

# Chapter one

Sing Sing prison  
New York  
June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1940

My dearest Emma,

(P.D.)

Please believe me when I say I have only written this letter as a last resort, because if I'm about to die, you are the only person with whom I wish to share my secret.

About a year ago, as I feel sure your grandfather told you, I left Oxford to join the navy, as I wasn't in any doubt, that it would only be a matter of weeks, possibly days, before ~~we~~<sup>Britain</sup> would be at war with Germany.

I had hoped to join H.M.S. Resolution as an ordinary seaman, but as she was not due to dock ~~at~~<sup>in</sup> Bristol for over a month, Sir Walter suggested I should sign up with the SS Devonian, a small merchant cargo ship that was about to sail for Cuba, and would be returning to Bristol by the end of the month, which would ~~help~~<sup>give</sup> me gain some experience.

Thanks to your grandfather's influence, I was able to join the Devonian as its fourth officer, and despite my lack of experience, Captain Havens made me feel most welcome. We must have been about half way across the Atlantic when the ship was torpedoed by a German U boat, and ~~the Devonian~~<sup>the Devonian</sup> became one of the first casualties of war. The ship sank with all hands, but fortunately, I was among the nine who was rescued by the S.S. Kansas Star, an American cruise liner, ~~on its way back~~<sup>on its way back</sup> to New York. ~~The~~ Sadly only two of my fellow seaman survived the night, ~~and~~<sup>while</sup> the other seven were buried at sea the following morning. The only other survivor was Tom Bradshaw.

the ship's third officer, a young American who had served on board the Devonian for the past three years. Unhappily Tom never regained consciousness, and died during the night.

The following morning, Dr Wallace, the ship's doctor, asked me my name for the records. I told him that I was Tom Bradshaw, in the hope it would allow me to begin a new life in America, while at the same time you and your family would be released from any obligation, you might feel for me.

Dr Wallace accepted my claim that I was Lt Tom Bradshaw of the SS Devonian without question, and that's how Harry Clifton was buried at sea, while Tom Bradshaw recovered sufficiently, to disembark from the S.S. Kansas Star when the liner docked in New York a few days later. You will by now, be asking yourself why I am writing to you almost a year after you believed I had died at sea. I will explain: within moments of passing through immigration Tom Bradshaw was arrested, and I was charged with first degree murder. Of course, I immediately informed the police officer who had arrested me, that there had been a terrible mistake, and, in fact I was Harry Clifton, an Englishman from Bristol, who had served on the same ship as Bradshaw. And I thought I'd heard everything was an only <sup>the officer's</sup> comment, as they locked the cell door behind me.

I lay down on my little bunk, and waited, for ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> lawyer, the other officer had assured me would be allocated to my case. As I had no money to speak of, I assumed that I would be assigned a young inexperienced lawyer, <sup>probably</sup> not much older than myself, so imagine my surprise, when the next

person to enter my cell, was a tall, grey haired, distinguished looking man, who must have been over sixty. The old man gave me a warm smile, and introduced himself as Mr Setton Jelks, He explained that he was the senior partner of Jelks Bates and Thornton, and that he had been instructed by ~~the~~ ~~Brad~~ Tom Bradshaw's parents to represent me.

My immediate reaction was to be delighted, to have such an experienced advocate on my side, ~~as I assumed~~ ~~as I assumed~~ he would quickly sort out any misunderstandings, that had arisen concerning my true identity, and would be able to ensure that I ~~was put on~~ <sup>was put on</sup> the first ship bound for England. But that was not his purpose.

Mr Jelks listened to ~~my story~~ <sup>me</sup> intently, and didn't speak again until I had come to an end ~~of my story~~ <sup>of my story</sup>. He ~~shook~~ <sup>shook</sup> his head, and said, Do you have any proof that you are Harry Clifton and not Tom Bradshaw. I thought about his question for some time, before admitting that I didn't, as everyone on the SS Kansas star believed I was Tom Bradshaw, and the only proof I had <sup>of my true identity</sup> was ~~over~~ <sup>over</sup> three thousand miles away, and by now, ~~they would believe I was dead.~~ <sup>all of them would have been</sup> it would ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> have been reported that Harry Clifton had been buried at sea.

