I write this chapter in the middle of the night because I cannot sleep. I have a lump in my throat, and a retching in my stomach.

My disillusionment is complete because now I know that the world-renowned "British Justice" is only a myth, and I am ashamed to call myself British. The courts are a laughing-stock, an empty charade; many magistrates are fools, allowing themselves to be used by gangsters; some of the prosecutors are corrupt; and the "forces of law and order" are part of an underworld empire here in Hong Kong.

I have just sat for four days listening to a blatant twisting of facts in court that prevented one villain standing trial and whitelied away the evidence against another until there remained no charge at all. The Prosecution deliberately turned the tables so that the innocent victim has been on trial and found unofficially guilty of being a drug addict, a brawling fish-wife, an immoral woman, and crazy to boot. None of these charges is correct, but she was found guilty without a chance to prove her innocence, and all in the name of "British Justice" which, we are told, must at all cost maintain the innocence of the accused (even when he is a well-known villain) regardless of the fact that this may destroy the victim of his crime.

Magistrate, Prosecutor, Counsel for the Defence and Police are guilty of defaming an innocent person, and of giving their full support and active encouragement to known blackmailer and extortioners.

My uninformed critics always ask me for evidence, actual facts, and they are now going to get them, everyone. Libel action is welcome, because I now hold the courts in such utter contempt that I would not expect a fair trial, and would count it an honour to be found guilty under such a stinking system.

The whole story follows:

In February, 1971, a lady, Madam H. who had never in any way broken any laws, was approached by a detective concerning a "dishonoured cheque" which was supposed to have been issued by her to pay off a debt to a man named Lee. The woman denied all knowledge of the cheque, its owner, or of any debt she owed to Lee. She was taken to the nearby Police Station and ordered to clear the "debt"
by paying Lee $10,000 in cash immediately; otherwise she would be detained and charged with uttering a dishonoured cheque. At this point it should be noted that the alleged debt was for over $18,000, but the amount demanded, $10,000.

How far this detective was personally involved in the affair, and how far he was under the instructions either of the black society to which Lee belongs, or of his police superiors, is not quite clear, but the incident does show the extra-ordinary duties detectives take upon themselves at a time when the Commissioner of Police complains about shortage of personnel for tackling serious crime. The Magistrate dealing with the case seemed to find nothing strange in a policeman going collecting debts for a complainant.

But let me first concentrate on the villain of the piece, Lee. Lee was himself originally a detective, and an old buddy of the detective in the case; they had known each other at Police Training School before working together in Kowloon City Police. Lee is known throughout the newspaper fraternity as a member of a triad society which includes in its membership some of Hong Kong's most notorious gangsters, in fact, part of Hong Kong's mafia.

While Lee was a detective himself, he had stood on a murder charge. That was ten years earlier. He was imprisoned for a short period and dismissed from the force. However, he kept up his contact with the police and made a good living from selling newspapers and renting out the newspaper licences of other vendors.

In 1966 I received frequent reports from handicapped newspaper vendors. Whenever a hawker arrived at the Urban Services Department's hawker licensing office to take out a new licence, Lee was there waiting for him. He then approached the hawker and ordered him to "sell" his licence for a few hundred dollars, or "rent" it in return for a few dollars monthly. If the hawker refused, he was intimidated or beaten. Handicapped hawkers could not stand up to this bullying and usually handed over their licences, and in this way Lee controlled a large number of licences which he then rented out to enrich himself.

In 1968, a group of hawkers, emboldened by the recent riots, held their own little demonstration in the licensing office. They carried posters blaming Lee for intimidation, and accusing the Urban Services Department
of collaborating with him. The allegations against Lee were true, and those against the Urban Services Department were also not without foundation; how else could Lee always appear when a new licence was issued unless they had informed him?

At that time of disturbances, a demonstration of this kind could not be ignored, and the Urban Services Department concluded that the matter had become too hot for them to handle, so they decided to cancel Lee's own licence and that of his wife, on the grounds that they "did not need them". These newspaper sites were outside a large restaurant in Kowloon City.

