The Edinburgh Echo

Thursday 10 October 2024 *The city's news, loud and clear* FREE

LOCAL COP BANGED UP

RETIRED DI FOUND GUILTY OF ATTEMPTED MURDER, WILL SPEND THE REST OF HIS LIFE BEHIND BARS

BY TIM ELBON
Senior Reporter



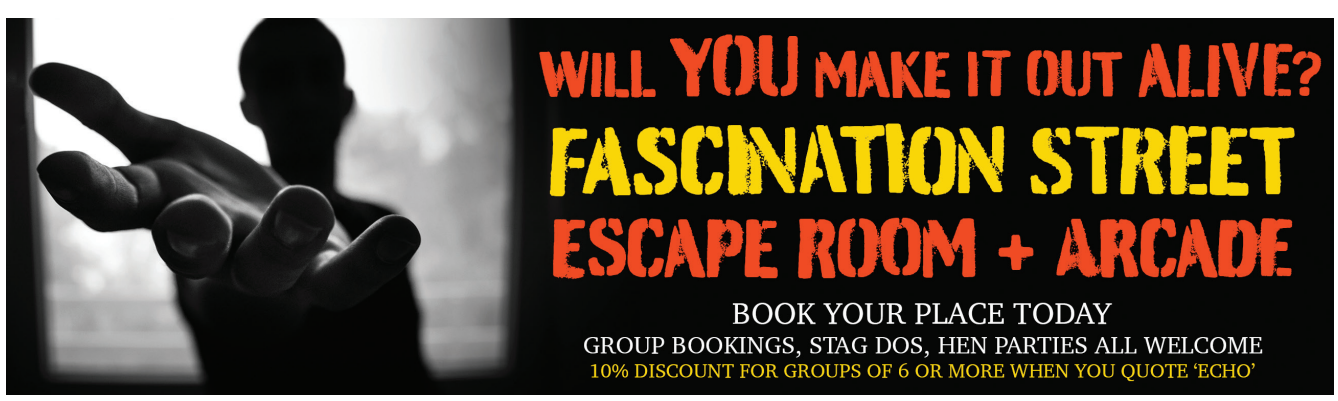
There were gasps in court yesterday afternoon as John Rebus, once a senior figure in the Edinburgh police force, was found guilty of attempted murder following the shocking death of wheelchair-bound local businessman Morris Cafferty.

The jury found that Mr Rebus, who worked in various law enforcement roles in the city and rose to the level of Detective Inspector in a career spanning over thirty years of service, entered Mr Cafferty's luxury Quartermile penthouse flat before attacking the victim and smothering him with a pillow.

Entering a plea of not guilty, David Bartleby KC, defending, maintained that Mr Rebus had merely intended to frighten Mr Cafferty following a 'heated but not violent' disagreement. For the prosecution, Alan Moffatt KC claimed Mr Rebus had a long-term vendetta against Mr Cafferty, citing 'completely unfounded' allegations of illegal activity across the victim's various business interests, claiming that years of frustration at being unable to prove these 'nonsense theories' – or build any kind of criminal case against him – saw the defendant finally lash out.

Whilst the court accepted that Mr Rebus may not have meant to kill Mr Cafferty, autopsy evidence showed that a long and sustained period of pressure was placed over the victim's mouth and nose, triggering a heart attack which ultimately caused his death. That the victim was consigned to a wheelchair and suffering from several serious health conditions, rendering him defenseless, only adds to the appalling nature of the crime.

Continued inside



SEARCH CONTINUES AS POLICE MAKE APPEAL

Fears are growing over the continued disappearance of 14-year-old schoolgirl Jasmine Andrews, who has not been seen since leaving her school in Marchmont to walk back to her home in The Grange over three days ago.

Anyone who may have any information on her whereabouts is being urged to contact St Leonard's Police Station. DI Siobhan Clarke, leading the investigation, told reporters, 'At this stage we are keeping an open mind and exploring all avenues, but any insight or sightings from the public could be vital – if you think you may have seen Jasmine, please come forward'.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Production crews have been spotted in several locations across the city as filming begins on a new – and currently top secret – drama series, with locals furiously speculating online as to what it could be. Cameras have been rolling in Grassmarket, the Mound, the Meadows and, perhaps most intriguingly of all, the Oxford Bar...

INSIDE TODAY'S ECHO...

