

## The Hanging Of Ray Williams, Part 2: The Decision

Ray re-appeared exactly one week later.

This in itself was no surprise. Every Tuesday the staff and volunteers of the church have lunch together and Ray would often join us. What surprised me was what he said to me as soon as lunch was over: 'Dave, I'm going to take the guilty plea.'

'Um... great! I think that's good', I said. 'This means you won't go to gaol, right?'

'Well, we don't know for sure', he said, 'but I really have no choice.'

What do you mean?, I asked.

"What I mean is that I've accepted the fact that I am going to be found guilty, no matter what I do. So it's just a question of whether I should be found guilty now or later."

Apparently what had happened was that the prosecution had gently leaked some of their evidence against Ray to his legal team. It seemed that a number of former HIH employees had made submissions that incriminated Ray. The deal was that if they made these submissions, they themselves would be immune from prosecution, or something like that. Evidently some of these stories were pretty damning.

'It's just the way things are', Ray said. 'Either I'm going to be found guilty now, and cop a lesser penalty, or I'm going to fight on and be found guilty a few years down the track, and cop a greater penalty. And frankly, I don't know how much longer I can keep fighting.'

Ray was right. He had no choice.

This is the way our legal system works. It's a system designed to reward the clever, the powerful and the prudent, not the honest.

We all knew that Ray was innocent of the charges that had been laid against him, but that wasn't even relevant. Ray was doing battle with the Government, the media, and a vindictive public that had been lulled into believing that he was a criminal. What hope did he have?

When I was a young man, I used to think that it was the role of the court to bring out the truth! How naive I was! Truth has no place in our system. What takes place in a courtroom is just a battle between two parties, with the judge playing the role of referee. What has truth got to do with it?

Perhaps those who play the legal game as professionals find it entertaining. Personally, when it comes to watching people get belted, I prefer boxing. It's a lot less pretentious, there are fewer mis-matches, and a lot less people get hurt.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

### About the Author

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