

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN
WHAT YOU CAN DO

- 1 Write to the Home Secretary, urging him to re-open the Bridgewater Four case.
- 2 Write to your MP asking him to lobby the Home Secretary to re-open the case.
- 3 Write and raise the matter with the Euro-MP for your area.
- 4 Acquaint your Trade Union, Church, Political Party, or any other organisation with which you are associated of the circumstances of the case and enlist their support.
- 5 Publicise the case as extensively as possible by talking to the media, discussing with friends and enlisting their support.
- 6 Sign and circulate the petition as widely as possible, asking for the case to be re-opened by the Home Secretary.
- 7 Write to the men who are suffering this grave injustice, telling them of your support.
- 8 Any donations, no matter how large or small, will be thankfully received and applied in full in the fight for justice for the Bridgewater Four. All will be duly acknowledged.



BRIDGEWATER FOUR CAMPAIGN

P.O. Box 2273, Wythall, Birmingham, B47 6LU

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FREE

THE BRIDGEWATER FOUR

13th year of wrongful imprisonment



Michael Hickey



Jim Robinson

INNOCENT



Vincent Hickey



Pat Molloy (Died in Prison)

VICTIMS

MURDER AT YEW TREE FARM

On 19th September 1978, Carl Bridgewater, a newspaper boy, was delivering papers to Yew Tree Farm in Staffordshire. He interrupted a burglary at approximately 4.20 pm and was shot. This caused nationwide outrage and revulsion. Three months passed, the police had not charged anyone, and public pressure for them to do so was increasing.

CONFESSIONS AND DENIALS

VINCENT HICKEY, in December 1978, knowing that he was wanted by the police for questioning on an unrelated matter, voluntarily walked into the police station. Hoping to divert attention away from himself and with the intention of bargaining for immunity, he pretended to have knowledge of the unsolved murder at Yew Tree Farm. He proceeded to implicate three innocent men, namely James Robinson, Patrick Molloy and Michael Hickey. Vincent did not make a written statement and believed that his verbal evidence could not be produced in court; but the police did rely on that verbal evidence and used it against him. He admitted at the trial that he had invented his story but that it had back-fired. He pleaded 'not guilty' and has consistently protested his innocence.

PATRICK MOLLOY was immediately arrested.

The central evidence in the case was a confession by Pat Molloy that he was at Yew Tree Farm on the day in 1979 of Carl Bridgewater's murder. He named three accomplices: Michael Hickey, Jim Robinson and Vincent Hickey. Molloy's confession said that he was burgling upstairs when the newspaper boy arrived. He said that he heard a shot and went downstairs, where the three men were standing with a smoking shot-gun over the boy's dead body.

As soon as Molloy was allowed access to his lawyers, he stated that his confession was false, that he had never been to Yew Tree Farm, and that his confession was bullied out of him.

For tactical reasons, the lawyers advised him not to give evidence, and not to deny his confession in court.

In anguished letters after his conviction Molloy alleged that he had been:

- * INTIMIDATED into giving his confession.
- * BEATEN and made to drink from a toilet bowl.
- * HELD by a police officer who whispered in his ears the words of a confession.
- * FORCED to dictate the "confession" to another officer and then sign it.

MICHAEL HICKEY was deprived of sleep and mentally tortured throughout his many days of rigorous interrogation. He remained consistent with his denials. He pleaded "not guilty" and has consistently protested his innocence.

JAMES ROBINSON, despite physical threats of violence and psychological torture, constantly denied any involvement. He pleaded "not guilty" and has consistently protested his innocence.

THE TRIAL

On the 8th October 1979, the trial began for these four Birmingham men. The prosecution's case provided:

- * NO FORENSIC EVIDENCE
- * NO FINGERPRINTS
- * NO IDENTIFICATION
- * NO MURDER WEAPON
- * NO STOLEN PROPERTY found or linked to the four men

The evidence of the prosecution relied upon:

