



● Left: Police bursting into the flat last Christmas where Errol Walker was holding Carlene Charles

● Below: Walker with Carlene on the balcony of the flat, at Northolt, west London, after he had killed her mother

Siege man gaoled for life after murder verdict

Errol Walker was gaoled for life yesterday for murdering a young mother and attempting to murder her four-year-old daughter during a siege in Northolt, west London.

An Old Bailey jury rejected Walker's plea that he was suffering from diminished responsibility when he fatally stabbed 22-year-old Mrs Jackie Charles during the 29-hour siege last Christmas.

Walker, aged 29, had admitted the manslaughter of Mrs Charles on the grounds of diminished responsibility, but denied murdering her and attempting to murder her daughter, Carlene, whom he knifed three times, causing "sickening" injuries.

Walker took the hostages when he went to Mrs Charles's flat where his wife Marlene and their daughter Patricia, 4, were staying, to give them Christmas presents.

When Mrs Charles told him he could not see Patricia, and that Marlene had gone to call the police, Walker went into the flat.

Fifteen minutes later he stabbed Mrs Charles through the neck and hurled her body through the window. He demanded that police should let his wife into the flat.

When he was refused he turned on Carlene, threatening to cut, maim, and kill her.

As PC Rah Landi pleaded with him to release Carlene he deliberately hacked her fingers down to the bone.

He attacked and threatened her several times until she was rescued when armed police stormed the flat using sledgehammers and stun grenades.

PC Anthony Long climbed through a window to see Walker holding Carlene with a knife at her neck. When Walker refused to drop it he

shot him in the back of the head.

Mr Justice Allott paid tribute to the police action. He commended PC Long for his restraint and the "fortunate outcome," and told PC Landi he was a credit to the force.

Walker's counsel, Mr Christopher Barnett, told the court his client felt very deep and sincere remorse for what had happened.

In 1983 Walker received a five-year gaol sentence after admitting his part in seven armed Post Office raids in London and gave evidence for the prosecution against other members of the gang. He was released on parole after serving two years.

Although he had recovered from an operation for the bullet wound in his head he was now partially blind.

He was mentally and emotionally backward and among the bottom 1 per cent of the population in intelligence.



Boeing 'has no tie with PM's adviser'

By Andrew Moncur

Boeing, the US aircraft company bidding to supply its AWACs early warning radar system to Britain, last night denied Labour suggestions that it had any link with Sir Gordon Reece, one of Mrs Thatcher's closest advisers.

"Sir Gordon has never been employed by Boeing in any capacity," a company spokesman said.

Earlier, Mr Denzil Davies, Labour's defence spokesman, had asked the Ministry of Defence to define Sir Gordon's role, and questioned whether he had been visiting the MoD seeking information about the competing bids.

This week, a Cabinet committee is expected to receive a recommendation that the RAF should buy AWACs in preference to the British-built GEC Nimrod.

Mr Davies said yesterday that if the American option was chosen, 2,500 jobs would be lost and £960 million in development costs would have to be written off.

"Over a billion will have to be spent acquiring a new system at a time when the defence budget is being severely strained by Trident and our conventional forces are being cut," he said.

Takeovers cut research funds, say scientists

By David Gow

Predator companies involved in takeovers will be accused today of stripping research and development units, the seed-corn of the future, for short-term cash improvements.

The white-collar union, ASTMS, which is hosting today's conference of scientists from the private and public sectors, is launching a lobbying campaign on behalf of under-funded science. It wants a £3 billion boost to science.

Mr Roger Lyons, the ASTMS national chemicals secretary, yesterday expressed particular concern about the Guinness takeover of Distillers, the current BTR bid for Pilkington's, the glass manufacturers, and the Hanson Trust acquisition of both Ever Ready and the Imperial Group.

"Some of the major companies taken over have suffered immediate cutbacks in research and development," he said.

"What future, for instance, will there be at Pilkington's in the event of a takeover?" The union has written to Mr Ernest Saunders, the Guinness chairman, asking for urgent talks about research facilities at Distillers.

He accused predator companies of concentrating on short-term profits and improvements in cash flow.

Pointing out that the UK had fallen from second to 10th in the Organisation for Economic

Cooperation and Development league table for research and development and was now in danger of being relegated, Mr Lyons accused Mrs Thatcher, the first trained scientist to become Prime Minister, of presiding over the biggest collapse in morale among scientists.

Launching the ASTMS lobby, he insisted that the time for moaning about cuts had gone and this new departure for trade unions would involve the use of sponsored MPs and peers as well as MEPs campaigning both politically and industrially.

The campaign will aim to improve the funding of research institutions as well as the pay and conditions of scientists and technicians. ASTMS, which claims to represent about 40,000 people working in the field, has engaged occupational psychologists to study the collapse in morale among technical and scientific staff.

The union has decided to go it alone with its new lobby, according to Mr Lyons, as it does not want to move at the speed of "the slowest and biggest ship in the convoy."

"You get a lot of scientists crying wolf. People in very influential positions have not been able to swing very simple political decisions. Research and development is too important to be left to amateurs," he said.

