

Police took no action over missing Asian

POLICE told the parents of a missing Asian student they could do nothing for 24 hours, despite being informed that he had been attacked by white youths, an inquest was told yesterday.

Ricky Reel, 20, a computer science student at Brunel University at Uxbridge, was found drowned in the Thames at Kingston seven days after he went missing in October 1997.

On the night of his disappearance he had been with friends, all Asian youths from Brunel, who were attacked and racially abused while walking through Kingston town centre.

The student's father, Balwant Reel, told the inquest into Ricky's death that he had reported the attack on the day of his son's disappearance.

Mr Reel said the officer at the police station had not taken any notes and had suggested Ricky may not have wanted to come home.

Ricky's mother Sukhdev told the inquest how she and her husband first contacted police by telephone when their son did not return home in the morning. When police failed to arrive she called again and was first told an

Black PC wins £7,000 for racial bias

ONE of the longest serving black officers in the Metropolitan Police has been awarded £7,000 after claiming he was treated as the 'lowest of the low'.

PC Leslie Bowie, 45, claimed racial discrimination against the force and Detective Inspector Alan Garrod, of Heathrow CID. PC Bowie told a tribunal in Croydon that he was ill-treated by DI Garrod. When he complained, he was told to drop the allegations by his superiors.

While the tribunal found no evidence of 'overt racial hostile behaviour' it said there was a 'pernicious problem of unintentional and unconscious racial discrimination'.

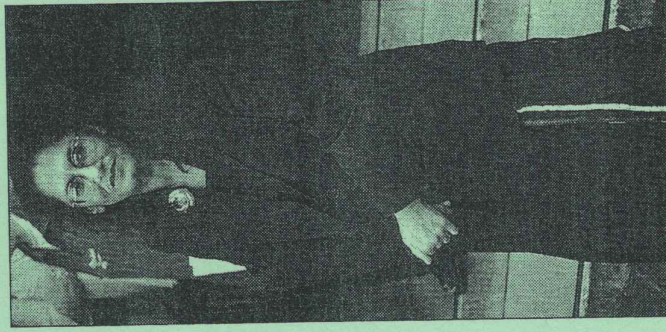
■ The Met is likely to face criticism of its anti-racism policies in a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. A leaked draft of the report suggests race-training efforts have been inadequate.

that Ricky was in danger but he still refused to do anything.

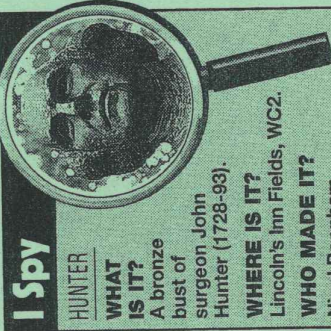
After Ricky's body was found police claimed he had drowned accidentally, but three officers were later disciplined over the initial inquiry into his death.

Earlier this year, the Police Complaints Authority found the officers guilty of neglect of duty and apologised to the Reel family for 'weaknesses and flaws' in the investigation.

The investigation was reopened in August this year with a new appeal for information. The inquest continues.



Mrs Reel: Told not to waste time



I Spy

HUNTER

WHAT IS IT?

A bronze bust of surgeon John Hunter (1728-93).

WHERE IS IT?

Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2.

WHO MADE IT?

Nigel Boonham.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

This oversize bust of the founder of scientific surgery was erected in 1977 by the President of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons to mark the Queen's Silver Jubilee and the college's long association with Lincoln's Inn.

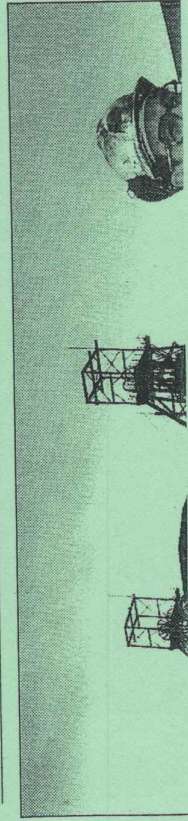
Hunter, a Scot, joined his physician brother William in London and became surgeon and lecturer to St George's Hospital.

In 1776 he was appointed surgeon extraordinary to George III and ten years later surgeon-general to the Army. Among the many subjects he investigated were aneurism, embryology and blood.

The sculptor of the bust used a life mask of Hunter's head as his model and consequently produced an extremely fine and accurate depiction.

E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial TM & © Unilever

ABS consulting
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Crackdown hailed as

Reel case: six new witnesses sought

As the mother of tragic teenager Ricky Reel prepares for her hunger strike, the BBC has reported there may be six new witnesses to his death.

The body of the 20-year-old was found in the Thames after he went for a night out in Kingston.

His family, from West Drayton, say he was murdered, and it may have been a racially motivated attack.

And Surrey Police have carried out an investigation into the Met's handling of the case.

Surrey say that on the night of Ricky's disappearance six people got on the same bus leaving Kingston as the two white youths who had earlier shouted abuse and had a fight with Ricky's friends.

But the Met's investigating officer, Det Supt Bob Moffat, said: "This is a distraction and is unhelpful to the inquiry."

"It is misinforming and inhibiting the open appeal we have had for anyone who was on that bus."

Efforts to trace bus passengers included leaflets, notices and even police officers spending a week on the



The family of Ricky Reel (above) say the young man, whose body was found in the Thames after a night out in Kingston, was murdered.

bus to talk to passengers. Meanwhile Ricky's mother will go on hunger strike for the six days which correspond to the time between Ricky's disappearance and the discovery of his body.

justice for ricky?

