



DAVID OLUWALE'S LIFE AND DEATH A Two Page Guide

Derived from Kester Aspden, *The Hounding of David Oluwale* (Vintage Books, 2008), and 'Northern Lights' in Caryl Phillips, *Foreigners - Three English Lives* (Harvill Secker, 2007)

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1931 Lagos, Nigeria: D.o.b. unknown, assumed to be 1931. Even the spelling of his surname is uncertain. Left school at 14. Father in the fishing trade. Religion unknown, assumed to be Catholic.

16 August 1949: stowed away on the MV Temple Bar.

3 September 1949: disembarked at Hull dock. Sentenced to 28 days in prison for not buying a ticket for the ship. David Oluwale was a British citizen.

1949-53 Some Work and Some Play

3 October 1949: released from Armley Jail in Leeds and moved into 2 Well Close Terrace and then 12 Grove Terrace with Abby Sowe, Steve One, Speedy Acquaye (later in Georgie Fame's band), Adekola Johnston and Sheila (Sheba) Savage. No evidence as to his aspirations. (It has been said he wanted to be an engineer.)

Work: six months at Croft Engineering in Bradford; then in Leeds: as a hod carrier on a building site and then labouring in the meat market and abattoir.

1951: laboured at the Sheffield Gas Company. His friend Joseph Odeyemi said David would get into trouble because he wouldn't let anything go. Then he worked at a foundry. Arrested for being drunk and assaulting a policeman on 17th March. Autumn 1951: back in Leeds, enjoying a social life at the King Edward Hotel and the Mecca Ballroom (now Reiss clothing store).

1952: lived at 209 Belle Vue Road with Isiaka (Tex) Harding and Widey. On the electoral roll as Olu Davies. Might have had a girlfriend called Gladys at this time.

His friend Christmas Ogbonson said he was 'A quiet man and he was always happy and smiling . . . not aggressive and would not harm anybody.' Abby Sowe remembered him as a very happy individual and a good conversationalist; he was always making jokes and could be the life of the party. Another friend, Gayb Adams, confirms this. Not a big drinker, but enjoyed cannabis. 'He was always wanting to be like a Yank,' said Gayb. His nickname was Yankee because he loved American popular culture.

25 April 1953: David 'Ulowale' arrested by PC Maurice Roberts at 11.20pm in King Edward Street, charged with disorderly conduct, assault on police and damaging a police uniform. There had been a dispute about the bill for their food and drinks. Gayb told Max Farrar that David would never back down when he felt injustice was taking place. Jailed for two months.

1953-1967 Psychiatric Hospital, Prison and Rough Sleeping

6 June 1953: David admitted to St James' Psychiatric Hospital, Leeds, on a 14 day court order. Psychiatrist Michael Leahy recorded that David appeared 'apprehensive, noisy and frightened without cause'. Five days later described him as loud, excitable and terrified: 'Childish and wept when talking of his fears'.

11 June 1953: taken to Menston Asylum, Leeds.

19 April 1961: discharged from Menston hospital. While there he was subjected to electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) and the drug largactyl. Diagnosed as schizophrenic. Psychiatrist Dr Richard Carty described him in 1970 as 'restless, noisy and restive . . . spoke English fairly well but he was so confused he could give no clear account of himself . . . visionally (sic) hallucinating'

April 1961: back at 209 Belle Vue Road and a job at West Yorkshire Foundry.

June 1962: signed on for social security benefit in Islington, London. August: signed on in Sheffield.

September 1962: back in Leeds. His friends Tex and Slim described him as nervous, twitchy, slow, shuffling, laughing for no reason – 'gone'. David was seen sleeping in 'Jews Park' (Lovell Park). PC

Dave Stanton found him sleeping in the doorway of Maple, Denby and Spinks' Furniture shop on Albion Street. Asked a few weeks later why he wasn't sleeping at St George's Crypt (homeless shelter), he told Stanton they gave him a hard time there because of his colour.