The two hawkers, Lee and his wife, appealed against this cancellation, and an investigation was initiated by Urban Councillors to take some action on the numerous charges of blackmail, forgery and intimidation levelled against Lee by other hawkers.

Throughout the enquiry, Councillors were obstructed by the Urban Services Department, probably to cover up their own part in the racket. This they did by trying to control the meetings, and by discrediting the witnesses against Lee. One complainant, named Wong, who had joined the demonstration in the licensing office, was a severely handicapped hawker. Urban Councillors were informed by the Department that Wong had obtained his licence on the grounds that he had an artificial leg, but the Department doubted if it was true that he had an artificial leg as claimed. Why the Urban Services Department chose to go on record that it held such doubts instead of clearing up the doubts by the simple expedient of examining Mr. Wong's legs, I find hard to understand. Had any of us councillors spoken in the same strain we should have been reprimanded for speaking without checking the facts. They were easy enough to check. I did it by the simple expedient of asking Mr. Wong to show me his two legs, which he was happy to do, because one of them was a "genuine" artificial leg. But the Urban Services Department preferred to remain in ignorance, no doubt to discredit Mr. Wong's claim of their officials' involvement with Lee.

The Urban Councillors were thorough in this case and questioned numerous witnesses, twenty-five to be exact, including the two hawkers Lee and his wife, who were given equal chances of stating their case. Almost all those interviewed, with the exception of Lee and
his wife who enjoy excellent health, were pathetic social welfare cases, widows, mental cases, cripples and ex- lepers. Most of them told the same tale, that they had been approached either inside or near the Urban Services Department immediately after receiving their licences, and had been forced in some cases by threats of violence and in one case by means of forgery to transfer their licences to Lee on a permanent basis, for amounts varying between $100 and $150 a month. Some of the licences could bring in over $1000 a month. The hawkers were then told that if they reported these transactions to the Urban Council, the licences would be cancelled, since transfer of licence is illegal. As none of these hawkers knew Lee before he met them outside the Urban Services Department, it is quite clear that officials of this Department had arranged for him to be present.

The fact of Lee's guilt was never in doubt. How he had escaped criminal prosecution for intimidation, extortion and forgery is something that should have been officially probed.

The Councillors upheld the decision to cancel both licences, only to be told by Lee's wife that she intended to operate regardless. The Urban Councillors had wasted many weeks of effort on this case, only to find that the two continued to sell newspapers at the same site, and are in fact still there to this day, six years later. The cancellation of the licences had only been a token gesture by the Urban Services Department, and it in no way interfered with their trade, nor did it bring to an end their nefarious activities. On one occasion a licensed newspaper hawker to whom the stalls had been re-allocated, called in the police when he found Lee operating there. The Police arrested the licensed hawker, while Lee stood by laughing. At other times, when action was demanded, Lee was informed by phone by police of the impending raid, and he just sat inside the nearby restaurant watching the charade.

With this background, therefore, it was no surprise to me when Lee was accused of having again forged someone's name on a cheque.

Madam H. was taken to the Police Station on 8th February, 1971, where she was told that Lee was accusing her of paying him with a dishonoured cheque. It is not possible that the Police believed Lee's story; they were certainly collaborating with Lee, and completely ignored Madam H when she denied that she owed any money.
to Lee, denied she had ever seen the cheque, denied that the signature was hers. It is completely incredible that Police who were not involved themselves would have judged the case and decided who was in debt to whom without reference to the courts. Even if Lee had not been known to the Police as a notorious character dismissed from the service, it is still unbelievable that they should have been prepared to threaten to keep the woman in the police station all night unless she paid the money to Lee. Madam H. called the crime by its proper name—blackmail by the detective and his old buddy Lee. Lee had no accounts of any kind to prove that Madam H owed him a single dollar. Indeed, it was impossible that she could have owed him such a large sum of money and yet have not a single account or receipt to prove it. It was purely and simply a frame-up in order to extort £10,000 from a woman who had once been a newspaper vendor for a few days only, with a threat of court action if she refused.

