

16/5/91

Crown closes drug case

The prosecution yesterday closed its case against four Bermudians accused of working together to smuggle drugs into Bermuda after 35 witnesses gave evidence against them.

And former narcotics officer Phillip Swift told the court that he lost his job in Bermuda after a run-in with Commissioner Mr. Clive Donald over an alleged attempt by Swift to tape former Narcotics department boss Chief Insp. Dennis Ramsay.

The court heard yesterday how leader of the Bermuda Strollers Ted Ming was seen visiting a Paget apartment occupied by his co-accused Antonio Miranda, using the name Anthony Hanlock, at least three times in the one month that it was rented out.

Another witness testified that during a six month period ending in May last year there were a total of 57 telephone calls between Ming's Southampton home and the cellular phone Miranda is reported to have carried with him.

A Bermuda Telephone Company record showed there were a total of 328 calls made during the same time between Miranda, Ming's house and the apartment Ming rented to Dexter Dillas and Larry Ebbin.

Ming, Dillas, Ebbin and Colin Winfield Smith have all pleaded not guilty to importing cocaine with Americans Miranda and Angela Trapasso between May 11 and 20, 1990, and conspiring to import the drug between October 1, 1988, and May 20 last year.

Three additional charges were laid following a Police raid on Ming's home on May 18, last year, and a search of Smith's apartment the following day. Ming has denied possession of cannabis, Smith has denied possession of drug equipment, and Dillas has denied obstructing Det. Sgt. Alex Arnfield.

The first witness on the stand yesterday was Swift who told the court during cross-examination that he did not leave the Police force on his own free will.

When questioned on his departure by Senior Crown counsel Mr. Barrie Leade, Swift said he was told by

Commissioner of Police Mr. Clive Donald last year that his contract would not be renewed from March this year. Swift left the force in December.

"(The Commissioner) accused me of bucking authority and stated that he had received information that I had attempted to tape Ch. Insp. (Dennis) Ramsay," Swift told the court. Ch. Insp. Ramsay was heading the Narcotics department at the time.

Det. Sgt. Arnfield, who headed the investigation, backed up evidence given by Swift on Tuesday. Det. Sgt. Arnfield said he was present at all the interviews conducted by Swift and sometimes just listened to question and answer interviews with the defendants.

He said that Ming, during two interviews taken on May 20 and 21 last year, "made every effort to obstruct the interviews". But he said that before the start of both interviews, Ming was told he was not obliged to say anything.

Det. Sgt. Arnfield denied he punched Smith twice during the search of his South Shore, Southampton apartment. During questioning by Smith's lawyer Mr. Delroy Duncan, he said "numerous allegations" had been made about his conduct as an officer over the years, adding that "unfortunately several lawyers, (Mr. Richard) Hector and (MP Mr. Julian) Hall, have based their defence on Police brutality".

Eleven additional witnesses gave evidence yesterday, including five whose testimony was read in and confirmed that Miranda, Trapasso, and the Crown's first witness Victor Alongi, had all spent time in Bermuda.

Richard Simons, the owner of Valley Cottages in Paget, said a couple using the surname Hanlock began renting an apartment on February 4 last year. He said the woman left the apartment by taxi on March 7, and that he later received a message on his answering machine that she had been picked up for drugs and to