

Bartolo was sorry for Anthony Mifsud and wanted to come back

How Theuma commissioned his escape

Louis Bartolo had been planning to come back to Malta to give himself to the police because he could not stand the way matters had turned out in his case. Hearing from abroad that prison guard Anthony Mifsud was being framed regarding his escape made him angry. He could not rest easy being free while an innocent man was being accused of something he had not done.

Il-Fusellu was shot at by two different weapons fired by Louis Bartolo. He was eventually found not guilty because he had acted in self-defence. In fact Bartolo had been at home in St Julians and saw John Bondin, better known as Il-Fusellu driving his Mercedes in the neighbourhood. Because Bartolo knew that Il-Fusellu had a Mercedes he had asked him whether he was Il-Fusellu. He had never seen him before, just heard about him. Il-Fusellu had responded with a barrage of foul language. Bartolo told him to leave him alone and that he had a family to look after. But Il-Fusellu after trying to open his luggage boot moved towards the car as Bartolo pointed a gun at him, telling him to leave him alone. Il-Fusellu then tried to pick up something from the door panel compartment of the Mercedes. He picked up a pistol. Bartolo fired at Il-Fusellu's hand and the pistol fell to the ground. Following this shooting Il-Fusellu joined his friend Godwin Cuschieri in the car and drove it at Bartolo. Acting in self-defence Bartolo fired through the car window killing Il-Fusellu. At Bartolo's trial, the judge stated that Il-Fusellu was a person dangerous to society and Bartolo had had no choice but to shoot.

Louis Bartolo consistently claimed that it had been Prison Director Ronnie Theuma who had helped him escape and that Anthony Mifsud had been framed.

Regarding Bartolo's repatriation to Malta, former Premier Dom Mintoff had stated that it was Albert Rizzo who brought him back to Malta with a Range Rover. When *MaltaToday* asked Albert Rizzo about such an accusation he said; "That is totally untrue; the Range Rover, Bartolo's property had come to Malta by sea and all I did was help his wife Margaret bring it back together with some of their belongings. In fact about such an accusa-



malta**today** special report

tion Bartolo had challenged Lorry Sant regarding this matter for a debate on television."

Lorry Sant answered him back on the General Workers' Union daily I-Orizzont on the 31 May 1989, saying; Bartolo closed down his invitation with the hope that I (Lorry Sant) would not ignore him. Of course I will not ignore him, on the contrary I am going to answer him in this newspaper. "As a Socialist and because I believe that no-one can take anyone's life, it would be an act of dishonour for me to sit with a person who killed one of my friends."

Meanwhile regarding Louis Bartolo's political sentiments, although he was the barman of the PN club at Gzira, he was not a die-hard Nationalist as many made him out to be. In fact when he came to Malta from the UK in the early 80's all he wanted was to find a job. But circumstances had caused Bartolo to tender for the job of a barman at a PN club.

When Louis Bartolo came to Malta he obviously wanted a house were to live in. A certain Dolly Dimech, a Labourite activist had arranged for him to take up residence at a house in St Julians but the same woman tried to make him leave the house after reporting him to the authorities because she knew he was a big friend of Albert Rizzo.