Madam H had never been involved in a court case in her life and knew nothing about her rights, or about court procedures: she had only one thought in mind—to get away from the police station. This, she was told, could only happen when she paid over the £10,000. It is strange that later in court, the Magistrate saw nothing unusual in the fact that a cheque for £18,000 was to be settled with £10,000.

Then came an extraordinary offer from detective: he would run Madam H. around in his own car to collect the money from her friends. But she could raise only £3600 and he refused to release her. She owned a very small flat, but had very little ready cash, so in the end she managed to mortgage her flat for the remainder of the money, £6,400, which was given to her by cheque. The Policeman demanded the money in cash, but eventually released her on the promise that the cheque would be cashed the following day and paid over.

The next morning Madam H. did not go at once to the Police to pay the money. Instead she went to see a solicitor, who advised her to report the whole matter to the Anti-Corruption Branch of the Police. This she did. But the officials there only asked her who had advised her to see them, and when she mentioned the solicitor, they told her to go back to him. The solicitor was by then in court, and she had no alternative than to return home and wait for the next approach by the detective. One thing did happen at the Anti-Corruption Branch: someone there whispered to her that
the Branch would never do anything, and she should come to see me. It was some weeks before she found me.

Later in the day the detective called her back to the Police Station, where she had to hand over the money. She was accompanied by a friend who insisted that the cheque should be returned to Madam H., together with a note stating that there would be no further demands on her. Unfortunately this note was so worded as to be ambiguous: it could have meant settlement of a debt; however, it did safeguard her against further demands.

Having bought her freedom, the woman then began to try to find some way of seeking justice. She tried to persuade the detective that she had been swindled, but naturally, being involved in the conspiracy, he ignored her pleas. Eventually she made enquiries and found me. That was early April, 1971.

When I heard the story I thought it would be easy to get action since I knew that Lee had a long history of crime, and the detective had obviously exceeded his duty. I should have realised that Hong Kong's official policy is to protect the underworld which co-ordinates so much of its corruption on drugs, gambling and vice. This official Policy goes right up the line from the lowest officials involved to the Legal Department and perhaps higher. I had had other sad and disappointing experiences with all departments supposed to deal with law and order. Yet this case seemed so clear that I could not see how the Departments could avoid taking action. How wrong I was: there is no crime that cannot be covered over if the guilty person is a friend of the police or other Departments, or if he is a member of Hong Kong's mafia.

I did take certain precautions, however. I went to the bank and, with a note from the woman, was able to see the Bank Manager, Mr. B to ask about the ownership of the cheque. This was at the Headquarters of the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation in Hong Kong. The bank manager assured me that this lady had no account at his bank and that they therefore had no specimen of her handwriting or signature. This particular cheque, he told me, had been reported "lost", but when he telephoned in my presence to check this out, he learned that it was not just "lost". It had been taken from a man named Wong under intimidation - a threat to harm his nephews. The person who had intimidated Wong was named Lee.
The Bank Manager took a photostat copy of the cheque and supplied me with a copy too. Everything looked rosy for solving the case since the old Lee intimidation had been used, and the name given by Wong was almost identical. I then went to see Mr. E.G. Jones of the Commercial Crimes Office.

Mr. Jones promised to take urgent and personal interest in the case. I was therefore disappointed when someone came to my office soon after and when I followed him to the door afterwards I found two shady-looking characters were with him. I had previously never been successful in a single case with the Commercial Crimes Office, and had written them off as another inactive and corrupt section of the Police. Mr. Jones therefrom showed no interest in the case and did not even trouble to answer my queries about it, nor did my reminders ever reach his file.

After placing the matter in the hands of the Commercial Crimes Office, it seemed to come to a complete stop. I sent monthly reminders, but heard nothing. I soon realised that my attempts to find justice had again been foiled. I tried to get action by making the case public, and the Police Public Information Officer, Mr. K. Farmer, visited me. He said that no reminders were in the file, but I was able to convince him by showing him the duplicates of the reminders in mine. He said he would look into the matter, but I heard nothing more, and soon I found that Mr. Farmer was in another department. We were back to square one. This is normal procedure in the Government of Hong Kong: keep personnel moving and nothing comes to light.

