

DEFEND THE RIGHT TO PROTEST PUBLIC FORUM

Policing on trial

HOW DO WE GET JUSTICE?

Introduced by:

MARCIA RIGG

Sean Rigg Justice & Change campaign

ALFIE MEADOWS

Student defendant

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Campaigning lawyer



The outcome of PC Harwood's trial has rightly met with an outpouring of anger. Ian Tomlinson died on 1 April 2009 after being struck by PC Harwood. Yet Ian's loved ones had to wait over three years to see PC Harwood in court—after an inquest last year found Ian had been unlawfully killed.

Harwood's acquittal is in a context of 1,433 people in England and Wales dying in police custody or following other police contact since 1990.

Not one police officer has been convicted for any of these deaths.

Sean Rigg is another of these 1,433 deaths. Sean died on 21 August, 2008, yet only in 2012 has an inquest begun—after his family have tirelessly campaigned as part

of 'Sean Rigg Justice & Change'.

Smiley Culture died during a police raid at his home, yet the IPCC ruled there was no evidence to pursue a case against the police nor were the family even allowed to see the final, full report of Smiley's death.

These cases all highlight the hard fight faced by those trying to hold officers to account for their actions.

Alfie Meadows, for example, who suffered a brain haemorrhage after he was struck on the head with a police baton on a student demonstration in 2010, is still awaiting a retrial for violent disorder.

We saw in the aftermath of the student protests in 2010, as well as

the August riots, the speed at which the government insisted those responsible for damaging property were dragged through the courts.

Yet violent police tactics remain unquestioned, police racism is ignored and deaths in police custody or as a result of police contact, including that of Mark Duggan whose death sparked the riots last summer, remain unaccountable.

So what happens when courageous campaigners use the courts to put policing on trial? Can the police be held accountable or do they effectively have a licence to kill?

This forum will discuss these issues and how we organise to strengthen support for those fighting for justice.

**Thurs 2 August, 7pm, Room G2, SOAS,
Thornhaugh St, (Russell Square tube)**

Organised by Defend the Right to Protest ● defendtherighttoprotest.org