- 1 Two (now self-confessed) pathological liars, one of whom was planted by a prison officer at Winson Green into an area which was out of bounds for his category, in order to falsely "obtain a confession" from Michael Hickey.
- 2 The evidence of a prisoner (Ritter - see page 7) who admitted he had made a damaging statement against Jim Robinson, hoping that it would help him to get his own sentence reduced so that he could be home with his family. By the time that he gave his evidence he was a free man.
- 3 The evidence of known police informants.
- 4 The evidence of two key witnesses who have since changed their statements at least five times.
- 5 The evidence of another prisoner who linked the two Hickeys with the area.
- 6 The evidence of a woman who identified Vincent as being a frequent visitor to Jim Robinson's home.
- 7 The prosecution said that the alibis of the defendants were false. This was later contradicted by the judges at the court of appeal (see under 'Appeals', page 5, paragraph 8).
- 8 Pat Molloy's confession played a most crucial and instrumental part in the prosecution's case, as he had named all three men as being at Yew Tree Farm. Pat Molloy was kept in a different prison to the other three men during his term on remand; at the trial he was completely separated, always being flanked by prison officers and at no time was he allowed to talk to or come into contact with his co-defendants.

Prosecution witnesses consisting mainly of police, prison officers, and prisoners were believed; witnesses called for the defence were disbelieved.

On the 9th November, all four men were convicted of this murder.

Michael, aged 17, was detained at Her Majesty's pleasure. Jim, aged 44 and Vincent, aged 25, received life sentences with minimum recommendations of 25 years. Pat, aged 50, got 12 years for manslaughter. He died in prison in June 1981.

SECOND MURDER

In June 1980, the Director of Public Prosecutions sent a bundle of documents to the lawyers of the Bridgewater Four, saying that there was new material which may assist their forthcoming appeal. Hubert Spencer had been a prime suspect in the Carl Bridgewater enquiry. In early police interviews he had concealed any knowledge of Yew Tree Farm or knowing Carl Bridgewater. When the police questioned Spencer at a later date, he admitted that he had been to Yew Tree Farm "hundreds of times". Spencer had lived two doors away from the Bridgewaters and knew the family well. When it was put to Spencer by a senior police officer that he knew Carl Bridgewater, Spencer replied "Yes, but I didn't recognise him". Spencer was an antique dealer and had been to the farm enquiring about some antiques that he wanted to buy.

We say that the wrong men have been convicted for the murder of Carl Bridgewater.

APPEALS

In December 1981, Lord Lane refused an application for leave to appeal. The grounds put forward by Lord Lane for not allowing the men to have a full appeal contained a number of grave mistakes.

Three secret police enquiries followed, and the Home Office announced the result of each enquiry. No action.

On the basis of fresh evidence in October 1987 the then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Douglas Hurd, referred the case back to the court of appeal.

The court of appeal heard the case from November 1988 to January 1989. It was the longest appeal in British criminal history. It lasted eight weeks and two days. One of the three court of appeal judges, Lord Justice Russell, made it abundantly clear from the outset that he was not prepared to tolerate any criticism or derogatory remarks concerning police or prison officers.

1 However, the judges did accept that the witness who said at the original trial, that Michael Hickey had confessed to him had committed perjury and was an outrageous liar.

2 The only witness at the trial to connect the two Hickeys with the area, told the court of appeal judges that he had lied at the 1979 trial. His evidence was declared as being unreliable before both courts and was dismissed.

3 Another witness told how she had been mistaken at the 1979

trial. She realised after giving her evidence on oath, that Vincent Hickey was not the man that she had seen at Jim Robinson's home. After leaving the witness box, she told Chief Supt Bob Stewart, head of the murder enquiry, that she had never seen Hickey before. Chief Supt Stewart said that he would talk to her about it; he never did. The court of appeal judge said that her evidence had made no difference anyway. It was dismissed.

4 Evidence was produced to prove that a prisoner who had given damaging evidence about Jim Robinson at the 1979 trial was a pathological liar and could not be relied upon. The court of appeal judges agreed that this witness was a pathological liar, but accepted that he had told the truth on the one day that he gave evidence in 1979.

5 A completely new witness gave evidence, saying that she had spoken to Jim Robinson at 3.30 pm on the day of the murder, therefore he could not have been at the farm. The court of appeal judges accepted that she had seen him, but that it must have been earlier as the pub at which he had been drinking closed at 2.30 pm (contrary to evidence given at the trial that the pub in fact closed at 3.00 pm).

6 The prisoner who had told the original trial judge that he had made statements against Jim Robinson in exchange for two reduced sentences was summed up by the court of appeal judges as follows - "It is inevitable that the testimony of fellow prisoners will be, to some degree, tainted. It raises no doubt in our minds as to the security of the verdict, in so far as the jury depended on this witness's evidence".

