



Image: Ian Britton - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/60107315@N00/5692516965/in/photolist-9F2CYe-cPZ25o-63V6R9-4RY12m-9BTF3X-5xUpAq-6bknv8-9BTGHg-cgY6vs-4AMoNA-6Yep6q-h5qZGE-pZk-fyn7uL-5iyDi6-IUKut-pkjpg-93VaEJ-93S6Dk-93S72T-6IDXec-854qBd-MbdUn-4NttTf-c3rwy-5H5HD4-3LiKNT-4AMoPh-2Q8GiY-9sTimQ-4wrJyW-8g5XMJ-4UvLda-5YDxED-5L9nhE-bHnDeI-7HzuAj-5ibckC>

Cameras in the Courtroom

by
Asraa Al-Khazraji

"Justice must be seen to be done," – courts minister Helen Grant.

After years of campaigning by broadcasters, cameras are finally allowed in the courts of England and Wales. Since the Criminal Justice Act of 1925 photography, filming and sketching have been banned in all courts apart from the Supreme Court. Permission has been granted to show civil and criminal cases at the Court of Appeal. Simon Bucks, an associate editor at Sky News, said in an interview, "we have been campaigning along with the other broadcasters in Britain to get cameras into courts for about 10 years. We believe that cameras are the best way of extending the public gallery to the public who are unable to go to court."

The Crime and Courts Act 2013 sets out the conditions under which the prohibitions on filming and broadcasting from court will be lifted.

How will the cases be filmed?

Four cameras will be used: one is set as a wide shot; another positioned in a bookcase, which provides a view of the bench and the judges entering court, and two more above and behind the judges look down on prosecution and defence lawyers. Lawyers' arguments, and the judges' summing up, decision and (in criminal cases) sentencing remarks will be filmed. Victims, witnesses and defendants will not be filmed. Civil cases can be broadcast almost in real time, though there will be a 70-second delay built into the feed to allow for contentious material to be removed. Criminal appeals must be recorded and only broadcast if a retrial has not been ordered, in case a future jury member becomes familiar with the evidence.

Media organisations will be covering the costs of filming and Matt Nicholls, a single video-journalist who works jointly for those organisations (Sky News, ITV, BBC, and the Press Association) will be responsible for filming. Mr Nicholls has said, "there are very strict rules on what we can and cannot shoot" and that "you can't show a reaction

shot of a judge.... there's no swearing or graphic language, or anything that legally we can't broadcast". Nicholls is able to censor the broadcast feed by muting the sound or cutting the video on the direction of the judges.

The first case broadcasted was a case of counterfeit coins. Alexander Cameron QC (Prime Minister David Cameron's brother) was representing the ringleader of a coin forging scam. Cameron failed in his bid to appeal against the sentence.

How beneficial is the footage?

This move has been widely seen as a groundbreaking development for British democracy. It allows increased transparency and according to James Harding (BBC director of news and current affairs), this is a "significant step on the way to helping millions of viewers gain a greater understanding of how

Continued on Page 2

Continued from page 5

facial reactions, there already appears to be controversy surrounding the subject. Ian Leslie, an author with an interest in psychology and politics, expresses his scepticism as to how good people are at spotting lies. In one of his articles, he refers to studies that show that people "suffer" from the assumption that we can read others' faces like a book. At the end of his article, he advocates against the idea that banning the veil in court will lead to better justice. Such an argument represents only a fragment of what will be

discussed when it comes to a debate on whether women wear the veil.

The question of whether it is necessary to see someone's face could be discussed by reference to scientific data but in the end, it might come down to what the majority thinks. In considering this, one could refer to the reason behind wearing the niqab and whether removing it would represent religious oppression. Nick Clegg suggests that the importance of a full-face veil in a religious context might have been slightly exaggerated. He refers to a state-

ment made by a friend of The Grand Mufti of the Al-Azhar mosque in Cairo who said that wearing a headscarf is a religious duty, but wearing a full veil is "a sheer cultural convention, which has no *raison d'être* in Islamic sources." However, as Silvio Ferrari observes, wearing a cross is not an obligation in the Christian religion but we would consider any law prohibiting one to do so illiberal. That being said, in this case it must be determined whether or not the problem that arises from the wearing of the niqab surpasses the expectation that freedom of religion must be protected.

