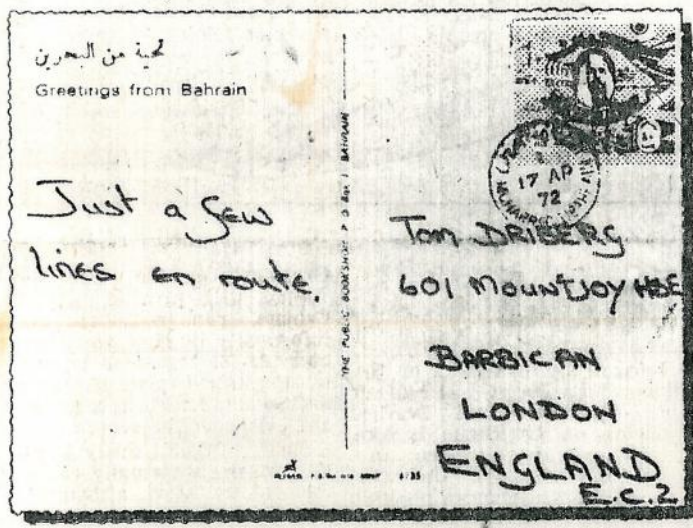


# HOW STEPHEN RAYMOND TOOK EVERYONE IN

STEPHEN RAYMOND, the security officer named last week by police as being urgently sought to help inquiries into the £2 million theft from Heathrow airport, had for many years been conducting an extraordinary correspondence with his MP, Tom Driberg (now Lord Bradwell). This exclusive article is based on his letters. By JAMES FOX.



Tom Driberg (above) and a cheeky postcard (right) sent to him by Raymond en route for Australia after absconding from Dartmoor. The card was posted in Bahrain.



STEPHEN RAYMOND came out of Pentonville prison on April 15 this year, thirty years old, with a string of prison sentences so long that he looked on his freedom as "problematical to me and troublesome to my friends."

Within only two weeks he had found a job with a security firm, Purolator Services, at Heathrow Airport. His mother, who has seen him return so many times for brief spells, was thrilled that he had found a job, but she wasn't sure that he would hold on to it. Steve, believed, she said, that the company had not checked his record.

He certainly was capable of talking himself into almost any job. He was softly spoken, highly intelligent, plausible. He didn't dress or behave like a criminal. And he had enormous charm.

But his nerve and ingenuity was the product of a lifetime of crime and imprisonment, bred on the streets of High-bury when he was fourteen and refined in almost every prison in the country, including Grendon Underwood, Britain's only psychiatric prison where he earned the classification "psycopath"—a title which he told a friend he rather liked.

Purolator Services would, for example, have been interested to read the report of a psychiatric social worker, Mrs E. M. Miller Smith, written in April 1970 when Raymond was serving a six-year sentence for armed robbery, burglary, car theft and shop breaking:

"At Grendon we see many men who can only be regarded as psychopathic and I think we have come to recognise a syndrome of recurrent imprisonment resulting from chronic conflict with the law (with or without violence), high intelligence and charm, fascination for the opposite sex, the inability to form mature relationships and perhaps most significant, characteristic of all, the callously manipulative and destructive exploitation of others and readiness to bite the hand that feeds them. In particular I'm afraid I personally think that Steve qualifies only too well for the designation."

By 1976, Raymond had perfected his manipulative bent: his deceits were compulsive even when dealing with his own family. The decline from his scholarship-winning early youth to a skilled criminal and a hardened recidivist is a classic tale of how little the penal system and well-mean-

ing friends can do in dealing with a particular kind of personality.

A SPECIAL INSIGHT into this story comes from Raymond's remarkable relationship with Tom Driberg (now Lord Bradwell), once Raymond's MP. For a period of almost ten years, Driberg, who offered friendship and help to Raymond in the belief that he could be helped from a path of crime, found himself exploited and sometimes cheated.

In that time, a voluminous correspondence developed. It begins as long ago as 1965, when Raymond had just received at the age of 19 his first six year sentence, and does not peter out until 1974.

The friendship ended in a London West End club in 1974 after a final act of ungratefulness on Raymond's part persuaded Driberg to drop his lifelong belief that nobody is immune to rehabilitation; ("I'm afraid I learned by experience that this optimistic maxim doesn't apply to a psychopath"). That night, Raymond, typically, had a Porsche and a Jaguar waiting for him outside the club, where he had invited Driberg for a "thank you" dinner. Driberg overheard Raymond conning a free meal by telling the manager that his famous guest often wrote for Egon Ronay's food guide. It was the last in a string of much greater abuses that Driberg had suffered over the years.

Stephen Raymond had been a brilliant and unruly child, growing up among the street gangs of North London. His father was a catering manager and his job took him away to the Middle East during Stephen's early years. The boy started running away from home at the age of nine. "But he was always top of the class," according to an early acquaintance, "even though the only time he seemed to go to school was for end-of-term exams." Stephen would try to live down the envious jibes of the less clever kids by showing off his physical prowess in acts of bravado with the street gangs, always associated with older boys. He took Eleven-plus and then a scholarship to the Salesian College in Battersea. He was expelled for unruly behaviour.

