

News

Outrage at verdict that 'puts police at risk'

Calls for retrial of killers of Pc Andrew Harper after jury finds them guilty only of manslaughter

By Bill Gardner

A JURY'S decision to clear three teenagers who killed Pc Andrew Harper of murder puts the safety of other police officers at risk, policing leaders and MPs said last night.

John Apter, the chairman of the Police Federation, described the verdict as "two fingers up at the criminal justice system", while a senior MP said

other criminals might be emboldened to attack officers without fear of severe punishment.

The Attorney General is facing calls to review the verdict over an alleged potential plot to intimidate jurors.

During the trial, an unidentified person in the public gallery was seen pointing at jurors, while one female juror in the case was dismissed after waving at the killers and saying "bye, boys" as she left the courtroom.

Henry Long, Albert Bowers and Jessie Cole smiled and hugged each other on Friday as they were cleared at the Old Bailey of murdering Pc Harper by dragging him behind their car, but were convicted of the lesser offence of

manslaughter. They will be sentenced on Friday but although still facing life are likely to serve far less prison time than if convicted of murder.

The decision sparked fury from MPs and policing chiefs including Mr Apter, who represents more than 120,000 officers in England and Wales.

"What we see far too often is offenders who assault police officers or any emergency worker, who are then let off with nothing more than a slap on the wrist," he said yesterday.

"They're literally putting two fingers up to the criminal justice system. These are violent individuals."

Priti Patel, the Home Secretary, called for tougher sentences for those



Pc Andrew Harper was dragged to his death down country lanes after catching a gang in the act of stealing a quad bike

who attack emergency workers in the wake of Pc Harper's killing.

But Mr Apter said the increase would be "worthless" unless it was accompanied by a "complete review and overhaul of the sentencing guidelines".

He said: "At the moment it's almost the exception that people go to prison." Ken Marsh, chairman of the Metropol-

itan Police Federation, added: "It's completely wrong and shouldn't be allowed. Cops need to be protected."

Pc Harper, 28, had caught the gang stealing a quad bike. He became entangled in the tow rope attached to Long's car and was dragged to his death for more than a mile down country lanes in Berkshire.

The killers were traced to the Four Houses Corner Travellers' site in Berkshire.

Mike Penning MP, a former policing minister, said he was referring the trial to the Attorney General over fears of jury tampering.

"I want her to look through the documents and examine the basis for a

trial," Mr Penning said yesterday. "Something seriously wrong has gone on here. I believe a verdict like this sends out the wrong message, and may put police officers at risk in the future."

Andrew Ledbury, a former employer of Pc Andrew Harper before he joined the police and a friend of the family, said he thought his death was murder.

Mr Ledbury told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme: "They knew exactly what they were doing."

Asked whether he wanted to see a retrial, he said: "Certainly I think this was murder and this will not in any way take away the pain of what has happened - it is about justice for those who committed the crime."

Patel vows to go all-out in effort to target people smugglers

By Jamie Johnson

PRITI PATEL has vowed to "put whatever resource is necessary" into dismantling people-smuggling after police arrested a gang illegally facilitating Channel crossings.

In an operation last week, 12 properties were raided, 11 people were arrested, £150,000 cash was seized and two vehicles were taken as the authorities clamped down on the gangs organising the dangerous crossings.

Already this year, 3,285 people have taken to the water in France and reached the UK, with a record 180 crossing in 15 boats on July 12.

This week alone, 288 people have made the journey.

The Home Secretary said: "I will not tolerate ruthless criminals looking to

'We will find you and we will stop at nothing to put you behind bars and strip you of your ill-gotten gains'

break the law by smuggling people into the UK illegally. I will put whatever resource is necessary to dismantle these gangs and stop these dangerous crossings, including going after the groups financing these criminal operations.

"This is a clear message to those behind these reckless crossings. We will find you and we will stop at nothing to put you behind bars and strip you of your ill-gotten gains."

The joint operation took place in London and Sheffield and was led by Immigration Enforcement Criminal and Financial Investigations. The raids were conducted in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police, the National Crime Agency, Border Force and French law enforcement counterparts.

Ms Patel met Gérald Darmanin, the new French interior minister, two weeks ago. Through a Declaration of Intent, it was agreed that a Franco-British Operational Research Unit to combat migrant smuggling will be established.



