

Police lies unravel over events leading to deaths of two boys in Cardiff, Wales

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Police lied repeatedly over their involvement in the death of two boys in a road accident in the Ely district of Cardiff, South Wales on Monday.

Harvey Evans, aged 15, and Kyrees Sullivan, aged 16, were lifelong best friends. It was clear to many in the area that only minutes before their deaths, the boys were pursued by a police van while riding an e-bike. This sparked hours of riots.

Around 100 to 150 people gathered at the site of the crash on Snowden Road, which occurred shortly after 6.00pm. South Wales Police tweeted at 8.20pm, “There is now a large number of officers working to manage the collision, but also to de-escalate ongoing disorder at the scene”.

Large numbers of riot police were mobilised, with a police helicopter also present. Youth threw bricks and other missiles at the police who stood in a line with riot shields blocking one end of Snowden Road. A police car had its windscreen smashed and wing mirrors broken off. Police officers, including mounted police, were stationed outside Ely police station into the early hours. Nine arrests were made.

A police cover-up operation was mounted. Speaking to BBC Radio 4’s *Today* programme, Alun Michael, the Police and Crime Commissioner in South Wales, said that it “appears that there were rumours, and those rumours became rife, of a police chase, which wasn’t the case and I think it illustrates the speed with which rumours can run around with the activity that goes on social media nowadays, and that events can get out of hand.”

Michael is a leading Labourite, having served as a minister in the Blair government and as leader of Welsh Labour from 1999 to 2000.

Such claims were repeated for hours in police statements and social media accounts even while video

footage contradicting their claims was being shown on mainstream media. South Wales police only admitted almost 24 hours later, in a 5.45pm statement, “We have received CCTV footage which shows a police vehicle following a bike just prior to 6pm.”

An eyewitness told *Sky News*, “On Monday evening I was walking up the street towards my little corner shop. As I got to the bottom of the street I seen two boys come round on an e-bike and seconds after a police van come around the corner. Basically the police van came around the corner at speed so you can tell they were chasing the boys, because as they came around the corner, they came round on the opposite side of the road. So if you’re not speeding and chasing somebody, you don’t come round at that kind at that kind of angle.”

She added that residents “are angry and disappointed in the police. The parents need closure. They need to know what happened.”

Police and Crime Commissioner Michael was still maintaining Wednesday morning to *Radio Wales Breakfast*, “I was assured [by the police] and I am still assured, that the youths were not being chased by the police at the time of the road traffic accident.”

Nobody in the area believed a word the police were saying, with the *Guardian* reporting that “a member of Harvey’s family” said, “They originally told our family there was no police vehicle in the area at the time and they didn’t get chased. It’s all in the video. They were lying.”

Comments on social media included, “Don’t condone the innocent people impacted by the riots in Ely, Cardiff but in a way don’t blame them physically doing the riots as basically police officers killed those two young boys chasing them! Should have just been about reacting to the police nothing else.”

On Wednesday afternoon, police issued a statement at a press conference, including a timeline of their version of events. South Wales Police Deputy Chief Constable Rachel Bacon said that at “17:49 - CCTV shows the bike travelling towards the police vehicle in Frank Road. The bike then turns around.

“18:00:52 - The bike is followed by the police vehicle, which you have already seen on CCTV images. Neither blue lights or sirens were in use.”

Distancing the police from subsequent events, the statement said, “At the time of the collision, police vehicle is in Grand Avenue, half a mile away from Snowden Road.”

At a vigil Wednesday evening Kyrees’ mother, Belinda Sullivan, told the *Telegraph*: “The police killed my son. I’ve got nothing else to say.”

Kyrees’ uncle told *The Times*, “My nephew and his best mate are dead because they chased him on a little electric motorbike.”

A statement from someone who knew the boys said that at least one police officer may have harboured a grudge against teenagers using e-bikes. Speaking to the *Daily Mail*, John Silver said, “The police have had issues with e-bikes in the area. They are legal but the police don’t like the boys on them. One officer in particular would try to run them off the road whenever he saw them... The police say they weren’t chasing the boys but if that officer was in the area they would want to keep away from him.”

Another resident told the *Sun*, “That’s what the police are like around here anyway. They will bully, chase and do whatever they can to all the little kids around here. It’s disgusting.”

South Wales Police have still issued no apology for any actions leading up to the crash. Deputy Constable Bacon confirmed at the press conference that no officer has been questioned under caution since the deaths.

The leader of the devolved Welsh Labour-run government, Mark Drakeford, also moved into damage limitation mode, stating that the police force had “repair work to be done” between themselves and the Ely community. “There are questions for police to answer, we know they have referred themselves to the independent investigation service, we must allow that to do its job.”

The nominally Independent Office for Police Conduct, responsible for overseeing the system for

handling complaints made against police forces in England and Wales, has begun an investigation.

Ely is one of the most deprived areas in Wales, a deindustrialized region which has never recovered from the closure of the mining industry that once employed over 270,000 workers in South Wales alone. Deprivation was increased with the loss of major employers, including the Arjo Wiggins paper mill which employed hundreds and closed in 2000, and the shutting of the large Ely Hospital (1996).

The 2021 census found that nearly 60 percent of children are eligible for free school meals—a key indicator of poverty—more than any other community in Wales. Nearly three-quarters of households have at least one deprivation measure, with 28 percent of children estimated to be living in families on relatively low incomes. Ten percent of people in the area are unemployed. Of those, nearly 40 percent have never worked, and more than half not worked in the past 12 months.

In such urban locations, “policing” is properly understood as repression. One twitter user said the events were “strikingly similar to the 1991 riots in Meadow Well, North Shields, triggered by deaths following an alleged police ‘hot pursuit’. Underemployed, disaffected young people; awful police-community relations in common.”

Ely was previously the scene of riots in September 1991, when unemployment reached over 30 percent as one pit after another closed following the defeat of the year-long 1984-85 national miner’s strike. Riots, also fuelled by acute social misery, broke out during the same month in Handsworth, Birmingham and on the Blackbird Leys Estate in Oxford.



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