

# The Broadwater Farm Uprising

On 28 September 1985 mother of eight, Cherry Groce, was shot and paralysed by police officers in Brixton, South London. This incident led to an outcry from Black communities across the UK, and resulted in the second 'uprising' in Brixton in 4 years. The disturbances lasted for almost 48 hours.

On the same evening in Tottenham North London, Roger Scott, a member of the Broadwater Farm Youth Association, was arrested on the Broadwater Farm estate for allegedly breaking and entering into the Broadwater Farm Social Club, which was actually run by the BWF Youth Association. The arrest was a violent one, those who witnessed it protested at the manner in which Roger was manhandled by several police officers. As the chair of the Youth Association had been in a meeting where Roger Scott been present throughout, there was a clear consensus among the Youth Association membership that the police had arrested the wrong person. They sent a delegation to Tottenham Police Station to make them aware of their concerns.

The concerns of those attending the station was immediately dismissed by the station officers who then employed strong arm tactics to clear the youths from the station lobby. Again using unnecessarily brutal force on youths and young women. At the end of the melee 4 youths and 1 young woman had been arrested and charged with assaults and obstruction of the police. Those charged, and later acquitted, included Clasford Stirling (MBE) the Vice Chair of the Youth Association and Diane Anderson, daughter of the Chair of Broadwater Farm Youth Association, Dolly Kiffin.

Exactly one week later, 5 October 1985, at around 1pm, Floyd Jarrett a senior member of the Youth Association was stopped by police officers whilst driving along Roseberry Avenue in Tottenham. Initially he was told that he was being stopped because the tax disc on his BMW was out of date. After a prolonged search of his vehicle the attending officers, PC Casey and PC Allen, decided that the VIN number on the chassis of the car had been tampered with and arrested him for theft of motor vehicle and assault on police, claiming that he had thrown two punches at the officers. He was taken to Tottenham police station charged with the two offences. He was later to be acquitted on all counts.

Approximately four hours into his detention DC Mike Randall, who was officially off-duty, and three other officers, Sergeant Parsons, PC Casey, & PC Allan, took the decision to search the address of Floyd's family home. They took Jarrett's keys from his possessions without signing for them. Then they attended and entered the family premises using the Jarrett's keys without knocking the door or ringing the bell to inform the occupants of their presence.

Once in the Jarrett household they were challenged by his sister, Patricia Jarrett, as to their right to enter the family home without a search warrant. A warrant was still not produced and despite the family's protestations the four officers continued with the unlawful search of the premises.

Floyd's mother, Cynthia Jarrett, also challenged the police's right to search her property as Floyd was no longer residing there. During the search it is alleged that DC Randall shoved Mrs Jarrett to the floor. Patricia Jarrett later testified during the inquest that DC Randall had shoved her mother to the floor, stepped over her body and continued with his search. At the point that Patricia demanded that she be allowed to administer her mother her medication and that the

police call for ambulance. Randle retorted that Cynthia was 'play acting' and did not require medical attention.

The officers carried on their unlawful search whilst Cynthia Jarrett was suffering a heartache that was to kill her. Records later showed that Randall left the premises and communicated with the police station that the raid had gone without incident.

Patricia Jarrett was eventually able to call for an ambulance. The ambulance arrived at 18.11 and transported the unconscious Cynthia Jarrett to North Middlesex Hospital where she was declared dead on arrival at 18.35

Floyd Jarrett was released from police custody at 19.00. The police did not inform him of the raid on his mothers home, or of the fact that his mother had died!

On Sunday October 6 1985 a small crowd gathered outside of Tottenham Police station to demand that the officers involved were immediately suspended. Bernie Grant who at the time was the leader of Haringey council added his voice to the demands of the community. In a meeting with senior Met police officers and members of the Jarrett family, chaired by Deputy Assistant Commissioner Richard told the civic leader that he and his officers could neither discuss the 'incident' or suspend the officer because the investigation was now in the hands of the Police Complaints Authority (shades of August 2011 here?)

