

## Summary and transcript of interview of Michael Sheaff by Chris Thomas, 2007 (803/18a)

Approximate timings given in minutes and seconds in various places. Interview starts at 1:49.

### Summary

Subjects include (transcript paragraph numbers given in brackets): Sheaff's arrest on picket line and wrongful criminal conviction and its effect on his career (4-12, 46-60, 66-70); solidarity shown during dispute (16, 24, 34, 38).

### Transcript

[Sound and vision check]

1. **CT:** OK Mike, how did you first hear about the Grunwick?
2. **MS:** Well, I'd been actively involved in the Labour Party Young Socialists and the National Organisation of Labour Students, and I'd read about the dispute originally in some of the labour movement papers, and from its early beginnings was following it quite closely because I saw the dispute as one involving [a] group of workers who were clearly being extremely exploited and being subject to quite autocratic and arbitrary management, which in my view then and now had no place in modern Britain. And it was a group of workers who were very newly coming into contact with the trade union movement and needed particular support, I felt, from the rest of the movement. There was another factor as well, which I remember being very conscious of as a Labour Party member, I think: was that the Labour government had in 1975 established legislation, the Employment Protection Act, which was intended to give workers the legal right to join a union, to have that union recognised for bargaining and so on, and yet the employers at Grunwick had been able to completely ignore that legislation, refuse to accept the recommendations from ACAS<sup>1</sup> on recognition and so on. And so in all those circumstances it seemed particularly important to show solidarity.
3. **CT:** And where did you come from?
4. **MS:** Well, I was [a] student at Plymouth, and I'd received news [of] successfully graduating on Friday the ninth of July, and I travelled up over that weekend to join the mass picket and demonstration that was organised for Monday the eleventh of July. And I arrived at the picket line – I guess it was seven o'clock, maybe slightly before then – and numbers were building up, and there wasn't any particular rancour, there was the odd pushing and so on that I remember. But the point I remember most clearly of all was, round about half past nine in the morning, I was in Chapter Road, and some yards in front of me – probably about maybe ten yards in front of me, perhaps slightly more – there was a line of pickets and a line of police, and there was, the pickets were my side of the line, and there was some pushing going on – nothing particularly I could see [that was] particularly aggressive – but there was some pushing going on, and then quite suddenly the police broke through that line, and a group of policemen just started running towards people who were standing around. And all of us, myself included, turned and tried to get out of their way, not being sure what they were after, and within moments, next thing I knew was a heavy arm around my neck and being forcibly pulled

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<sup>1</sup> Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service.

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backwards. Obviously, I realised it was the police, and so I remember just letting my body go limp and not resisting in any way, and was taken in onto the police bus. [4:43]

5. **CT:** And what happened next?
6. **MS:** Well, we were taken to Wembley police station, and I suppose by that time I'd just accepted that I was charged with obstruction or some similar offence, and just had to accept that that can happen in those circumstances. And when it got to the point of being charged, I was charged with possession of an offensive weapon and assault on the police, which was – well, one can imagine, was just – I was incredulous, to say the least. And, I mean, the case that the police put was that they alleged that I'd been holding a broken-off banner pole with which I was hitting police on the head with, and only when I was forcibly restrained by the police that I stopped doing this, and the allegation continued that while being restrained I elbowed one of the police officers in the stomach. It just bore so little – I mean, it was just – there was nothing in it remotely; there was nothing there that remotely compared with the situation that happened. So between that point and the trial there were various changes. I mean, at one point the charge of assault on the police was changed to assault causing actual bodily harm, which my solicitor was actually quite pleased about because that would have allowed us to have elected for trial by jury, but then they altered it back to assault on the police, which I hadn't known until then allowed the police to decide whether I had a jury, and they turned down our request for one. Then there was an added charge of threatening behaviour, and eventually, when it got to court, prior to getting to court, my solicitor had urged me strongly to get character references, which I did, under his advice. I have to say I was a little bit reluctant at the time, because my view, I think, which I expressed to the solicitor, was that we should argue the case on what happened. I was completely innocent and I wanted to argue it on the facts of what happened, not on particular character references. Now, fortunately I listened to my solicitor because I think it was that that saved me from a prison sentence. And in fact, I mean, I was given a suspended prison sentence, but it was suspended on the grounds of the character references that were provided. I was cleared of the offensive weapon charge, but then the allegation that I'd elbowed a policeman in the stomach was still held to have happened, which it didn't, and that was grounds for the conviction of assault and the allegation that prior to that I'd been engaged in some kind of threatening behaviour, which was never made clear, because the allegation had always been that I'd been hitting police officers on the head with a stick, which is fortunately – I mean, it was a difficult experience for me, but fortunately for me everyone who knew me just knew that that was – I mean, I don't hit people on the head with a stick, and one imagines if you were you wouldn't chose a six-foot something Metropolitan Police officer to begin with. You know, it was just so out of anyone – so that I found supportive, because people who knew me knew that it couldn't possibly have been true, but it was nevertheless a difficult experience to go through. [8:09]
7. **CT:** And what ultimately were you sentenced with?
8. **MS:** I had a one-month prison sentence, which after some discussion in the court was then suspended for a period of a year, and it did turn out basically that it was the character references that ensured that it was suspended, so I came within an inch, really, of spending a month in gaol for something that simply hadn't happened.