He developed, early on, a desperate desire for "status," a word he often used for being looked up to and admired. It

is perhaps why his criminal exploits were always readily discovered.

In April 1959, aged 14, he faced his first charge—house-breaking and larceny and was placed on probation. From then on he was constantly in trouble—for stealing cars, housebreaking, forging cheques, taking drugs. He went to Remand Homes and Detention Centres—from which he always ran away—and in January 1963 sent to Borstal. Then his first serious crime—he took part in the armed robbery of the house of actress Florence Desmond in October 1964. He was nineteen, and he wasn't to see the streets of London again until he was 24.

He wrote his first letter to Tom Driberg, then MP for Barking, on May 25, 1965 from Aylesbury jail. It is a model of goodness and politeness. But there are already traces of the style of his long and bitter siege against the prison bureaucracy. He makes demands on Driberg, which later in the correspondence were to flow thick and fast. He asks for a transfer and says he is deprived of long-term prisoners' privileges. And he mentions his worry about his father's health—he was suffering from a tumour on the brain—which was to become an obsession until he died three years later.

As the letter flowed through 1965, Driberg meticulously passed on the demands, however small, to the Home Office. By July of that year he wrote: "Anyway Tom, I hope you don't mind me calling you that, only Mr Driberg seems so remote..." and "Just let me know when I become too much of a nuisance." He signed the letters "Take care and be lucky, Steve."

But Driberg's interventions with the Home Office sometimes proved embarrassing, when it emerged that Raymond had begun to lie about crucial details. And in September 1965, Driberg was shocked to receive a reply from Alice Bacon, then Minister of State at the Home Office, which said:

"The picture is anything but reassuring. Raymond has a completely selfish, antagonistic attitude to life. This confirms him in any criminal or quasi-criminal undertaking which attracts him, and until he changes he is a potentially dangerous and quite unscrupulous person."

The letter was passed on to Raymond, who took bitter exception to it and wrote to Driberg: "Antagonistic? ... I wonder how Miss Bacon would feel if she was snubbed or insulted. Antagonistic?" He pleaded with Driberg, in his usual articulate and painstaking way, that the letter was wildly unfair. "Mixed with the worst elements?" He then reveals that "I had George Blake teach me German (the famous spy), a solicitor book-keeping and another prisoner bee-keeping. Hardly the worst elements."

Despite his assurances that he was trying to become a model prisoner, Raymond tried to escape from Wandsworth in October of that year. "If you've stuck your neck out on my behalf," he writes coolly, "I hope this won't be an embarrassment to you."



Stephen Raymond and his one-time Australian fiancée, Mardy Kros.

The demands increased, as Raymond plugged away at the endless regulations in the prison system, looking for flaws. Driberg never let him down. He continually asked for books. At Chelmsford he took A-Levels in History, English Lit, British Constitution, and British Economic History, and passed them all. He began to develop a passion for literature and an interest in politics, and he began to write poetry.

One poem in blank verse called "Where the Red Armies have" contains a revealing verse pathic traits," said that other "Do I turn in my rage and frustration, on the very devils and that he used people for that axe tormenting me so?" "own nefarious ends."

Do I in turn, plunder, torment, rage and ravage and become a Devil King in my night?" "Some of my poetry is sensitive," he said, "quite the equal of Bunting and others, I'm sure."

On July 30, 1967, he wrote, "I don't know how to mix with people and I've become very contemptuous of others, and the thing that troubles me most is that I can find no reason for being otherwise." In that same year, 1967, his "instability" persuaded the Home Office to send him to Grendon Underwood psychiatric prison. A friend says that Steven himself managed to produce the symptoms that got him transferred there. By comparison with anywhere else the Grendon régime was liberal and comfortable.

secret of the fact that was the character named "Archie." He tells of how to manipulate Grendon. "For a start you begin by telling everybody you haven't the remotest intention of changing... then signs of progress should start slipping out. You mustn't overdo it of course. They like to feel they're having a battle; you've got to strike just the right balance so they can persuade themselves they've got a hope of winning in the end."

In fact the hospital found "Where the Red Armies have" "serious psychopathic traits," said that other "Do I turn in my rage and frustration, on the very devils and that he used people for that axe tormenting me so?" "own nefarious ends."

BY THE TIME he left Grendon in December, 1968, Steve had been offered a place at the University of Surrey to take a degree in catering. He was originally turned down for the LSE because his background made him look too dangerous on a campus already rocked with the turbulence of that famous year.