The PCA was the predecessor organisation to the IPCC. It did not conduct investigations, it commissioned officers from one force to investigate officers from other forces. It did not have the power to make issues sub-judice. Neither did it have the power to stop a force from implementing its own internal disciplinary actions.

The community's demand for immediate suspension was not a call for all the officers involved to be suspended. It was for suspension of DC Mike Randall, the officer that the family identified and blamed for Cynthia Jarrett's death. Randall was well known to the Black youths of the area. He had fast developed a reputation for being a racist who thought he was hard. He had allegedly told many youths that he was going to 'clean up' Tottenham single-handed, as a result he had earned himself the nickname of 'Sweeney' amongst the youths.

So when Randall appeared, grinning widely, from the windows of the police station during the impromptu demonstration it was seen as an incendiary action by some of the youths who then 'retaliated' by throwing 'missiles' at the windows of the police station. This then led to clashes with the police officers guarding the station. Stafford Scott a senior member of the BWF Youth Association made a decision to remove the protesters from the police station to avoid further clashes and possible arrests. To do this he called for a meeting at the BWF Youth Association centre later that afternoon.

Approximately 150 people, mainly youths attended the meeting. The unanimous decision of the meeting was to return to Tottenham Police station to reiterate their demand that the officers involved in the search be suspended until a full investigation had been conducted.

At approximately 18.45 the meeting ended and the youths began to make their way to the police station. On attempting to leave the estate the youths found that there had been a build up of the police presence in the area. There were several riot vans filled with officers from the Special Police Group (SPG) parked on the estate. This angered some of the youths who rushed to the riot vans, banging on the sides of the vans demanding that they withdrew from the estate as the presence was considered to be inflammatory.

The response from the police was immediate and emphatic, within moments the estate was swamped with hundreds of police officers in riot gear. At the Gifford Inquiry that followed, witnesses described the police as 'an invading force' that swept onto the estate dressed in full riot gear and with long truncheons drawn at the ready. They had certainly come prepared for business!

They entered the estate from every entrance, making a cacophony of noise by banging on their shields with the long truncheons and at the same time making loud monkey noises. Their behaviour was clearly designed to scare and intimidate. They yelled at the youths "Get back into your bloody hole! You're not leaving until we allow you too!" "Nigger Nigger Nigger! Oi Oi Oi!"

They then proceeded to block all of the exits from the estate, only allowing a few elderly white residents and their friends to leave. When a senior Youth Association member approached to challenge the police's authority to 'kettle' them and stop them from peacefully demonstrating, he was told to "Fuck off back with the rest of them!" "This isn't fucking Brixton you Black cunt, go on fuck off!"

The last few people who managed to get on the estate spoke about hundreds of police in vans on the estate periphery. There was also a rumour that the police had officers with dogs in Lordship Recreation Ground which bordered the estate.

The youths became enraged as the same police who had murdered a Black mother in her own home were now here to deny them their right to protest against this act. The same police were now here to deny them their right to demonstrate their anger! The youths now felt threatened by the menacing stance adopted by the police. It was the first time that they had ever been 'kettled' and they did not like it one bit. It only added to their anger!

The uprising began at 19.05 and was over by 01.00 the next morning.

In the violence that ensued 243 police officers were injured. 2 officers and 3 members of the media suffered gunshot wounds. 1 officer, PC Blakelock was killed.

## The police investigation

- Between 10 October 1985 and May 1986 the police raided 271 homes and arrested 362 people. 167 were charged with offences relating to the events of 6 October. Six of those were charged with the murder of Blakelock.
- Over 80% of those arrested were of African-Caribbean descent
- Those arrested were taken to 14 different stations across London, Tottenham police station was not used.
- 167 charged 195 released without charge
- Three men and three juveniles charged with Murder, Riot and Affray
- 3 charged with Riot
- 70 charged with Affray
- 20 charged with Threatening Behaviour
- 1 charged with Manufacture of Petrol Bombs
- 13 charged with Possessing Stolen Goods
- 8 charged with possessing an Offensive Weapon
- Seven charged with Theft
- Four charged with Arson
- 3 charged with Assault on police
- Remainder charges unrelated to 6 October

- 68 heard cases were held at the Old Bailey
- 19 pleaded Guilty
- 49 pleaded Not Guilty
- Of those pleading Not Guilty 26 were acquitted - no surprise as 37 of the 49 were charged on confessional evidence only,
- Most had been held for 2/3 days without access to solicitors, family or legal advice, incommunicado

## **December 1985**

Floyd Jarrett attends magistrates court on the theft and assault charges. Jarrett is acquitted and magistrates award costs against the police.