Route 66 23/2/98
Student Magazine

NEWS

Four months after Brunel student Lakhvinder Reel (known as Ricky Reel) was found dead in the Thames in Kingston, justice seems to take a turn. Ricky Reel went missing on the night of the 14 October, after being subjected to racial abuse together with three of his friends on the way to the nightclub 'Options' in Kingston. Last seen in Wood Street outside Bentalls Centre, near to where his body was found, Ricky became separated from his friends when fleeing their attackers, two white men. According to Ricky's friends, the two white youths boarded a bus while Ricky disappeared running in another direction. From this point on the events surrounding Ricky's unforeseeable death present a puzzle to Ricky's parents. A postmortem examination concluded that Ricky Reel had drowned, having made no attempt to swim, presumably due to the influence of alcohol. No marks or bruises were discovered on his body, and with his trouser fly buttons found undone, the police ruled out the possibility of race-related murder and closed the case with the explanation that Ricky must have fallen into the water whilst attempting to urinate. Unwilling to accept this explanation, Mrs Reel started the campaign "Justice for Ricky Reel" involving racial equality councils, campaign solicitor Louise Christian and the Southall Monitoring Group. Believing that Ricky was a strong swimmer with a phobia of wide stretches of water, a joint complaint was submitted to the Police Complaints Authority by Mrs Reel and the Southall Monitoring Group. According to a recent press release, the family of Ricky Reel will urge Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, to intervene by installing a fresh team of police officers to investigate the death. Additionally, a

Member of Parliament showed inclination to support the family Reel and three questions have already been presented to the House of Commons on 10 February. Mrs Reel is adamant that the police have been showing a racist attitude towards the investigation of an Asian death from the start. She says "prior to this happening to our family we could not believe that the police could be so racist, but we have come to accept this as the reality". Parallels have been drawn to the violent death of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence, who was stabbed by a gang in 1993. The complaint to the PCA has now been assigned to the Chief Constable of Kent, who will initiate a fresh investigation of the death. Ricky's family has employed the services of an independent pathologist, Dr Patel from the Department of Forensic Medicine at Guy's Hospital, University of London. Conducting a second postmortem examination, Dr. Patel's report reveals that bruises were found on Ricky's back indicating that he could have fallen backwards into the water. It further stated that Ricky did not die instantly and an attempt to swim could have been made. Dr. Patel believes that there is not necessarily significance in some of the trouser fly buttons found undone, due to

clothes being moved around by the currents anyway, and that more convenient urinating sites could have been chosen by Ricky. Conclusively he remarks that a third party involvement in Ricky's death can not be excluded.



MYSTERY STILL SURROUNDS THE TRAGIC DEATH OF LAKHVINDER REEL

The immediate response of the police is to instruct a third pathologist to look at both reports available in order to achieve a balanced interpretation of the physical evidence. According to a police source, two of the friends, who were with Ricky on the night of his disappearance, have been exposed to ongoing verbal threats as well as physical intimidation since the death of Ricky Reel. Both are Brunel students and have reported these incidents to the police, the only result being that the threats are now anonymous. There will be a public meeting at 1:30 pm in the Academy on 25th February organised by the Socialist Worker Student Society. Mrs Reel will be speaking publicly to support her campaign.

strike

words: Yusuf Moosajee

On Wednesday March 4th the National Union of Students has called a Strike against fees in protest at the government's draconian plans to introduce tuition fees from next September. All new students will be expected to £1,000 up front by the day they start university, and on top will be forced to borrow money to maintain themselves. It has been estimated that upon graduation many students will have debts on average of £20,000. The introduction of fees seems to be part New Labour's grand plan to undermine the welfare state, combined with cuts in

disability and single parent benefit. Although their pledge to keep to Tory spending limits strangely does not seem to stop them spending on Trident or sending troops to support America in the gulf. The 'strike against fees' has been called nationally by the NUS. This has happened after trying to ignore the issue for two years, the NUS has felt the pressure from students, who can see the problems which the introduction of fees, the cutting of grants, and the problems which loans will cause. It seems strange that students should be willing to work for three or

four years toward something which helps the country, and have to pay to do so. The NUS has nationally balloted the Universities and they all plan to take part. Even the UBS Executive has voted unanimously for the strike. The prospect of stopping fees has never been better. The NUS are finally calling action over an issue that students almost unanimously support. At NUS conference the current Blairite leadership will be challenged by a group of united anti-fees candidates. SUPPORT THE STRIKE ON 4TH MARCH

Asian bands seek justice for dead student

An allegedly racist killing has sparked a musical protest. By Paul George

THE biggest collection of Asian musicians to play at a single event in Britain is to perform at a gig to raise funds for further investigation into the death of a student who drowned shortly after what his family claims was a racial attack.

More than 50 exponents of Bhangra, Asian underground and Asian classical music are to perform at a night club in North London in July.

The concert is being staged in the name of 20-year-old Lakhvinder Reel, known as Ricky, who died in October last year in Kingston, Surrey, after he and three friends were involved in an alleged altercation with two white men.

It is hoped that thousands of pounds will be raised for the Justice for Ricky Reel Campaign, which is seeking a "proper investigation" into Ricky's death.

Pop group Cornershop, who had a No 1 smash with "Brimful of Asha", have given their backing to the campaign and some group members will appear under a different name. Other artists will include Fun-Da-Mental, and Bhangra artist Jazzy B. Compere for the evening will be comedian Sanjeev Bhaskar.

Ricky, a student at Brunel University in Middlesex, went missing on 14 October and his body was found a week later in the Thames. His family say police told them his death was an accident and officers did not consider a possible racial element.

When Ricky's body was found, his trouser buttons were undone and police said he may have fallen into the river while urinating and died instantly.

