

They appeared to pre-empt and influence the "independent" investigation before it had even begun. The statement led directly to a report in the *Mail on Sunday* on the 6th October which appeared to put the police story beyond doubt:—

"Scotland Yard confirmed that 49-year-old Mrs Cynthia Jarrett became ill after she was in a struggle with officers who visited her home following the arrest of her son."

We consider that it was quite wrong for an official statement to be put out which stated the police view alone of an event which was known to be disputed and which was under investigation by another force.

4.58 Late that night after midnight, members of the Jarrett family and a number of friends went down to Tottenham Police Station to demand more information. They again saw Chief Superintendent Stainsby. After a lot of pressure he went away and produced a copy of the warrant. Mr Jarrett could see at once that it was not a warrant which could have been taken on the search, because it was a clean, uncreased piece of paper. But the original warrant was not produced, and they could obtain no more answers. Martha Osamor said of the visit:—

"For them to behave in such an insensitive way, for him to keep repeating to us what he has already said, meant that a lot of people who were there felt they were treating us as if we hadn't got any sense at all."

4.59 While they were inside the police station they heard the sound of smashing glass. People in a small demonstration outside had thrown some stones at the police station windows. The Jarrett family and the community leaders present were able to persuade them to stop and go home. George Martin, of the West Indian Leadership Council, was one of those there. Before he left he said these words to the Chief Superintendent:—

"This is no longer a family matter. It's gone beyond that. It has now become a community matter, and I think that it is important that somebody of some importance makes a statement."

Chapter 5

OCTOBER 6 – WHAT HAPPENED?

Reactions to the Tragedy

5.1 The news of Mrs Jarrett's death spread quickly. Some learned about it during the night at a party, some the next morning. People were stunned:—

"Just hearing the news on the radio about Mrs Jarrett, it made something just turn over inside of me."

"On the Sunday morning I picked up this newspaper and I read it. And while I was sitting there...my hands were shaking with the paper, because I personally know Mrs Jarrett and I know all of her family because I've been to school with them."

The younger people reacted to what they had heard in the light of their own experience, and they thought of their own mothers. Stafford Scott spoke for the feeling of many:—

"Because it has happened before – police officers have taken away people's keys and entered their homes without alerting the people inside – it was easy for people to believe it had happened in this instance. Because people have seen police manhandling members of their families whilst raiding, it was easy to believe in this instance. So what was actually taking place was a lot of emotional transferral. They wasn't thinking just in terms of Floyd Jarrett's mother died today, they were thinking in terms that it could very easily have been my mother. So people were feeling very sickened by what had happened. People were very upset."

Youth worker Harry Adams saw the death against the shooting of Stephen Waldorf and the subsequent acquittal of the police officers, and the shooting of the child John Shorthouse in Birmingham:—

"If they could stand by and watch them damage White people in that way, what they could get away with with us? People watched that and watched it very carefully. Now when Mrs Jarrett died, that was the end. As far as we were concerned they had overstepped the mark – not overstepped it, they had run it completely out of existence."

Millard Scott put it quite simply:—

“There is no way we can accept the death of a Black mother within our community.”

5.2 During the morning there was a lot of telephoning between community leaders and the police. Roy Limb had heard the news from Dolly Kiffin at about eight o'clock:—

“I thought about it that Sunday morning and then rang Couch and said ‘There is enormous tension within the community now. We must explain to people properly what happened. You’ve got to tell us what happened’, in my own mind hoping and praying that there was a rational explanation for what had taken place.”

At the same time the senior youth officer Mike Bates was instructing Stafford Scott and other youth workers to go down and help keep things calm.