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9. **CT:** And what was the consequences of that?
10. **MS:** Well, the consequences for me, I mean, were that my intention to enter school teaching at that time was certainly disrupted. It's very difficult making an application that had to include details of, you know, assault on the police and threatening behaviour charge. And there were other career routes that I followed through in the years afterwards which were similarly blocked. I mean, as the years passed, I was able to establish a new career as an academic, and I love the job, got a great family, and so I wouldn't claim that my life now is blighted by that experience at all – it's not – but I'm very conscious that I was very fortunate – very supportive colleagues, family and others, and it was a real insight into how an injustice – I mean, there are much bigger injustices [that have] occurred – but it was a real insight into how injustices can occur.
11. **CT:** So what was your – how did that change your impression of the police, the Grunwick dispute and industrial relations?
12. **MS:** Well, I think in terms of the dispute itself, I continued – I mean it was getting into a period later on that autumn where the issues around the sorting workers at Cricklewood and so on, and it was – I hoped that there might be more solidarity action, and, you know, it didn't diminish one inch my support for the dispute. In terms of the police, I mean, I think I often went through my mind afterwards thinking, well, was it a case of mistaken identity? Was there somebody the police had seen who was doing that, and they'd simply mistaken the identity? And that is a possibility. The other alternative is that the police – and it was only one police officer who was making that allegation – the other alternative is that he was lying. On balance I think it probably was the second of those, unfortunately, but I can't be sure of that. All I know is that what I was doing there was trying to get out of his way. **[10:55]**
13. **CT:** Sure. Looking at the Grunwick dispute as a whole, do you see it – I mean, how did you see the political future change as a consequence of the failure of the dispute?
14. **MS:** Because I'd felt that the dispute had become necessary, in a sense, sadly, because some of the legislation that was in place to protect workers was being – well, the courts were being used to find ways around or beside that objective of that legislation. So, because I'd seen that happening to the legislative intent, that's why I felt that it was particularly important that mass support was the best means of trying to create sufficient pressure for improvement. Once that had failed to succeed as well, then I suppose – I mean, I'm not for a minute suggesting that I imagined quite was going to happen under Thatcher and so on – but you saw that as being – I felt that Grunwick was a real test for the labour movement, that we couldn't allow a sweat-shop like that to continue and employ on that kind of basis, and when we had the employment rights laws on our side, the trade union movement on our side, then the fact the dispute wasn't successful was a – it sounded a note of warning for what was perhaps to come. **[12:30]**
15. **CT:** What message do you think it sent out to the employers?
16. **MS:** Well, I'm sure it did give many employers of that kind more confidence that they could change, challenge union organisation. Having said that, though, I mean, the other clear message that I think

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– although the dispute itself wasn't successful, one of my abiding memories of it was the range of people that it brought together in support of those workers. And I remember a conversation in the police cell at Wembley, because as the day wore on more people – I think I was the first person in that cell – but as the day went on others joined me who'd been arrested, and the range – there was one, I remember, a Yorkshire miner who had come [in] a contingent of Yorkshire miners, who had come, I don't think knowing a huge amount about the dispute but understood that this was a dispute that the trade union movement needed to support, and was showing, effectively if you like, class loyalty in standing with those workers. Other – women's group, feminist movement, you know, had become involved, seeing it as important struggle involving those women. Although the outcome wasn't achieved – or the successful outcome wasn't achieved – I think it did symbolise something new, which is still in the process of being built in my view, of a wider kind of movement than maybe simply the traditional labour movement, in which the labour movement forms an important part but other groups can be important allies. And that – I think it was just an early example of that kind of dispute. So although the outcome was a depressing result, I think the process of it, the movement that was built around it, was also an important harbinger of what was to come. [14:20]

17. **CT:** Do you think we learned anything about the Labour government?

