WHY WAS CURTIS THERE? MORRIS CLAIMS HE WANTED DRUGS

Neither the prosecution nor Morris claim that Mark Curtis knew anyone in that family. In the trial, the prosecution presented no evidence of a motive for Mark to go to that house, park in front of it and attack a 15 year old girl inside.

Since they had no evidence, the prosecution tried to throw a hint to the jury to help them justify a guilty verdict. The prosecutor suggested that Mark was looking for drugs, went to the wrong house, saw a girl and went berserk.

Morris claims, like the prosecution, that Mark came to the wrong house. He says "it appears that he was looking for this reputed drug dealer and his girl friend ... [who] moved from their house across the street from Mark Curtis to three doors down from mine. When Curtis knocked on my door March 4 ... it appears that he was looking for this drug dealer at his new address and came to my house by mistake."

He alleges that this drug connection explains why Mark went to the house, leading to the attack on the young woman, and demonstrates that Curtis is "a convicted rapist, a proven liar and probably a drug user."

This claim came into the trial at the very end. As a rebuttal witness, the prosecutor put a woman on the stand who lived down the street from Morris and previously lived on the same block as Mark. The full extent of the woman's testimony was that she knew Mark lived on the same block she used to live on, and that she may have spoken to him. She said she thought her husband may have spoken to him. But the husband was not called to testify.

Mark Curtis does not use drugs. The police found no drugs on him, in his car or in his system when they took him to the hospital after the beating. They investigated Mark Curtis nationally. They did not have a shred of evidence that he ever had any involvement with drugs.

His organization, the Socialist Workers Party, is well-known among political activists for the fact that its members do not use illegal drugs of any kind. This policy is to help protect the party from police victimization.

The drug innuendo got woven into the frame-up of Mark Curtis. But with no evidence, no witnesses, nothing even the prosecution could pretend were facts.

The following are quotes from the summary to the jury by prosecutor Catherine Thune. (The quotes are taken from the *On Trial* video):

"If it's a frame-up, why not plant a knife on the defendant or on the porch. Why pick a sexual abuse case — there's no ejaculation, there's no transfer of pubic hairs.

"Instead, wouldn't it be much easier if there was a frame, a conspiracy, to pick a drug case. Stop the defendant and throw a bunch of drugs in there and call him the worst drug dealer to hit Des Moines. Wouldn't that be a lot easier?"

THE CHARGE CURTIS WOULD HAVE COMMITTED MURDER

Morris says if "the police had not responded so quickly, my wife and I would have come home to find our children murdered, and Curtis would never have had to answer for his crime." Again, this resurrects a charge the police floated early in the case and then had to drop.

The first police report on the Mark's arrest was put together after the cops beat him in the city jail, the night of March 4. It was printed in the Register the next morning. It said: "When he saw there were no adults at home, the man pulled a knife and forced his way onto the porch, ordering the boy to go back into the house."

But the police didn't find a knife or insert one at the right point to use as evidence. So when the alleged victim appeared at a deposition on May 31, she claimed her assailant SAID he had a knife, but she never saw one.

POLITICAL FRAME-UP

Morris argues that to believe Mark Curtis and his defense campaign you must prove a complex, pre-planned conspiracy.

As Mark Curtis testified about Morris's daughter's testimony: "I heard her like you did, like we all did. I believe something may have happened to her. Maybe what she said. But I was not that person. She was wrong about that."

The police failed to investigate if she was attacked by someone else. Paul Bush, the police forensics expert, reported he did find other human hair on the clothes of the alleged victim. But they did not match Mark Curtis's hair so he did not investigate further.

We can show that the frame up of Mark Curtis began at least by the time Officer Gonzalez arrived at the house and decided to pull Mark's pants down. We don't know whether this operation was carefully planned in advance. We don't know why the woman brought Mark Curtis to the front porch.

The police knew who Mark was from at least the point when Gonzalez got his hands on him. He found political leaflets Curtis had with him. Once they had their hands on him, the cops knew who he was. Government files we got under the Freedom of Information Act showed that federal agents reviewed Swift personnel files for three months before arresting 17 immigrant workers in the plant March 1. Mark spoke Spanish and had worked with a number of the "Swift 17," as they became known.

The uproar against the immigration arrests led to a community meeting March 4. An Assistant U.S. Attorney, the regional director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Swift personnel director attended. Workers in the plant were given permission to attend. At the last minute, the workers were told they could not leave work. They shut down the line. A second meeting was then set up for 5 PM, after work.

Mark Curtis spoke there, in Spanish, about the need for the union to defend those arrested. Within hours he, himself, was under arrest on frame-up charges, and was beaten in the jail.

Two weeks before his arrest he participated in a demonstration against police racism in Clive, a suburb of Des Moines. He set up a literature table on the lawn of the police station.

Mark Curtis has been a long time activist. The FBI files released under the Freedom of Information Act show they illegally spied on him for "acting in the leadership roles" in the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, a group opposing U.S. policy in Central America. Mark was National Chairman of the Young Socialist Alliance, and was a plaintiff in a historic lawsuit brought by the YSA and the Socialist Workers Party against FBI spying.