7 Another witness told how she had seen Jim Robinson in her mother's house all afternoon of the 19th September 1978. The court of appeal judges said: "Our overall impression of this witness was that she retained a misguided sense of loyalty for Robinson. We do not find her a credible witness, and if she had been called at the trial we don't think the jury would have regarded her in any different light than we do".

8 Fresh evidence was produced to support both Michael and Vincent Hickey, that they were buying a car on the afternoon of the murder. In their evidence at the original trial they said that they had been at the garage at "about 4.35 to 4.45". The prosecution had said that they were lying and it was the following day, the 20th September. The court of appeal judges said they were "satisfied that Michael and Vincent bought a car on the 19th September and not on the 20th September as was suggested by the Crown at the original trial. But we cannot support the findings that they were there soon after 4.30 pm. That being so we are satisfied that the Hickeys arrived at the garage sometime after 5.00 pm on the 19th September contrary to what is stated in their alibi notices and contrary to what Michael and Vincent said in evidence.

"The new evidence does not assist Vincent in any way, we are

satisfied that Vincent Hickey deliberately lied about his whereabouts more than once in order to conceal the fact that he was at Yew Tree Farm on the afternoon of 19th September".

9 The court of appeal judges said: "It is vitally important that we should now stand back and look at the case of Michael Hickey in the light of fresh evidence. Michael made no admissions save, allegedly, to a prisoner whose evidence we disregard. There was no identification of Michael at the scene, although there is an overlap in the sense that he advanced a joint alibi with Vincent Hickey." The prosecution agreed at the original trial that the case against Michael Hickey was made up of a couple of 'bits and pieces' and although Michael is consistent in his denials of those 'bits and pieces' they do add up to a formidable case against him. The court of appeal judges said: "We cannot improve upon that summary, we have taken into account the fresh evidence we have heard and the evidence we have dismissed. Having given it very anxious consideration, we have come to the conclusion that the evidence against him, including his own evidence, the prosecution has proved beyond reasonable doubt that Michael did not part company with Vincent throughout the crucial period, so therefore was at the scene of the burglary at Yew Tree Farm".

10 The confession made by Pat Molloy played an instrumental part in sinking the other three men at the 1979 trial, as he had named all three of them. Neither Michael, Jim or Vincent was given the chance to challenge the alleged confession, as Pat Molloy had been advised by his defence not to go into the witness box. The argument was put before the court of appeal judges that the trial judge should have allowed the three men to have a separate trial. the judges said they did not think it would make any difference if put before a new jury.

The appeal for all three men was dismissed in March 1989, and in July the men were refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords.

If all the new evidence that was presented to the court of appeal had been put before a new jury, there is no doubt that these men would now be free.

THE WEST MIDLANDS SERIOUS CRIME SQUAD

In the same month (July 1989) that leave to appeal to the House of Lords was refused, the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad was disbanded after a whole series of complaints that police from this squad had been fabricating evidence and gaining false confessions. Case after case was being thrown out of the courts with the defendants being acquitted because of allegations of police corruption.

In August 1989, more than fifty members of the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad were moved to non-operational duties after

some crucial papers went missing. At least five of these officers were involved in the interrogation of the Bridgewater Four. D.C. John Perkins of this squad was responsible for gaining a signature on the false confession from the petrified Pat Molloy.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

RITTER'S EVIDENCE

There have been new developments in the case of the Bridgewater Four. In April 1990, it was revealed by Paul Foot in the Daily Mirror and reported on television and radio that a retired prison officer had come forward with new information regarding a key witness for the prosecution. The evidence of this witness at the original trial was crucial to the prosecution's case.

Mervyn "Tex" Ritter said at the original trial that he had overheard Jimmy Robinson confess. Jimmy Robinson has always strenuously denied that any conversation of this nature took place. Tex (as he likes to be called) is a self-confessed pathological liar and has said: "I deceive myself, I don't know when I'm telling the truth any more." despite this amazing admission from Ritter, backed up by two psychiatrists' reports confirming that he was indeed a pathological liar, three court of appeal judges described him as a "witness of truth."