The Couple That Conquered Death Row

by
Stacey Smith

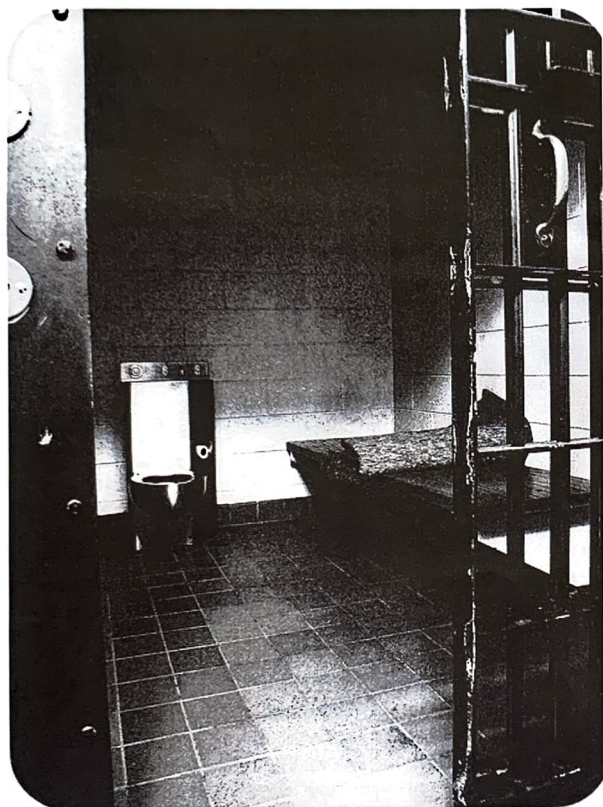


Image - Gloomy50 -
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/gloomystudio/2248873923/sizes/z/in/photolist-4qJ4Sk-5VyQwP-5UryXB-6g4Sm-cG8eoo-blKPKL-8VweWA-5YXXrU-fsp8ij-ocaN7-5rjgq7-35BK-B-5ij4dr-bmmxGj-5Us2wx-2CNBT5-8nxrjz-8yHsB5-8nxrjv-at4oii-5FxEcG-4oKBuP-e4kqTR-8nxrjB-38GA1-5ac4p8-aqsByj-dJDSv6-ayH8fw-8z9YRL-9uHM2e-9uLRvC-9uLQMU-14spX4-8CLFG-A92DR-e3SMD1-8yCgNZ-6i5sHA-35BKd-35BLF-7HrUhi-zCqj-G-nshu1-9Tr49J-9uIQL3-cM6Yy-6qKpfo-8ZVf1-77EwT-eBfiBN/>

Sonia "Sunny" Jacobs and Peter Pringle, death row exonerees, are known internationally for their inspirational stories of triumph over tragedy and human rights activism. Although they endured years of pain behind bars, through yoga and meditation they discovered the true meaning and power of the phrase 'mind over matter'. Amicus ALJ – a charity that assists with the provision of legal representation for those awaiting capital trial and punishment in the US – invited these truly remarkable individuals to speak at Queen Mary on Thursday February 28th.

Peter spent 15 years incarcerated in Ireland where he was sentenced to death by hanging, while Sunny – imprisoned for almost 17 years in the state of Florida (U.S.) – was sentenced to death by electric chair. Both had young children when they were wrongfully convicted of murdering police officers and false evidence was in-

tentionally given in each case.

Both spent time in solitary confinement and were treated like sub-humans by jailers. "It's a truly frightening experience," Sunny said of imprisonment, particularly when among other inmates. In Sunny's case even other prisoners were warned that if they communicated with her their sentences would be extended.

"People think that in America the people that get sentenced to death are mostly African Americans or people of colour. They don't think of a working class white woman" Sunny said. Although she did say that she was one of few women sentenced to death in the U.S. "People think it happens to someone else but it can happen to anyone." Sunny was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Peter said that to fight for your freedom in a situation like that "you have to go behind the documents. You have to seek out original statements". He said "police forces are like bureaucracies and bureaucracies are like water...they'll always find the line of least resistance and flow that way if they're al-

lowed." He expressed the belief that police officers lack accountability and when a high profile crime is committed the investigating officers are under huge pressure to get results – but not necessarily justice. And it only takes one officer to do something that completely alters the case to get a conviction. "And then he gets promoted so the trend continues" he added. To illustrate Peter said that the one officer who refused to lie in his case was never promoted.

"There is no justice, there is just us" he said, quoting Sunny. "And what she means by that is that there is just us collectively. And collectively we can create justice. But if we leave it up to other people to do it for us there will be no justice, there will be injustice."

Sunny's husband at the time was also arrested with her and wrongfully sentenced to death. Unfortunately he was not exonerated before his execution – which went horribly wrong and was depicted in the movie 'The Green Mile'. "I really do believe that when people are sentenced to death it's worse for the family, because they're so traumatized" said Sunny.

Speaking on the importance of pro bono legal work Sunny said "it's so important to have pro bono lawyers because no one on death row is rich. Without pro bono lawyers there would be no representation whatsoever and there is such an enormous workload for cases involving the death penalty that they just can't do it all." Then she stressed: "that's why Amicus is so important. Even if you're photocopying or interviewing people."

The happy twosome met in Ireland at an Amnesty International meeting and fell in love. "It was a gift" said Sunny whose big smile and jovial personality truly live up to her name. They realized that the only way to genuinely heal was through forgiveness. Rather than looking for compensation from others "we compensate ourselves by having a really good life" she said.

Visit www.sunnyandpeter.com

Visit www.amicus-alj.org