Mark was already listed on the FBI computer network. The Des Moines police announced publicly that they had joined the FBI computer network four days after Mark's arrest.

The authorities found out who Mark Curtis was. They decided to use large resources and severe charges to frame him. They added the burglary charge - with no allegation of robbery - to the attempted rape to increase the potential jail term by 25 years.

THE WORKERS LEAGUE — AGENTS OF THE PROSECUTION

The authorities convicted Mark Curtis but they were not able to make it convincing politically. Since the conviction, the defense has won important new support, especially from workers and farmers.

The Workers League, an operation which poses as a socialist group, reprinted and is distributing the Morris letter. They provide the prosecution a useful vehicle to attack the moral and political standing of everyone who has joined the defense.

They claim the defense campaign is against the Morris family rather than the cops. They claim Mark Curtis's supporters know he is guilty and are cynically defending a rapist to disrupt the labor movement. This is now the central campaign of their paper *The Bulletin*: disrupting the defense campaign for Mark Curtis and promoting the cop frame-up.

In the last few years the Workers League has intervened against strikes by copper miners in Arizona, packinghouse workers in Austin, Minnesota, paperworkers in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere.

In each case they tried to divide the strikers from their union and aim fire at the leadership in the midst of the strike. Ed Long, one of the strike leaders from the United Paperworkers International Union Local 1787 in Lock Haven wrote:

"The Workers League group was never invited or encouraged to come to Lock Haven or were never invited back. At a rally held in Lock Haven on June 18, 1988 they were placed on the agenda through misrepresentation. They infiltrated our information meeting on one occasion and were asked to leave and tried to do the same on another occasion. They have been asked and told (not kindly) to stay away from our people. They have been put out of our office on two occasions. It is almost impossible to embarrass or insult them.

"There has been consistent turmoil caused by this group because of the articles printed in the Workers League paper and their insistence that our local supports them."

One of the biggest provocations by the Workers League against the labor movement was a lawsuit they ran against the Socialist Workers Party. They infiltrated an agent, Alan Gelfand, into the SWP in Los Angeles about 9 years ago. He was an attorney employed by Los Angeles County. Gelfand filed suit in federal court challenging a historic lawsuit initiated by the SWP and the Young Socialist Alliance to combat government spying and disruption against political and union activists.

Gelfand argued the SWP could not sue the FBI because he charged the SWP was run by the FBI. He asked the court to take control of the SWP and make decisions against the membership about who they could choose as members and leaders of the organization. At issue was the basic right of voluntary political associations such as unions and political groups to run their own affairs. A victory for Gelfand would have encouraged more government intervention in unions, civil rights and political groups.

This Workers League provocation was denounced by hundreds of union and civil liberties activists.

The Gelfand operation failed - the judge ruled he had no evidence to support his charges. This was an important victory for labor and other organizations.

In recent issues of its paper the Workers League printed names of people it claims are rescinding support for Mark Curtis. Larry Regan, President of Steelworkers local 1014 in Gary, Indiana wrote the Defense Committee December 2:

"I have just seen a copy of *The Bulletin* newspaper, in which it is said that I indicated that I would rescind my support to Mark Curtis. This is not true.

"Local 1014 voted unanimously to support Mark at our August meeting and there has been no change or motion to the contrary since.

"As far as I am concerned, *The Bulletin* newspaper has no credibility whatsoever."

The Workers League has no political life except provocations like these. It is nothing new for the authorities to use outfits like the Workers League against those fighting for social justice. But they can be defeated.

THE STAKES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN

There are enormous stakes in this fight for union members, workers, farmers, students, political activists, and defenders of civil liberties.

If this injustice is not reversed, it will be easier for the employers and cops around the world to frame up, victimize, beat and jail union and political activists on criminal charges.

It will be easier to intimidate and silence all of us.

The facts make it crystal clear Mark Curtis is the victim of a brutal cop frame up.

Contrary to the picture Morris paints of himself in his letter, he is not a spokesman for Blacks or for progressive working people. Support for Mark Curtis is growing, especially among working people, in Des Moines and around the world.

Mark Curtis is serving 25 years in state prison for a crime he did not commit!

Every working person should take a stand to defeat this frame-up. It affects everyone who helps organizestrike solidarity, who supports political rights, fights against apartheid, against U.S. intervention in Central America, for immigrant rights, and for affirmative action for minorities and women.

An injury to one really is an injury to all. Together we can overturn this frame-up by getting out the facts and building on the support we have already won. We can free Mark Curtis and advance the cause of social justice.

In Solidarity,

Stu Singer, Co-ordinator
Mark Curtis Defense Committee

Contact us for more information or to get additional copies of this letter or other material.

Contributions are urgently needed for legal expenses, to produce and distribute more literature, and to send speakers around the world to explain the stakes in this fight.

If you support justice for Mark Curtis, send a signed card or letter to be listed as a sponsor of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. Please indicate how you should be identified.

Mark Curtis Defense Committee, P O Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311; (515) 246-1695

2-12068