At the time that the judges made this remark in favour of Ritter, he was sitting comfortably in Pentonville Prison. one of the prison officers, Frank Gibson, has come forward with new evidence. this officer has recently retired after 24 years of service to the prison system. Frank Gibson has made a sworn statement to the men's solicitor, saying:

"I have not seen a prisoner so favourably treated in my 24 years in the prison service. I was in the office with Ritter when it was announced that the Bridgewater appeal had failed. We heard the announcement together. Ritter looked at me in amazement, and I remember he exclaimed "Jesus Christ, They've actually believed me." I said, "Look Tex, did Jimmy Robinson admit anything to you?" he didn't say anything, he just smiled and shook his head from side to side, indicating 'no', and then said "Look Mr Gibson, you know the score, it's all about money."

Mr Gibson described how all prisoners in Pentonville would be locked up at lunch-time. "During the lunch break there is only one officer on duty. That officer is not even allowed to open a cell door without another officer being present even if the prisoner is in distress. Some staff would play Badminton during the lunch break. I recall seeing Ritter playing Badminton with other prison officers. All prisoners should have been

locked up in their cells. I was very disturbed to see this. The activity was a breach of prison regulations."

Mr Gibson says that he regarded Ritter as "an extremely privileged prisoner" who:

1 Was allowed the freedom of the prison to play Badminton with prison officers while his fellow inmates were locked up.

2 At Christmas received a present of toiletries from senior staff at Pentonville. At the very same Christmas at Gartree, prison officers prevented Jim Robinson from being given a dozen campaign Christmas cards to send to his family.

3 Mr Gibson was disgusted when a week after he left the prison service he received retirement card with sixteen signatures. Fifteen of the signatures were those of his colleagues, and the sixteenth was that of prisoner Ritter, who had put "god bless Mr Gibson. Be in peace. Tex." Mr Gibson says "I knew Ritter had the run of the place but it is wrong that a prisoner be asked by other prison officers to sign a retirement card."

We say that Ritter is enjoying special privileges as a result of being deliberately planted by the authorities on a wing that houses unconvicted remand prisoners. Things don't appear to have changed much over the last thirteen years. This is how he originally came into contact with the Bridgewater Four, who at the time were unconvicted and on remand.

MOLLOY'S CONFESSION

Last May, speech pattern expert Andrew Morton wrote suggesting that Molloy's confession was not authentic. Molloy's lawyers commissioned Professor Gerald McMenanim of the Department of Linguistics at California State University. Professor McMenanim is one of the world's top language experts. He has given conclusive evidence in a large number of American criminal cases.

He compared the language of the dictated confession with the language in Molloy's letters. His conclusion is devastating:

"It is my opinion that the written confession does not in fact represent Molloy's language."

This is supported by two other language specialists.

Pat Molloy was born and grew up in Ireland. So Dr John Harris, a lecturer in linguistics at London University and a specialist in Irish dialects, was commissioned.

Dr Harris studied the letters and the confession. he concludes:

"The known writings of Patrick Molloy in his prison letters contain a considerable number of general non-standard and identifiably Irish English linguistic features. the confession on the other hand, contains only one general non-standard feature

and no specifically Irish features."

The third report is by Mr Morton. In a series of detailed graphs and analyses, Mr Morton re-affirms his opinion last year that Molloy's confession is bogus. He writes:

"That Molloy is not the source of the utterance attributed to him could hardly be clearer."

We cannot emphasise strongly enough the importance of this new evidence.

Three independent experts, using different techniques, support each other's conclusions that Pat Molloy's confession was not in Molloy's language.

Under the British legal system, the three men had no right to challenge the Molloy confession which named them as murderers. Whatever the judge said must have damned the three men in the eyes of the jury.

Now it seems that Molloy's confession was false, and in that case the trial of Michael Hickey, Jim Robinson and Vincent Hickey was unfair.

INNOCENT

The men have always maintained that a case was fabricated around them, and that one witness after another (all recruited by the police) lied at the 1979 trial. All the men have always been adamant that the confession of Pat Molloy was false.

The court of appeal accepted that witnesses did commit perjury at the 1979 trial. However this court was not aware that the interrogating officer who obtained the false confession from Pat Molloy was one of the now disbanded Serious Crime Squad officers. More importantly, this officer was found guilty in 1989 of two out of three charges of falsifying evidence and gaining false confessions. Neither was the court aware of the new developments in respect of Ritter's evidence and Molloy's confession.

