

TALES OF THE RIVERMAN 101

Some things are just not worth it, but sometimes people end up doing silly things on the “spur of the moment”.



It appeared to be like that the night a group of young men went to dine in a restaurant in the south side of the city, not too far from the river. They thought that they were smart and tonight, they would run out the restaurant without paying the bill.

Now the last thing you want to do if the police are looking for you, is draw attention to yourself, but this “runner” was no doubt an example of a “spur of the moment”, without really thinking.

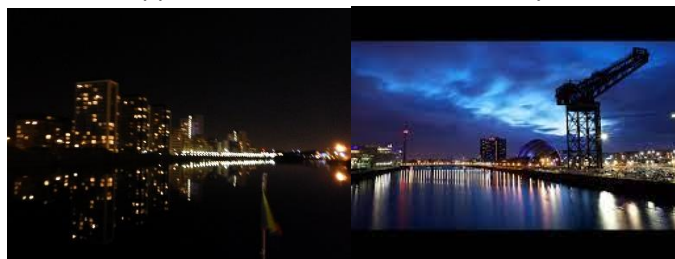
Luck was not with the group that night, for as they upended tables and chairs and ran towards the door, they were followed, hard on their heels, by another group, waiters and chefs waving all sorts of kitchen utensils, who had guessed what was going down. The far-sighted restaurateur had also contacted the police and as the group ran out of the door, police were at that precise moment, getting out of vehicles that had just drawn up.



All but one of the group of youths realised this was a “fair cop”. The one youth punched a police officer, booted another, then hoofed it down a side street towards the river, pursued by some of Glasgow’s finest like an angry swarm of bees.



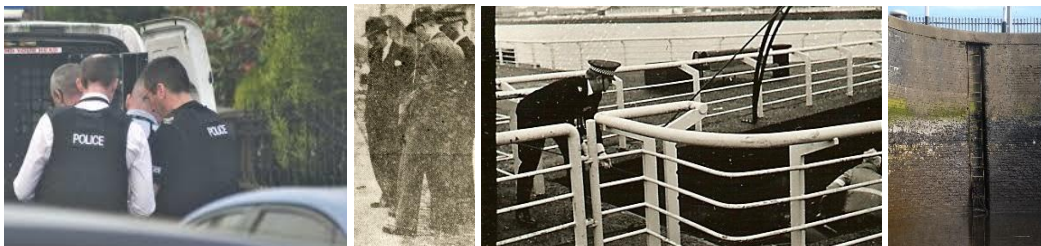
When the youth reached the Clyde, he jumped off the quay wall straight into the river and started swimming strongly towards the opposite north bank. River visibility is bad at night.



The river was fairly wide at this point, but the youth was really determined that the police would not catch him. Alas, obvious from what had already happened, this was not his lucky night, and police were now on the north bank watching his swimming efforts. The youth had almost reached the bank so a police officer climbed over the railing and positioned himself at the top of a set of ladders, yelling encouragement to the youth. On hearing and seeing the police officer, the startled youth turned away from the quay wall, and safety, and started heading diagonally across and up river. He was certainly determined not to be caught. It had all happened so quickly and the youth's actions had been so unexpected, that a boat hadn't been requested. Sadly, he could not keep going, and the currents, the cold, and the exertion took its toll. He sunk as the call for a boat went out.



I arrived on the scene, and after speaking with officers on both sides of the river to get a cross referenced position, I quickly recovered the youth's body, but he was sadly beyond help. Such had been the manner of the incident, and as the members of the arrested group were well known the police, CID, and Crime Squad officers showed great interest and arrived bearing photographs. The youth I had recovered, had short red hair, whereas the youth in the photographs had long fair hair, but it was still obvious that this was the same person. I later learned that the young man was wanted for murder, possibly multiple murders, and this, no doubt, was why he had cut and dyed his hair in his determination not to be captured.



Why, oh why, did he decide to do a runner out of the restaurant? Why did he put himself into a position where he could be caught, for the sake of a few pounds, and what he no doubt thought was a laugh? Why did he head for the river (he was a local and knew it was there) and why did he turn back when he realised (literally) that there was no other way out? A "spur of the moment" reaction?