But he was consistently refused parole and was moved to Chelmsford. He seems to have built up a personal resentment against Lord Stonham, a Home Office minister. Just before his eventual release, Raymond wrote:

In love with an Australian girl, Mardy Kros. "I hoped she would alleviate Steve's psychopathic condition" said Driberg. "She was charming and sensible, although somewhat puritanical. She once told me her parents belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church in Australia and added, 'I stick to my parents' principles.' She said 'he can't get into bed with me, though he often wants to. He can lie on the outer covers.' I

When he got back from retrieving the paper, Driberg found Raymond lounging in his flat, doing no work of course. He just said: "Oh yes, I thought that was rather a useless cutting, and you didn't need it." Driberg recalls: "I tried to control my anger. But that was when I began to lose confidence in his rehabilitation."

said, that that must be very frustrating for him, and Mardy said, 'That's what he says.'"

Raymond told his girl friend that his name was Simon St Clair. She knew nothing of his criminal background and Driberg tried to persuade him to tell her. He agreed, but later said he "couldn't face it."

In this period of freedom, Raymond wore expensive clothes, bought from Yves St Laurent, and seemed to have money. "He talked a lot about status," says Driberg. "He had decided not to go to university. To persuade him I said that this would have given him the status he needed so badly. He said, 'Why should I want that sort of status. If I want status I could go out in the street any day with a gun and get status.'"

Driberg tried to assist him by giving him small jobs, including the sorting out of his filing system. Raymond responded by stealing several things from Driberg's flat, including his Diner's Club card, which Raymond used to run up several hundred pounds' worth of bills in Scotland. To get there he had stolen from Driberg's desk some of the special travel vouchers which MPs are given to travel to and from their constituencies. Raymond managed to get the railway ticket clerk to give him a return first class ticket to Oban.

"He had no money," said Driberg. "He got a free meal in the dining car by complaining loudly about each course, posing as an MP, threatening to telephone the head of British Rail. In the end they pleaded with him to have the meal for nothing."

Raymond also stole a stand-by obituary of Harold Wilson, which the editor of The Times had asked Driberg to update, and sold it to Private Eye for £7, who printed part of it. Driberg was forced to send grovelling letters to the editor of The Times and Harold Wilson.

When he got back from retrieving the paper, Driberg found Raymond lounging in his flat, doing no work of course. He just said: "Oh yes, I thought that was rather a useless cutting, and you didn't need it." Driberg recalls: "I tried to control my anger. But that was when I began to lose confidence in his rehabilitation."

SOON AFTERWARDS, in March 1970, Driberg was on the point of leaving the Commons for dinner with Michael and Dingle Foot, at the Gay Hussar, Soho, when he received a telephone call from Raymond.

"He said, 'Mardy and I are going to have dinner at the Mirabelle to celebrate our engagement.' I said I could not join them, but would be pleased if he wanted to join us after dinner in the Hussar. He accepted eagerly. I warned the Foots of his character, but they expressed no objection.

When he and Mardy arrived they said that the dinner had cost £40, partly because they had bought a bottle of ancient

pre-phyloxera claret which cost £25. Dingle Foot who had been Solicitor General was particularly interested in discussing penal matters with this expert on prison conditions."

This, as Driberg later discovered, was Raymond's alibi. At that moment Eddie Coleman, a gangland leader was being bludgeoned and shot to death by Norman Parker in the back room of a Tottenham shop. He and his accomplice, David Woods, then took the body in a trunk before and buried it hurriedly in shallow earth in the New Forest. Norman Parker then went to stay with Raymond.

Later, Raymond bought camping equipment, drove Parker and Woods to Scotland and hid them in a remote part of the countryside. Raymond was subsequently arrested in Glasgow on a murder charge and told the police of Parker's and Woods's hiding place. "They would have been caught anyway," he afterwards told Driberg.

Because of his alibi Raymond was acquitted of murder, though he was sentenced to three years for committing an act to impede arrest.

The Old Bailey trial ended his relationship with Mardy who returned to Australia on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Driberg helped to get Raymond transferred from Wandsworth to Dartmoor. But he became sarcastic when Driberg's replies to other complaints didn't come as fast as he wanted: "Perhaps silence is a parliamentary privilege."

Then in 1972, Raymond was allowed out on licence a few months before completing his sentence. He told Driberg that he wasn't going back. I told him not to be a fool, that he would be caught." One Monday, Dartmoor prison rang Driberg to say that he hadn't returned. "A few minutes later came a phone call asking me to ring a number in Dublin," said Driberg. "I was amazed and furious because he was implicating me. I gave the police the number."

Raymond had gone to Ireland, as he told Driberg later, and had ingeniously applied for a passport by posing under the name of a mental patient of his own age, who Raymond judged, would not be coming out.

Raymond went to Mardy's house—only to be told that she wouldn't see him—but was soon afterwards picked up by the Australian police for being a prohibited immigrant. He was returned to Wandsworth prison, moved to Pentonville and released on July 25 1973.

By January 1974, he was in prison again, sentenced to 18 months after using false documents to hire a car. He continued to write to Driberg, but to no avail. In one letter he said, "although you're a mistrustful, prickly old bastard at times, I'll always be grateful to you for what you've done."

It was grudging thanks for ten years of an MP's trouble and concern.

© Times Newspapers Ltd., 1976.

The new European money

by train

press

AFRICA

AYMOND FOUND a job as assistant hotel manager, here he met and fell