However, the family have called for a fresh police investigation after an independent pathologist's report showed a third party could have been involved in Ricky's death.

The Metropolitan Police has

now referred the matter to the Police Complaints' Authority and the Surrey Constabulary is looking into how the Metropolitan Police handled the case.

The concert has been organised by Cheeky Bhandar Promotions, based at the *Eastern Eye* newspaper.

Gig co-organiser, Pravin Char, a journalist with *Eastern Eye*, said "The Ricky Reel case is to the Asian community what the Stephen Lawrence case is to the black community."

"We are aware that without concentrated media exposure the Lawrences would still be struggling to be heard, so we are hoping for a similar level of media interest in Ricky's case."

Sukhdev Reel, Ricky's mother, has welcomed the announcement of the concert, saying the money raised should ensure there will be enough funds for the campaign to acquire proper legal representation.

Mrs Reel said: "I had been contemplating giving the whole thing up just because of the expense. So far, the campaign has spent more than £4,000 in pursuing justice and a lot of this has come out of the family's own pocket."

The Metropolitan Police are still investigating Ricky's death and say they have an open mind as to how he died.

Head of the investigation into Ricky's death, Detective Superintendent Bob Moffat said: "Extensive enquiries have been made in this matter to fulfil our responsibilities to the coroner and to allay the concerns of Ricky's family. Despite all that, there is no evidence to suggest that anyone else was involved."

For more information on the Justice for Ricky Reel Concert, contact Cheeky Bhandar Promotions on 0171-702 8012 extension 254. For more information about the campaign, call 0181-843 2333.



The Independent 26/4/93

Candlelight Vigil on 9th March - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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Address <http://www.iansmith.co.uk/justice/news/vigil.htm> Links

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Justice for Ricky Reel

NEWS UPDATE

Last updated 9th March 1999

CANDLE LIGHT VIGIL FOR RICKY - he shall not be forgotten!

Supporters of the Campaign for Justice held a candle light vigil outside the Home Office on Monday, 9th March, in an attempt to persuade the Home Secretary Jack Straw to assign new police officers to the investigation into Ricky Reel's death.



Pre-vigil set-up with various camera crews



Ricky's mum, Sukhdev, being interviewed



Sukhdev being interviewed for TV while Suresh of the Southall Monitoring Group looks on



Stephen Lawrence's father talks to a TV crew



Ricky's uncle talks to another TV crew



The Reel family's solicitor, Louise, talks to Heart FM radio

[Back to Home Page](#)

Justice for Ricky Reel

Local intranet zone

As the Police Complaints Commission looks at the investigation

BY NAYAB CHOCHAN.

If the Metropolitan Police are to be believed it is an open and shut case. On the night of October 14, Ricky Reel, a shy 20-year-old student, went out with three friends. Seven days later, his body was discovered by a team of police divers near Kingston Bridge, Surrey.

A post mortem revealed the cause of death to have been drowning. There were no signs of a struggle on the Ricky's body. Sunbury CID closed the case.

In doing so, they controversially discounted a key eye witness account of an altercation between the boys and two white youths 300 yards from where his body was recovered. According to Ricky's "devastated" mother, Sukhdev, the group were barracked with racial abuse - "Pakis go home" - and punched at 12:21 pm that night. In their fright, they dispersed.

That was the last time, the computing student was seen alive. The police assumption that he had taken a dip is weakened by the fact that Ricky had a phobia about open water. From day one, his mother, who is a social worker, knew something was wrong.

"Ricky always rang me," she said. "Even if it was for the smallest thing." When she first contacted the police, she

was told, her son was old enough to do as he pleased. Sukhdev frantically scoured the area of his last sighting, handing out leaflets.

During this time, she says, the Met were decidedly cool. "I have three children - an 11-year-old boy and two girls aged 21 and 17, as you can imagine they were frantic."

"The police broke the news that they had found my son's body to them - without me being present. There seemed to be a glaring contradiction here," she said. "First, they were telling me that it was procedure not investigate someone's disappearance after twenty four hours and then they break this horrible news to my 11-year-old."

Sukhdev, then launched a solo campaign to uncover the "truth", and successfully lobbied the Police Complaints Authority to investigate the police handling of her son's case.

"That is all fine," she said last week, "but the police who are being investigating are still investigating my son's disap-

THE QUESTION IS - WHO KILLED RICKY?



FEAR OF WATER: Shy 20 year old student Ricky Reel was found drowned

pearance." According to Sukhdev, the police are still ignoring valuable CCTV footage, which includes two white youths abandoning a car at the time Ricky was seen alive, near the Kingston Bridge. There are a total of five tapes which she says the police are not looking

at. More importantly, in the last three months, there has been no reconstruction of Ricky's last hours.

The police released footage of Ricky taking money from a cash machine, last week, which they claimed as new evidence.

"What they failed to add,"

son, with the names of four other disappeared youngsters, was unveiled at the headquarters of the Southall Monitoring Group, last Saturday. During a highly charged meeting at Hillingdon, North London, which attracted over 300 people, the family of murdered Eltham teenager Stephen Lawrence expressed their belief that the police had made an "error".

Ricky's younger sister, Tishy, then read a poem she had dedicated to him. Called Reflections, the opening lines poignantly read:

"Though it is not comfort-

ing To speak positively of tomorrow

Since what seems more significant

Is today's grief and sorrow."

However, Ricky's mates from that fateful night - who cannot be named for legal reasons - were absent.

"At first they helped, but now they just do not want to know," Sukhdev revealed. "It is sad, had the roles been reversed I would have certainly done my utmost for them."