NOT BAD FOR A BOY FROM BEATH HIGH! Local author knighted at Buckingham Palace



RAITH EXPECTATIONS: Rovers promotion push continues with thumping 3-0 win

THE BEST IS YET TO COME: Popular local band Best Picture rumoured for a comeback

Continued from front cover

A statement read by the deceased's solicitor, Muriel Camberg, outside court, claimed that Rebus had waged a 'long and malicious' smear campaign against the victim, and his continued harassment had made life 'hell' for a well-respected yet vulnerable member of the Edinburgh business scene.

Mr Rebus was born in Cardenden, Fife, and, after serving in the military for several years, became a familiar face to criminals across Edinburgh due to his reputation for solving some of the most notorious cases of recent times. He retired from service in 2007. Whilst his downfall will be celebrated by some, it raises serious questions about the forces that are supposed to keep Edinburgh safe.

Approached for comment, a Police Scotland spokesperson said 'Mr Rebus left the police force over 15 years ago. Whilst despicable, his actions are no reflection on the men and women who serve in the force today and who work tirelessly to keep the public safe. We extend our deepest sympathies to Mr Cafferty's many friends and business associates'.

The life sentence handed down by Judge Lord Justice Stevenson is mandatory for attempted murder, and Mr Rebus will now be transferred to HMP Edinburgh.

POLICE APPEAL FOR CALM AS LOCAL GANG TENSIONS CONTINUE TO RISE

BY CLIVE MAKHDONALD
Crime Correspondent

Gangland rivalries are being blamed for a recent spike in arson and vandalism cases across the city – with members of the prison service being targeted in particular.

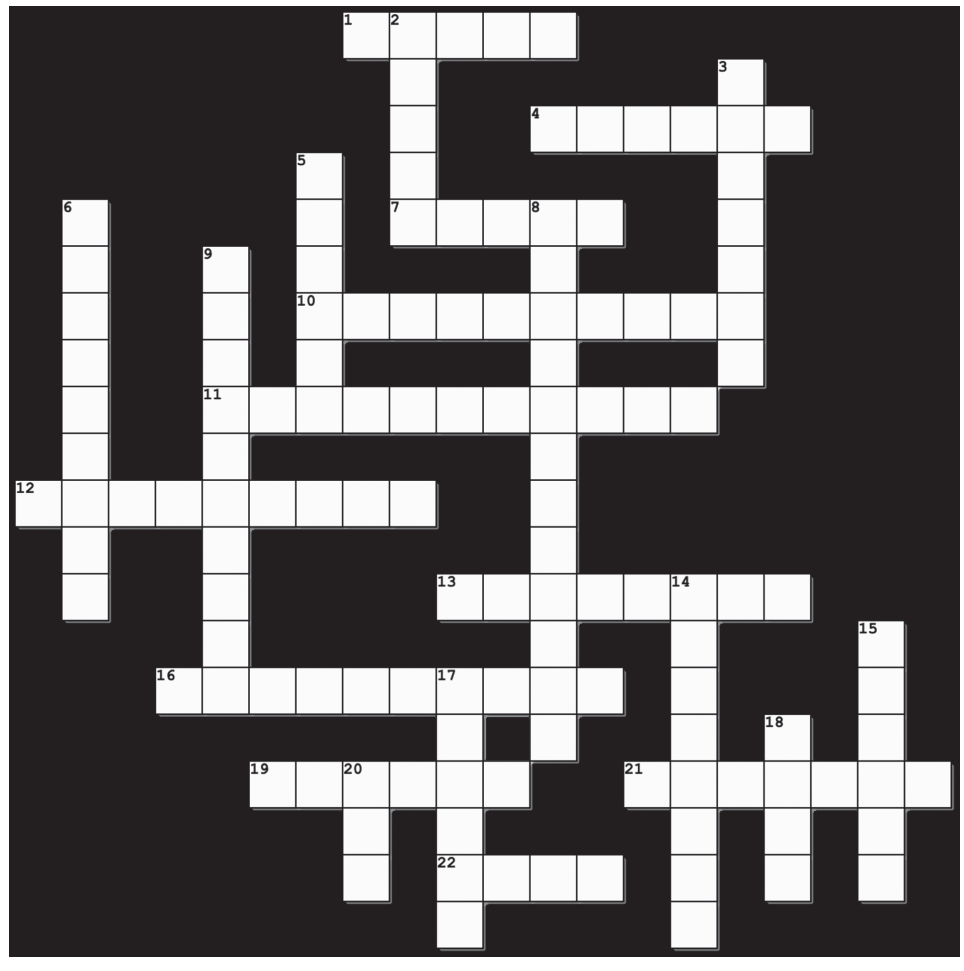
In the past two weeks alone there have been several reported cases of anonymous threats, with some prison officers having had their cars attacked with petrol bombs and acid. Rival hangs from outside Edinburgh are believed to be to blame.

