Pigpen Released

Fireman

1970

"Don't worry," said the cop who had busted Pigpen a week earlier, "we'll put you back in there peeling potatoes."

Pigpen, also known as Allen Barber, is free on a $500 bond until his lawyer, Sol Plafkin, files a motion for a new trial June 9. But the harassment he has received since his arrest and conviction on a contempt of the flag charge has left him looking for shelter.

His beautiful shoulder length hair was cut off while he was in DeHoCo (Detroit House of Correction) so he feels out of place in his usual haunts. His wife lost her job at Michigan Bell while she was trying to get him out of jail because the company learned about her husband's conviction.

Paying a bondsman used up the last of their ready cash. They had to move 'out of their apartment on W. Hancock and now they'll be sharing one in the same building with another couple.

The front page coverage which his case received in the papers has made him a target of letter-writing super patriots. For examples:

"I was happy to hear you got a good stiff sentence. Thank heavens there are still a few judges around town who know enough to take care of delinquents."

"Evidently your mother and father didn't teach you any manners."

"It sounds as though you are a bad egg, because the charge against you was originally possession of marijuana. What a shame that charge had to be dropped for lack of evidence. Doubtless you are plenty guilty, Allen."

"The paper was kind in withholding the information as to the color of your skin but we just imagine you must be colored, for I don't believe any white folks live in that cheap neighborhood around Hancock and Commonwealth."

"We already contacted Judge Sutherland and complimented him on his wise action."

The Arrest, conviction and harassment of Pigpen could have hit any freak in the Warren-Forest area. He was walking down the street when he was stopped and frisked by a TMU.

The cop found a rolled cigarette which turned out not to be marijuana, and a piece of red, white and blue bunting which had been folded up in his pocket for six months.

Pigpen was confused at his trial and went to court without a lawyer and didn't know that he could have a jury trial. As the judge sentenced him to a maximum 90 days for a misdemeanor, he remarked, "I believe in peaceful dissent but you've never done anything to perpetuate or better our political system."

Even though he was convicted, Pigpen was released pending his appeal. His lawyer will base the appeal on many errors in the court and police handling of the first trial and the constitutionality of the ordinance.

According to his lawyer, Pigpen will probably not be back in jail on this charge.

People who are faced with court or police hassles arising out of political harassment should contact the National Lawyers Guild at 871–1251.

fifth estate

Fireman
Pigpen Released
1970

https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/107-june-11-24-1970/pigpen-released
Fifth Estate #107, June 11–24, 1970

fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net