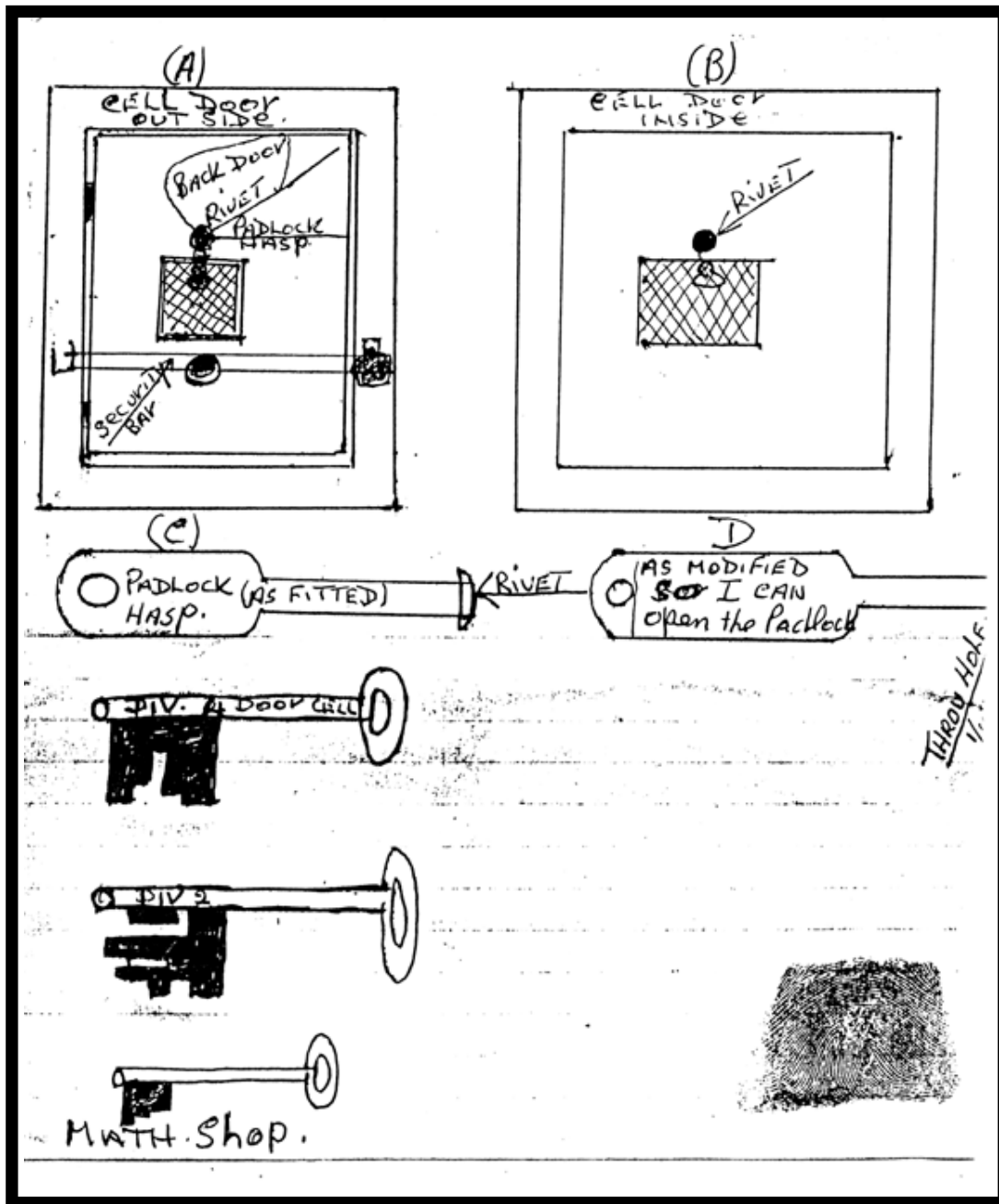
In fact many people from the Housing Department and even soldiers had gone near Bartolo's house to try to throw him out. That's how much this Dolly had power during those days.

When Bartolo came back from England (the first time) he was living in a furnished flat paying around Lm40 a month in Testaferrata Street, Msida. Then he moved to Ta'Giorni where he was paying around Lm35 a month.

Ms Dolly Dimech had even tried to nail Albert Rizzo in court during Louis Bartolo's jury. She had testified that on the day il-Fusellu was shot, Albert Rizzo was present and that he might have shot il-Fusellu himself. She had said that she had recognised Rizzo because of the scar he has on his face.

The court then confronted the two and following the confirmation that Rizzo had no scar on his face, Dolly, was saying that she never knew Albert, the same Albert who had helped her remove her belongings from home when she was changing residence.

"You do not know I am Albert Rizzo, you do not know I train for the marathon in front of your house, you do not know that many people even got a T-shirt with my face on. And



The officer (Anthony Mifsud) arrested had nothing to do with our escape. I swear it on God and all my family, that God strikes them dead

you don't remember that when you arranged for a residence for Louis Bartolo you told him in my presence about how he could tamper with the electricity."

