

Relative of Anthony Grainger speaks on UK police killing

Our reporters
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On March 3 Anthony Grainger, 36, was executed by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) in a preplanned operation while sitting in a parked car in the village of Culcheth in Cheshire, England.

Grainger was unarmed. He was killed by police wearing face masks, shot through his heart by a bullet from a Heckler and Koch MP5 submachine gun. No shots were fired at the police during the incident.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) said a few days later that after a detailed search of the red Audi that Grainger was in, no weapons were found. The Crown Prosecution Service said it was “considering a range of potential offences against the officer—including manslaughter and murder.”

His two companions in the car, David Totten and Joseph Travers, were arrested and charged with conspiracy to rob. Another man, Robert Rimmer, was arrested the next day.

On September 3, Totten, Travers and Rimmer faced trial in Manchester Crown Court on charges of conspiracy to commit robbery. Grainger was also indicted in the case, a decision opposed by the “Justice for Grainger campaign 3/3/12”, who protested that he was dead and could not defend himself.

The proceedings took place with a heavily armed police presence inside the courtroom. After a three-week trial, in which only circumstantial evidence was produced by the prosecution, the jury, after just one hour’s deliberation, returned a unanimous not-guilty verdict. This was greeted with jubilation by the Grainger family and supporters of the campaign.

After the verdict, Gail Hadfield, Anthony Grainger’s partner, commented to the *Manchester Evening News*, “Through the whole trial the police have just been trying to cover their own backs. All along the police have been trying to make up their own version of what

the lads where up to that day and this verdict has blown that out of the water. This is a massive breakthrough. This feels like a big stepping stone in proving to the public that the police were wrong to open fire and towards getting justice for Anthony.”

GMP Deputy Chief Constable Ian Hopkins merely stated that “Greater Manchester Police notes today’s verdict.”

After the verdict, Marina Ahmed, Anthony’s mother, and Wesley Ahmed, his cousin, appeared on the local TV news programme *Granada Reports*. Marina said, “This has destroyed my family, his two children are devastated. This man [the police officer who killed Anthony] needs to be charged with my son’s death.”

Marina said she was pleased with the verdict, “as it vindicated Anthony and what we have been saying all along.”

Wesley said, “It justifies why I am campaigning for my cousin and not just for Anthony but for all the other families as well.”

Wesley and his partner Linda spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site* about the campaign and its future plans in light of the verdict. Marina was unable to speak to the WSWs due to illness caused by the stress of her son’s killing and the trial.

Wesley told us the not-guilty verdict had “vindicated Anthony and the other defendants and left the state with no justification for executing our Anthony, he was not a violent criminal.”

Wesley connected the police attempt to cover up the murder with recent revelations concerning the suppression of evidence of those responsible for the Hillsborough Football Stadium disaster in Sheffield, which led on April 15, 1989, to the deaths of 96 Liverpool Football Club supporters.

The immediate reaction of the police and government

was to vilify the Liverpool supporters, blaming them for the tragedy. After 23 years of campaigning for the truth, the families, friends and supporters of those who died have only now been allowed access to files that reveal a massive state cover-up.

Wesley said he is in contact with members of the Hillsborough Justice Campaign. He also commented on the miners' strike of 1984-1985, when striking miners faced the full force of the state, culminating in the jailing of 200 strikers. "If our campaign manages to get a conviction against the state, we are hoping this will happen with every injustice in the country," he said. "This should go back to the time before Hillsborough, to the miners and reopen the cases against them and demand new inquiries into the convictions in which they were jailed.

"We want to join with the Hillsborough campaign. We see that we all have to unite. Hillsborough came at a good time for us as well, as it showed the state up to be liars."

Wesley spoke about the upcoming United Family and Friends Campaign (UFFC) annual rally in London. The UFFC notes that no police officer has ever stood trial for the murder of an innocent civilian and calls for genuine independent investigation of deaths in police custody, rather than the whitewashes carried out by the IPCC.

"As far as I can see these campaigns have been suffocated and they need stirring up," Wesley said. "Being dignified doesn't get you anywhere. Our campaign is more vibrant. That is why we need to keep broadening the horizons. It's not a matter of black or white. It's poor people being killed.

"If Anthony had been rich he'd still be alive. It's a class issue."

Wesley contrasted the media outcry over the recent killing of two police officers in Greater Manchester with the fact that "when the police kill a civilian there is hardly any news, except a police smear campaign to demonise the victim. We have had to go to Culcheth and put our own leaflets out asking for witnesses to come forward."

Linda commented that the execution of Anthony "has changed my outlook forever. You view everything completely different. You question everything on the news. What you used to trust, you don't trust

anymore."

In regard to the ultimate outcome of the Grainger case, Wesley commented, "There will be a charge of murder and all those involved in the operation that night will be held accountable. This case is unique. The not guilty verdict means that the state had no justification for executing our Anthony. We will not stop until we get justice."

Justice for Grainger 3/3/12 will be attending the United Families and Friends Rally in London on October 27. The campaign is organising coaches from Manchester to London for those who wish to attend the rally.

The authors also recommend:

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[10 March 2012]



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