**Name**: James Murray

**Occupation**: Confectioner / Farmer (possibly also spy?)

**Home**: Withy Grove

**Date**: April 6th, 1822

**Source**: Redford v Birley, 295-308

**Summary**: Spotted spying (along with John Shawcross) at White Moss on August 15th, beaten and threatened by drillers, who made him promise to take part in ‘no more constabling’. Following day, was hissed by crowds passing his house. Felt that ‘it was like a civil war’.

**Done by**: RM

*James Murray sworn; examined by Mr. Serjeant Hullock.*

Q. In what part of Manchester do you live?

A. In Withy Grove.

Q. Do you remember going to White Moss, on the morning of the 15th. August, 1819?

A. I do.

Q. At what time of the morning did you set off from Manchester?

A. About one o'clock.

Q. Who accompanied you thither?

A. John Shawcross.

Q. What distance is White Moss from Manchester?

A. About five miles.

Q. At what time did you get near to the spot?

A. About three o'clock.

Q. Before you reached the place, had you heard music or shouting?

A. I heard a continual shouting thereabouts; all the way on the road.

Q. Did you see the persons from whom these shouts proceeded?

A. I saw some of them.

Q. When you got near the White Moss, did you see a number of persons together?

A. Yes.

Q. Was it daylight then?

A. Just break of day.

Q. About what number might be collected there?

A. There might be from 600 to 800.

Q. How was you directed to the spot?

A. By the shouts; we followed the sound as well as we could.

Q. You went in the direction of the noise?

A. We did.

Q. Was it in an inclosure, on a field, where the persons were collected?

A. The people were collected on the Moss.

Q. How long was it, before you could ascertain their numbers?

A. I went close to them.

Q. Shawcross being in your company?

A. Yes.

Q. Were they in one body or separate bodies?

A. Divided and separate; but so close that they appeared one body; the next party to me was a separate body.

Q. Could you ascertain in what way they were employing them-selves?

A. They were drilling.

Q. Did you hear any word or words given, that you call drilling?

A. I heard them say, “wheel,” “halt,” “march,”' stand at ease,” and every word given from a drill ground, as far as I have heard—as far as I have been at a drill.

Q. From your observation, and what you heard, were they pursuing the same course, as is adopted in the case of drilling recruits?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you see the parties unite, or did they continue in separate divisions?

A. They continued in separate divisions.

Q. How long did you continue there, before any thing occurred worth notice?

A. Not many minutes.

Q. What then took place?

A. They began to halt the squads, and shout ”spies."

Q. Did you stand still or move away?

A. I began to retreat; I did not like the place very well then.

Q. Was the word “spy” uttered by one man, or by several persons?

A. Several shouted “spies", and “constables."

Q. These words induced you to retreat?

A. Yes.

Q. Did any person follow you, or move towards you?

A. Yes.

Q. How many?

A. I should think nigh a hundred.

Q. Was you walking away or running away?

A. Walking away.

Q. What became of Shawcross?

A. I walked quicker than him, and he was between me and them.

Q. Did these hundred people walk or run after you?

A. They ran; part might walk.

Q. Did they shout to you; did they say any thing?

A. I heard several voices from the main body, shout “murder them, kill them, damn them, kill them."

Q. Those who did not move?

A. Those who did not move.

Q. They shouted these words?

A. Yes; "kill them, murder them; damn them, murder them."

Q. Was you overtaken by these persons?

A. Yes.

Q. About what number of men overtook you?

A. I cannot say: a great number. They overtook Shawcross first, and began to abuse him; and then they came to me.

Q. Were there several came to you?

A. From thirty to fifty.

Q. Did they say any thing when they got up to you?

A. They began to throw stones and clods; they were a little timid at first, but then they began flourishing with sticks, and came round me.

Q. Some were armed with sticks, and others had nothing?

A. Nothing.

Q. Before they reached you, they threw stones or clods; did either of those stones or clods strike you?

A. They did.

Q. Having got to you, and surrounded you in the way you mentioned, what was the nature of their operations?

A. They all did their best to kill me.

Q. Tell us what they did?

A. Those that had sticks hit as hard as they could; those who, had not, kicked me hard runbar kicks, as they say in our country and struck with their fists.