18. **MS:** Well, I mean I think the Labour government at the time, I think, had relied – certainly Labour ministers had relied on the legislation being passed, and I think that there was genuine – I thought then and I think now – there was genuine intention in that legislation to strengthen workers' and trade union rights. What I don't think they were prepared for was the extent to which the employer at Grunwicks was prepared, with the support of the National Association for Freedom, to challenge that through the courts. I don't think they were prepared, maybe, for the extent to which the courts would take their side in that process. And the difficulty then I think the Labour government then created for itself was that it was wanting to appear to uphold the law, particularly in the context of mass picketing and so on, when it was very clear that the employer was quite prepared to use whatever means was at his disposal to challenge the employment rights law. So the government ended up, having been over-reliant on legislation, some government ministers then became, I think, excessively critical of the mass picketing tactic, because in my view at the time – and it's one that I would hold now in similar circumstances – one doesn't enter that kind of tactic lightly, but if other methods have failed, sometimes galvanising that kind of mass support provides the only means to be able to create the sort of pressure that's needed. [break]

19. **CT:** Yes, the role of the Right in this dispute: how much was it a test-case for them? What was limbering up behind there?

20. **MS:** I think that organisations such as the National Association for Freedom at that time were clearly intent on challenging the legislation and other forms of activity, and they were very clear in their minds that Britain in the mid to late 1970s had moved too far to the left, that there was a government which might not have been described as left-wing but was introducing legislation which was certainly more supportive of workers' rights than [the] previous government had been, and there was a movement, a trade union movement, trade union membership was growing at the time. There was a confidence in the movement, and I think there were sections of the Right that clearly

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saw that as a threat and were determined to break it. And, ultimately, I guess an important part of that objective was to undermine that kind of confidence. [17:44]

21. **CT:** And how successful were they?

22. **MS:** In the short term, and even the medium term, I think that undoubtedly there were successes that were achieved, but I – I think there's probably two really important dimensions that stay in my mind from the dispute at Grunwick: I mean, one was the treatment that the workers experienced from the employers. A lot of it was just petty dictatorship almost, really, a really autocratic style of management which gave no respect to the workers, and I think that issue of respecting work and respecting workers has always been a strong one for the labour movement. And in many ways I think there has been progress in some of the ways in terms of recognition of issues around harassment and bullying and so on which just weren't really talked about thirty years ago. And although there's many other ways in which that hasn't been so positive, I think that, in terms of the way in which labour is treated is still a very live issue. The second point, though. Sorry, can I do that again? I sort of lost the thread a bit there.

23. **CT:** That's OK, no problem at all. . . OK, yeah, go ahead.

24. **MS:** I think [to] my mind there's two dimensions that stay out from that dispute at Grunwick: one was about the very autocratic style of management, the bullying, really, and the lack of respect with which workers were treated, and that, sadly, remains the case for many workers. Although there has been some improvement in some areas such as recognition around harassment and bullying at work and so on, there is still a real issue around the fact that work and workers very often aren't treated with respect. But the second issue – dimension – I think is [in] many ways more important, which is that of solidarity. What the Grunwick dispute revealed was the scope for an incredibly strong solidarity movement, and today, I mean, we have trade union laws that, as Tony Blair has said, are more restrictive than in any other western country, and employment lawyers – labour lawyers – say that are more restrictive than they have been since the 1906 Trades Disputes Act. And prohibition on secondary action in particular has meant that what in many ways can be regarded as one of the finest form[s] of trade union action – taking action not on behalf of your own self-interest but on behalf of another worker – it's that very form of action that is still made illegal in this country. So, that experience and those two dimensions: the issues around respect for workers and the solidarity action that can be taken, are two issues that I think remain as alive now as they did then. [21:00]

25. **CT:** Terrific.

26. **MS:** Sorry, I got a bit – that last bit there –

27. **CT:** You can go again.

28. **MS:** I don't know, that was the bit – I was starting to witter on a bit.

29. **CT:** Yeah, you can – yeah, that's OK.