### **The policed investigation into the killing of PC Blakelock**

Det Ch Supt Melvin's was given the task of leading the investigation into the killing of PC Blakelock. Melvin's first problem was that there was no forensic evidence to go on. Senior officers did not allow the estate to be sealed off immediately after the attack, which meant the crime scene was not secured. Witnesses and those involved in the attack were able to leave the vicinity without even having to give the police their names. Objects that might have held fingerprints were not collected. Police did not enter onto the estate until 4 am, by which time much of the evidence had disappeared. Whatever remained was removed during the councils operation.

Melvin therefore resorted to arresting suspects – including juveniles, some of them regarded as vulnerable as they attended a local school for 'educationally subnormal children (ESN school) – holding them for days without access to lawyers or family. Of the 359 people arrested in connection with the inquiry in 1985 and 1986, just 94 were interviewed in the presence of a lawyer and many of the confessions that resulted – whether directly about the murder, or about having taken part in the rioting – were made before the lawyer was given access to the interviewee.

When people did confess to even a minor role in the rioting, such as throwing a few stones, they were charged with affray a serious offence for which many were to receive up to 4 years in prison. One resident told the 1986 Gifford inquiry into the rioting: "You would go to bed and just lie there, and you would think, are they going to come and kick my door, what's going to happen to my children? It was the horrible fear that you lived with day by day, knowing they could come and kick down your door and hold you for hours." Thus, argues Rose, in his book on the murder trial entitled 'A Climate of Fear', the police created, or at least intensified, a climate of fear in which witnesses were afraid to step forward.

DCS Melvin defended his methods in court by arguing that lawyers might wittingly or unwittingly pass information they had gleaned during interviews to other suspects. He said under cross-examination that, in his view, "the integrity of some firms of solicitors left a lot to be desired"; he said he believed solicitors were being retained by people who had an interest in learning what other suspects had said. The Crown prosecutor, Roy Amlot QC, told the murder trial that the police had one effective weapon, namely that suspects did not know who else had spoken to police and what they had said, and that "the use of that weapon by the police was legitimate and effective."

## **The Tottenham SIX**

Mark Pennant, aged 15, was arrested on **9 October**, and charged with murder on 11 October, the first person to be charged in connection with the killing. He was born in England to West Indian parents, and had been raised in the West Indies until the age of nine, after which he returned to the UK. He had learning difficulties and was attending a special school. He was arrested and handcuffed at school, and taken to Wood Green Police Station, where he was interviewed six times over the course of two days with a teacher in attendance. He said he had cut Blakelock and kicked him twice. He named Winston Silcott as the ringleader, and named others he said were involved, including a juvenile, Mark Lambie.

Jason Hill, a 13-year-old white boy who lived on Broadwater Farm, was seen looting from a store in the Tangmere block during the rioting, near where Blakelock was killed. He was arrested on **13 October** and taken to Leyton Police Station, where he was held for three days without access to a lawyer. He was reportedly kept in a very hot cell, which he said made sleeping and even breathing difficult. His clothes and shoes were removed for forensic tests, and he was interviewed wearing only underpants and a blanket, the latter of which by the third day of detention was stained with his own vomit. Hyacinth Moody of the Haringey Community Relations Council sat in as an "appropriate adult"; she was later criticized by the judge for having failed to intervene.