And yesterday, in an incident not involving a prison officer but believed to be related, a motorcyclist – with their identity concealed by their helmet – was seen brandishing a pistol in a supermarket car park in broad daylight. The intended target has not been identified.

In a statement to the Echo, Detective Malcolm Fox of the Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism Unit (OCCTU) appealed for calm but reminded the public to be vigilant: 'We're monitoring these cases closely as giving the officers affected as much support as they need. Whilst there is no need for the public to be concerned, we would of course ask that anything suspicious is reported to us immediately'.



QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1. An overflow of water
4. Putting the pieces together
7. Spiked persuasion
10. Could never happen
11. A butcher's sale
12. Monument to the deceased
13. The final batsman at the end of a day's cricket
16. The honour given to a Sir
19. University City at the confluence of the Thames
21. Female name created for The Tempest
22. A way out

DOWN
2. The middle name of a Scottish author and essayist, who died 1894
3. Elaborate formal meal
5. Ill will
6. Keeper of pigs
8. Back from the dead
9. Admitting guilt
14. When the clock strikes 12
15. The Prime of Miss Jean...
17. A Sensational Alex
18. Swedish vehicle
20. A sly creature

READ A PREVIEW EXTRACT FROM

MIDNIGHT AND BLUE

Rebus sensed that something was wrong even before the alarm sounded. He was in the queue for breakfast, listening to the Wizard coughing up half a lung as usual. Nobody ever mentioned the hierarchy; it just happened naturally. Those liable to throw their weight around or go off on one ended up closest to the food while everyone else gathered behind in a ragged line. The Wizard was two places ahead of Rebus, which was fine. He probably wasn't any older, but he looked it, and he'd been in prison longer than just about anyone else on the hall. His real name was Gareth Wallace, the nickname stemming from his long grey locks and longer beard. He arched forward as he coughed, not bothering to cover his mouth. New arrivals would make COVID jokes until they realised none were being heard for the first time. When Rebus turned to look behind him, he found Ratty there, seemingly more shrunken with each passing day. Ratty's eyes, narrower even than usual, were for once not focused on the progress of the queue. He gave a slight nod when he realised he had Rebus's attention.

There was a blur of movement as one of the white-shirted officers hit the alarm. The ringing was sudden and piercing, accompanied by other officers arriving, milling, conferring. Then the order – back to cells – followed by complaints and questions.

'Room service today,' an officer called Eddie Graves announced, beginning the process of shepherding the reluctant flock. 'Wish I was as lucky.' Graves had a complaint for every occasion, as if fortune was forever favouring the inmates.

'How long but?' someone asked.

'Soon as we get you indoors,' Graves answered.

Though Ratty was a good eight inches shorter than Rebus, he had the knack of seeing and knowing everything. 'It's Jackie,' he told Rebus. Sure enough, two officers – Novak and Watts – filled Jackie Simpson's doorway, faces close together, conversing in an undertone. Though other officers were forming a makeshift cordon, Rebus and several others had to pass this cell to get to their own.

'Keep moving,' came the order, hands flapping, arms outstretched. But as with a motorway crash, traffic inevitably slowed for a gawp. There were two more officers inside the cell. On the lower bunk Rebus could make out a prone and bloodied figure. Another man lay on the upper bunk and seemed in slightly better shape, in that the officers were trying to rouse him while ignoring his cellmate. Rebus remembered the name of the upper bunk – Mark Jamieson. He'd known him briefly on the outside. Not that he'd ever mentioned as much in here; Jamieson wouldn't have thanked him.

'Come on, John,' Graves said, pressing a hand to his shoulder. 'Don't make things difficult.' They locked eyes for a moment. Graves's jaw was tensed and some of the colour had drained from his face.