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30. **MS:** Could have been a bit sharper, I think.
31. **CT:** OK, go again then.
32. **MS:** I think the trouble was . . .
33. **CT:** Yeah.
34. **MS:** I think there were two important dimensions at the time of the Grunwick's dispute: one was around the bullying, harassment and so on that the workers at Grunwick's experienced from a very autocratic management. Now, we still today face issues around the lack of respect given to many workers, although there has been some progress around some of those issues, that remains an issue that the labour movement needs to continue to address. But in doing so, the second issue – that I think can be even more important – is the basis for solidarity on which that can be achieved. Now, Grunwick brought about [a] tremendous solidarity campaign, which then the right-wing groups were able to threaten secondary action, as it was being called, by the trade unions. Sadly, today we have, as Tony Blair has said, the most restrictive trade union legislation in the western world, which still prohibits trade unions taking action which in many ways can be regarded as the finest form of action: action not being taken in pursuit of your own self-interest, but being taken in pursuit of the interests of another worker or another group of workers, and that remains a hugely important issue to address in terms of re-establishing the rights of trade unions to take supportive action on behalf of other workers.
35. **CT:** Just a snapshot now: a positive memory.
36. **MS:** The sight of ten thousand, twelve thousand people outside the factory at Grunwick. The atmosphere there was a really positive one. There wasn't violence, there was – it was a real demonstration of what can be achieved in my mind by mass civil disobedience. **[23:11]**
37. **CT:** Was there a message – the end result, did it send a message out to the new workforce, the new immigrant workforce, about their role in trade unions?
38. **MS:** Well, it probably sent different messages out. I mean, I know that, having read subsequently some of the accounts of [the] strikers themselves, they often refer to the fact [of] sometimes feeling frustrated by what they heard from some trade union leaders – not all, by any means, but by some – but on the other hand very heartened and encouraged by the support they had from rank-and-file trade unionists. So I think there were probably different messages of that kind being sent.
39. **CT:** Right. What I'd like to do, if it's all right with you, is just again with the story, a, because I want the story in its entirety, but it was bit long on the first telling. That's the arrest.
40. **MS:** Yes.

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41. **CT:** Your coming up from Plymouth. Let's just have another go at it, and I suspect you'll swing into it a bit quicker.
42. **MS:** Yes.
43. **CT:** I've got some excellent footage for it, by the way.
44. **MS:** Right.
45. **CT:** So, yeah, let's start the story from the beginning: the graduation story and then the coming up, the arrest, the false accusations, the sentencing and the consequence[s].
46. **MS:** So just go through the whole thing. I'll try to keep, yeah . . . Well, I learnt that I'd successfully passed my degree on the Friday ninth of July, and I'd intended to travel up to support the mass picket and demonstration on Monday the eleventh, so travelled up over the weekend, arrived at Grunwick I guess about seven o'clock in the morning, and was there as numbers grew and grew. And, round about half-past nine in the morning, some way out in front of me – eight to ten yards – there was a line several deep of pickets with police on the other side, and there was a degree of pushing but nothing too aggressive. And then suddenly, the police broke through and a group of police officers rushed across to the area in front of where I and some others were standing. We sort of turned get out of their way, and the next thing I knew was having the arm of a police officer wrapped around my neck and pulling me sharply backwards. I let my body go limp because it was obvious I was being arrested, and was taken into the police bus. [I was] taken to Wembley police station, and then when it came to the point of – put in a cell for a while – when it came to the point of being charged was told that I was being charged with possession of an offensive weapon and assault on a police officer. When I heard this, I mean, I can remember the feeling now, it's just absolutely incredulous, because there was nothing at all that bore any relation to what had happened. Basically, the police story was, as they put in court, was that they argued, well, they asserted that I'd been hitting police officers with a stick – with a broken banner pole – on the head, and one of them – or more than one – they said had to restrain me, and during the course of that restraint they alleged I'd elbowed him in the stomach, hence the assault on the police. And the outcome of the case was that I was cleared of the offensive weapon charge. I mean, they even produced a broken banner pole in court, alleging – I'd never had any contact with. The outcome was that I was cleared of that charge but I was found guilty of another charge of threatening behaviour and of assaulting the police, alleging that I had elbowed a police officer in the stomach. I received a suspended prison sentence – one-month sentence suspended for one year – but during the course of the discussion about whether it should be suspended or not, the character references that I'd provided were taken into account, and that basically was what avoided going inside, which had been put together [or been provided] on the advice of my solicitor, for which obviously I was then very grateful. [27:16]
47. **CT:** And the consequences for you of that?
48. **MS:** I'd been hoping at that time to enter school teaching, and during the course of the suspension of the sentence, and even after it, was – having to provide those details certainly prevented me