Over the course of several interviews, Hill told police that he had witnessed the attack, and named Silcott and others, including Mark Lambie. He described almost a ritualistic killing, and said Silcott – whom he called "Sticks" – had forced him to make his own "mark" on Blakelock with a sword. He described injuries to Blakelock's body that did not match the autopsy report.<sup>1</sup> After he had cut Blakelock, he said Silcott told him he was cool, and asked him what he had seen. Hill said he replied, "Nothing," and that Silcott said, "Well, you can go." He said the aim of the attack had been to decapitate Blakelock and put his head on a pole. In 1991 he told David Rose that, throughout the interview, the police were saying, "Go on, admit it, you had a stab," and "It was Sticks, wasn't it?" He said they threatened to keep him in the station for two weeks, and told him he would never see his family. He later told David Rose: "They could have told me it was Prince Charles and I would have said it was him."

Mark Lambie, aged 14, was the third juvenile to be charged with the murder. He was named by both Mark Pennant and Jason Hill, and was interviewed with his father and a solicitor present. Lambie admitted to having taken part in the rioting, but denied involvement in the murder. One witness said during the trial that he had seen Lambie force his way through the crowd to reach Blakelock, although the testimony was later discredited; the witness was caught in several lies and admitted he had offered evidence only to avoid a prison sentence.

### Winston Silcott

David Rose writes that a former detective inspector called the Blakelock investigation a "pre-scientific inquiry, it was all about how to get Winston Silcott convicted, not discovering who killed Keith Blakelock. By the time of the murder, the local police saw Silcott as the "biggest mafioso in Tottenham," running gangs of muggers and paying them in drugs, according to Rose's source

Silcott was 26 years old when he was arrested, the oldest of the six charged with murder. He was born in Tottenham in 1959; his parents, both Seventh-day Adventists, had arrived in England from Montserrat two years earlier. He told Rose that he had experienced racism throughout his entire upbringing, particularly from the police.

Known as "Sticks" locally, Silcott was living in the Martlesham block of the Broadwater Farm estate at the time of the riots and was running his greengrocer's shop in the Tangmere block, the block near the spot where Blakelock was killed. He told *The Observer* in 2004 that he had been in the Tangmere block on the night of the death, and had stopped someone throwing a scaffolding pole

through the window of his shop. Then a friend of his, Pam, had invited him to her apartment to keep him out of trouble. He told the newspaper: "And look, I'm on bail for a murder. I know I'm stupid, but I'm not that stupid. There were helicopters and police photographers everywhere. All I could think about was that I didn't want to lose my bail. He said he first learned of Blakelock's death when he heard cheering in the apartment he was staying in, in response to a news report about it.

He was arrested for the murder on 12 October 1985, six days after the riot; he was interviewed five times over 24 hours, Det Ch Supt Melvin asking the questions and Detective Inspector Maxwell Dingle taking the notes. During the first four interviews, he stayed mostly silent and refused to sign them, but during the fifth interview on 13 October, when Melvin said he knew Silcott had struck Blakelock with a machete or sword, his demeanour changed, according to the interview notes. The notes show him asking: "Who told you that?" When the detectives said they had witnesses, he reportedly said: "They are only kids. No one is going to believe them." The notes say he walked around the interview room with tears in his eyes, saying: "You cunts, you cunts," and "Jesus, Jesus," then: "You ain't got enough evidence. Those kids will never go to court. You wait and see. No one else will talk to you. You can't keep me away from them." The notes show him saying of the murder weapons: "You're too slow, man, they gone." He was at that point charged with murder, to which he reportedly responded: "They won't give evidence against me.

### Engin Raghip

Nineteen-year-old Engin Raghip, of Turkish-Cypriot descent, was arrested on 24 October after a friend mentioned his name to police, the only time anyone had linked him to the murder. During his trial, the court heard from an expert that Raghip was "in the middle of the mildly mentally handicapped range," although this testimony was withheld from the jury. His mental impairment became a key issue during his successful appeal in 1991 in *R v Raghip and others*, when the court accepted that it rendered his confession unsafe.