We would ask you to support us in our continued fight for JUSTICE. The Bridgewater Four have been wrongly convicted for a crime that they clearly did not commit. They are now entering their thirteenth year of wrongful imprisonment as victims of a grave and serious miscarriage of justice. THEY ARE INNOCENT.

APPENDIX

PATRICK MOLLOYS STATEMENT OF DENIAL

Sir,

I wish to ask your permission to add these points to my first grounds, to explain last year of 79. I had reason to write to a friend about what happened at Wombourne Murder H.Q.. In that letter I described the beatings and mental torture I underwent at the hands of the Regional Crime Squad, and how I came to sign the statement Exhibit 54. I posted this letter in the usual way which was censored by the prison at Leicester. A week later the prison officer in charge of the segregation unit brought my letter to my friend back to me, with a covering letter from the Home Office Category A committee which said I could not write to anybody about the ill-treatment I received at the hands of the police. It also said the only person I could write to about this matter was the Chief Constable of Staffordshire.

When I made out the opening grounds last December I was still under the Cat. A conditions and I thought at the time I could accuse the police of brutality in my grounds and how that Exhibit 54 was obtained. What happened to me is this. I was taken to Bournville to wait for men to come for me to take me to Tamworth. A blanket was placed on my head and was taken to Tamworth as I thought, but in fact I was taken to Wombourne Murder H.Q. and I was there two days before I really knew where I was. I was taken into the doctor's surgery to be questioned by Sergeant Harrison and Detective Constable Davies. After a time Harrison left the room for a few minutes also with Det. C. Davies. As soon as Harrison left the room, Davies jumped up and strode across the room towards me grasping a 12" ruler in his hand, and struck me a severe blow across the throat which left me gasping for air. All the time this was happening Davies was uttering obscenities at me. Later I was taken to the cells, and was warned by those two I would be questioned about Carl B. A bearded man who I think is called Perkins and his big mate came to my cell, who did ask me about Carl and his death. They told me all about V. Hickey and Jim Robinson. Perkins showed me a statement signed by Vince, saying he was the driver and me and Jim and John Burkett was at yew Tree Farm with him. I was very upset over this as I knew me and Jim were not here at Y.T.F but neither could I remember where me and Jim were at that time for sure. Those two men came back late that night after the pub closed, loaded up with bottles of ale. They said I could have a case of them if I signed a statement admitting being at Y.T.F.. I was questioned and insulted and called a thick Irish mick. I was struck on the face several times which broke my teeth, that was by Perkins, while his mate held me in his arms and repeatedly asked to sign a statement saying I was at the farm upstairs robbing it. Before they left finally that night they both went out of the cell, and half closed

the door to, the bearded one rushed back in again and struck me a severe blow to the stomach and said he would be back in the morning for my signature. I was disturbed by the uniformed night staff every half hour by banging on the hatch to waken me up. The meals I received were liberally doused with salt and I was not given anything to drink. In the end I had to cup my hands in the lav basin and flush the toilet to get water to drink. During the night I thought long about how Vince was involving me in murder which I did not know about.

Also what they had told me of Joe Hickey saying he had informed on me and Jim and J. Burkett. I was told that Jim had put me in for the Tamworth meat offence. It was me who involved Michael in this out of revenge on the Hickeys. In the morning I asked to see Perkins. He and his mate came back and the bearded one started to make out a statement. While this was being started his mate put his arms around my shoulders and started talking low in my ear and I repeated what he said

(I ask your permission to continue these facts)

with minor variations to put in Michael. Perkins added the bit about remorse and sorrow over Carl's death.

I signed it Ex. 54, out of revenge on the others and out of fear of more beatings and ill-treatment. As soon as I signed it conditions changed for the better but I never thought for one moment that it would be believed, but it was and they recruited the lowest of the low out of the prisons to back it up, also a barmaid and others to give it some validity. I was also threatened with more beatings by Watson if I did not come across with more to involve Michael Hickey.

13.10.1980

PAT J. MOLLOY

The confession (Exhibit 54) referred to in this statement played a vital part in securing the convictions of all four men.

CAMPAIGN FUND RAISING

The following items are now available for sale to raise funds in support of the Bredgewater Four Campaign:

Tee-shirts (Medium or large sizes)
Pens
Key Fobs
Badges