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from entering opportunities I might have otherwise have done. I'd also tried some other career opportunities at the time. Subsequently I re-established a new career as an academic and [have] been successful and very happy with that, so the lasting effect, perhaps – sorry that's –

49. **CT:** No, just pick it up from the consequences of the sentence and, you know, basically, when you got a prison sentence or even a suspended prison sentence on your cv, you don't get, you know –
50. **MS:** Yeah. Because I was hoping to become a schoolteacher at the time, applications that I was making had to include details of the conviction, and clearly that – I mean, I didn't receive interviews, and [it was] very clear that that was becoming quite an important obstacle to me progressing. And I did try other avenues, but – and on one occasion, in terms of re-training in a different profession, was told that it was the conviction that would prevent me doing that. So it was difficult for a considerable period of time, although subsequently I've able to establish a new career as an academic, and in that sense the impact hasn't been permanent, but it was certainly a damaging one for several years. **[28:50]**
51. **CT:** I mean, at the time you must have been quite angry.
52. **MS:** Well, I was. I mean, I didn't want to be angry in the sense that I wanted to get on with my life and work out what I wanted to do, so I didn't want it constantly playing on my mind. And also, yes, it was for me a big injustice, but for the workers at Grunwick who had lost their livelihoods, for others who had received prison sentences. I mean, there were others who had experienced as bad if not worse. But I was angry that a police officer lied in court, that led to me getting a wrongful conviction, I was angry about that, but I just had to take the view that I needed to get on and not allow that to embitter me.
53. **CT:** But in the end, the simple act of attending a picket in solidarity with others ended up with a life-changing event effectively.
54. **MS:** Well, that's true, and there's been the odd moment when I sometimes reflected, what if I hadn't gone? Because there would have been other ways of showing support. And of course I regret the consequences that happened, because my life would have moved much more smoothly without that conviction. But I have thought long and hard about do I regret going? The answer is no, because it was a cause that deserved support, it was a cause that won support quite rightly, and had I felt intimidated [indistinct] from not going, then those who want to see the continuation of that kind of employment have won, so no, I mean I've no regrets about going. Clearly, I wish the outcome for me had been slightly different, but I think that the solidarity movement that developed around that dispute was one of the greatest episodes in the British labour movement. **[30:58]**
55. **CT:** Terrific. I just couldn't ask you just to sort of summarise the consequences again of the sentencing. You know, just list the things that you tried to get to and that you didn't, you know, made it impossible, you know, the teaching, yeah. So the consequences of the sentencing.
56. **MS:** Well, I'd been intending to pursue a career in school teaching, and I had one more year to do to complete my certificate training in school teaching. Once I'd done that I clearly still had my



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conviction, which was live, and having to put that information on job applications simply prevented me getting even as far as the interview. I got other work: I had a job as a hospital porter for several years, and during that time I made applications, actually, for training in nursing, in different routes, and was turned down for that and was told I was turned down for that because of the conviction. Some years later I went back to study and gained my PhD and then eventually got a job in an academic environment, but it prevented me for several years following career routes that I might otherwise have chosen.

