

Inquiry into police killing of Mark Duggan to report no evidence of police criminality

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8 August 2013

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), tasked with investigating the police killing of Mark Duggan, a 29-year-old father of four, revealed this week that, two years later, it has uncovered no evidence of any criminal offence.

Duggan was unarmed when he was shot dead after the taxi he was travelling in was stopped by armed police in Tottenham, north London, on August 4, 2011. He was surrounded by 11 police firearms officers during his last moments and shot twice. His killing was the spark for major civil disturbances, which spread across London and to other major inner cities in England.

The IPCC's statement makes clear Duggan's killing will be another whitewash, joining the lengthy list of those killed by the police, none of whom have been held accountable or brought to justice.

The *Guardian* reported last week that the IPCC final report will be completed this month. "It is waiting on one report from an expert, but otherwise proactive work on the investigation has ended. The final say on the lawfulness or otherwise of the shooting will be delivered by an inquest jury which will start hearing the case next month."

The Metropolitan Police have taken no action against any of the 11 officers, except taking the officer who shot Duggan off active firearms duty.

The IPCC has received minimal co-operation from the policemen involved. All refused to be interviewed initially. Later the officer, known as V53, who shot Duggan attended but he refused to answer questions orally and submitted written answers two days later. Eventually, the other 10 officers also supplied written answers.

The *Guardian* noted, "V53 has said his substantive account of the shooting was compiled three days later,

with he and his colleagues spending more than eight hours sitting in a room together writing their statements. He says he has 'no doubt' Duggan had a gun and was preparing to open fire."

The evidence that was subsequently released into the public domain refutes the claims that Duggan was about to fire a gun or that he was involved in a media-invented "shoot-out". No gun was found on his person.

According to the family lawyer, witnesses said they saw police throw a gun over the fence. However, the gun had not been fired and neither it, nor the sock it was said to be inside, had any trace of Duggan's DNA or fingerprints. Two types of blood were found on the gun, but neither were Duggan's.

Initially, and before any proper investigation had been carried out, the IPCC repeated the claim, entirely concocted by the police, that an "officer was shot first before [Duggan] was shot". The police were forced to retract this lie when it emerged that the bullet lodged in the police officer's radio was from the same CO19 officer's MP5 carbine that shot Duggan.

The fact that Mark Duggan's family have now waited for more than two years to find out the circumstances surrounding his death, strikingly contrasts with the rapid and vicious summary justice handed out to those involved in the riots that followed Duggan's death. It took more than a month for the family to even receive a pathology report.

At one stage it was doubtful whether a full inquest would ever go ahead, following an extraordinary intervention by the IPCC last year at a pre-inquest review at the North London coroners court. Officials said evidence about police decision-making on the day of Duggan's killing was too sensitive to be disclosed at a public inquest.

In contrast to the cover-up being orchestrated by the

IPCC, the *Guardian* reported, “A new expert report originally commissioned by the family is understood to challenge aspects of the police account of the shooting.”

On August 3, members of Mark Duggan’s family and other justice campaigns held a public meeting at the North London Community House in Tottenham, titled “Justice Delayed is Justice Denied”.

Hundreds attended the meeting at which were present some of the relatives of Joy Gardner, Roger Sylvester, Christopher Alder and Sean Rigg, who all died after being violently restrained by police officers. Also present were relatives of Cynthia Jarrett, whose death, following a police raid on her home, sparked a large-scale riot on the Broadwater Farm estate, in Tottenham in October 1985.

Mark Duggan’s aunt Carole said prior to the gathering, “It’s been two years and we are now waiting for the inquest to get the answers to the questions we have about how and why Mark was killed”. She added, “We expect those responsible for Mark’s death to be prosecuted and for justice to be served.”

Speaking to the media, Carole Duggan said of the supposed investigation into Mark’s killing, “They’ve been incompetent from day one. They’ve had to apologise to us as a family on numerous occasions because they’ve not investigated thoroughly. They’ve not been transparent at all.”

During the Broadwater Farm riots, a police officer, PC Keith Blakelock, was killed. In contrast to the kid gloves handling of the many police officers accusing of killing civilians, 359 people were quickly arrested and three youth rounded up, framed for Blakelock’s killing and sent to prison. In 1991 their convictions were quashed, considered unsafe.

The state has pursued those responsible for Blakelock’s death with tenacity, whilst ensuring that no-one is ever held to account when a civilian dies in police custody. This year, nearly 30 years after the event, the police have arrested a man, who was 16 at the time, and charged him with Blakelock’s murder. According to INQUEST, just in the year 1990-2013, total deaths in police custody or otherwise following contact with the police, England and Wales stand at 1,466.

Also attending the event was Myrna Simpson, the mother of Joy Gardner. Joy was a 40-year-old mother

who died when five police officers and an immigration official forced their way into her home in Crouch End, London in July 1993, in order to deport her and her 5 year old son Graeme. After Joy was thrown to the ground, tied up with leather belts and gagged with surgical tape, she suffocated and suffered massive brain damage, never regaining consciousness. Three police officers were charged with Joy’s manslaughter but were all acquitted in June 1995.

Joy’s mother said to the meeting, “It’s important for people to fight for justice and don’t stop, because there is no other way to get justice but to fight for it.

“I am still fighting for justice for Joy and not only for Joy but for all. I am fighting for justice for everyone that has been unjustly killed.”

Joy’s son Graeme, who witnessed the horrifying events, was also in attendance at the meeting.

In November 1995 the Socialist Equality Party convened an Independent Workers Inquiry into Joy’s killing. Using evidence presented at the police officers’ trial, and testimony supplied by Joy’s family, the inquiry proved that Joy’s death was the direct result of the actions of the deportation squad. Furthermore, her brutal treatment was the result of a concerted offensive by the British government against immigrant workers and democratic rights.

Myrna Simpson made a submission to the inquiry, clearing the name of her daughter, which had been vilified through the press, and appealing for the unity of black and white workers in the face of this attack.

The results of the Workers Inquiry were published in book form as *A State Murder Exposed: the truth about the killing of Joy Gardner*, ISBN: 1-873045-12-3 available from Mehring Books



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