5.3 The police arranged a meeting which started at 12.45 pm at Tottenham Police Station. D.A.C. Richards was in the chair, with Chief Superintendent Couch and another senior officer. There were two councillors, Ernie Large and Andreas Mikkides; Roy Limb, the Chief Executive; Eric Clarke, chair of the Community and Police Consultative Group; Chris Kavallares, chair of the Haringey Community Relations Council (HCRC); Jeff Crawford, senior Community Relations Officer of the HCRC; Hyacinth Moody, chair of the HCRC Police Liaison Committee; Dolly Kiffin; and Floyd and Michael Jarrett, who came after Dolly Kiffin insisted that she would not attend the meeting unless members of the Jarrett family were there.

5.4 In the words of Ernie Large, D.A.C. Richards was “totally in charge” at the meeting. In answer to all questions, all he would say was that there was going to be an inquiry under the supervision of the Police Complaints Authority; that the Chief Constable of Essex would look into the matters raised; and that he could not comment further. Because of his experience as a magistrate, Ernie Large concentrated on the question of the warrant, but got no answers:—

“Down came the curtain that it was subject to an inquiry, there was nothing they could say, therefore it was all a one-way traffic. Which annoyed me. If you want to defuse a situation, you have to defuse it by being open”.

5.5 There were demands from all the people from the community for the suspension of the officers who had been involved in the search of Mrs Jarrett’s home. Roy Limb was very clear about the reaction of D.A.C. Richards:—

“Richards’ answer to that was that the matter was now out of his hands. They had already put it in the hands of the Police Complaints Authority. I was rather surprised by that and said so. But that was what they insisted upon, that the matter was in the hands of the Police Complaints Authority and therefore they couldn’t say anything about it.”

This was an incorrect answer. The suspension of police officers pending inquiries is a matter of internal discipline for the senior police officer to decide. Later on in a letter to Roy Limb, the deputy chair of the Police Complaints Authority, Roland Moyle, confirmed:—

“The question of suspending police officers is outside the powers of the Police Complaints Authority. Suspension is a matter for the Metropolitan Police.”

The Police (Discipline) Regulations lay down the legal position:

“Where a report, allegation or complaint is received from which it appears that a member of a police force may have committed a disciplinary or criminal offence, the chief officer concerned may suspend that member from membership of the force and from his office as constable, whether or not the matter had been investigated.”

5.6 We find it extraordinary that an officer of D.A.C. Richards’ high rank was not able to give correct information about a matter which was of intense concern to those present. Many witnesses have stressed to us that the suspension of the four officers was the one action which the police could have taken which would have given some assurance to the Black community that the circumstances of Mrs Jarrett’s death were being taken seriously. We agree. **Suspension from duty is a common practice in many walks of life when something serious has happened and there are disputed allegations to be investigated. Suspension would have implied neither guilt or innocence. The death of a woman during a police search of her home was just such a case. The failure to suspend was short sighted and insensitive.** The community leaders left the police station at 1.50 pm in a sombre mood. Roy Limb said:—

“All I can say is I was extremely sad when I left there and very

concerned, because we had heard nothing that could help us to go and defuse the tension that was there in the community."

5.7 As they left, a demonstration was gathering outside the police station. It grew to over a hundred people and lasted for about one and half hours. There was angry shouting at the police officers who were present. Some people lay in the road. One stone was thrown through the police station window but otherwise there was no violence. The police response was restrained and sensible. They blocked off the High Road in both directions to give room for the demonstration. They policed the demonstration with a thin line of officers in ordinary uniform, with special units well out of sight. They stood while the crowd shouted angrily and made intimidating gestures, without reacting or making arrests. Chief Superintendent Couch described the scene to a meeting of the Community and Police Consultative Group which we attended:—

"I and nine officers stood for one and a half hours taking all that they could give us. We wanted to let them vent their feelings."

Nick Wright of the Police Research Unit paid tribute to both the Chief Superintendent and his officers:—

"Couch is perhaps the most sophisticated politician amongst the police locally. He understood the necessity of dealing with it in those terms. He wasn't the only one. His subordinates right down to the local PCs understood that they had to deal with it on the streets there. It wasn't just him but his officers were in amongst the crowd, unarmed, not equipped with riot gear, talking to people. They didn't arrest anybody, they didn't get angry, they just stood their ground and argued the point and it gradually went down. I don't think that could happen without effective leadership."