'It's not in my nature to make things difficult,' Rebus assured him. 'Unlike some.' He gestured over Graves's shoulder to where Darryl Christie sat at one of the circular tables near the food station. Two officers were flanking him while he finished his breakfast, taking his time, savouring each drop. Neither officer seemed minded to interrupt.

'Darryl!' Graves called out. 'Back to your cell, please!'

Turning his head slowly, Christie took in both Graves and Rebus. 'Right you are, Michelle,' he called out. Michelle for Michelle Mone. Graves, the serial moaner, tried as ever not to show that the name irritated him. Rebus sensed that the grin Christie threw in Graves's direction was meant not for the officer but for him.

John Rebus had a cell all to himself. It consisted of a narrow bed, toilet and sink. The toilet had no door but was in an alcove, allowing a modicum of privacy. There was a small desk and some storage space, plus a shelf for personal effects. He had piled here all the books he had promised himself he would read. Inside one of them he kept photos of his daughter and granddaughter. He wasn't sure why he wanted them kept private, but he did. A wall-mounted flat-screen TV had a slot at the side for DVDs, and there was also a landline telephone, again fixed to the wall. Calls had to be prearranged and paid for, and of course were monitored if there were any staff available. Beneath the bed was a small safe for valuables, which Rebus never bothered to lock.

This was his home now, and had been for the past six months. When he'd first arrived at HMP Edinburgh, they'd assessed him and put him in an overnight cell. Because he was ex-police, it was then decided that he should transfer not to one of the general halls but to the Separation and Reintegration Unit. This was where they kept the prisoners who were either in danger or were a danger to themselves. Some of them Rebus never saw. They kept to their cells, occasionally yelling a complaint but mostly staying silent. There was an enclosed yard where exercise was taken, its walls heavily graffitied with names, sometimes with the word 'paedo' or 'nonce' added.

Rebus felt hemmed in, not only by walls but by the same daily faces too. He had visited the prison many times during his detective years – he recalled being shown the Hanging Shed, now long demolished – but this was different. The various smells were never going to be showered away. Testosterone and wariness filled what air there was. Drug use was hard to miss. He had always known the place simply as Saughton, though the branding on the officers' shirts these days declared it HMP Edinburgh. Prison, nick, jail, chokey, inside – many names but only one game: incarceration.

There were four general halls – Gyle, Swanston, Trinity and Whitecraig. Gyle was for women prisoners while Whitecraig housed the sex offenders. Trinity and Swanston were a mix of those awaiting trial on remand and those already convicted. One day, three months into his life sentence, the governor, Howard Tennent, had summoned Rebus to his office. It was large and modern and had a table and chairs for meetings. Tea was offered and there was even some shortbread.

'How would you feel about joining the general population in Trinity?' Tennent had asked while Rebus bit into a biscuit.

'What's happened?' Rebus had asked back.

'Two things. For one, we're short of accommodation in the SRU, so we could do with your bed.

'And?'

The governor had shifted slightly in his chair. 'Darryl Christie is ready to vouch for you, meaning you'll be protected. He seems to think you did him some sort of favour a while back.'

'He means getting rid of the competition – not that I did. My lawyers are busy with the appeal.'

'You were there when Cafferty died, though.'

'Again, not true. The coronary came after.' Rebus had paused. 'Is Trinity Christie's patch?'

Tennent swept a few crumbs from the table in front of him. 'He's guaranteeing your safety, John, and we have a single cell that's just been vacated. You've been off the force a good few years – I doubt you'll come across too many guys you put in here. In fact, I've had a look. Just a few minor habituals, none of them minded to get on the wrong side of Darryl and his lads.' He had fixed Rebus with a look. 'So what do you say?'

'I say that if someone does me in, I want you grieving at the graveside.'

Tennent had given a thin smile before rising to his feet, Rebus snatching a final biscuit as he was ushered from the room.

Well, it'll make a change, he had thought to himself, while all too aware that ex-cops were unlikely to be welcomed with open arms. Aware, too, that Darryl Christie might at any time change his mind, leaving him wide open to attack.



Scan to listen to the MIDNIGHT AND BLUE playlist on Spotify, curated by Ian Rankin

HE SPENT HIS LIFE PUTTING THEM BEHIND BARS



NOW HE'S JOINING THEM

THE LANDMARK 25th REBUS THRILLER

AVAILABLE 10th OCTOBER 2024