One of them had known Ricky for two years. I would just like to say that the door is always open to them, if they want to help." Anyone wishing to help Sukhdev in her quest, can write to "Justice for Ricky Reel", c/o Southall Monitoring Group, Unity, Southall, Middlesex. UB2 5YR. Telephone: 0181 843 2333.

Asian Age April 98

Drowned teenager honoured with plaque

BY KALPANA CHAUHAN

London, Jan. 19: The three friends of drowned youth Ricky Reel were conspicuous by their absence when a memorial plaque was unveiled to mark his "suspicious death" along with four other black deaths since 1976, at the Southall Monitoring Group's launch of their new premises in Southall over the weekend.

Ricky's mother, Mrs Sukhdev Reel, of West Drayton, Middlesex, broke down several times while addressing a gathered crowd of up to 100 people.

"...All I have to offer others is my aching heart, since the pain of losing you, Ricky, my son is tearing me apart..." she said.

Despite the heartfelt tributes by his family and others close to the family, they still remain ignorant of how Ricky Reel, 20, ended up at the bottom of the River Thames last October.

Weary of the on-going police complaints investigation into the lack of police action Mrs Reel was reluctant to speculate on why his 'friends' have decided to remain silent.

"As well as not investigating the racial attack of the two white youths the police never took statements from the friends," Mrs Reel told *The Asian Age*. "I am waiting for them to come forward of their own accord."

A race equality officer at Hillingdon council said: "It is strange that Ricky friend's would not be here to lend his family support and to help in whatever way they can to get to the bottom of this case. It is obvious the family is in agony to find the truth surrounding his death."

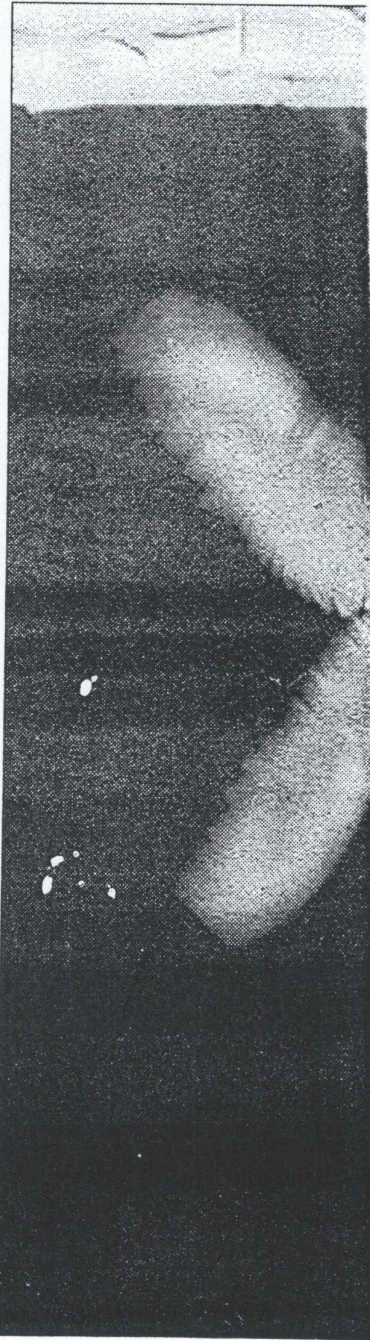
Neville Lawrence the father of racially murdered teenager Stephen in 1993 lent his support to the family saying that "despite five years after the death of my son we are still trying to find the truth and get justice."

Mr Lawrence urged the community to help the Justice for Ricky Reel campaign gain momentum.

Lawyer for the Reel family, Louise Christian, said she was smarting at the lack of police action since she became involved in the case. "I am very angry that there are now several officers investigating the complaint and only one officer inspecting the death."

Imran Khan, representing the Lawrence's family said: "There are people who feel that monitoring groups such as the Southall monitoring group are no longer necessary because racism and harassment is being taken seriously by the state machinery. Initiatives like the European Year against Racism last year reinforces intolerance of racism, but then we get a case like Ricky's and we get no police action and we then see that grass-roots organisation are needed more than ever."

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Catholic in visit trans

BY GERARDO TENA

Havana, Jan. 19: The city of Havana

Reels to do whatever it takes for justice

BY KALPANA CHAUHAN

There is a sense of pity and anger to the tragedy that has struck the Reel family. Pity because they lost a son who had everything to live for and anger because not until 20-year-old Lakhvinder Reel was dredged out of the river Thames in Kingston, seven days after he was reported missing last October, did the family realise the full scope of the possibility of police indifference.

Mrs Sukhdev Reel brushed aside the economic realities that an under-resourced police force might be faced with since the minute she made her first contact with the police and is blunt about what she thinks is the police's racist attitude. "I was messed around by the police since I first reported that Ricky was missing when he failed to return home after a night out with his friends. My local police told me to go Kingston police and they even suggested that he might have decided to stay out with a girlfriend. It was not until my local member of Parliament John McDonnell personally intervened did they attempt to trawl the river and look for my son. They found him seven minutes after they sent divers in."

But the worse was still to come. A woman liaison officer broke the news of Ricky's death to Mrs

somewhere her son's killer is free. Until justice prevails she will not stop.

The whole episode has taken a great toll on the family. Mr Balwant Reel is unable to console himself and tears well in his eyes as his wife and daughter explain the incident.

Trying to brave away his emotions he looks intently into a file of papers and pictures which all that is now left of his son.

"He was more than a son, he was a friend." Younger son Jagvinder has developed behavioural problems at school and is afraid to be alone. The doctor recommends counselling but Mrs Reel has too much to do see to that. "First we have to find out the truth about Ricky and then I will be able to spend time with the rest of my children."