57. **CT:** Terrific, terrific. Let me just stop and . . . Did it affect your attitude towards the police?
58. **MS:** I think I took the view that – there were two police officers giving evidence against me: one I'm convinced was lying; the other his evidence wasn't really – I mean, he didn't mention anything about seeing this banner pole or anything. I think in the general melee of things, I don't think he was lying, so from that point of view I didn't believe all police were capable of lying and were malicious. But it was – the worrying thing, I think, was the fact once that uniform is on and the police officer stands in court and gives that evidence, as my solicitor told me, you'll probably need six witnesses to contradict each police officer. And I even had a witness who saw the banner pole being broken up after – it was away from me, I hadn't even seen this banner pole. But that was what I think maybe did change my attitude, but certainly intensified my understanding of the dangers that can arise if police officers are assumed to be wholly truthful and law-abiding. [33:36]
59. **CT:** Were you aware before you came about the style of policing that was going on at the picket line?
60. **MS:** Well, I'd seen something, because there'd been the mass picket I think the previous month where the Special Patrol Group had been involved. So I was aware of that, and because of that, ironically, was being quite careful, as I saw it, to keep away from any direct [confrontation]. So when I'd seen this pushing between the line of pickets and the police, I was standing, say, probably eight to ten yards back thinking – I don't mean just keeping out of it, but not wanting to be so close to the action. I mean, I was smaller then than I am now, and I wanted to be there to show support for the strikers. I saw it as a means of providing support through numbers, not physical pressure from individuals. So I knew about some of the policing techniques but I was optimistic that the bigger the numbers the less that kind of tactic was likely to be used, and I think to a large extent that was true, but there were some exceptions, and I was unlucky in being caught in one of them.
61. **CT:** Just looking at the overall issue in terms of 'the class struggle', do you think the trade union movement boxed below its weight?
62. **MS:** Well, I think that what often has happened – and I think Grunwick is a case in point – is that, partly because the law on employment protection and so on is quite complicated, we don't have rights in the same way that workers in many other European countries have, you know, trade unions have immunities. And that's allowed an impression to be given that trade unions were in some way above the law, and then you get a scene such as mass picketing and suddenly it's the trade union that is breaking the law, or the perception is. And I think that's where trade union leaders have been very cautious in challenging and establishing the fact that, really, the rights that are being

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sought after are no more than are enjoyed in virtually every other European country, and somehow they've allowed – not only the leaders, but we have all allowed, very often, the trade unions to be put on the wrong side of the law – as the ones who are breaking the law – when employers, all too often, get away – whether it's in relation to, you know, the delay in getting legislation through on corporate manslaughter or issues such as unfair dismissal. There's a whole number of affairs where employers break the law with virtual impunity, but the trade unions seem to be the ones who are most subject to hostility, where it's perceived that they're the ones breaking it. [36:32]

63. **CT:** I tell you what, just give me your introduction again: where you were and how you heard about Grunwick.
64. **MS:** I was just coming to the end of an undergraduate degree in psychology at Plymouth. I was a member of the Labour Party Young Socialists and the National Organisation of Labour Students - I was a national committee member of the Labour Students – and so I'd been following the dispute since its early beginnings in some of the labour movement press, and I'd been aware throughout that that here was a factory in which the workers were not only being exploited but were being treated in a wholly unacceptable autocratic, bullying way, and all they were seeking to do was join a trade union to have their rights represented, and it was such an elemental demand, such a basic demand. In the mid-seventies, when trade union membership was growing and – and in many ways the trade unions showing a strength and confidence, and yet here was a group of workers who were being treated in that way, caused me to think, once the mass picket and demonstration was called on the eleventh of July, that I should join and show solidarity.
65. **CT:** Terrific, terrific. Yeah, just the consequences of the arrest?
66. **MS:** Yes, well, the court hearings themselves – I think I had an original hearing in July, and at that point I'd asked for a jury trial, but the police, who had the capacity to decide on that because of the nature of the charge, said there wouldn't be a jury trial. So it went to the full hearing – I think in September – and it was at that hearing at Barnet magistrates' court that I was found guilty of the two offences. I appealed against that because it was such an unjust decision, and the appeal was held, I think, in November of that year, but that wasn't successful, the original convictions stood, but it was clearly important to follow through all of the legal opportunities that were available to try to challenge that decision.
67. **CT:** Just go again and mention what the sentence you were charged with was.
68. **MS:** The sentence that was imposed was one month in prison, which was then suspended for one year, but the original – the discussion that took place in the court between my legal representative and the stipendiary magistrate, it was a very close call. I remember clearly the words from the stipendiary magistrate saying that he was going to impose a custodial sentence, and it was basically the character references that had been produced that caused him to suspend it rather than imposing it as an immediate gaol sentence.
69. **CT:** And we might as well get it: the consequences of that sentence.

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70. **MS:** Well, I found it impossible to enter my originally intended profession, which was school teaching. I had a year to complete a graduate certificate in education, I completed that, but having to put details of the conviction on every job application meant that I wasn't even getting invited to interview. I gained other employment: I was working as a hospital porter for some years, and at one point I applied for nursing, but was turned down, was told on that occasion that it was because of my conviction. So for several years after the event I was prevented from following some of my career choices I might have made. Eventually I went back to studying, completed my PhD and now [indistinct] as an academic, but that took quite a long period of time to be able to establish.

71. **CT:** Terrific, that's terrific. I think we just got that in before the end of the roll, we did.

72. **MS:** Right.