Q. Did they confine their strokes and blows inflicted on you to any part of your body, or were they very impartial, and laid them on all over you?

A. All over me.

Q. Did they bring you to the ground by the effect of those blows?

A. They did; frequently.

Q. Did you make any outcry?

A. Yes, I did.

A. As much as you could?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. During the time this outrage was going on, did they use any expressions too?

A. The first thing I heard said was, "Mun us”(must we) "kill him out and out, and put him in the pit, or let him go."

Q. "Was there any pit thereabouts?

A. Yes; I believe there was.

Q. This is what you heard them say?

A. This is what I heard them say. One man said, "I think he has had enough; if he has any more he will die."

Q. I believe that was your own opinion?

A. It was, a good while before that.

Q. Did you continue sensible throughput this?

A. Not all the time; I lost my recollection a few minutes.

Q. You lost your recollection a few minutes?

A. It might be a few minutes; I cannot say how long.

Q. Upon one of them saying he thought you had enough, did they cease?

A. They did.

A. Did they impose any condition upon you before they, permitted you to go away?

A. They did.

Q. What did they make you do?

A. They gathered together; what they said I did not hear. One stepped out from among the body, and. said “Will you go down on your knees and swear never to be a King’s man again nor own the name of a King, nor go a constabling?

Q. What did you say?

A. I consented, to save my life.

Q. Did they say that any thing should be done to you, if you did not consent?

A. No; but I conceived that if I did not consent I should he murdered.

Q. Was any form adopted to make it more solemn?

A. They formed all round with their sticks, and I was in the centre.

Q. Your's was “Liberty or Death"?

A. I believe it was.

Q. What did you say?

A. They surrounded me with their sticks, and I was in the centre, and one came forward to repeat what I had to say?

Q. There was a person came forward?

A. There was; he administered these words—

Q. Was you standing at the time?

A. I was.

Q. Did you repeat after him?

A. I did.

Q. Can you tell us how he began?

A. He said, "Kneel down, first;” and I did so: then he said, “you swear"—

Q. Did he say “you, James Murray"?

A. No; he did not say my name; he said “you swear never to be a King's man again, nor own the name of a King, nor go a constabling; I will have no more constabling".

Q. Well; this oath was administered to you during the time you was on your knees?

A. Yes.

Q. After you had finished the oath, what became of them?

A. They went away, and I got up; two of them afterwards struck me with their sticks. I went to Middleton.

Q. How far from Middleton was you?

A. I cannot say; half a mile perhaps; if the house had been a hundred yards further I could not have reached it

Q. You experienced great difficulty in reaching the house?

A. I did.

Q. How did you get to Manchester?

A. I sent for a chaise.

Q. You could not get to Manchester without?

A. No; I could not get to the chaise or walk. I was carried down stairs.

Q. You first went to a friend?

A. I went to a friend.

Q. I believe you received injuries in various parts of your person?

A. Yes.

Q. Was any part of your person free from bruises and strokes?

A. No; there was no part of my person that was not black. I looked at the bottoms of my feet and they were black.

Q. You got home?

A. Yes.

Q. Was you obliged to go to bed immediately?

A. Yes.

Q. Was you able to rise at the usual hour on the following morning?

A. I was confined to my bed; I could not get out without being helped out.

Q. In the course of Monday, was your attention excited by any noise in the street?

A. I heard a bugle and drum, and then I began to be very much alarmed.

Q. You heard the sound of a drum and bugle?

A. Yes.

Q. Did that sound approach your house?

A. It came nearer.

Q. Was you lifted out of your bed?

A. Yes.

Q. Was you carried from your bed to the window, to enable you to look out?

A. Yes.

Q. Have the goodness to state what you saw in the street?

A. At the front of the column—

Q. Was there a column?

A. A solid body of people; in the front of the column they were about eight or ten abreast; one man called "halt," on which the bugle sounded, and they all halted.

Q. The whole party?

A. They did.

Q. From the situation you were in, could you distinguish the length of the column?

A. I saw it pass afterwards.

Q. What took place then?

A. They gathered together, and had some little conversation; then they cried " march” the bugle sounded, and they went away.