Meanwhile during his prison escape, Louis Bartolo had written to various officials which included the then Police Commissioner Dr Lawrence Pullicino and MP's from both sides from the House.

"The officer (Anthony Mifsud) arrested had nothing to do with our escape. I swear it on God and all my family, that God strikes them dead. He is innocent and has been framed and probably beaten to sign such a statement. He said that he left my cell door open, if this so;

a. The door should have been checked by a warrant officer and why wasn't it reported opened? And why had this door not been double-checked?

b. If it was left open, why did my door need to be repaired? - Check who repaired my cell door.

c. Why wasn't anything

mentioned in court, regarding the trap door on my cell as this was the master key of my escape and from this it can be proved that the officer probably locked my cell. Why damage the door if it was left open? Maybe one day the keys I made will appear.

d. Habib (the Arab) had his cell locked according to the statement made by the framed officer. And it was. Believe me, also mine was properly locked, and this is how I did it;-

As soon as I had confirmation from Habib's organisation, that a letter will provide all the money needed, that is the price that had been arranged between Ronnie Theuma and myself, I started to observe and memorise the main large padlock keys to the cells. First I produced one key made of wood, I tried this while I was in Division 4 cell, number 110 next to the killer (Frank) cell, this broke inside the padlock (this cell was used as a wash-room). As my escape did not happen

while I was in Division 4, however I had already made a key to most padlocks in this division. I was moved from Division 4 to Division 2 for more security. As soon as I moved there on the first floor Habib was next to my cell. I knew that the Arabs must have made contact with Theuma, this was later confirmed by the Arabs on the radio. He also left us working together in the carpentry shop where there are most of the tools needed to make such keys. Once again I started to watch and memorise the key needed in division 2. I had never seen this type of key before and I knew it was going to be hard to produce one under prison circumstances. I tried to give specifications to get it made, but without success. But I have a very strong will, and where there is a will there is a way. I did not want to run away from justice, but only from vengeance, cruelty and the total lack of human rights. I had one of three options; do myself in, kill someone, or

escape. So you can understand my readiness to jump the wall.

After so many attempts I made the main key. I did not have any help from the police officers or prison guards. I had also made a key for the mat making shops. This was quite easy, as inside the carpentry shop where all the tools are is a padlock which fits the mat making shop. Check it. Although the two keys needed were done there were still many problems, such as how I was going to open my cell from the inside (refer to diagram on how it was done).

As diagram (Fig.D) illustrates: This part was to get inside the prison as it is standard part for the trap door. I got one and drilled a 1/16 hole so I could pass a thread. Two prisoners witnessed this drilling inside the carpentry shop, they asked me why I was doing this, and I told them for a little mouse so he could go round and round. One was Bonavia from Bormla, the other one "Ic-Caqwes". Both worked with me in the carpentry shop.

On the eve of my escape that is the 9 June 1982, as soon as the prison guards opened the doors, (this always occurred at 7.45pm) I went behind my door cell which was open. The rivet (Figure E) was already cut off, I pulled of the original padlock hasp and fitted the modified hasp (Fig. D) and placed a small nail as a split pin inside the 1/16 hole. I was properly locked up at 8pm. But I was not double-checked as usual. At 8.30pm. from inside my cell all I had to do was remove the nail I placed at the end of the hasp and waited for the lights to go off. I pushed through the mesh wire on the trap door with bits of clothing to prevent noise when I lowered the hasp (Fig.D) complete with padlock and opened it. I turned the security bar as shown in Fig A, about 10.15 degrees just enough to squeeze through. Then I pushed back the hasp complete with padlock and the mesh door and replaced the nail in the hole (Fig. D) and re-locked my cell door. I opened Habib's cell. The rest you all know. I am also sending the diagrams of keys but not to specifications.

One must also note that the Arabs were instructed to go by two phone boxes outside St Luke's hospital every Wednesday and Sunday between 7pm and 7.05pm. In case of urgency we were to use phone no 511925 only between the hours of 10pm to 12pm Ronnie Theuma gave these instructions.

Continues next week