

*Reported by Samuel J. Allan on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021.*

## The Queen v Laurie Martin

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Laurie Martin, a part-time hairdresser, was arrested by the police on the suspicion of laundering £5,200 into her bank account - which was found to be the proceeds of criminal activity - on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2020.

Laurie Martin had a Saturday job at a hairdressing salon, and one of her clients was a woman named Jess. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of August Martin was cutting Jess's hair, Jess suggested to Martin that she could earn extra money over the top of her wage, and that she would be helping a friend. Laurie had agreed as she had to pay a friend and buy her mother a birthday present and handed over her bank details. Sometime later, Martin was told to bring her passport and bankcard to meet Jess. When she arrived at the bank, Jess was there with a man named Aiden, who has been described as threatening: tall, muscular, and wearing dark clothing. She was told a background story and scared, drew the £5,200 from her account, saying that it was to buy her first car. Aiden took it and gave her £200, then disappeared, along with Jess. Laurie Martin, frightened, states that she was threatened to withdraw the money and quit her job, however she did not go to the police. After that, she was arrested when the police traced the money in her bank account from another woman who had been defrauded, Jane Luckins.

On May 27<sup>th</sup>, Laurie Martin's trial began. She pleaded not guilty and was represented by lawyers Ella Chen and Mae Bisset, arguing that she had obtained the money without knowing of its legality. The prosecution team was represented by Yasmine Taylor and Alexandria Dupont-Short.

The defence team argued that Laurie was enamoured of Jess, and her boss Addison Burns stated that Jess always had her hair cut by Laurie and that Laurie looked up to her. Burns's office overlooked the salon, and while he was doing paperwork, he looked up to see his clients, and saw Jess 'talking animatedly', something a person described as 'snobbish and arrogant' would not have normally done. He states that Jess might have been working up to deceive Martin into doing something illegal over all her appointments, as he believed that 'Laurie would have not done anything illegal unless she was forced to.' Laurie herself stated that she felt flattered that someone like Jess, 'who was so glamorous and cool' would recommend her to a 'friend' that needed help withdrawing money, but only with trustworthy people. Whilst at the bank, Martin met Aiden, the 'threatening' man told her to withdraw the money in cash. Immediately she felt suspicious; she started to question Aiden's motives. Aiden had said that she should withdraw the money as 'he knew all about her now', and Jess said that she should 'do as he says' because then they would 'leave Martin and her family alone'. She affirmed she did not go to the police

immediately as she was so scared of Jess and Aiden. ‘She ‘wished that she’d been braver’ and states ‘she would not have agreed if she knew the money was linked to a crime.’

The prosecution team argued with evidence from Quinn Young, another hairdresser at the salon and Rowan Farkas, the bank clerk who met Martin. Quinn Young overheard the conversation clearly, even with traffic outside – as defence had questioned, and heard Martin say, ‘are you sure I won’t get caught?’ to Jess saying ‘no it will be fine, believe me, how do you think I earned all of this?’ (referring to her expensive clothing). Martin responding ‘sure, as long as they’ll never know it was me.’ Young caught Martin’s eyes in the mirror, and initially saw her face excited. As they locked eyes, her face went red. Defence fired back that if you were caught discussing a less than ideal financial situation, wouldn’t you also be embarrassed? Prosecution asked Farkas about her statement, in which she saw the group of three and said that they looked like old friends. Martin did not look threatened, even though she stated that ‘she wished she’d been braver’ and that she ‘felt a sharp metallic object at her back, held by Aiden’. Prosecution questioned her to ask how you would have been able to tell the material of an object if you cannot see it, to which she only responded, ‘I wouldn’t want to test it.’ They also proposed that she thought about spending the money and did not go to the police, who could have offered her protection.

After the defendant and witnesses had been questioned from both sides, the Lead Magistrate Lennon Yarrow, alongside Magistrates Rufus Goatman and Myles Marchant, retired to conclude the case and decided the verdict.

The trial lasted for 41 minutes and on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2021, the Magistrates declared Laurie Martin guilty of acquiring and possessing criminal property contrary to Section 329 of the Proceeds Of Crime Act 2002.