There is a way out of your dilemma suggested Mr Jelks, it was my turn to remain silent while the old lawyer suggested an alternative course of action.

If you were to retain the persona of Tom Bradshaw I can assure you, you'd be on your way back to England within days.  
But I ~~was~~ <sup>would have</sup> to face a murder charge I reminded him.

You would indeed responded Jelsky without missing a beat, but the case against Tom is so weak that I expect it to be thrown out of court even before a jury has been selected, which would mean you could <sup>even</sup> be back on the Kansas Star before she returns to Bristol in ten days time.

Looking back on that first meeting with Setton Jelsky, I now realize, I should have told him to get lost, and assumed that it would only be a matter of time, before ~~the judge~~ <sup>everyone</sup> realized I was telling the truth. But I want you to imagine, ~~just for a moment~~ <sup>if you will</sup>, what it's like to be locked up in a foreign jail, with no one to turn to for advice, other than a friendly lawyer, who seems to have ~~your~~ <sup>your</sup> best interests at heart.

Jelsky was also quick to ~~point out~~ <sup>remind me</sup>, that if I did take his advice, no one would be any the wiser, so there would be no reason for you, my darling, or any other member of the Bamington <sup>family</sup> to doubt that I had been buried at sea. However, you may ask, as indeed I did, why Tom Bradshaw's parents were so willing to go along with this subterfuge.

Mr Jelsky had a ready answer for this, as he seemed to have for all my questions. Mrs Bradshaw he told me had already lost one son who been murdered, and she didn't care to spend the rest of her life, ~~wondering~~ <sup>wondering</sup> ~~if it was~~ <sup>if it was</sup> her other son <sup>who</sup> had been responsible for his death. She was determined to have Tom name cleared, ~~rather than spend the rest of her life~~, and finally remove the demons

that had been counting for. I am bound to admit, after what we had been put through, I felt some sympathy for the poor women,

Mr Jelks then played what he clearly imagined was his trump card, when he ~~totally~~ <sup>revealed</sup> that that the Bradshaws were so keen to prove their sons innocence that they had instructed him to offer me 100000 dollars - for any slight inconvenience ~~or~~ I might experience - words that were <sup>repeated</sup> ~~repeated~~ to me, if I were to go through with the trial. I was about to dismiss this bribe, for what it was worth when he added, something your poor mother might appreciate. <sup>(P10)</sup> I had to admit that such a large sum of money would transform ~~my~~ <sup>my mother's</sup> life, even making it possible for her to escape her one up and one down in Cold Harbour Lane, and buy a home of her own. She could even give up her job as a waitress at the X hotel, and begin to enjoy a life style she would never have ~~dreamed~~ <sup>dreamed</sup> possible. ~~Jelks didn't speak~~ while I reconsidered the offer, and I had to admit this would be an opportunity to repay her for all the searches she had made over the year. <sup>When</sup> ~~When~~ Jelks returned ~~the next day~~ <sup>the next day</sup>, I still remained unmoved, <sup>certainly</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>not</sup> willing to fall in with his plan, until I had questioned him <sup>more</sup> ~~close~~ about the case against Tom. After several hours of answering my questions, Jelks was able to convince me that Tom had no case to answer, and I would be released in a matter of days. That was nine months ago.

Once I had pleaded not guilty, <sup>to the charge</sup> <sup>(P10)</sup> I was present in court for every day of the six week trial, when it quickly became clear that Tom's innocence was not quite as clear cut as Jelks had suggested. It didn't help, that I couldn't appear in the

witness box to defend myself, because it was clear that I knew less about ~~the~~ <sup>the defendant</sup> than David Kendon, the state's attorney.

In Mr Kendon's summation up before the jury, he made a ~~great~~ <sup>great deal</sup> of Mr Bradshaw's unwillingness to answer his questions, when he assured the jury ~~that~~ <sup>PRO</sup> that he would have asked me, why I had deserted the navy, and left the country the day after ~~the~~ <sup>his brother's</sup> ~~body~~ <sup>body</sup> had been discovered. I couldn't answer either question. He ended his summation by asking the jury, if Tom Bradshaw didn't kill my brother, then who did? Another question I couldn't answer.