I then started a barrage of letters, to the press, the Governor, and others. I made it clear that I would never give up the case. It had been opened by me in April, 1971, and it was not until December, 1972 that an arrest was made; this was almost two years after the event, and lack of memory was going to be used to destroy the case - besides corruption. The detective, was arrested and charged with blackmail; Lee, gangster, was not arrested, though he had been named by the complainant as the villain of the piece.

I then wrote to the Police, the Governor, the Legal Department and the Judiciary, telling them of this outrage, asking why Lee had not been arrested, and saying that forgery, intimidation, extortion and conspiracy were the crimes involved. Most departments simply ignored my
letters (the usual way of dealing with serious complaints). Mr. J. B. Lees, however, of the Criminal Investigation Department, did reply with one of the impudent letters characteristic of this public servant, informing me that the charges had been investigated for eight months. He did not explain why a case reported in February 1971 had not been investigated until a year later, nor why a key witness in the case, a Police Inspector who had been on duty at the time of the offence, denied that he knew of any pending action or of being questioned until a few weeks before he appeared in court as a witness in January, 1973.

Mr. J. B. Lees, made the surprising statement that the criminal background of Lee had no relevance to the present case: with a long background of forgery, blackmail and intimidation, it would have seemed to me as a layman that the background of Lee had every relevance to the case. I agree, he could not have been arrested without some proof, but he had actually been named as the extortioner, by a woman who had been intimidated and blackmailed by him, the complainant in the case.

By this time it was quite clear that the case was being manipulated to allow Lee to escape and make the detective a temporary scapegoat: the trial was being fixed even for him. It is common practice for a case to be so presented in court that a Magistrate, even if he sees through the plot (and the majority do not care enough to see anything) cannot bring a conviction. Lee, instead of standing trial, actually stood in the witness-box and was lauded by the Magistrate as a very clear and convincing witness. To an incompetent judge, it is easy for an experienced gangster to put forward a convincing case. It is important to note that, independently, I had been informed that £25,000 had been paid over to have this case fixed up in court. Had I not been told this, I could still have guessed it from the incompetent way in which it was presented.

I had originally no intention of sitting through the case in court, as it was all so clearly fixed up that I knew I could do nothing: Hong Kong has no place at which one may appeal against an injustice, and the Anti-Corruption Branch is busily engaged in covering over corruption, not exposing it. However, after two days of gruelling, the woman pleaded in tears for me to go and see what was happening, and to give her moral support.

She found that when I was present, the Magistrate and the Defence Counsel were a little less harsh with her;
however in my opinion, they still bullied her as if she had been the criminal instead of being the victim of the crime. I was amazed to notice the difference in tone used even by the magistrate when questioning the woman, and later when questioning a police witness who was certainly perjuring himself in court.

The Prosecution offered no case against the detective, but brought forward perjured evidence: no wonder the Counsel for the Defence told the Magistrate that it was a mistake to bring the case to court at all. The Counsel for the Defence ran the show at will, insinuating that the victim might be a drug addict, a person with an aversion to police; at one point he accused her of once having attacked a policeman, but she was fortunately able to prove that she was not the person named. He called her a crazy woman, and insinuated that as her witness was a man and not her husband, she might be having an affair with him. The Prosecutor did nothing to protect his Crown witness, the victim. He laughed at the libellous attacks made on her. When the woman's witness was tricked by the Counsel for the Defence by telling his part as if it has happened in 1972 instead of 1971 (he did not notice the change in date in the question), the Prosecutor did nothing to protect this uneducated man from being called a liar because he naively did not notice the trick in the change of date. Yet when the Police witness flatly contradicted himself by saying at one moment that he identified the cheque, and a minute later that he had not even seen the cheque, the Defence lawyer, the Magistrate and the Prosecution accepted that this was merely a slip of memory. Almost all questions asked required only the reply YES or NO, and in this way the witnesses were guided through what they were expected to say to exonerate the accused detective. Likewise, when the defendant himself made errors on several matters, he was given memory aids to make sure that the story was as planned, and his lapses were explained as being due to lapse of time. No concession was made for any memory lapse on the part of the victim or her witness. Indeed, if there were memory lapses, this was entirely due to the delay of two years between the event and the trial: this delay was entirely the fault of the authorities.