Her campaign *Justice for Ricky* now involves the Southall Monitoring group, racial equality councils and campaign solicitor Louise Christian. Despite the December cold and chill there is not a day when the family are not involved in distributing leaflets around Kingston and local areas in Southall.

Mrs Reel says the community and Gurdwaras have been a great help. "There is anger there too. But there is also pride that we not going to accept the death of our son the way the police

want us to." Some people whom she gets to talk to on the streets are not 'surprised' how the police have behaved.

"What to do you expect from the police," they say. "They don't care about investigating black deaths."

Prior to this happening to our family we could not believe that the police could be so racist. But we have come to accept this as the reality."

Through their solicitor they have sent submissions to the Stephen Lawrence inquiry — stating that black deaths are not thoroughly investigated particularly when there is some racial element.

But her leafleting and media visibility has encouraged some witnesses to come forward, including a letter sent anonymously describing the people who boasted about being responsible for Ricky's death. This is what Mrs Reel is holding on to get to the bottom of the mystery as to who killed Ricky Reel.

Next month a plaque in honour of Ricky's memory will be inaugurated at the opening of the Southall Monitoring Group's new premises. Mrs Reel said: "We are touched by this as it will help to keep the abiding memory of Ricky in the minds of the community."



MORE THAN A SON: A file photograph of Lakhvinder Reel whose death is being investigated by the police.

was the kind of son who always told me of his whereabouts and what time he was going home. The night he happened to go out he never returned home."

Not satisfied with the coroner's findings Mrs Reel paid for an independent pathologist to do a post-mortem on Ricky's body. Something innate tells her that

The bruises that he found convinced Mrs Reel was killed by someone. His killer was out there somewhere but they were not doing anything about.

The case has grudgingly continued because of Mrs Reel's belligerent attitude.

Something innate tells her that

Surf and you will find. says Suchitra

21/8/98

3

Reel mother to starve

The mother of Ricky Reel, the 20-year-old Asian found drowned in the Thames at Kingston last year, is to go on hunger strike.

Sukhdev Reel, from West Drayton, said she will refuse food from October 15 to 21, the dates between Ricky's disappearance and discovery in the river, in a bid to force the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to launch a fresh inquiry.

And she said she hoped her son's case would be one of the unexplained deaths examined by the police's £1 million task force which investigates cases with a possible racial motive.

This week lawyers acting for the family requested Kingston police documents, used in the Police Complaints Authority investigation, in order to prepare their case for the coroner's inquiry.

But this would be unprecedented because they contain statements which could prejudice any resulting disciplinary proceedings.

The coroner's society is also opposed to the release of such documents fearing its inquiries could turn into trials.

Public death probe

SURREY police aim to make public the results of a probe into the death of a young man in Kingston by the end of this month.

Investigation supervisor Tony Williams and his team are looking into the death of Lakhvinder Reel, 20, whose body was found in the Thames at Kingston last December.

The officers will investigate complaints by the Reel family that a series of mistakes were made by officers handling the case.

The family believe Ricky was the victim of a racist attack.

IN FORMER
14.8.98

Police deny Reel claims

Police investigating the death of Ricky Reel in Kingston last year have hit back at claims this week that they were negligent.

The BBC reported on Wednesday, the day before a TV documentary about the incident, that six new witnesses had been unearthed by Surrey Police, who are investigating how the Met Police conducted the case.

On the night of Ricky's disappearance, these six people got on the same bus leaving Kingston as the two white youths who had earlier shouted racial abuse and had a brief fight with two of Ricky's friends.

Twenty-year-old Ricky's body was subsequently found in the Thames and his family claimed he was murdered.

But Met Police deny the BBC allegations and insist that they immediately launched a

widespread appeal for anyone who was on that bus to come forward.

Investigating officer, DS Bob Moffat, said: "This is a distraction that is unhelpful to the inquiry."

"It is misinforming and inhibiting the open appeal we have had for anyone who was on that bus."

Efforts to trace bus passengers included leaflets, notices and police officers travelling on the bus talking to passengers. But no-one was traced.

SURREY COMET

28/8/98

Sukhdev Reel enlists BBC's help to probe son's death

Lee Hayhurst

Police hit back over Ricky links

The officer in charge of the investigation into the death of Lakhvinder "Ricky" Reel has hit out at stories which link Kingston's police's handling of the case to that of murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence.

The front page of this week's Big Issue magazine asks: "First Steven Lawrence. Now Ricky Reel. Why can't British Justice Deal With Racist Murders?"

"That is outrageous," said Chief Superintendent Bob Moffat. "There is no evidence whatsoever that Ricky was murdered."

Ever since Ricky went missing the Monitoring Group, which has been set up to look at the handling of racial crimes, took on the Ricky Reel case.

Last week Neville Lawrence, father of murdered Stephen, criticised Kingston police on national television for their handling of the Ricky inquiry.

The mother of Ricky Reel, the 20-year-old Brunel University student who was found drowned in the Thames last year, stands alone at the spot where his body was found still mourning for her son, still fighting to find out how he died.

On Wednesday night she was in Kingston to help in a reconstruction for the BBC of the night her son went missing.

It is hoped when the programme, called East, is aired it will jog someone's memory of that night in the latest bid to find a witness to a death which happened late at night on a deserted stretch of river bank.

Over the past seven months Sukhdev Reel's mission has taken her to Parliament, put her in national newspapers and embroiled her in the controversial Stephen Lawrence case currently being played out in Southall.

The Monitoring Group which represents Mr and Mrs Lawrence has taken on the Reel case to try to prove racism in the Metropolitan Police is endemic.

