

## **Chumbawamba**

# **"The Birmingham Six"**

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Birmingham, 1974, there occurred a bloody murder  
Twenty-one people killed by bombs, Britain reeled in  
horror  
Within three hours the British State found the first  
available scapegoats--  
Five Irish men bound for Belfast, about to board the  
boat  
And this is their story, very sad, but true  
Of how six men were falsely imprisoned for something  
they didn't do  
And if any should say, "British justice is the very best in  
the world"  
Tell them, "Well of course it is, for the vested interests  
it serves"  
The men were taken to Morkham to be tested for  
explosives  
Tests which have since proved ambiguous but were at  
the time held as conclusive  
One scientist's word was sufficient to condemn the  
Irish men  
Like vultures the police moved in to begin  
interrogations  
In the circumstances how well do you think the men's  
rights were observed?  
The cops thought they had the bombers; do you think  
they kept their judgement reserved?  
Does 'innocent till proven guilty' have any meaning at  
all  
When you're alone in a police house surrounded by  
cops being kicked around like a ball  
In a dark windowless room half a dozen detectives  
were waiting  
Billy Power was thrown in, the serious questions about  
to begin  
He was kicked and hit and punched from all sides,  
spread-eagled against the wall  
They kicked him and hit him again, a voice from the  
dark said, "Stretch his balls"  
Soon after, poor Billy surrendered, screamed, "I'll tell  
you anything you want me to say"  
Sat in his own excrement, he could hardly speak he  
remained in a daze

Whilst cops compiled his statement of how he planted  
the bombs  
They threatened him with the treatment again so Billy  
signed a confession  
Thursday night became Friday night, the five men were  
took back to Birmingham  
The threats and the violence continued--a taste of what  
was to come  
Deprived of food and sleep, all part of procedure to  
break the men  
Johnny Walker blacked out twice; they untied his hands  
while he signed his confession  
And Richard McIlkenny was threatened with a gun  
The cop said it was OK to shoot him, that the home  
officer'd given permission  
The cop asked him if he was going to sign, put the gun  
against his head  
Playing Russian roulette with a blank; when he banged  
McIlkenny thought he was dead  
Hugh Callaghan, a sixth man, was picked up in Berm  
and tortured  
He, too, hadn't done it but they made him sign a  
confession to mass murder  
Six men kept in isolation no contact with each other  
And it weren't until Monday morning that they each got  
a duty solicitor  
Still separate each unbuttoned his shirt to show how  
he'd been beaten up  
The solicitors, filling in legal aid forms, said there  
wasn't time and refused to look  
The only obvious injury, Johnny Walker's black eye in  
court that day  
When he tried to unbotton his shirt all the majistrates  
said, "Let's take him away"  
Leland workers staged a walkout, their banners read  
"Hang the IRA"  
The labor government empowered at the time rushed  
through the PTA  
In their war on the Irish people the British wanted  
vengeance  
Despite glaring omissions in the so-called confessions  
the six men hadn't a chance  
The judge dismissed their claims, said it would've  
meant there'd been a conspiracy  
Between fifteen officers from two different forces, as if  
it was an impossibility  
The police in fact became heroes, got their promotion  
and victory medals  
The six men got life imprisonment and fifteen years on  
they're still in jail  
The men protested their innocence but it fell mainly on

deaf ears  
They wanted to bring the policemen to trial, the appeal  
took seven years  
Lord Denning dismissed their case out of hand, saying  
"These actions cannot go on"  
What he really meant was the State machine could  
never admit it's done wrong  
Another six years, another appeal, another set of  
judiciary  
To uphold the original convictions as safe and  
satisfactory  
For if it ever gets out that the State judges wrong, well  
what would people say?  
We'd say, "We know who are real enemies are now",  
and we'd form our own IRA  
Oh let me tell a story, very sad, but true  
Of how six men were falsely imprisoned for something  
they didn't do  
And if any should say, "British justice is the very best in  
the world"  
Tell them, "Well of course it is, for the vested interests  
it serves"  
For as long as we remain ignorant they'll fight their war  
against Ireland  
For as long as we remain silent they'll imprison any  
they want  
For as long as we keep our eyes shut they'll continue to  
contain us  
For as long as we remain passive they'll trample us into  
the dust  
Hugh Callaghan, Patrick Hill, Richard McIlkenny, Johnny  
Walker, Gerry Hunter, and Billy Power  
Still fighting for their freedom fifteen long years on  
Their spirits shall remain when our State is dead  
When our State is dead  
When our State is dead and gone

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