It was perfectly obvious that the detective was in court, not to be tried for a crime, but to destroy the charge for all time, to discredit the woman for ever for daring to take action against a gangster and his police buddies.
One interesting witness was Wong, the original owner of the cheque. At the bank I had learned that this cheque was taken from him (I believe with other cheques too) by a man named Lee Y. who was said to be a "security guard". Like other witnesses, Wong had to reply YES or NO, and under leading questions he admitted that he had "lost" the cheque but did not know he had lost it until the police questioned him in connection with this case. This was outright perjury, as he had reported the loss to the bank, and also the fact of intimidation. He looked frightened throughout the proceedings, and in reply to my question afterwards as to why he had lied in the witness box, he replied "I had no other way because they did not ask any questions where I could tell the truth." I concluded that this man had been told what to say in court, and intimidated to say it. He had obviously not forgotten earlier threats against his nephews by this same gang.

The Magistrate did not show much interest in the cheque, nor how it could possibly have been used by Madam H. to pay an alleged debt to Lee: Madam H. and Wong were in fact unknown to each other, and she owed no money to Lee. The Prosecutor, who must have had the information, supplied by me, about Lee Y being connected with the cheque, did not mention Lee Y at all, nor was any reference made to the charge of intimidation used on Wong. The Bank Manager was not called as a witness, yet he knew about the report of intimidation of Wong by Lee Y. But one has to remember that the prime purpose of this trial was to exonerate the accused and destroy the victim of the crime, as well as keep Lee's name out of trouble. In short, the intention was to lose the case.

The cross-examination of Lee, the villain, who appeared ostensibly as a Crown Witness but was in fact a defence witness of the accused detective, was also remarkable. The Prosecution asked him nothing that would indicate that intimidation, blackmail, extortion and forgery were his normal business. In spite of Madam H.'s efforts to show the Magistrate that Lee should have been in the dock, neither the Prosecution nor the Magistrate asked him anything that could have involved himself. Knowing full well that the woman claimed she owed him nothing, the Prosecution went ahead as if Lee had been an honest man to whom she owed over $120,000, but who was generously prepared to accept $10,000 "to save a law case". By the time the Prosecutor had finished eliminating all important and relevant evidence,
and by the time he had permitted his own witnesses, the victim and her friends, to be mauled by the ruthless Counsel for the Defence, there remained nothing to be judged.

I then saw clearly how the court was just one tremendous charade; there was the Prosecution conducting a case, but keeping mute about all the relevant facts; there in the dock was a policeman who had collaborated with a well-known criminal; there was the criminal in the box as an honest witness; and there was the Defence Counsel fully aware (as I had informed him) that there was a conspiracy going on but intent only on getting his client off; and there was the judge solemnly pretending to judge a case in which truth had become lies and lies passed on as truth.

And all this was going on in the name of British Justice. Had I stood up in court to protest my honest indignation, I should have been arrested and charged with contempt of a thoroughly contemptible performance under the unjustifiable name of Courts of Justice. Indeed, when I later protested through the newspapers about this case, I was told by that Defence Counsel that the Attorney General was considering taking libel action against me on behalf of the Prosecution for this case. Injustice and lies are in order, but the truth must not be known, even at the cost of charging the truthful with libel. But how did the Defence Counsel know that the Attorney General was considering taking libel action against me? Does the Legal Department confer so closely with private lawyers?

When this case ended, I was crushed, angered - I went out of the court room, the "court of justice" and vomitted. My head ached; there was a lump in my throat. I spent several sleepless nights; I felt ashamed to be British.