



Serious Case of the Felony

A case of very serious nature was tried at the Magistrates office on Thursday before JC Wheeler Esq. are H Wheeler Esq., and Mr. Lush.

Mr. Moren a Traveler Draper in a highly respectable way of business was charged with stealing a gold watch and chain to which was attached a guinea and two gold seals, from the person or Mr. Longe landlord of the Shoulder of Mutton Inn.

Mr. Whatman appeared for the prosecution and Mr. Nodder for the defence.

The case for the prosecution was opened by the examination of Mr. Lodge, who said, yesterday afternoon about 4 o'clock, the prisoner came into my smoking room in company with Sergeant McGough, and ordered some gin and soda water to drink, and Moren took notice of a Guinea I had hanging from my watch chain and wanted to buy it. I said I did not wish to part with it, when he replied "If I do not have it now I will by and bye." "I said you won't if I know it," I said I had given Mr. Stokes 25s. for it, and the prisoner. Answered "more fool you." I then went out of the room and fetched three two's of gin and soda water, on my return they were sitting at the window with a table before them. I went to the table and put down the liqueur. I took up the soda water bottle to open it and whilst doing so I saw the hand of Moren on my watch chain, I said "that will do, I don't want any of those games here," I turned round to put the bottle on a side table and found that my watch was gone. I immediately charged Mr. Moren with having stolen it, and said "let's have that watch and chain, I'll have no games of that sort," he replied "I don't know anything about it." I said "did you see it a minute ago, and he said "yes." Sergeant McGough said "that will be alright," and I sat down at the end of the table for a little while, when I again asked for it, and again the prisoner denied having it. "I said if you don't give it up I shall get someone to make you." I then went to the door leading to the kitchen and called my wife to bring my coat as I meant to go to the police station. The prisoner and McGough went out of the front door. I afterwards went in company with Sergeant King, in search of the prisoner.

Some conversation here ensued as to whether Sergeant McGough ought not to be charged with the offence in common with the prisoner, or admitted as a witness, it was decided that no charge should be laid against him.

Examination continued:- I found him in the house of Mrs. Elliott, in Culver-street, and at once gave him in charge of Sergeant King for stealing my watch and chain. I believe the prisoner said I have not

got it now, if you charge me with stealing it I will beat your b----- brains out. Sergeant King took him in charge. I have not seen my watch since, I am certain there was not a single person besides us in the smoking room when I lost my watch.

Cross examined by Mr. Nodder, I am not quite sure the prisoner used the word now on being taken into custody. I will not swear he did. I do not know what time it was, it was getting dark. I did not accuse Sergeant McGough of stealing my watch and chain, I said if you have not got it you know who has. I thought it was done for a lark, and said "here old man let's have my watch," I did not say to him "turn out your pockets. I did not feel his pockets or clothes, I did not attempt to search him in any way. There was a man named Miller at the bar, I did not leave the room after I brought the gin and soda water. I did not say to McGough that Miller was a bad character, I did not attempt to stop them when they went out, nor send after them, it was six o'clock before I went in pursuit of the prisoner. Whilst out in the evening I did go into a public house in Culver-street kept by Mr. Ireland. I saw a man named Cryer outside the door, and asked him if he knew. Who he prisoner was, I did not tell him that Sergeant McGough or the other man had my watch and chain, nor anything to that effect. Mr. Ray and Mr. Jolliffe were in my house last night, my wife didn't say in the presence of these men that I had done a wrong thing giving this man custody, she did not say she believed he was innocent.

Sergeant King was called and said about half past eight o'clock from information I received I went in company with the last witness to search for the prisoner, I found him in Culver Street. I took him in charge of stealing a watch and a chain from the prosecutor, the prisoner said "I searched him in the room and found upon him £26 in gold, a draft for £352 16s. 8d. also a watch and chain, but not the lost property.

Mr. Nodder then briefly addressed the Court for the defence, he felt sure that the evidence he should submit, that the prisoner would be enabled to leave the court with an unblemished character, he was a man holding a respectable position in society, and being a man of business, the delay caused by the charge was a serious loss to him, but he cheerfully submitted to that in order to vindicate his character.

Sergeant McGough was then called and said, at half past three yesterday afternoon I met the prisoner as I was returning from Fisherton. I have known him for some time past, but have never previous to this had any conversation with him. He came up to me and asked if I knew a lad that could carry his bag, I said "I do not know". We then went into Lodges and had a gin and soda water. I paid for one lot. Presently Mr. Lodge said he had lost his watch. I said "nonsense, where can it be gone." He replied, "I don't know." I had seen Mr. Lodge wearing the chain, and had heard a conversation about it, but did not hear the prisoner say he would have it. Mr. Lodge went out of the room several times, once when he brought back the change. I got up to go away, when Lodge said "don't go yet, those Millers are at the bar". When he said he lost his watch, I treated it as a joke. He said "Somebody's got it, and d-- it there's nobody but ourselves." As I passed by him to go out he felt my pockets and clothes, and I said, "you don't mean it," and at the same time opened my coat, took out my watch, and asked him if that was his. I did not see the prisoner put his hand on Lodge's chain. The words, "Let's have none of them games" were said more than once, but not before Lodge complained of losing the watch. I was in a good position to have seen it had he done so. I don't think it was possible for him to do it without my knowledge.

Cross examined by Mr. Whatman:- it was about half past three o'clock when I went into the house, and I left again at quarter to four. I went to Mr. Lodge's in the evening and asked if the watch was found. It did once strike me that it was a serious matter, but I did not really think so till I heard the prisoner was in custody.

Mr. Frederick Cryer, shoemaker, of Milford street, said I was at Mr. Ireland's public-house last evening, where I saw Mr. Lodge, he said, "I will give you five shillings if you will tell me where Moren is, for I have lost my watch and chain, and either that man or McGough has got it." He said, "It was taken out of his waistcoat pocket and button hole.

Anthony Jolliffe, shoemaker, of Exeter street, said I was at Mr. Lodges house last night, from half past nine to eleven, and during that time I heard Mrs. Lodge say to her husband "I firmly believe you have given the wrong man in charge. Mr. Lodge replied "nothing of the sort, I saw the watch in the man's hand, and demanded it of him, and while I went to the other end of the room they slipped off."

This concluded the evidence, and the magistrates retired to an adjoining room for consultation, and on their return Mr. Whatman was asked if he thought more evidence could be obtained if the prisoner was remanded, but this not being probable, the Bench said, although this was a case of very grave suspicion, for the want of corroborative evidence they must dismiss the charge. The prisoner expressed his thanks and stated his determination of bringing the matter before a jury in order to obtain damages.

The case occupied the time of the Bench from 12 o'clock till half past four.

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