But the police who investigated her son's disappearance say this is no Lawrence two, they insist Ricky was the victim of a terrible accident, similar to that which befell Ben Lawrence, also found dead in

the river in January.

The last time Ricky was seen alive he was caught on a CCTV camera which shows him walking, hand in pocket, down Wood Street as a bus passed by.

Police believe this was the same bus that two white men, who had been involved in a brief fight with two of Ricky's friends, ran to catch; they have no evidence to suggest they were involved.

The surveillance cameras also caught his friends as they unsuccessfully tried to find him before heading off to Options nightclub; they told police Ricky had said earlier he wanted to go and they assumed he had.

Superintendent Bob Moffat, the officer who led the investigation, said despite the family's assertion that their son was killed by racists they had found no evidence to support that and he rejected claims they were slow off the mark investigating that possibility.

He said it was highly unusual, in a missing person case, to carry out a river dive so soon after the person goes missing.



Still mourning: Ricky's mother, Sukhdev Reel, at the spot where her son's body was found. Photopress

S-C. 3/7/98.

Cop slammed over Ricky case nabbed Asians for race attack

Family speaks out after report admits investigation errors

By NICK HARDING and DANIEL ABRAHAMS

A COP criticised for his handling of the Ricky Reel case successfully prosecuted five Asian youths for a racist attack on a white policeman's son.

And now the Reel family claim stark contrasts between the way their case was handled and the case of Daniel Moore, who was beaten into a coma in Hounslow in September 1997, show institutional racism.

Asian student Ricky, 20, disappeared after being attacked by white youths in Kingston on October 14, 1997. His body was found in the Thames a week later.

Police said his death was a tragic accident and not connected to the row with the mystery youths.

Despite the racial attack, from the start police treated the case as that of a 'non-vulnerable missing person'.

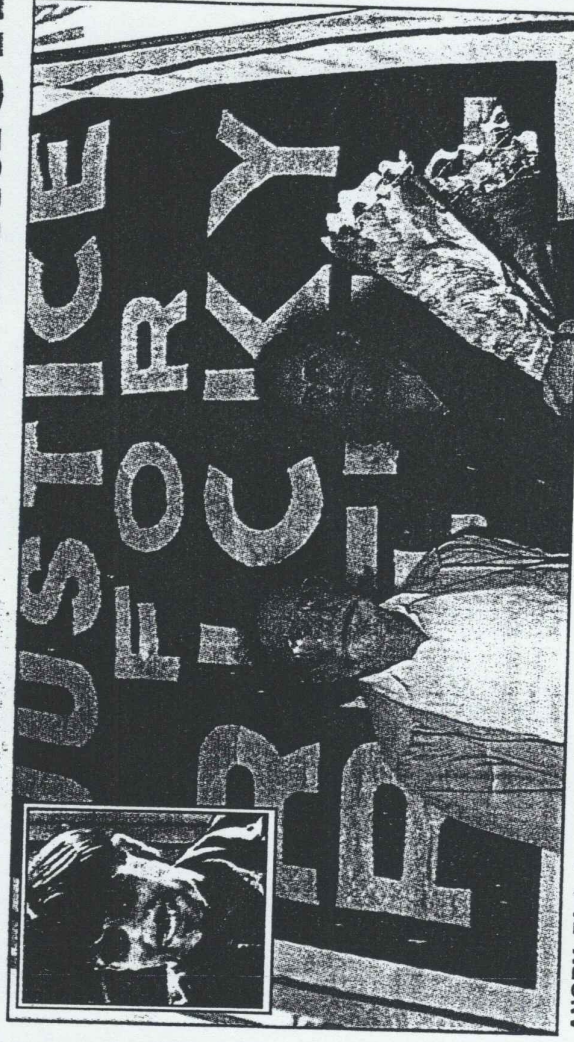
However, Ricky's family believed he was murdered and organised search parties in that vital first week.

Now a Police Complaints Authority letter to the Reel family answering their complaints about the case says the officer in charge, detective superintendent Bob Moffat, "Contributed to the confusion as to the ownership of the enquiry, in particular the racial incident."

"Whilst he was acting in accordance with force policy he failed to adequately communicate matters to yourself and your family."

The letter criticises the way evidence was gathered in the case but concludes that no one person was to blame for the shortcomings.

It says the Reels did not receive a professional standard of service because of "organisational failings". It says DS Moffat has been admonished by the Met, a serious disciplinary action just short of a formal reprimand.



ANGRY: Ricky's parents

The detective also led the investigation into an attack on 12-year-old Daniel Moore, a police officer's son, who was beaten and left for dead by Asian youngsters in Hanworth just a month before Ricky's death.

During that investigation scores of officers were mobilised to collect evidence and carry out door to door inquiries. The day after the attack DS Moffat held a press conference with national media to appeal for witnesses.

In November last year after some of Daniel's attackers were jailed Mr Moffat said: "This result will send out a message to anyone caught committing this type of offence that they can expect to be caught and prosecuted."

Mrs Reel said: "We were left to investigate Ricky's death. We did not receive the same level of service because we are Asian. The contrasts show a racist attitude

INSET: Ricky was attacked by racists shortly before his death

within the police. They use the excuse that Ricky was a missing person. But they knew about the racial attack — they told us about it yet they did not investigate it."

The differences in the way the two cases were handled was brought to the PCA's attention before it began investigating the family's complaints.

A Met Police statement about the PCA report into Ricky's death says: "One officer has been admonished. In relation to the organisational and policy issues which have been criticised by the PCA, the Metropolitan Police Service has already recognised them and a process of change is in place."

