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'Angry Brigade' claimed responsibility for bombing of ministers' homes, prosecution says

By Clive Borrell

Bomb attacks at the homes of two senior ministers and the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police were among explosions caused by two young men and others unknown during an eight-month period, Mr. Doiran Williams, for the Director of Public Prosecutions, said at Barnet Magistrates' Court yesterday.

After each incident communiqués from "The Angry Brigade" claimed responsibility, Mr. Williams said. He was opening committal proceedings against the two men. The hearing is expected to last at least eight days.

The accused are Jack Leonard Prescott, aged 26, decorator, of Roehampton Lane, Roehampton, London, and Ian Donald Purdie, aged 23, film technician, of Tyneham Road, Wandsworth, London.

They are jointly charged that on dates between July 30, 1970, and March 5, 1971, they unlawfully and maliciously conspired to cause explosions in the United Kingdom likely to endanger life or cause injury to property.

Mr. Prescott alone is charged with causing an explosion at the home of Mr. Robert Carr, Secretary of State for Employment, at Hadley Green, Barnet, on January 12 this year; causing an explosion in a B.B.C. outside broadcast van at the Albert Hall on November 20 last year; causing an explosion on December 19, 1970, at the offices of the Department of Employment in St. James's Square, London; and nine other charges alleging theft of cheque books and obtaining goods by fraud with forged cheques.

An application to have restrictions on reporting reimposed was rejected. It was made by Mr. Arthur Rosen, for the offence of Mr. Prescott. He said he could not

now attack the prosecution evidence and its admissibility. Mr. Rosen, who has appeared for both men throughout the hearings so far, had his application supported by a solicitor representing the second man.

Mr. Doiran Williams said he could not comment on the plea. Before Mr. Williams opened the prosecution's case, Det. Chief Supt. Roy Habershon, the senior Scotland Yard officer in charge of the case, was asked to leave the court until he was called to give his evidence.

Mr. Arnold Rosen, for the defence of Mr. Prescott, and Mr. Stephen Sedley for the defence of Mr. Purdie, successfully applied to Alderman Cedric Reynolds, the Magistrate, to have the detectives ordered out of court during the hearing, contrary to normal custom whereby the officer in charge of an investigation is allowed to sit in to assist the prosecution. Mr. Rosen said in his application: "I deplore the granting of a special privilege to the prosecution."

Mr. Williams said the defendants became friendly in the summer of 1969 when they found that they had common interests. Mr. Purdie held strong anarchistic views which he communicated to Mr. Prescott during their friendship.

Both men were closely connected with the Women's Liberation Movement who occupied a commune in Grosvenor Avenue, Islington, north London, where occasionally they stayed.

Mr. Williams said a woman would be called to say that Mr. Prescott had told her that Mr. Purdie was the "link man" of the anarchist movement, with his own money to travel about the country. When the woman became concerned at the prospect of Mr. Prescott's becoming involved, he



Mr. Prescott

called, he said, to tell how Mr. Prescott described the manufacture of the two bombs used to cause explosions at Mr. Carr's home.

Describing six incidents in detail, Mr. Williams said the first was at the home of Sir John Waldron, Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, on August 30, 1970. An explosion of a bomb made of TNT, nitro-glycerine and ammonia nitrate caused damage to a door and porch but caused no personal injury.

The second incident was at the home of Sir Peter Rawlinson, Q.C., the Attorney General, on September 8, 1970. The damage was slight. The bomb in this case was of an incendiary type.

The third attack was on a B.B.C. van at the Albert Hall, where the Miss World contest was being held. This caused extensive damage to the rear of the vehicle. Experts would say the explosion was caused by an acid bomb.

The fourth incident was the firing of a machine-gun bullet at the Spanish Embassy in London early in December last year. A first-floor window was damaged by a 9mm. bullet similar to those used by the Services.

This incident, Mr. Williams went on, was the subject of the first communiqué from "The Angry Brigade". This was sent to *The Times* and the underground newspaper known as IT.

Mr. Williams added: "This was as wide a traverse of enlightened opinion as one is likely to find." The communiqué said in part: "We machine-gunned the Spanish Embassy last night in solidarity with our Basque brothers." It also stated: "Fascism and oppression will be smashed. Embassies, judges, high pigs, spectacles and property. Spanish Emb machine gunned Thursday".

He then turned to February this year, when Mr. Prescott was in custody at Brixton prison. Two fellow prisoners, referred to only as A and B, would be

The fifth incident, Mr. Williams said, was at the Department of Employment on December 9, 1970, which caused minor damage. This was followed by communiqué No. 2 to *The Times*, simply stating: "Success at the Min of Emp and Prod."

The final incident, he added, was the attack at Mr. Carr's home, where two bombs of gelignite caused extensive damage internally and externally while Mr. Carr, his wife and daughter, aged 13, were inside.

The bombs were made each of 2lb. of gelignite with acid detonators and under different conditions could have caused death or serious injury.

Communiqués 4, 5 and 6 followed this explosion from "The Angry Brigade" and, Mr. Williams continued, a handwriting expert would be called to swear that in some cases the writing on the envelopes, although disguised in block capital letters, was that of Mr. Prescott.

At the end of the day's hearing, Mr. Rosen said he objected to an attempt by police to search him before entering court. He added: "I do not like an attempt to have a search made on me for any recorders or cameras—or whatever else the police may think it would be wrong to have in court."

He understood that the police were acting with the "best will in the world" to protect people attending the hearing. "I take it it won't be necessary for me to make mention of this fact at any time in the future", he said.

The magistrate said it was beneath the dignity of a member of the Bar that he should be searched unless there was any good reason. The hearing was adjourned until Tuesday next, both the accused being remanded in custody.