Green light Blackpool Tower is lit up in green in support of Samaritans Awareness Day. The charity stages Samaritans Awareness Day on July 24 every year to highlight that it is available 24 hours a day for anyone who may need its help. The event also celebrates the work of the charity's 20,000 trained volunteers.

EU's approach to talks led to 'paralysis', says government

By Edward Malnick
SUNDAY POLITICAL EDITOR

THE EU'S method of conducting trade negotiations has led to "paralysis", government sources have said, as they called for Brussels to "adapt" to enable more progress on the post-Brexit talks.

British sources criticised EU negotiators for slowing down talks on less contentious issues in order to focus on the most difficult areas, including fishing rights and demands for the UK to be bound by Brussels state aid rules.

UK negotiators want the two sides to make progress on areas where they are closer to agreements and leave the most difficult issues to be settled later.

A UK government source said: "The way the EU insisted on parallelism led to paralysis. Everything needs to be up for discussion, but it makes no sense to have everything going at the speed of the most difficult issues. They need to adapt their approach to make sure talks throughout the summer don't suffer from unnecessary roadblocks."

Michel Barnier, the EU's chief negotiator, returns to London this week for informal talks with David Frost, his British counterpart, ahead of more formal negotiations next month.

Last week the UK set a new deadline of October for a trade deal with the EU to be signed after Mr Barnier said an agreement was now "unlikely". The two sides will continue talking through the summer after conceding that Boris Johnson's July deadline will be missed.

The EU's demands for the UK to abide by a "level playing-field" of rules after Brexit include proposals for the country to continue to abide by strict limits on state aid, the subsidies that governments provide for businesses.

A UK source said: "What's needed is internal reflection on the EU side on whether what they're asking us is consistent with our status as an independent country."

EU officials fear the UK could pressure Brussels into agreeing major concessions on the most contentious issues if they are not resolved in advance of other areas.

Social media sites 'still sucking children into self-harm and suicide'

TELEGRAPH CAMPAIGN

Duty of care



By Nick Owens and Mike Wright

THE number of children being admitted to hospital for self-harm has risen three-fold over the last decade, latest NHS figures have revealed, prompting the father of Molly Russell to call for Duty of Care laws that force social media companies to purge online images glorifying the act.

The latest provisional statistics show children aged 17 and under were admitted 4,455 times in 2019-20, compared

to 1,420 in 2009-10. This means health workers are now seeing an average of 12 children a day arriving at hospital for self-inflicted injuries.

Ian Russell, the father of 14-year-old schoolgirl Molly, who took her own life after viewing self-harm and suicide content on Instagram and other apps, warned social media sites were still sucking children down dangerous "algorithmic whirlpools" that normalised depression and suicide.

He also expressed frustration that more than a year after Instagram pledged to remove all "graphic" self-harm content *The Sunday Telegraph* was able to find images on the site of children cutting themselves and users

posting messages glorifying suicide. One post read "suicide is the only thing we can control in our lives" and another posted "I am going to die anyway, so why not today?"

Mr Russell said: "Today the sort of harmful material Molly viewed can still be found on the platform (Instagram). Young people who are struggling with their mental health are still vulnerable when online."

"The inaction of the platforms is only matched by the inaction of our politicians. We are still allowing our children onto the information superhighway and have yet to set any form of effective speed limit for their safety." He added: "It's time for companies, governments

'It's time for companies, governments and individuals to make the internet a safer place'

and individuals to do whatever possible to make the internet a safer place and prevent more wasted young lives."

The Government is drawing up duty of care legislation that will impose a legal responsibility on tech companies to protect children on their services, a measure campaigned for by *The Telegraph* since 2018.

Under current proposals, companies found to breach their duty of care could

face fines running into the billions, criminal prosecution or having their apps barred from the UK. However, ministers have only committed to bring a bill before MPs by the end of the current parliamentary session, leading children's charities to warn it may not come into force until 2024.

Instagram said that it had removed all the posts found by *The Sunday Telegraph* and that it was developing new technology to help better scan and find such material on its site. The company said it had removed more than 1.3million self-harm posts in the first three months of 2020 alone.