Explaining why one case was treated differently from the other, a police spokesman said: "One was classified as a missing person and the other classed as an attack, so in the initial stages different protocols were applied."

Benefit gig and rally to be held for Ricky

TOP civil rights barrister Mike Mansfield QC will speak at a public meeting organised by the Campaign for Justice for Ricky Reel on Thursday, March 18.

Other speakers at the event will include Ricky's mother Sukhdev, Kwesi Menson — brother of tragic Michael Menson — and Suresh Grover of the Southall

Monitoring Group. The meeting will begin at 7pm at the United Reform Church in Eden Street, Kingston.

● The campaign is also holding a benefit concert with bands Dip, Fun-Da-Mental and Stereo Nation.

The concert will be held on March 12 at Kingston University's Kingston Hill Bar, Hanaford.

Kingston Hill Site. Tickets cost £7. Call 0181-843 2333 for details.

WEEK ENDING FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6th 1998
news

Fresh look at Ricky's death



Top policeman examines evidence

A NEW operation to find evidence about the death of Lakhvinder (Ricky) Reel has been launched by the Metropolitan Police.

The investigation is headed by one of the force's most senior officers, assistant deputy commissioner and Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force commander John Grieve.

The move was made last week after the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) report into the initial handling of the case was completed.

But details from the study have yet to be released to the family of 20-year-old Ricky (pictured above) despite their requests.

He drowned in the River Thames after a night

out in Kingston last October. Police say it was an accident but his family maintain he was the victim of a racial attack.

The Met has set up a working party to review the release of police information to families after deaths in custody and incidents such as the death of Ricky and the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

Information is not normally released before inquests are completed.

The group includes representatives from the Coroners' Society, the PCA, the Home Office and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Its decisions will have national implications and will be reported to the Home Office.

KEEP IT REEL



MARCH 12th is a date to be noted in your diary. This is the day that you can lend your support to a worthy cause.

The Ricky Reel campaign was launched just under 2 years ago, following the mysterious death of Lakhvinder 'Ricky' Reel.

Aki Nawaz, Shaheen Badar, PMC, Asian Dub Foundation and Sanjeev Bhaskhar are just a few of the celebrities that have pledged their support to the Ricky Reel Justice campaign.

Ricky reel went missing after being racially abused after a night out in Kingston in Surrey. His body was found seven days after his disappearance in the River Thames. The case has many similarities with that of black teenager Stephen Lawrence in that

the police failed to investigate Ricky's disappearance properly.

March 12th is the date for a pre-launch concert at Kingston university. On the night you can see acts such as Stereo Nation, DIP and Fundamental playing live in a bid to raise money and publicity for the campaign.

This is the first in a line up of events taking place before the KEEP IT REEL concert on July 10th 1999 (a day before Ricky's birthday) which has already attracted a host of top Asian bands, mainstream acts and sports personalities. The concert aims to raise over £20,000 for the Reel family to continue

with their quest for justice. If you need anyone more convincing that you should be supporting this vital cause then here are the words of the musical maestro PMC Coventry where the skin

head movement started back in 1981. I remember being really frightened as a child and being aware of the hatred that was directed towards Asians. I remember a Sikh being hanged in a graveyard in Coventry. Many people believe that racism has disappeared, but the fact that Ricky is dead proves that racism is very much alive. It is important to back the Ricky Reel campaign to ensure that Ricky's name is remembered in the same vain as Stephen Lawrence. We are

all vulnerable to violence and it is up to all of us to support the campaign and ensure that Ricky receives the justice that he deserves."

Tickets for the Kingston event cost £7. For further information on the events, or if you would like to contribute in any way to the KEEP IT REEL concert please contact Suresh Grover on 0181 843 2333 or the event organisers on the following numbers:

07957 318 958
07957 163621
0958 770228.



Ricky Reel

PARTY ON!

THREE days and two nights of music, dance and fashion - sound too good to be true?

Well, surprise, surprise it is true. Progression 99 is the name of the event and it takes place on the weekend of 19th, 20th and 21st of March in Great Yarmouth.

You can see DCS, and VRI under the same roof, along with

many other bhangra stars.

To give you a little taster of the things that go on at Progression one of the organisers Ejaz has filled us in on some of the shenanigans from previous Progressions. In the build up to the event we will let you know all the best bits of gossip from the event.

The first one involves an extremely popular dance group who were performing at Progression 97.



Fab Five in a fight



Sukhdev Reel enlists BBC's help to probe son's death

Lee Hayhurst

Police hit back over Ricky links

The officer in charge of the investigation into the death of Lakhvinder "Ricky" Reel has hit out at stories which link Kingston's police's handling of the case to that of murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence.

The front page of this week's Big Issue magazine asks: "First Steven Lawrence. Now Ricky Reel. Why can't British Justice Deal With Racist Murders?"

"That is outrageous," said Chief Superintendent Bob Moffat. "There is no evidence whatsoever that Ricky was murdered."

Ever since Ricky went missing the Monitoring Group, which has been set up to look at the handling of racial crimes, took on the Ricky Reel case.

Last week Neville Lawrence, father of murdered Stephen, criticised Kingston police on national television for their handling of the Ricky inquiry.

S-C 24/7/98

The mother of Ricky Reel, the 20-year-old Brunel University student who was found drowned in the Thames last year, stands alone at the spot where his body was found still mourning for her son, still fighting to find out how he died.

On Wednesday night she was in Kingston to help in a reconstruction for the BBC of the night her son went missing.

It is hoped when the programme, called East, is aired it will jog someone's memory of that night in the latest bid to find a witness to a death which happened late at night on a deserted stretch of river bank.