Rose writes that Raghip was born in England in 1958, ten years after his parents had emigrated from Cyprus. He left school at 15, illiterate, and by the time of the murder had two convictions, one for stealing cars and one for burglary. He had a common-law wife, Sharon Daly, with whom he had a two-year-old boy, and he worked occasionally as a mechanic. He had little connection with Broadwater Farm, though he lived nearby in Wood Green, and had gone to the Farm with two friends on the day of the rioting to watch, he said. One of those friends, John Broomfield, gave an interview to the *Daily Mirror* on 23 October, apparently boasting about his involvement in the rioting. He was arrested, and he implicated Raghip. Broomfield was later convicted of an unrelated murder.

At the time of Raghip's arrest he had been drinking and smoking cannabis for several days, had not slept or eaten properly, and his common-law wife had just left him, taking their son with her. He was held for two days without representation, first speaking to a duty solicitor on the third day, who said he had found Raghip distressed and disoriented. He was interviewed by Det Sgt van Thal and Det Insp John Kennedy ten times over a period of four days. He made several incriminating statements during the interviews, at first admitting he had thrown stones, then during the second interview saying he had seen the attack on Blakelock. During the third, he said he had spoken to Silcott about the murder, and that Silcott owned a hammer with a hook on one side. After the fifth interview, Rose writes, he was charged with affray, and during the sixth he described the attack on Blakelock: "It was like you see in a film, a helpless man with dogs on him. It was just like that, it was really quick." He did not sign this interview, Rose writes, and after it he vomited.

During a seventh interview the next day, he described noises he said Blakelock had made during the attack. During the eighth interview, he said he had armed himself that night with a broom handle,

and had tried to get close to what was happening to Blakelock, but there were too many people around him. He said: "I had a weapon when I was running toward the policeman, a broom handle." He said he might have kicked or hit him had he been able to "get in." Rose writes that he also offered the exact order in which Blakelock's attackers had launched the assault. He was held for another two days, released on bail, then charged with murder six weeks later, in December, under the doctrine of common purpose.

Mark Braithwaite

Mark was 18 when Blakelock was killed, a rapper and disc jockey living with his parents in Islington. He had a girlfriend who lived on Broadwater Farm, with whom he had a child. On **16 January 1986**, three months after the murder, his name was mentioned for the first time to detectives by a man they had arrested, Bernard Kinghorn. Kinghorn told them he had seen Braithwaite, whom he said he knew only by sight; stab Blakelock with a kitchen knife. Kinghorn later withdrew the allegation, telling the BBC three years later that it had been false.

Braithwaite was taken to Enfield Police Station and interviewed by Det Sgt Dermot McDermott and Detective Constable Colin Biggar. He was held for three days and was at first denied access to a lawyer, on the instruction of Det Ch Supt Melvin. He was interviewed eight times over the first two days, and with a lawyer present four times on the third day. During the first 30 hours of his detention he had nothing to eat, and said in court – as did several other suspects – that the heat in the cells was oppressive, making it difficult to breathe.

He at first denied being anywhere near the Farm, then during interview four said he had been there and had thrown stones, and during interview five said he had been at the Tangmere block, but had played no role in the murder. During interview six, he said he had hit Blakelock with an iron bar in the chest and leg. Rose writes that there were no such injuries on Blakelock's body. In a seventh interview, he said he had hit a police officer, but that it was not Blakelock. On the basis of this confession evidence, he was charged with murder.

### **The trial of the Tottenham SIX**

The trial was held in the Central Criminal Court in London, known as the Old Bailey, from January to March 1987.

Forty-nine men and youths were convicted of offences arising from the riots, out of 359 arrested and 159 charged, not counting the six murder defendants. The trial of the six – Silcott, Raghip and Braithwaite, the adults; and Pennant, Hill and Lambie, the youths – began in court number two of the Old Bailey on **14 January 1987**, and lasted 44 days. All the men were charged with murder, riot, and affray; Lambie was also charged with throwing petrol bombs.

