

Private Members' Business

The hon. member was the subject of an insult, not against him personally, I agree. It was an insult, a racist comment that struck many Canadians through him, not just those who are black but Canadians of every colour. I would hope that Canadians who are white would feel it was a slap as well at them. After all we are a multi-coloured, multi-racial country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. It being three o'clock p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

JUSTICE**CONVICTION OF DAVID MILGAARD**

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should recognize the serious possibility that a miscarriage of justice has resulted in the murder conviction of David Milgaard and order a new trial in the case.

He said: Mr. Speaker, on January 31, 1969 it was minus 42 degrees in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan that morning. That morning, very early, Gail Miller, a 20-year old nursing assistant, got up and got ready for work. She left her rooming house at about 7 a.m. Her bus stop was about a block and a half away. Between her home and her bus stop she was attacked, set upon, stabbed repeatedly in the back and the chest, and was sexually assaulted. She died tragically within 30 minutes of leaving her home. Her body was found about an hour later, just before dawn on that very cold and chilly Saskatoon winter morning.

The body was found in a snowy back alley between her rooming house and the bus stop. That same morning, three young people—and I will call them in the terms of the late sixties, three young hippies, basically teenagers—came from Regina. Their names were Nicol John, Ron Wilson and David Milgaard. Milgaard was 16 years old at the time.

The three young people came by car overnight from Regina. They arrived in Saskatoon in the early morning hours. They were looking for the home of Albert Shorty

Cadrain. Albert Cadrain was also a teenager. They subsequently found the home of Cadrain. They picked up Cadrain and they left Saskatoon with him later that day, about noon, on the way to Edmonton.

Later the Crown charged David Milgaard, one of those young people, with murder. In 1991 Milgaard is one of Canada's longest serving prisoners. He spent most of what was really the most vital part of his life in prison. The key witnesses against Milgaard were Nicol John and Ron Wilson, the two people in the car. I think everybody would agree that they gave inconsistent testimony in the beginning, in the middle of this story, at the end of the story, and even today. But I will get back to that.

Their evidence at the time of the trial was that the three arrived in Saskatoon around 6.30 a.m. on N Avenue or O Avenue. That is in Saskatoon. They noticed a young woman in a black coat and they asked for directions. They continued to drive to the end of the block. They tried to turn but the car got stuck. Canadians in the west know what it is like on those cold winter mornings and evenings where cars can often get stuck. The car got stuck and the two boys got out to push the car, unsuccessfully. They could not get it out so they went off in different directions for help.

Wilson was away from the car for about five minutes. He returned, he said, to find Nicol John, the young woman, hysterical. Milgaard was away for about 10 minutes. The car became unstuck. They got the car moving and they drove to the Traveleer Hotel in Saskatoon where David Milgaard got out of the car, went into the hotel and asked for directions. The motel manager, one Rasmussen, said that Milgaard was perfectly normal except that he was wearing only socks on his feet, no boots. He was polite, did not seem to have any blood or wetness on his clothes, and he thanked the motel manager for giving him, Milgaard, a map.

The three youths then set out for the Cadrain home. They got stuck again and a couple called the Danchuks helped them, called a tow truck, and invited the kids into their home. At this time Milgaard was polite and his clothes were not wet according to the Danchuks, who are independent witnesses.

Finally the young people arrived in the Cadrain home one and a half blocks away from where the body of Gail Miller was found. Wilson, Cadrain, Nicol John and David Milgaard, four teenagers, got in the car and left