

'Phey told us he couldn't bolt — he was under 24-hour watch'

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By

— SAY BAILORS IN SHOW-CAUSE HEARING

FORMER trade union leader Phey Yew Kok had assured his two bailors that he could not escape facing the six charges against him even if he wanted to because he was under 24-hour police surveillance, a magistrate heard yesterday.

Both bailors, Mr Phang Tai Mun and Mr. Kam Weng Nam, said this when they were asked to show cause why their bail money of \$50,000 each should not be forfeited.

The bailors, both businessmen, who were summoned to show cause after Phey failed to turn up in court on Jan 7 when his case was mentioned, also said they never took any steps to ensure that Phey would appear in court because they trusted him.

DPP Lawrence Ang, however, denied in his submission that Phey was under 24-hour surveillance.

Friendship

Phey is accused of four counts of criminal breach of trust of a total of \$82,520 and two other counts under the Trade Unions Act.

MR KAM told the court in his evidence that he agreed to stand bail for

'No one'

"He telephoned me the day after he was charged in court (last Dec 11) thanking me for helping him. He said that when he was down, there was no one to help him.

"I told him to prepare his case well and clear his name."

Mr Kam then recounted how on Jan 6, the day before Phey's case was to be mentioned again, Mrs Phey went to his house and told him that she had not seen Phey for a week.

Mrs Phey was very upset and he comforted her by saying that Phey must be resting somewhere or in a room preparing his case.

Mr Kam continued: "I was in court on Jan 7. When I heard that Phey failed to turn up, I was sad and disappointed."

He urged the court to be lenient in the amount of money to be forfeited from the bail money as it was "hard-earned money."

Cross-examined by Mr Ang, Mr Kam said that he had been seeing Phey about two or three times a year in the last three years and that he had never visited Phey in his Lorong Ong Lye home.

He said: "I never visited him because he is an MP and I am a small fry. He

might look down on me."

Mr Kam agreed that the consequences of becoming a bailor had been explained to him and that he was aware that unless he had taken positive steps to ensure Phey's attendance in court, he must be prepared to lose his money.

Asked whether he was worried about the possibility that he could lose his money when he was asked to furnish the bail, Mr Kam said that initially he was and had in fact first sought the advice of a friend before agreeing to it.

DPP: Did you seek Phey's

assurance or did you blindly agree to furnish the bail?

Mr Kam: Phey stood by his word to me on three instances, so I had faith in him that he would not jump bail.

Mr Kam agreed that other than hoping that Phey would keep his word and would attend court, he did not take any steps to ensure Phey's attendance.

Meeting

The DPP then suggested to Mr Kam: "When Mrs Phey told you she had not seen her husband for a week you could have run back and informed the court or the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau or the police because that was your responsibility.

"You as a bailor have a responsibility. The court is transferring custody (of Phey) to you, but you never took any steps to ensure that Phey would be in court.

"You took such an indifferent attitude that you were not around on Jan 7."

Mr Kam, however, replied that he in fact attended court that day, but he turned up late as he was caught in a traffic jam.

The second bailor, **MR PHANG**, said he furnished bail for Phey because he knew Phey for 11 years since the time Phey was the advis-

er to the Pang Clan Association.

He also knew that Phey was an MP and "chairman" of the NTUC.

He met Phey at the Big Splash the day before Phey was charged.

Mr Phang said: "He asked me to be one of his bailors. I agreed because he was chief of the labour union and I knew him to be reliable. He told me that he would attend court and that he had no intention of escaping.

"He told me also that if he had wanted to escape, he could simply have remained behind in Copenhagen when he was attending a meeting as he knew then that he was under investigation.

"He also told me that he was under 24-hour surveillance by the authorities and that even if he had intended to escape, he would not have been able to do so."

Mr Phang then related how on Christmas Day, Phey telephoned him about having instructed his (Phey's) lawyer, Mr H.E. Cashin, to apply for a withdrawal of his (Mr Phang's) cash deposit to save interest on the overdraft.

Upset

Mr Phang also spoke of two occasions, on Dec 31 and New Year's Day, when he tried unsuccessfully to contact Phey.

He said: "On Jan 1 I went to Phey's house and asked Mrs Phey where her husband was. She told me that he had gone out.

"She also said that her husband was emotionally upset and that sometimes he went out for drives in the middle of the night. He also sometimes could not sleep."

Mr Phang said that Mrs Phey and Phey's sister visited him on Jan 6 and told him that Phey left on Dec 31 and had not returned since.

He added that they said they could not locate him anywhere and that Mr Cashin had consoled them by saying that Phey was either most likely resting somewhere and that he would attend court the next day.

The DPP began his cross-examination by asking Mr Phang: "Where is Phey Yew Kok now?"

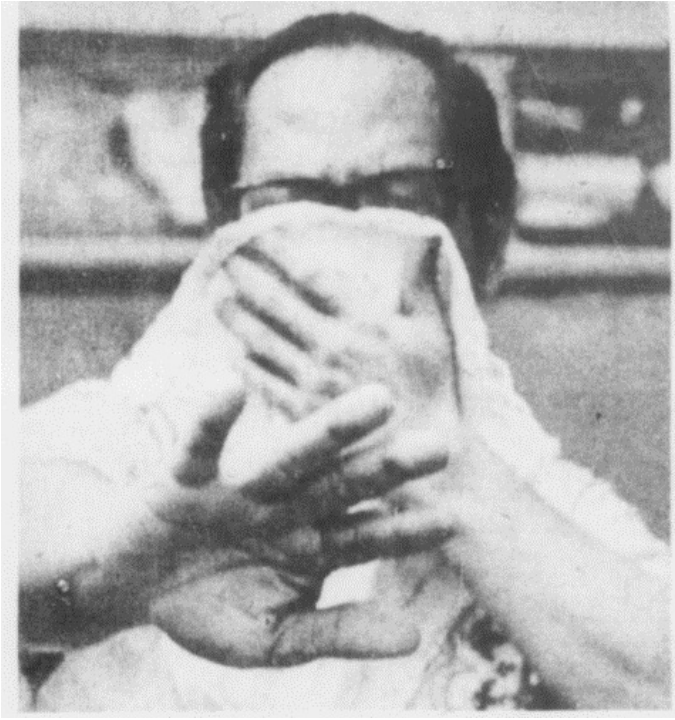
Mr Phang replied: "I don't know."

The DPP: "Can't you even guess or venture a guess? You are one of his bailors."

Mr Phang: "I don't know where Phey is."

Mr Phang agreed that he did not take any steps at all to ensure that Phey would attend court.

The magistrate, Mr Khoo Oon Soo, will give his decision tomorrow. Mr Phang Sin Kat appeared for Mr Kam and Mr Phang.



MR KAM ... "I had faith in him."





MR PHANG
...“I don't know
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