The jury consisted of seven men and five women, including one Afro-Caribbean woman. They were not told that Silcott's had been out on bail for the murder of Anthony Smith when Blakelock was killed, or that he had subsequently been convicted of that murder. Silcott's barrister, Barbara Mills (1940–2011), a future Director of Public Prosecutions, decided that he should not take the stand in case it left him open to questioning about his previous convictions. The effort to avoid introducing the previous conviction meant the jury could not be told that Silcott had signed on for his bail – related to the Smith murder charge – at Tottenham police station at around 7 pm on the evening of Blakelock's death, when witnesses had supposedly placed him at a Broadwater Youth Association meeting, making inflammatory speeches against the police.

The press coverage of the trial included the publication on day two, by the *Sun*, of a notoriously violent-looking photograph of Silcott, one that "created a monster to stalk the nightmares of Middle

England," as journalist Kurt Barling put it. Silcott said he had been asleep in a police cell when it was taken; he said he was woken up, held in a corridor with his arms pinned against a wall and photographed, and that the expression on his face was one of fear, not violence. Its publication constituted "the most gross contempt," according to the judge at the trial, Sir Derek Hodgson (1917–2002), speaking to David Rose in 1992. No action was taken against the newspaper.<sup>[95]</sup>

The charges against the youths were dismissed by the judge because they had been detained without access to parents or a lawyer. Four armoured police vehicles waited in Tottenham as the jury deliberated for three days. They returned on **19 March** with a unanimous guilty verdict against Silcott, Raghip and Braithwaite; the men were sentenced to life imprisonment, with a recommendation that Silcott serve at least 30 years. The black female juror fainted when the verdicts were read out. Rose writes that the tabloids knew no restraint, writing about the beasts of Broadwater Farm, hooded animals, and packs of savages, with the old jail-cell image of Silcott published above captions such as "smile of evil."

### **1988 Application for leave to appeal-rejected**

A campaign to free the "Tottenham Three" gathered pace, organised by the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign. They published an 18-page report in 1987 by two American law professors, Margaret Burnham and Lennox Hinds, who had attended part of the trial, and who wrote that Silcott's conviction "represents a serious miscarriage of justice." Rose writes that the *New Statesman* and *Time Out* wrote sympathetic pieces, and MPs and trade unionists were lobbied. In May 1989 Silcott was elected honorary president of the famously left-wing London School of Economics by its students' union, to the dismay of the college's more serious director and governors. Silcott resigned shortly afterwards, saying he did not want the students to become scapegoats.

Engin Raghip's solicitor was now Gareth Peirce – who had also represented the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six, prominent cases of miscarriage of justice – and his barrister Michael Mansfield. Peirce applied for leave to appeal. She began to explore Raghip's mental state, arguing that his confession could not be relied upon. She arranged for him to be examined by Dr. Gísli Guðjónsson of the Institute of Psychiatry in London, a specialist in suggestibility; Guðjónsson concluded that Raghip was unusually suggestible, with a mental age of between 10 and 11. Silcott was again represented by Barbara Mills and Braithwaite by Steven Kamlish. Mills noted the lack of photographic or scientific evidence, and argued that Silcott would have been unlikely to stop firefighters from extinguishing a fire on the deck of the Tangmere block, given that he was renting a shop there.

Lord Lane (1918–2005), then Lord Chief Justice of England, dismissed the applications on **13 December 1988**, arguing of Raghip that the jury had had ample opportunity to form its own opinion of him. Amnesty International criticized the decision, pointing to the problems with confessions made in the absence of a lawyer, and was criticized in turn by Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, who said Amnesty had abandoned its impartiality. During a BBC *Newsnight* discussion of the case, Lord Scarman (1911–2004), a former Law Lord, said the convictions ought to be overturned. Gareth Peirce obtained another psychologist's report about Raghip and, supported by Raghip's MP Michael Portillo, asked the Home Secretary to review the case. She also submitted an application to the European Court of Human Rights, arguing that the way Raghip had been interviewed breached the European Convention on Human Rights. In December 1990 Home Secretary Kenneth Baker referred the case back to the Court of Appeal.



