

Eight Police Officers Prosecuted For Perverting Justice In The Frame-Up Of Five Innocent Men For Lynette White's 1988 Murder

Twenty-year-old Lynette White was brutally murdered on Valentine's Day 1988 in Cardiff, Wales. Her body was found in her apartment where she had been stabbed more than 50 times.

White's 22-year-old boyfriend Stephen Miller was arrested in December 1988 after a friend of White's signed a statement that she saw Miller standing next to White's body. During the next four days Miller was interrogated almost around the clock, and during his 19th interrogation he confessed to White's murder after 13 continuous hours of questioning. Miller implicated two other men in the murder, Yusef Abdullahi and Tony Paris. Immediately afterwards Miller recanted his confession claiming he knew nothing about White's murder and that he confessed to stop the shouting and threats by the police during the long hours of his interrogation.

Two other men John Actie and his cousin Ronnie Actie were identified as involved in the murder by eyewitnesses.

The five men were charged in December 1988 with White's murder and jailed without bail. There was no physical or forensic evidence tying any of the men to the crime. Blood that didn't match White's was found at the crime scene, but DNA testing excluded any of the five defendants as its source. Their 117-day trial that concluded in November 1990 was at the time the longest criminal trial in British history. John and Ronnie Actie were acquitted. Miller, Paris and Abdullahi were convicted primarily based on Miller's confession. Abdullahi was convicted even though he had the seeming ironclad alibi that at the time of the murder he was on a ship eight miles from the crime scene.

The three defendants were sentenced to life in prison and they became known in the media as the Cardiff Three.

Doubts about their guilt were so substantial that one of England's largest newspapers, *The Guardian*, launched an investigation of their case. In a [series of articles](#) published in March 1991 it was reported the police had

failed to disclose a number of exculpatory alibi statements to the defendants, there were reasons to doubt the truthfulness of White's friend whose statement led to Miller's arrest as well as doubts about the truthfulness of testimony by other prosecution witnesses, and that three weeks after their convictions a young woman was murdered in Cardiff in almost the same manner as White. With the new evidence uncovered by *The Guardian* Abdullahi's alibi was supported by 13 witnesses.

Tapes of Miller's interrogation during which his appeal lawyer described that the police were "beating him over the head verbally" were played during the hearing of their appeal by the Court of Appeal. On December 10, 1992 the Court of Appeals [quashed their convictions](#) as "unsafe and unsatisfactory" and they were released after four years in custody. In the Court's ruling Lord Taylor said he was "horrified" by the interrogation tapes and that the oppressive and bullying techniques used by the police were "almost passing belief." He also said, "The officers ... were not questioning him so much as shouting at him what they wanted to say. Short of physical violence, it is hard to conceive of a more hostile and intimidating approach by officers to a suspect." Miller's lawyer was present during the interrogation and Lord Taylor was critical of him because he did nothing to protect his client because he "sat in on the interview and seems to have done little else."

Twelve days after the men's release the police announced that no disciplinary action would be taken against the officers who conducted Miller's interrogations.

Six years after their release journalist Satish Sekar, who worked on the investigation by *The Guardian* in 1991, published a book about the case, *Fitted In: The Cardiff Three and the Lynette White Inquiry*. As a result of the information in the book Ms. White's murder case was re-opened in June 1999.

The investigation to find White's killer focused on trying to find a match with crime scene DNA that didn't match White, particularly the foreign DNA recovered from blood on a piece of cigarette wrapping



Lynette White (White family)

found near her body. In March 2003 a partial match was made to a 14-year-old boy who hadn't been born at the time of the murder. Police investigated and obtained DNA from his relatives. They found the crime scene blood matched his uncle, 38-year-old Jeffrey Gafoor. He had remained undetected because he had no criminal record so his DNA wasn't in the national DNA database. When arrest at his home [he told police](#), "I did kill Lynette White. I've been waiting for this for 15 years. Whatever happens to me I deserve."

Gafoor pled guilty on July 4, 2003 and was sentenced to life in prison.

After Gafoor's conviction a new investigation was begun by the South Wales Police that was overseen by the Independent Police Complaints Commission. The investigation into the botched investigation of White's murder resulted in the arrest of 34 people that included trial witnesses and former and present police officers.

In December 2008 three witnesses who gave false evidence at the trial of the Cardiff Three were jailed for 18 months after pleading guilty to perjury. They all said they were pressured by police to lie. [One of those](#) witnesses was Leanne Vilday -- whose false police statement led to the arrest of Miller and eventually to the Cardiff Three's convictions.

In March 2009, 2 more witnesses were charged with perjury, and 13 present and past police officers, [were charged with](#) conspiracy to pervert the course of justice during the 1988 investigation of White's death by fabricating evidence and pressuring witnesses to lie.

In July 2011 the trial began of the 2 witnesses charged with perjury and 8 of the 13 officers. Their trial was expected to last up to 7 months. The other defendants were scheduled to go on trial in 2012.

During opening statements [the prosecutor said](#) that the wrong men were charged in 1988 with White's murder based on the accused police officer's invention of a fictional scenario that was "almost entirely a fabrication and was largely the product of the imagination."

