

BILLY WRIGHT INQUIRY

Day 100: 13th October 2008

Witness Markus Lewis continued from day 99 Questions from

Mr Angus Stewart QC, Counsel to the Inquiry

Mr Lewis said that the Staff Communication Sheet submitted on the 29th of April recorded the drugs find that had happened at 16:00. Therefore he said that it could not have been the same sheet as described to the Inquiry on day 99. He said that it appeared to be the case that he and Mr McCrum were not on duty together on Sunday in May 2006. Mr Lewis re-iterated his statement that the incident involving the HMP Maze file at HMP Maghaberry actually happened. He said that he had given his friend a key to his locker at HMP Maghaberry but that afterwards all the diaries supporting his affidavits had gone missing.

He explained that he believed that there were HMP Maze files, journals and health records from staff and prisoners held at HMP Maghaberry. He said that he believed that the files from Mourne House administration block had been destroyed between 2004 and 2005.

Mr Lewis said that he gained access to the Cage Room of HMP Maghaberry in 2006 when he was asked to carry visitor tapes and journals. He said that he would like to think that he was on the palm reader that gave access to the Cage Room. Then he explained that the palm reader must have worked for him otherwise his depiction of events would not make sense. He said that he thought that there were only two cages in the cage room. He said that he entered the security cage within the room.

Mr Lewis said that INLA prisoner Christopher McWilliams had explained to him in advance how easy it would be for him to smuggle a gun into the Prison. He said that he approached Sophy Bryson, the then Chair of the Board of Visitors, about the matter. Then he described how he had not told Sophy Bryson. Then he said that he had told her but not in that much detail. Then he said "I believe I did" but was not prepared to disclose further details.

Mr Lewis explained how he had heard the telephone call by Christopher McWilliams where he said that he was going to kill "The Rat", referring to Billy Wright.

Questions from Mr Johnson, Counsel to the Northern Ireland Prison Service

Mr Lewis explained that he had not written his affidavits out of spite against the Prison Service. He said that there was no connection between the date of his giving evidence to the Inquiry and the date for which his job in the Prison Service was terminated.

1He said that he could not explain why Mr McCrum had said that the incident with an HMP Maze file had never happened. He said that he had told the Principal Officer about McWilliams' plan to bring guns into HMP Maghaberry the same day as McWilliams told him. He said that he did not know why he had said something different in his affidavit.

He explained how traces of Semtex had been detected in HMP Maghaberry but that it was never found and that they kept on working through the threat of explosion.

Mr Lewis said that he did not think that he had enough information to go to the police after being told by Christopher McWilliams that he wanted to smuggle weapons into the prison. He accepted that he may have heard the telephone conversation after Christopher McWilliams had killed Billy Wright rather than before.

Questions from Mr Waite, Counsel for the Prison Officers Association

Mr Lewis described how he had a disagreement with Governor Davis in 1991 after he was assaulted. He then explained how Governor Davis had not arrived at HMP Maghaberry until 1992 and could not understand how his argument could have happened. He said that he had known of other occasions when prisoners had threatened other prisoners in advance apart from when he said Christopher McWilliams threatened to kill Billy Wright.

Mr Lewis explained that after telling Sophy Bryson about the plan by Christopher McWilliams to smuggle weapons into HMP Maghaberry she confessed her knowledge of it to his whole committee.

Mr Lewis explained how another member of the HMP Maghaberry Prison staff who was held hostage was Officer McCarthy. He said of Officer McCarthy that "the poor man simply never recovered" from the hostage incident. He described the physiological pain in greater detail, "I just know that Mr McCarthy is not the same Officer McCarthy that I used to work with. As I said, the poor man never recovered."

Questions from Mr O'Donoghue, Counsel for the Prison Officers Association.

Mr Lewis described how a Prison Officer had told him about a tape recording of Christopher McWilliams telling a woman about his plans to kill Billy Wright. He said that afterwards he discussed it with a member of his committee. He was unwilling to disclose names for fear that the Prison Service might do to them what it did to him. He said that he walked into the Security Intelligence Centre (SIC) and asked an individual to play the tape for him. He said that he heard the tape and that it confirmed that the rumours in the prison about an advance threat against Billy Wright were true. Mr Lewis then listened to the telephone call that Christopher McWilliams made to a woman after he had killed Billy Wright. Mr Lewis said that he had never heard this recording before and said that he did not know why he remembered hearing a call by

Christopher McWilliams before Billy Wright's death but not the more widely known call made afterwards. He said that he was unwilling to point to any other officer who might be able to verify the existence of the tape.

Mr Lewis described how prisoners would be taken away to false visiting sessions to find information from them. He said that there was no one to confirm his statements.

Questions from Mr Coll, counsel for Mr Jopling and Mr McCrum

Mr Lewis clarified his earlier point by conceding that "I haven't been in the security cage". He could not comment on why the HMP Maze files he had described seeing in the security cage had not been destroyed with the other files. He said that Mr Jopling's comment that everything Mr Lewis said must be "taken with a pinch of salt" was an attempt by Mr Jopling to defend himself from the authorities and the Prison Service. He said that he had seen the words "Maze SIC" written on the bottom of the security file. He denied that he had been making up the evidence.

Questions from Mr McQuitty, counsel for Duncan McLaughlan.

Mr Lewis explained that he had made mistakes in his evidence because he was working without his diaries.