### **(1990) Electrostatic Detection Analysis test**

In parallel with the efforts of Pierce, Silcott's lawyers had requested access in November 1990 to his original interview notes, so that the seven pages from his crucial fifth interview – the notes he said were fabricated – could be submitted for an Electrostatic Deposition/Detection Analysis (ESDA) test. The test can identify a small electrostatic charge left on a page when the page above it is written on; in this way, the test's developers say, the chronological integrity of interview notes can be determined.

In Silcott's case, according to the scientist who conducted the ESDA test, Robert Radley, the notes from the section of the fifth interview in which Silcott appeared to incriminate himself had been inserted after the other notes were written. The seventh and final page of the fifth interview, where the participants would normally sign, was missing. The ESDA test suggested that, on the third to sixth pages of the interview, no impressions had been left from previous pages, although these earlier impressions appeared throughout the rest of the notes. According to Will Bennett in *The Independent*, the test "also revealed an imprint of a different page five from the one submitted in evidence which was clearly the same interview with Silcott but in which he made no implicit admissions." In addition to this, David Baxendale, a Home Office forensic scientist who was asked to investigate by Essex police, said that the paper on which the disputed notes were written came from a different batch of paper from the rest of the interview.

The disputed section of the interview had been written down by Det Insp Maxwell Dingle. It said that, when Silcott was told the police had witness statements that he had attacked Blakelock, he replied: "They are only kids. No one is going to believe them"; he reportedly said later: "Those kids will never go to court, you wait and see." As a result of the ESDA test evidence, the Home Secretary added Silcott and Braithwaite to Raghip's appeal.

### **(1991) Appeal: *R v Raghip and others***

The appeal was heard in the Royal Courts of Justice on 25 November 1991.

The Court of Appeal heard the case on 25 November 1991, and took just 90 minutes to quash all three convictions, delivering their 74-page decision on 5 December. *R v Raghip and others* is regarded as a landmark ruling because it recognized that "interrogative suggestibility" might make a confession unreliable.

Lawyers for the three argued that Silcott's interview notes were contaminated, and that Raghip's suggestibility and Braithwaite's having been denied a lawyer rendered their confessions unreliable too. The Crown prosecutor, Roy Amlot, conceded that the apparent contamination of the evidence rendered all three convictions unsafe. Rose writes that Amlot's statement to the court was "one of the more sensational speeches in English legal history." Amlot said: "We would not have gone on against Braithwaite, against Raghip, against any other defendants, having learned of the apparent dishonesty of the officer in charge of the case. I say that because the Crown has to depend on the honesty and integrity of officers in a case ... The impact is obviously severe."

Braithwaite and Raghip were released on 25 November. Silcott remained in jail for the 1984 murder of Anthony Smith. He received £17,000 compensation in 1991 for his conviction in the Blakelock case. He was offered up to £200,000 in legal aid in 1995 to sue the police for conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. The Metropolitan Police settled out of court in 1999, awarding him £50,000 for false imprisonment and malicious prosecution. He was released on licence in October 2003 having served 18 years for Smith's murder

### **(1994) Detectives acquitted**

In July 1992 Det Ch Supt Melvin was charged with perjury and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice, and Det Insp Maxwell Dingle with conspiracy. None of the three people present during the disputed interview with Silcott – Melvin, Dingle and Silcott himself – gave evidence during the detectives' trial at the Old Bailey in June–July 1994.

The prosecution alleged that the notes of the fifth interview with Silcott had been altered to include the self-incriminating remarks. Silcott had refused to answer questions during the first four interviews. During the fifth, when told that he had struck Blakelock with a machete or similar, the notes show him saying that no one will believe the "kids" who have spoken to the police, and "Those kids will never go to court. You wait and see. No one else will talk to you. You can't keep me away from them.

The detectives' lawyers produced 14 undisclosed witness statements from the tainted Blakelock inquiry, one of which said Silcott had been carrying a knife with a two-foot-long blade on the night of the murder, and that he had attacked Blakelock. The detectives were acquitted on 26 July by a unanimous jury verdict. They told reporters after the verdict that they had been through a "terrible ordeal." Both officers had been suspended during the case. Melvin returned to work afterwards, while Dingle retired.