On July 12, 2011 Gafoor, 46, [testified as a](#) prosecution witness that the men known as

Cardiff Three cont. on p. 19

Cardiff Three cont. from p. 18

the Cardiff Three were “completely innocent,” and that he was alone with White when he murdered her. He said, “I met Lynette White for her services as a prostitute but I changed my mind and asked for my money back. She declined to give my money back. We argued and I grasped for a knife to threaten her to get my money back. We both had the knife. In the course of an argument I stabbed her and she was killed.” He also said that he cut his hand “when we were scrabbling over the knife.” That cut resulted in his blood at the crime scene that 15 years later led to his arrest and conviction.



Stephen Miller in September 2011 (Martin Godwin, *The Guardian*)



Tony Paris, one of the Cardiff Three

Vilday testified on August 10, 2011 that [she did not know](#) anything about White’s murder and that she only made a statement and testified in 1990 identifying his “killers” because she was pressured by the police. She said that once she made her statement and the men were arrested she

had to “live the lie.”

Stephen Miller, 45, testified in early September that he disapproved of what White was doing to make money, but he loved her and had hoped to marry her. During his testimony on September 27 it was disclosed that [he was paid](#) £571,000 (U.S.\$889,000).



Yusef Abdullahi, one of the Cardiff Three. He was 49 when he died in January 2011.

Yusef Abdullahi died in January 2011 at the age of 49 from a burst ulcer so he was unable to testify.

On December 1, 2011 the trial of eight officers ended when the trial judge determined they couldn’t receive a fair trial because the prosecution admitted it had failed to disclose documents related to the case that were believed to have been shredded. The judge acquitted the eight defendants.

In January 2012 [it was announced](#) the missing documents had been found and had not been destroyed, and that the Crown Prosecution Service was conducting an investigation into the handling of the officer’s trial.

It is estimated the officer’s five month trial cost up to £30 million (about US\$40 million)

Although it is positively known that Miller falsely confessed to his girlfriend’s murder and that the five men tried for the crime were framed by the police officer’s involved in the investigation, none of the police officers involved in the conspiracy has been held criminally liable for their actions.

Sources:

[New evidence grows for Cardiff Three](#), *The Guardian* (London), March 19, 1991

[Jailing of Cardiff Three witnesses](#) raises questions over law on duress, *The Guardian* (London), December 21, 2008

[15 people charged](#) over Lynette White murder case, *Walesonline.co.uk*, March 3, 2009

[Police on trial for prostitute murder](#) ‘frame-up’, *The Scotsman*, July 7, 2011

[Cardiff Three are completely innocent](#), says convicted killer of Lynette White, *The Guardian* (London), July 13, 2011

[Lynette White corruption trial](#): Key witness ‘named names’ in private letter, *Walesonline.co.uk*, August 10, 2011

[Lynette White corruption trial](#): Boyfriend received £571,000 for conviction error, *Walesonline.co.uk*, September 27, 2011

[Lynette White corruption trial](#): John Actie ‘had never heard of four key prosecution witnesses’, *Walesonline.co.uk*, September 28, 2011

[Trial of eight police officers](#) accused of framing men for murder collapses, *The Telegraph* (London), Dec. 1, 2011

[Lynette White police corruption trial](#): Documents found as DPP orders review, *BBC News*, Jan. 27, 2012

More Than 30,000 Copies Of *Kirstin Blaise Lobato’s Unreasonable Conviction* Downloaded From JD’s Website

More than 30,000 copies of the book [Kirstin Blaise Lobato’s Unreasonable Conviction](#) -- *Possibility of Guilt Replaces Proof Beyond A Reasonable Doubt* have been downloaded at no charge from [Justice Denied’s](#) website.*

The book details how Kirstin Lobato has twice been convicted of a July 8, 2001 Las Vegas homicide when the prosecution doesn’t deny it has no physical, forensic, eyewitness, confession, informant, surveillance video or documentary evidence she was in Las Vegas at any time on the day of the crime. The prosecution also concedes she was at her home 165 miles from Las Vegas at the time new scientific evidence conclusively proves the man died between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. The book also details

that in 2001 the 18-year-old Ms. Lobato was prosecuted even though the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and the Clark County District Attorney’s Office obtained evidence [three days after her arrest](#) she is innocent.

The 169-page book written by *Justice Denied’s* editor and publisher Hans Sherrer is supported by 416 source endnotes. In documents filed in the Nevada Supreme Court the Clark County District Attorney’s Office and the State of Nevada don’t assert there is a single factual error in the book.

[Click here to download](#) at no charge Kirstin Blaise Lobato’s *Unreasonable Conviction* in PDF format from, [www.justicedenied.org/kbl.htm](#).

A hardcopy of the book can be purchased from Justice Denied for \$13 by check, money order or a credit card [by clicking here](#).

Kirstin Lobato’s website with extensive information about her case is, [www.justice4kirstin.com](#).

[Click here to go to](#) the Kirstin Lobato

"Guilty Until Proven Innocent" website.

Justice Denied’s webpage with information about the Kirstin Lobato case is, [www.justicedenied.org/kbl.htm](#).

* As of January 31, 2013, 30,645 copies have been downloaded.