Tara Hopkins, Instagram's head of policy for Europe, the Middle East and

Africa, said: "We have strict rules - developed with experts, including the Samaritans - that do not allow the promotion or glorification of suicide or self-harm, or content that is graphic. We remove it as soon as we find it."

"We use technology to detect this content and direct people to organisations that can help."

Social media firms are also facing demands to open up their secretive algorithms to health workers and academics.

Last year, the Royal College of Psychiatrists said duty of care laws should also open up tech giants' data, as the lack of access was frustrating attempts to understand the links between social media and children's mental health.

Global Britain urged to open doors for developing world

By Edward Malnick
SUNDAY POLITICAL EDITOR

ENTREPRENEURS in developing countries should be allowed to register firms in the UK as "e-citizens", as part of Boris Johnson's push for a global Britain, the Prime Minister's former business adviser has said.

James Sproule has called on Mr Johnson to allow a new generation of start-ups to operate within UK company law from abroad, beginning with Commonwealth countries such as Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia.

A report by Mr Sproule, published by the Centre for Policy Studies think tank, says the move would help entrepreneurs in developing countries to draw investment to countries where the "start-up spirit" is currently "stifled", including, in some cases, by corruption and maladministration. It would also give British investors an opportunity to gain the "higher returns" available in developing countries, knowing that their investments would be protected by UK law, he states.

Speaking earlier this year, Mr Johnson said that Brexit gave the UK the opportunity to "go out into the world",

adding that free trade "has done more than any other single economic idea to raise billions out of poverty and incredibly fast".

Mr Sproule, who is now UK Chief Economist at Sweden's Handelsbanken, said his proposals were intended to "help flesh out that vision" by putting the UK "at the heart of the global trade in services ideas".

Under his proposals, the UK would introduce "e-citizenship" akin to a scheme set up in Estonia in 2014 to allow entrepreneurs to set up Estonian firms from anywhere in the world.

The criteria for e-citizenship would be more stringent than for a business visa application, allowing those who are approved to also qualify for working visas. E-citizens would be able to set up UK-registered "e-international" companies and open an international British bank account.

The report states: "Britain's legal system, and its financial institutions, are among the most trusted in the world. We are the home not just to Europe's financial services and industry and its largest capital markets, but dominate in fields such as accountancy and legal services."



Road block A police car and officers behind a cordon in Chislehurst, south-east London, where a man died on Friday night after being hit by a van which then drove off.

Rapper Wiley investigated over 'anti-Semitic venom'

By Craig Simpson

POLICE have opened an investigation into an anti-Semitic tirade by rap artist Wiley on social media, after Twitter faced criticism for not stopping it.

The London rapper, whose real name is Richard Cowie Jr, was dropped by his management company following the diatribe on Twitter and Instagram which included statements calling Jews "cowards" and "snakes".

The Campaign Against Antisemitism asked police to investigate to stop Wiley spreading "anti-Jewish venom" and threatened to pursue a private prosecution of the grime artist.

Metropolitan Police officers are investigating the posts only tentatively curtailed by Twitter issuing a temporary ban of his account, which is followed by around 500,000 fans.

The Holocaust Educational Trust branded Wiley's lengthy rant "racist" and said Twitter's lack of firm action against the rapper was "pathetic".

Police in Tower Hamlets said: "We have received a number of reports relating to alleged anti-Semitic tweets posted on social media. The relevant material is being assessed." Beginning

a series of comments on Friday evening, many of Wiley's messages concerning Jews were still available yesterday as MPs condemned the use of anti-Semitic tropes by the rapper.

Wiley branded Jewish people "too touchy" and accused them of holding the financial and political levers of power, comparing the community to the Ku Klux Klan.

His posts also suggested black people were exploited, historically and in the music industry, by Jews in purported positions of power.

MPs Jess Phillips and Luciana Berger questioned why Twitter had not taken steps to remove the comments, and comedian David Baddiel accused the platform of not affording the same hate speech protections to Jewish people as other minorities.

A statement from the Campaign Against Antisemitism made after it reported his comment to the authorities said: "Twitter has allowed Wiley to spew anti-Semitic venom for 24 hours."

The campaign group said it would consider a private prosecution if no action was taken against the rapper.

Representatives of Wiley and Twitter have been contacted for comment.