Students to launch own Aids campaign

By Edward Vulliamy

The National Union of Students conference yesterday called the Government's response to the Aids virus criminally inadequate and launched an information campaign of its own.

The conference also ratified its biggest programme of action on student finance, housing and Government proposals for a scheme of loans to students.

A motion which was overwhelmingly carried at the Blackpool conference accused the Government of using the Aids issue to persecute homosexuals and said "the classification of Aids as a 'gay disease' is absolutely false."

Proposing it, Ms Sarah Jones of Leeds University, said that homosexuals were being blamed for the fact that heterosexual people have got Aids by "rightwing Tories and moralists."

The NUS Aids campaign will involve safe sex guidelines being distributed to all colleges. The conference agreed "homosexual behaviour alone cannot and does not spread Aids. It is the practices involved

rather than the number of partners which is relevant." The union would "ensure that hard-wearing condom machines are provided in every student union building."

The conference said that lesbians and gay men should be free to donate blood and to care for children. No employer or insurance company had the right to demand that any person take an Aids test, or to know the results.

Aids sufferers would be protected by the union and should have free access to lectures, tutorials, libraries and all college and union premises.

The conference ratified its programme on housing, finance and benefits which includes plans for what is intended to be the largest-ever student demonstration next year, plus local rent strikes and college occupations.

In her closing speech, the NUS president, Ms Vicky Phillips, said the campaign would seek to involve the unions of academic staff. She said the NUS would support the mounting action by art students

Place in history for tourists

By Martin Wainwright

BED and breakfast at Cardiff's old Post Office, a winter-break at Titus Salt's alpaca mill in Yorkshire or even a single room (with shower) in Harlech castle may become available to tourists in Britain.

Tourist authorities have been urged to set up a chain of historic hotels, similar to Spain's paradores but privately-run, in redundant ancient buildings.

A report commissioned on "heritage" hotels in Spain, Holland and Denmark concludes that similar opportunities in Britain are considerable. It calls on the tourist boards to guide a co-ordinated development of new hotels in warehouses, dock buildings and other historic premises.

"Britain has a wealth of old buildings, some of which have been preserved, but others are being demolished with a haste that seems indecent," says Mr Paul Barrett, author of the report and overseas marketing officer for the Welsh Tourist Board.

The report acknowledges Britain's reputation for historic country house hotels, but argues that their success could be spread to less obviously promising buildings.

Mr Ken Powell of Save Britain's Heritage, which has argued vigorously for converting empty historic buildings to new uses, drew the line at Welsh castles yesterday. But he welcomed any encouragement for hotels in other buildings.

Old Buildings, New Accommodation, British Tourist Authority, Thames Tower, Black's Road, London W6 9EL. £5.00 incl p&p.



Rebel wins Riba vote

Dr Rod Hackney (above), the controversial figure behind the Prince of Wales's passion for community architecture, has been elected the next president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, defeating the official nominee of the Institute's ruling council by 5,927 votes to 4,210 in a 37 per cent turn-out, writes John Ardill.

Dr Hackney, who campaigned on a programme of radical changes in Riba, promised yesterday that he would raise the profile and change the public image of the profession. He also promised his critics in the institute the start of a new era when he takes office next July.

He urged the institute, which has often been stung by Prince Charles's comments on architecture, to welcome the prince as a friend of the profession and a man with his finger on the public pulse.

Speaking at Riba's Portland Place headquarters in London he said: "I would like to think this building will concentrate more on those people who are trying to provide a good service, to those in inner city areas in particular that are suffering environmental stress. The profession has that responsibility."

Dr Hackney's defeated opponent was Mr Raymond Andrews.

Harassment hearing

By a Staff Reporter

Kensington and Chelsea borough council was yesterday granted leave to dispute the decision of a public inquiry inspector, that evidence of tenant harassment by a landlord was inadmissible as proof of property mismanagement.

The West London council claims, by Mr Richard Barry, was incorrect. The authority's counsel, Mr Graham Eyre, told the High Court yesterday that the deci-

sion was "a sweeping ruling with grave implications." The inquiry concerns the validity of five compulsory purchase orders by the council on properties belonging to the landlord, Mr Nicholas Van Hoogstraten.

The Department of the Environment, which set up the inquiry, opposed the council's application for a judicial review. The inquiry is now expected to be adjourned until the outcome of the High Court hearing.

THAMES

Unicef are 40.

Will the children in tonight's programme ever know what that feels like?

Tonight at 9:00 Thames Television presents 'To Us A Child,' a look at the world's largest charity dedicated to the welfare of children.

Dennis Tuohy tells the story of 8 of the world's needy children.

In India, 13 year old Shoba is a

'teawallah' from dawn until nightfall.

In a disease ridden slum in Hanoi lives 9 year old Luong, underweight, and undernourished.

Raul's home is a 'barrio' in Bogota. At 8 he already works to feed the family.

Hussain is a 3 month-old boy born

to face life in drought ridden Chad.

For these and all the other children in the programme, the future depends upon Unicef.

Thames are proud to have been chosen to make this documentary to mark Unicef's 40th anniversary.