Q. Was there any mark of approbation or disapprobation?

A. Not till they marched away.

Q. What, then took place?

A. They hissed, and pointed at the window.

Q. Are you quite sure, that when they hissed they looked at your house?

A. I am quite sure.

Q. Did they point to the house?

A. They did—not all.

Q. But some did?

A. They did.

Q. What was the size of this column—what number were there?

A. From 8,000 to 10,000; they were twenty minutes passing, eight or ten abreast.

Q. About what time of the day was this?

A. Between eleven and twelve.

Q. Had they any banners?

A. A good many; as I conceived, one at the head of every division.

Q. Can you tell us any thing that was written on them?

A. I cannot say; I paid more attention to the men and the way in which they marched.

Q. Did they march with regularity and order?

A. They did; I have seen a regiment march worse.

Q. Had they sticks?

A. Many with sticks.

Q. With which they walked?

A. They had them in their hands; I took as much notice as lay in my power.

Q. Was that the only column you saw pass your house that day?

A. No.

Q. How soon was your attention directed by similar sounds?

A. In about an hour; between twelve and one.

Q. What occurred?

A. I heard music and drums; I was again carried to the window.

Q. State what you observed then?

A. The whole street was as full as it could be of the mob, and a band of music was preceding an open carriage.

Q. Was the band of music at the head of the column?

A. There were thousands before the music.

Q. Marching with regularity, or merely a mob?

A. Merely a mob.

Q. Like all other mobs, consisting of men, women, and children.

A. There were.

Q. What did this open carriage contain?

A. Hunt was there for one; Johnson was there for another.

Q. He is a brush maker?

A. I know him very well; he has a house higher-up than mine.

Q. Who else?

A. The other I did not know.

Q. You did not know the lady?

A. No.

Q. She was dressed in white?

A. She was very smart.

Q. Was she a young lady?

A. Yes.

Q. Any thing in her hand?

A. A banner.

Q. Placed by herself?

A. In the dickey.

Q. How many horses?

A. Two.

Q. Or was it drawn by other animals?

A. I did not take much notice of the horses.

Q. Did they pursue their course?

A. They went as slow as they could, to call it moving; they

pointed at my house.

Q. They pointed at your house?

A. Hunt and Johnson looked up at the window, and the others hissed and hooted tremendously, and groaned so, that it might be heard a long way.

Q. He pulled off his hat to you?

A. He was not so polite.

Q. They hissed and groaned?

A. They did.

Q. Did the hissing, hooting, and groaning, pervade the whole line?

A. It did, as far as I saw; and after they had hooted, they pointed to the carriage, and clapped and shouted, and then hissed and groaned; my judgment was, they considered that he was to be their deliverer.

Q. They then shouted and pointed towards Hunt, and after that hissed again?

A. They did.

Q. Treating you and Mr. Hunt rather differently?

A. A good deal.

Q. From the observations you made at the time, did Hunt appear to have influence and command over the people?

A. He did not seem to have command or give directions; he rather stood.

Q. Of what number might this column be composed?

A. The whole street was full, but it was sooner gone than the other, it was a mere mob.

Q. You say that Johnson resides a little above your place?

A. Yes.

Q. At Smedley Cottage?

A. He resides there, but his shop is in Shude Hill.

Q. On going from Smedley Cottage to the field, is your house the nearest way?

A. No.

Q. Is it more circuitous?

A. It is not so good a road; not so broad.

Q. But is it further about?

A. It is, 600 or 700 yards.

Q. And not so good a road?

A. The streets are not so broad as the nearest way.

Q. Was you confined in your bed the remaining part of the day?

A. Yes.

Q. You know no more about the meeting?

A. No.

*Cross-examined by Mr. Evans*.