Over the past seven months Sukhdev Reel's mission has taken her to Parliament, put her in national newspapers and embroiled her in the controversial Stephen Lawrence case currently being played out in Southall.

The Monitoring Group which represents Mr and Mrs Lawrence has taken on the Reel case to try to prove racism in the Metropolitan Police is endemic.

But the police who investigated her son's disappearance say this is no Lawrence two, they insist Ricky was the victim of a terrible accident, similar to that which befell Ben Lawrence, also found dead in

the river in January.

The last time Ricky was seen alive he was caught on a CCTV camera which shows him walking, hand in pocket, down Wood Street as a bus passed by.

Police believe this was the same bus that two white men, who had been involved in a brief fight with two of Ricky's friends, ran to catch; they have no evidence to suggest they were involved.

The surveillance cameras also caught his friends as they unsuccessfully tried to find him before heading off to Options nightclub; they told police Ricky had said earlier he wanted to go and they assumed he had.

Superintendent Bob Moffat, the officer who led the investigation, said despite the family's assertion that their son was killed by racists they had found no evidence to support that and he rejected claims they were slow off the mark investigating that possibility.

He said it was highly unusual, in a missing person case, to carry out a river dive so soon after the person goes missing.



Still mourning: Ricky's mother, Sukhdev Reel, at the spot where her son's body was found. Photopress

S-C 3/7/98

Reward offered by Reel family

£5,000 for positive information

Almost a year after his death a reward is being offered in an 11th hour attempt to find information about how Ricky Reel came to be drowned in the Thames.

His family, who refused to accept the conclusions of the police investigation that he fell into the river while urinating and who set up the Justice for Ricky Reel Campaign, are offering the £5,000 on posters placed in Kingston town centre.

And to mark the anniversary of Ricky's death they are planning a hunger strike and a procession in Kingston on October 14, which will visit the spot where his body was found and Kingston Police Station.

In five weeks, following the completion of a Police Complaints Authority inquiry into the handling of the case on which 15,000 hours and £125,000 was spent, a public inquest will be held when the PCA's findings will be re-

vealed.

Last week the Metropolitan Police moved to rule out the possibility of letting the Reel campaigners see the relevant evidence in the PCA report before the inquest after it was requested by the authority's chairman, Peter Moorhouse.

A spokesman said: "We are carefully considering his request but to release the report prior to an inquest would require a major change of policy."

The reward posters include descriptions of two white men who had a fight and shouted racial abuse at Ricky's friends outside John Lewis in the moments before he disappeared and was never seen alive again.

These men, who it was

thought jumped on a bus heading over Kingston bridge, were never traced.

The Reel family are totally convinced the 20-year-old Brunel University student was killed.

The campaigners, represented by The Monitoring Group, which was also involved in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, have claimed Ricky was an aquaphobic and would never have approached the river voluntarily, although two pathologist reports failed to find marks on Ricky's body to suggest he was forced to the river's edge near Canbury Gardens.

Anyone with information is asked to call Suresh Grover on 0181 843 2333 or Mukesh Solanki on 01753 532 2980.

16/10/98

Marchers remember Ricky Reel

A peaceful and emotional demonstration marched through Kingston town centre on Wednesday evening exactly a year after the disappearance of Ricky Reel.

Controversy about the police investigation into the 20-year-old Brunel University student's death, he was found drowned in the Thames six days later, has fuelled allegations of racism in the Metropolitan Police.

Ricky's family claim he was killed by racists following a fight outside Lewis' and that police inaction in the first week meant vital evidence was lost - Surrey police have recently completed an inquiry into the initial investigation.

A police spokesman said an anniversary card was handed into Chief Inspector Phil Harris at Kingston Police Station and, although there was some chanting by the 70-strong group, the demonstration was low-key and non-confrontational.

Among the crowd, which moved on to the spot where Ricky's body was found, was Suresh Grover from the Monitoring Group, the pressure group which helped bring the Lawrence murder to national attention.

He said: "It went very well, there were around 200 people there, it was very peaceful and dignified and very emotional.

"I think it is important that the family are getting



Ricky's mother at the demonstration. Photopress

support from local people - demonstrated by the fact that a lot of local people and people from the university turned up."

The family go on hunger strike on Monday until October 21 when they meet with Sir Paul Condon, the Met's Commissioner, at Scotland Yard, to persuade him to re-open the case and to release the Police Complaints Authority report to the family.



A supporter remembers Ricky Reel. Photopress

news

Sad Ricky's death marked by a vigil

And mum plans a hunger strike to publicise his case

FRIENDS and family of Ricky Reel were due to march through Kingston tonight (Wednesday) to mark the anniversary of his death.

And his mother, Sukhdev Reel, is due to go on hunger strike on Monday (October 19) in protest at the length of time independent reports into his death have taken to be finalised.

Ricky disappeared from Kingston town centre on October 14 last year.

His body was found in the Thames on October 21, the date Mrs Reel plans to finish her hunger strike.

Marchers plan to hand a giant postcard in to Kingston Police station to remind officers that they are still fighting to discover the truth about circumstances surrounding the death of the 20-year-old student.

Mrs Reel said: "It has been 365 days since my son's death and there has been no justice.

"I will not give up my fight for justice.

"The march and the hunger strike are to show that

we are still determined to get justice and they are to show Ricky that I will not give up on him."

Ricky disappeared after a night out in the town with friends.

Police maintain he fell into the river and drowned after drinking, but Mrs Reel believes her son was killed in a racist attack.

He had been involved in a fracas with white youths earlier in the evening.



TRAGEDY: Ricky's family maintain he was the victim of a racist attack