



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Houndsfield Cottage,
Houndsfield Lane,
Wythall,
B.ham.47.6LS.

7th Dec.1989.

The Bridgewater Four Campaign.

Dear *Mrs Charles Harghey*,

I am the mother of Michael Hickey who was wrongly convicted of murder in 1979.in the Carl Bridgewater case.Three other men were convicted with my son,Vincent Hickey,Jim Robinson,and Pat Molloy (who died in prison).They have all protested their innocence for the past eleven years and will continue to do so until they receive justice from our courts.

British Justice has been shattered by the release of the Guildford Four who served fifteen years in prison for a crime they did not commit. Our system has now at last conceded to admit that mistakes can and do happen, whether by accident or by design. There are so many cases of injustices which have been and I suspect still being perpetrated,my own experience being one of them.

Briefly I would like to tell you that at the accused mens trial in 1979. there was'nt any factual evidence produced by the prosecution at all.The case was built around police verbals,which for most part were hotly denied. Convicts were recruited from out of our prisons to lie on oath and make damaging statements against the accused. Probably the most damaging of all was a false confession the police gained from Pat Molloy. The prisoners who lied we now know from the recent Court of Appeal hearing lied on oath for their own gain i.e.early release from prison,reduced sentences,etc.The confession which was extracted from Pat Molloy by the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad was beaten out of him,and only after he signed this confession was he allowed to have contact with his solicitor,and of course he immediately complained of the ill treatment he had suffered at the hands of the police. This confession played an instrumental part in sinking the other three men at the original trial as he had named all three of them.Neither Michael, Jim,or Vincent were given the chance to challenge the alledged confession as Pat Molloy had been advised not to go into the witness box.So therefore we are left with a situation whereby Pat Molloy's uncorroborated false confession helped to convict three more innocent men.

Earlier this year the whole of the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad,a total of fifty three officers was disbanded.This came amidst allegations of corruption and certain officers have been falsifying evidence and obtaining false confessions.This has resulted in the West Yorkshire Police being called in to conduct an enquiry into the activities of all serving officers belonging to this squad.I find this police enquiry to be totally unacceptable and feel very strongly that it should be replaced with an Open Independent Public Enquiry immediately.

In 1988/89 we spent forty one days at the Court of Appeal, it was the longest appeal in British Criminal history. The evidence against Michael Hickey in particular has been quashed, apart from a couple of pieces of very flimsy evidence, which was described by the trial judge as 'Straws in the wind' adding 'If Michael were to stand before me on these bits and pieces there would be no trial for him'. Yet Michael Hickey still remains in prison. In the main what I'm saying is the whole case changed even more in favour of the appellants in 1988/89. Witnesses came forward to say they had lied at the original trial, alibi's were firmed up and established, but I'm very much afraid that all our overwhelming new evidence fell upon deaf ears and the judges are so selective in what they choose to believe its almost unreal. It certainly proves to be the case that the bigger and more notorious a wrongful conviction in this Country the more difficult it becomes to admit and rectify the mistake. All the innocent men should have been exonerated on the new evidence placed before the three Court of Appeal judges.

The whole world now knows that British Justice is not quick, if at all to put right these outrageous miscarriages of justice. It is a known fact that there are many innocent people in British prisons, some you never ever hear about, and some like our own case have constantly protested their innocence and have shouted aloud and fought to be heard. Through the winter of 83/84 in freezing weather Michael Hickey staged the longest prison rooftop protest ever known, he stayed on the roof for ninety days pleading that someone will take a fresh look at the case, they didn't and he came down from the prison roof suffering from frostbite, and as a result of this courageous and amazing protest his health has suffered ever since, it had taken its toll both mentally and physically, and still they refused to listen and acknowledge something was wrong. To reiterate the more notorious a case the more difficult it becomes to right the awful wrong that has been inflicted upon these innocent men.

I feel strongly that the time is nigh to highlight the plight of these innocent men as far afield as is possible. We believe we have a human right to be heard, and the British courts have a duty to determine right from wrong, truth from lies, and the innocent from the guilty. All these things are being denied to Michael Hickey, Jim Robinson, and Vincent Hickey. British Justice is just not working properly as many of our Judges and Ministers would have the world believe.

The men's legal profession acting on their behalf remain totally supportive and are completely convinced that a grave and serious injustice has been committed against all four men, and have pledged to continue to fight on for them.

It is our firm belief that any other support we may enlist from any other man or woman of conscience would be a tremendous help to us and our campaign, therefore its for this reason I ask you if you would commit yourself to our cause and our pursuance of JUSTICE in order that we gain the eventual freedom and liberty of these INNOCENT men.

Yours Sincerely,

Ann Whelan

Ann Whelan.