Q. Pray, Murray, what are you?

A. A confectioner by trade.

Q. Is that the only trade you follow?

A. No; I am a farmer now, as well.

Q. Are you well acquainted with the police officers of Manchester?

A. Yes.

Q. Pray what might induce you to go to this place?

A. The alarming state of the country, which I conceived it to be in.

Q. Will you swear that you was led by the shouts to White Moss?

A. I will swear they directed us, for I did not know the way before.

Q. Will you swear that no man told you the way?

A. I asked no man the way.

Q. Who went with you?

A. Shawcross, Rymer, and Rymer's son.

Q. Did you communicate to any person, your intention?

A. Certainly.

Q. Who?

A. I asked Rymer and Shawcross.

Q. To any body else?

A. I believe Shawcross asked me to ask Nadin to go.

Q. As you was in no public situation, what good could your going there do?

A. I went to see whether the account I had heard was true, as to drilling, and to satisfy myself as to the state of the country.

Q. Am I to understand, you had no other object but curiosity?

*Mr. Serjeant Cross*.—He did not say his object was curiosity.

*Mr. Evans*.—I beg, Mr. Serjeant Cross, I may not be interrupted.

Q. Had you no other object than curiosity?

A. I had an object respecting drilling, and what I had heard of pikes and drilling. I conceived it very like a civil war.

Q. Is that an answer to my question, pikes and drilling? What was your object?

A. I was very unhappy several weeks prior to this day; if I am capable of giving you a clear answer, I will. In consequence of drilling and collecting men, I conceived the country was in a very terrifying state, and I went to see whether there was any truth in it.

Q. Then you went from mere curiosity?

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—He had an object beyond that; he had heard accounts of pikes and drillings, and he tells you he was in fear of a civil war.

Q. Then your fear led you?

A. Yes j my fear of a very serious disturbance.

Q. Was not your object to give information?

A. It was not.

Q. What did you get for this?

A. Nothing.

*Mr. Serjeant Hullock*.—He got almost murdered.

Q. You got nothing?

A. There was a subscription for the men who were hurt on this day, and there were two doctors who attended me, and they paid them.

Q. The committee?

A. I was known to some who were in the committee.

Q. There was a subscription to give to the people who had suffered?

A. Yes; there was one lady lost her husband, and several were very much hurt.

Q. When you went to the Moss, somebody began to cry out "spy", and you began to run away?

A. They did.

Q. You appear a man of great consideration, how did they know your house?

A. I have lived there thirty years; I keep a wholesale confectioner's shop, and people from the country used to buy gingerbread of late; I had a good deal of business before this job.

Q. How did these people, who came from the country, know your house?

A. It was talked of that Murray, the gingerbread baker, had been, among them.

Q. You said they were timid at first?

A. They did not close all at once.

Q. You stated that you was insensible for some time, that you was beaten so severely that your life was despaired of?

A. I despaired of it.

Q. But you can state all the forms you went through?

A. I could know nothing while I was insensible, but afterwards I could.

Q. How long did this transaction take place?

A. From the beatings near ten minutes.

Q. Can you now take oh yourself to swear, that, notwithstanding you was beaten by fifty men, notwithstanding you was insensible, you can accurately describe what took place?

A. I do positively swear, on my oath.

Q. On Monday you was so ill, that you was obliged to lay in your bed?

A. I was.

Q. But still you could not avoid getting to the window to see the people coming?

A: I requested to be moved to the window.

Q. And then afterwards you asked them again; and you have described this mob of boys correctly?

A. Yes.

*Re-examined by Mr. Serjeant Hullock*

Q. Was the sole cause of your going to the place, the apprehensions of danger which existed in your mind, by the reports you had heard of the state of the country?

A. It was.

Q. Was your sole purpose to ascertain how far there were grounds for such reports?

A. It was.

Q. How long had these apprehensions of danger existed?

A. From the first time I saw the placard of the 9th.

Q. Did that placard create this sensation in your mind?

A. It did; and then being followed up by-the drilling reports.

Q. Were these apprehensions-confirmed by; what you saw and felt on the morning of the 15th?

A. They were.

Q. Was your name mentioned by any of the persons on the ground at White Moss?

A. It was; "Murray," I heard distinctly.

Q. In what way; with any epithet?

A. I heard "gingerbread Murray," more than once.

Q. In which article you deal?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know whether there were any Manchester people in the mob who came opposite your house?

A. I do not know that there were.

Q. Did your trade experience any diminution after the 16th. August?

A. It did.

Q. Was it considerable?

A. It principally went away; from six days work my men were reduced to two.