an innocent man is serving a 10 year sentence. And, if true, they suggest the police have used a mixture of bribery and threats to stop Moorcroft speaking the truth.

Union backing to save whale?

LOCAL TRADE unionists have become involved in the campaign to save the sperm whale.

Ken Mullen, branch secretary of ASTMS and a member of Friends of the Earth is a leading figure in the campaign on Merseyside.

The Liverpool firm, Highgate and Job are the importer and sole refiner of sperm whale oil in Britain.

Over half the total imports of sperm whale oil passed through Liverpool in 1974 — 7,029 tonnes. In the first nine months of 1975, 3,664 tonnes were imported through Liverpool docks.

In December Ken Mullen and Friends of the Earth organised a picket of Highgate and Job's office at Burlington House, Crosby Road North, Waterloo. Since then Ken has written to the firm, asking for a meeting and information — so far without success.

He needs to know where the oil comes from and where it goes, and what it is used for. It is known to be used in the tanning and lubricant industries, but it is not known which firms use it.

Once this is known, Friends of the

Earth can talk to the firms concerned about substitutes for the oil. Many experts believe that there are substitutes for all present uses. The USA banned the import of all whale products in 1971 and their industries have apparently not suffered.

Ken Mullen has enlisted the aid of Jimmy Symes, dock stewards convenor of the T & G, in collecting information. At present Jimmy is helping only in an individual capacity, but he is trying to bring the matter to the attention of other trade unionists and local MPs.

The reason for all this activity is the very real danger that the Sperm Whale may become extinct in the next few years. In the last thirty years this has been the fate of nine other species of whale.

Britain no longer kills whales and the import of most whale products was banned in 1972. However the Soviet Union and Japan continue to kill them, despite a UN resolution in 1972 calling for a ten-year ban.

So Britain, with practised hypocrisy, does not actually kill whales but condones their slaughter by importing whale oil.

LABOUR AGENCY SACK MEN WHO COMPLAINED

THE ENGINEERS' union have blacked work at Liverpool's new Head Post Office after three men were sacked for complaining about being employed by an agency.

The men were installing the mechanical conveyor system at the Copperas Hill site. Contractors for the job are George Robson and Co, of Sheffield.

But the men were employed by a firm called Brindle Engineering from Harlow, Essex. Two of the men had been approached by Brindle when they finished a job in London. The other Liverpool man joined them later.

Brindle Engineering turned out to be an employment agency.

The men were contracted to work a 70-hour week. But the overtime rate was only 10p an hour more than the basic. And they were earning up to £35 a week less than the men employed directly by Robsons.

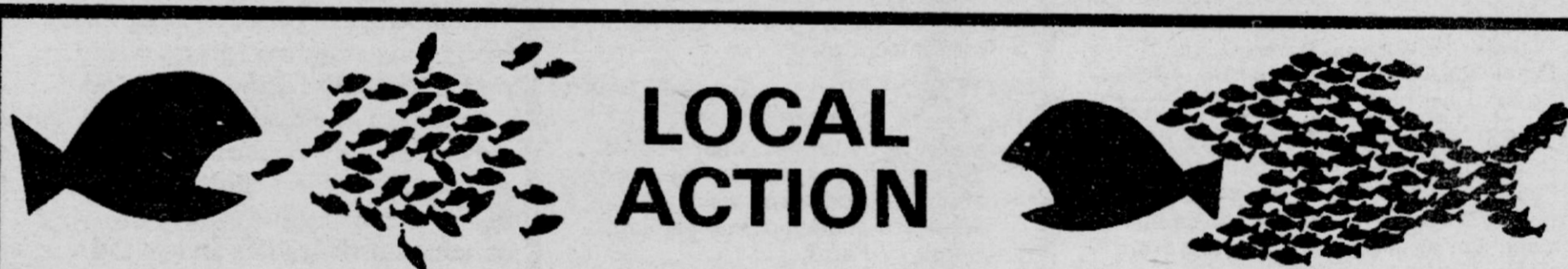
Last September they chose a shop

steward and set about organising the site. Non-union men from outside Merseyside were kicked off, and negotiations began to get everyone taken on by Robsons.

Then, the day before the Christmas holidays, Derek Vincent, who runs Brindle Engineering, phoned to say they were finishing up. The reason, he said, was that Robsons had discovered they could not employ agency labour on a government contract.

But, as Derek Vincent explained to us, Robsons have had plenty of experience with agency labour before: "We actually move from site to site with them. It was unfortunate one of them happened to be in Liverpool".

Robsons have so far refused to take on the sacked men and the AUEW have blacked the job. The £9 million Post Office contract is due to be completed this autumn.



LOCAL ACTION

'Anti-cuts' man arrested in Council Chamber

A MEMBER of the Sefton Against the Cuts campaign will be appearing in court this month charged under the 1936 Public Order Act.

Robert Marmian was charged after a demonstration at Sefton Council meeting in January. He will appear before Southport magistrates on February 13.

Mr Marmian was arrested as a Labour councillor defended the government's policies. His supposed crime was to shout out "You're taking us back to the Thirties".

The Sefton Against the Cuts campaign will, of course, continue. Started just before Christmas, they have since picketed council meetings and produced leaflets. Support comes from community groups, a pensioners' and workers' association, and individuals.

The response from the unions so far has been cool. Organisers reckon it is probably because a Labour government is responsible for slashing public spending.

But they point out that a similar campaign in Manchester has the support of over 20 union delegates.

ENVIRONMENT FESTIVAL

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH have come up with the idea of an environmental festival on Merseyside in the summer.

They hope to organise talks, films, dancing, theatre and anything else that will stimulate communication amongst local groups.

The success of the festival will depend on the active contribution of interested groups and individuals.

Contact FoE, 5 Percy Street, Liverpool 8. Tel: 708 0358.

Education group

PARENTS, tenants' groups and trade unionists are invited to a meeting on the education cuts at the University on February 28.

It's organised by the Liverpool Action Committee for Education Expenditure. More details from Kevin Donovan, 708 0423 (ext 37), daytime.

Unemployed may organise...

AN ATTEMPT is to be made to start an unemployed workers' organisation for the Speke, Garston and Halewood areas.

The aim is to make it similar to the unemployed workers' movement which was so powerful in the '20s and '30s.

Speke Trade Union Defence Committee hope this will be the most important result of their conference on unemployment, which is being held on Tuesday, February 10 at 7 p.m. in Damwood Hall, Central Parade, Speke.

One of the main speakers will be Stan Bonham, an active member of the unemployed workers' movement during the depression.

The conference will also discuss a plan to get the unemployed representation at all levels of trade unions, £6 increases for the unemployed, and shop floor control of hiring, firing and manning levels.

Other speakers will be Sarah Benton, on women and unemployment, and Joe McGough, an EPTU steward at Dunlop.

ANANDA PRINTING

1-11 Hardman Street Liverpool 1.

Commercial work at reasonable rates, especially for community groups

Tel: 051-708 8248