21 Sept 1962 arrested by PC Harold Robinson on Woodhouse Moor after almost biting off the finger of the park ranger. Jailed for six months for malicious wounding. Sent to Hull prison.

1963-5: no fixed abode except, briefly, 15 Mexborough Ave, 2 Well Close Place (Faith Lodge hostel), 12 St Alban's Place. Charged with malicious wounding of two policemen and remanded to Armley Jail.

11 November 1965: Psychiatrist Dr Carty sectioned David from Armley jail and he was admitted to High Royds psychiatric hospital, formerly Menston Asylum. Psychiatric nurse Leroy Phillips said he could be a handful at times, but was fine if properly dealt with.

27 April 1967: discharged from High Royds.

1969-71 Hounded to his death by Sgt Kitching and Inspector Ellerker

1967-9: David slept rough at John Peter's shop in Lands Lane, the Bridal House on the Headrow, Eve Brown's on Kirkgate, Peter's 'Sew and save' in Thornton's Arcade, in the doorway of Trinity Church on Boar Lane, amongst other city centre sites. Short spells in Armley Jail and Preston Prison.

29 March 1968: discharged from Preston Prison and back in Leeds. Steve Oke described him as 'a little bit mental'. Abbey Sowe, who found some jobs for him to do at his ceramic business, said he was 'in a very bad way'. Gayb said he was always anxiously looking over his shoulder.

17 April - 4 July 1968: accommodated in the Church Army hostel in The Calls.

Police Inspector Ellerker and Sergeant Kitching instructed all their officers at Milgarth police station (now the John Lewis store) to call them whenever 'Uggy' was seen sleeping rough.

7 August 1968: Ellerker and Kitching take David to Bramhope and dump him there.

11 August: they dump him in Middleton Woods, saying he should feel at home 'in the jungle'.

But he always came back to Leeds city centre. Later, when they saw him they beat him, they set fire to the newspapers he lay on, urinated on him and rolled down an arcade in a dustbin.

9-23 January 1969: David imprisoned in Armley Jail after conviction for disorderly conduct when Ellerker and Kitching moved him on from his doorway in John Peter's shop on Land's Lane. On release he resumes sleeping rough in the city centre.

18 April 1969: around 3am Ellerker and Kitching assault David in the doorway of John Peter's. At around 5:20am bus conductor David Condon saw two men in police uniforms pursuing a scruffy old man down Call Lane, close to an alley leading to the River Aire.

4 May 1969: David's body found at Knostrop Weir in the River Aire about two miles downstream from The Calls.

8-23rd November 1971: partial justice in Leeds Crown Court

Soon after David's body was found, Police Cadet Gary Galvin suspected Ellerker and Kitching had killed him, having heard rumours of their assaults on him over the past year or so. He told his Sergeant of his suspicions. After an exhaustive investigation, London Met Chief Superintendent John Perkins came to the same conclusion as Gary Galvin. The Crown prosecutor would only lay charges of manslaughter, actual bodily harm (ABH) and grievous bodily harm (GBH). Judge Hinchcliffe refused to allow the jury to hear bus conductor Condon's evidence and directed acquittal of the manslaughter charge. The jury found Ellerker and Kitching guilty of ABH and Ellerker was sentenced to three years in prison while Kitching got 27 months.

In court, several Leeds police officers testified to the beatings, urination, setting fire, dumping David outside Leeds and rolling him down the arcade in a bin. Kitching admitted to 'tickling' David with his boot and giving him 'a good slapping', 'but never hard'. Ellerker refused to testify and claimed he had lost his duty book. On release the officers got civilian jobs and never spoke of their crimes.

The David Oluwale Memorial Association believes that Ellerker and Kitching caused David Oluwale to drown in the River Aire in the centre of Leeds. The court found them not guilty, so this is a matter of dispute. But they were convicted of assaulting David, providing a hint of justice.