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Prison escape bid ended in a beating

THE Rhondda man held in a Spanish/Moroccan gaol on a charge of drug smuggling says he has been beaten up by prison warders.

In a letter to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Jones of Ton Pentre, Alan Jones has written that he was one of 12 Europeans who tried to escape from Cueta Gaol on the Moroccan coast.

The attempt failed and he was forced against a wall and beaten up by prison guards holding rifles and machine guns.

Since then he has been transferred to Cordoba prison on the Spanish mainland.

Alan Jones, aged 36, was arrested on July 11 for allegedly trying to smuggle 23 kilos (over 60lbs) of hashish

over the Spanish Border.

He says he is innocent and the drug was planted on him.

He was originally put in Cueta prison from where the escape attempt was made.

In a letter to his parents dated October 13, he said they tried to escape because of the conditions in the prison and because of the violence used on them by warders.

"It's the God's honest truth," he wrote.

"On the night we tried to escape, I was forced up against a wall in the exercise yard by guards with rifles and machine guns. Because I have plenty of meat on me and looked strong enough, they beat the hell out of me from head to foot.

"I was black and blue from

the clubs and rifle butts and one of them had a chain with a padlock on the end."

He thinks he suffered either a broken or cracked rib as a result of the assault, but was not allowed to see either the British Consul or a doctor.

Since he has been moved to Cordoba, he has been better off, he says, and his health has improved.

But no date has been set for a trial and according to Release, the London-based welfare organisation, it could be a year before a date is set.

Meanwhile, his parents back in Wyndham Street, Ton

By CERI JONES

Pentre, can do little but sit and wait... and worry.

Said Mr. Jones, a retired schoolmaster, "I'm concerned about his being beaten up. I don't think that's on. After all, they are human beings."

They are also concerned that their letters, including international money orders, have not got through although he situation seems to have improved since Alan was moved to Cordoba.

Alan wrote that in Cueta prisonery had money and clothes stolen from them by warders and other prisoners. Alan's two brothers, Nor-

man, who works at Lewis Merthyr Colliery as a ventilation officer, and Phillip, a civil servant, have both been keeping in touch with the Foreign Office. They and their parents have contacted Mr. Alec Jones, Rhondda's M.P. for help.

Mr. Jones told them that the vice-consul in Seville had been to see Alan and that Alan had picked a lawyer from a list to defend him.

What they would really like to do is to go and see their son but it is financially impossible.

"I know we will be allowed to see him but we would have to get the money to go out there," said Mrs. Beryl Jones.

But even then, her son Norman pointed out, they would

probably be able to see him for only an hour and then have to come back.

"It's just a question of patience," said Mr. Jones.

A spokesman for Release said on Tuesday that innocent or guilty, Alan Jones would almost certainly be found guilty by the Spanish Courts and would probably have to face a sentence of eight years. (In practice, it is likely to be less because of remission).

Prison life in mainland Spain, he said, was not too bad, as long as prisoners minded their p's and q's.

"If I had a choice I would rather do a couple of years there than in a heavy English prison. But if he causes any trouble then he will have a very rough time indeed."



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