

# Beyond Reasonable Doubt

## Justice for Derek Christian

### Newsletter No. 2, Dec. 99

Dear friends,

Welcome to the second newsletter from *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, which sees the festive period drawing closer. Derek, who is preparing for his fourth Christmas in prison, would like to pass on the following message to his friends and supporters.

"We are into the final month of the year, in fact it is the final month of the millennium. This means Christmas is just around the corner with peace and goodwill to all men. Family and friends ask what I'd like for Christmas. Well my conviction quashed and regaining my liberty would be nice. But alas not this year. Still I'll be making the most of my situation.

I don't know about you, but for me this year seems to have flown by. It has been helped by me attending the education department. A whole range of subjects is on offer, though whether you get them or not is a different matter. However, having said that, I did manage to get all of my first choices.

I have gained a GCSE in law and just received notification that I have been granted funding to study 'A' level law, and also gained qualifications in computing. At present I am half way through a first aid course - the final exam is

on 13<sup>th</sup> December - and I am also studying GCSE mathematics. It's never too late to learn!

Now back to Christmas. What will it be like for me?

It will be one of the better times of the year for me, as it means 8 full days opened up. They'll serve the traditional dinner, however as I've got cooking facilities I'll be making my own dinner on the day. Most evenings I manage to cook something I like - and a proper portion!

Entertainment wise - there is the TV and if we are lucky the latest round of video releases. Last year it was Titanic over two sessions. There will also be the usual competitions - quiz, snooker, pool and darts - so I shouldn't be at a loose end.

I hope this has given you an insight into what I've done so far this year and am likely to do over the remaining days of the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support, and wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

*Derek*



## News & Updates

### Legal News

Derek's solicitor is currently having an independent report prepared; this will examine the strength and soundness of the forensic evidence against Derek.

### Innocent

At the end of October Kevin and I attended a public meeting in Manchester hosted by the campaigning group **Innocent**. Both **Innocent** and its sister organisation **conviction** are supporting Derek's case. **Innocent** has played a major role in having several miscarriages of justice reversed, perhaps the most (in)famous of which has been the Kevin Callan case.

Among the guest speakers at the meeting were Michael O' Brien - one of the "Cardiff Newsagent Three" - who spent 11 years in prison before being released on bail pending the outcome of his appeal hearing in December, and Paddy Joe Hill - one of the "Birmingham Six" - who spent over 16 years in prison before his conviction for the Birmingham

pub bombings was quashed in 1991.

Both Michael and Paddy spoke of the need to campaign vigorously on behalf of wrongfully convicted prisoners. As they both testified, the quest for the truth and justice can be a long and slow one.

### Crimewatch File

The Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC) has not upheld our complaint of unfairness against the BBC and its *Crimewatch File* programme which featured the investigation into the murder of Margaret Wilson.

While the BSC conceded the case was a complex one, it felt the programme showed how the police debated the complex issues in the investigation.

The BBC, in its evidence presented to the Commission, suggested that Derek had grown a "pronounced goatee beard" in the space of 3 days, and the BSC, as part of its adjudication, considered it of no significance that a clean-shaven actor was used to portray Derek in the

programme. The BSC also accepted that reference to the complexity of the fibre evidence and to fibres not attributable to Derek might have been helpful [to putting Derek's case], but felt it was fair to present such complicated evidence in a simplified manner.

Copies of the adjudication can be obtained from the BSC, 7 The Sanctuary, London, SW1P 3JS.

### What you can do to help

If Derek's story upsets you, **write to your MP or Home Secretary Jack Straw, at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA**, demanding that Derek's case be referred back to the Court of Appeal.

Tracey and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support over the past 12 months.

Please continue to show your support for Derek by sending him a Christmas card.

*Tracey                      Kevin*

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