Mr Jakes put up a spirited defence, pointing out that I had returned to America, because I clearly felt ~~if~~ I had nothing to hide <sup>PRO</sup> and by the time the jury retired, no one was willing to predict ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> way the verdict would go.

The jury are expected to deliver their verdict sometime tomorrow, when I will finally know if I ~~am~~ <sup>am</sup> the only person in that courtroom who knows I'm innocent.

If my darling, you should ever read this letter, it ~~is~~ can only be because I have been found guilty of first degree murder, and sentenced to death, ~~which in New York means the electric chair.~~

Old lags have already warned me that my appeal would be heard within a month, and if my sentence is not commuted to life imprisonment, I ~~will~~ <sup>can expect to</sup> be sent to the <sup>electric</sup> chair within weeks, possibly days. As I sit in my cell, writing this letter, only hours before learning my fate, I can only pray that you never have to read this letter, but if you do, I want you to know that I went to my

grave only ever having loved one woman,  
As always, my darling  
Hanny.

As the cell door swung open I tucked the letter  
into an inside pocket, and would ask Jelby to  
post it, if the verdict went against me.

The two officers who accompanied me each  
~~morning~~ ~~to the court~~, as they had done every day,  
~~on the court~~ ~~on the court~~ ~~to~~  
~~the court~~. I was grateful for their silence,  
as the only words I wanted to hear that morning  
were not guilty.

New York was suffering one of its blizzards,  
so ~~the~~ the journey to the courthouse was even  
~~more~~ ~~difficult~~ than usual. When we eventually arrived,  
~~Mr~~ Mr Jelby, standing on the top step of  
the courthouse. The same oldy smile, ~~the same~~, the  
same double breasted suit, the same ~~handshake~~,  
one I'd joined him, he ~~was~~ his way through,  
a throng of curious onlookers, who didn't yet  
know whether to cheer or boo, as he led me  
towards court number four. He pushed his way  
through the swing door, down the centre aisle  
to a seat ~~in the well of the court~~ ~~behind counsel table~~ that I had  
occupied for the past six weeks. (PTO)

I swung round to find the court room packed  
no surprise on the day of a verdict in a murder  
trial, but I was surprised to find that the seats  
~~usually~~ occupied by Mr and Mrs Bradshaw my punitive  
parents were empty.

Mum must have been held up by the blizzard  
Jelby suggested, before taking his seat ~~PTO~~ I forgot  
about the Bradshaws, as I turned my attention  
to the dock behind the judges chair. I waited

impatiently for the minute hand to reach its peak, when the first of ten chubs would ring out; ~~and~~ ~~his~~ ~~honour~~ Mr Calaghan would appear like a realiable cuboo out of a swiss clock. (no)

Durny the past six weeks I had come to respect the <sup>judge's</sup> ~~judge~~ <sup>old</sup> who didn't favour either side, and certainly didn't allow Mr Jellie to get ~~the better of him~~ away with anything. (pro)

On the first chub, as realiable as a cuboo in a swiss clock, ~~the~~ door in the far corner opened, and his ~~honour~~ <sup>notion</sup> ~~looking at me~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ walked slowly across the courtroom, mounted the dais, and took his seat in the most comfortable chair in the ~~courtroom~~ <sup>courtroom</sup>. He gave a slight bow to the jury attendant, ~~who~~ who without a word, left the courtroom to summon the jury. My heart couldn't have beat any faster, if I'd been running a hundred yard dash.

The door beside the jury box, finally reopened, and twelve good men and true, filed slowly into the courtroom, and took their <sup>allocated</sup> places in the jury box. I stared at them but learned nothing. Only the foreman remained standing.

~~He~~ The judge waited for them to all settle. He enquired of the foreman of the jury "Have you reached a verdict." We have your honour the foreman replied

of unity

And is that verdict unanimous

~~No your honour~~ — Yes your honour

So is a majority verdict

Yes your honour.

The judge nodded again, and a clerk, walked slowly across the courtroom, and