5.8 A meeting of Black community leaders had been arranged for the afternoon at the West Indian Centre in Clarendon Road. People at the demonstration protested about this. They said they did not know the West Indian Centre and did not believe that it would be an adequate place to hold a meeting. They believed that there should be a meeting on the Broadwater Farm Estate. They thought — rightly as it turned out — that many people would come to the Youth Association because of Floyd Jarrett's close involvement with it. They wanted those who were prominent in the Black community to come down and tell them exactly what the position was and assure them that there would be no cover-up of how Mrs Jarrett had died. So the

community representatives who had been at the police station were asked to come on from the West Indian Centre to the Youth Association at any time after 4 pm for a second meeting. At around 3.30 pm, as the demonstration was getting a bit ragged and the Youth Association workers feared that there might be violence, they took action to avoid it. They advised people to leave the police station and come back for the meeting on the estate.

5.9 The meeting at the West Indian Centre started about two o'clock. There was an audience of about 40 people. On the platform were Martha Osamor, chair of the Haringey Independent Policing Committee; William Trant, an officer of the West Indian Standing Conference; Councillor Bernie Grant, and Councillor Steve Banerji, chair of the police sub-committee. Councillor Banerji noticed that there was "a significant absence of Black youth at the meeting"; but the older people in the audience gave accounts of their own experiences at the hands of the police. Nick Wright wrote in his report that "the most striking thing was the deep anger of the audience". There were calls for the suspension of the police officers, and a resolution was passed containing four demands:—

- (1) A full public inquiry into Cynthia Jarrett's death;
- (2) The resignation of D.A.C. Richards;
- (3) The withholding of the Metropolitan Police precept by the council;
- (4) For the Jarrett family's account of their mother's death to be accepted.

Dolly Kiffin came in during the meeting to report on the demonstration and the feelings of the people there. She then went on to the Youth Association. Other people followed to the Youth Association after the meeting at the West Indian Centre ended. They were George Martin, Vernon Moore and Arthur Lawrence, all members of the West Indian Leadership Council; Martha Osamor, Roy Limb, Councillor Grant and Councillor Sharon Lawrence. They reached the Youth Association at various times between 5.30 and 6.00 pm.

5.10 People had been gathering at the Youth Association during the afternoon. Eventually there were about 70 people there of all ages, including a number of older parents. Stafford Scott described to us the bewilderment and confusion he observed during the period before councillors and others came from the other meeting:—

"There were no plans. People were terribly upset – this was something totally new to the community. We as professional community and youth workers weren't sure how to handle the situation, much less the ordinary members of our Youth Association or ordinary members of the community. People were bewildered – there was no clear decision on what to do next. People wanted to see the big shots of the community, and they wanted to hear exactly what was being said so that they could come to some kind of decision. But because of the nature of what happened, emotions were running high, people were feeling bad, but they were feeling sad at the same time. There were no clear cut decisions being taken either way. A lot of people wanted to return to the police station to protest, a lot of people thought it would be a waste of time, a lot of people thought it would lead to trouble."

5.11 There were two community reactions taking place during the afternoon which though separate were not in conflict. The established representatives of the Black community, mainly from the older generation, were meeting in an ordered way to express their grief and anger through a formal resolution. Others, mainly but not entirely young people, were gathering at the Youth Association and were wanting to express that grief and anger through an immediate and active protest. Martha Osamor described the interaction between the older and younger people:–

"By this time, remember it's almost 24 hours now, there hasn't been any kind of answer to any of the questions. No move on the part of the police to calm things down or help us to calm things down. So we got to the meeting and the youths were still very angry. So what they said to me was that we've come to the stage now where I have to go. They said they are not going to stop me from meetings, from passing resolutions and so on, but at the same time they don't want me to stop them from going back to picket the police station, because they want the answers".

5.12 Dolly Kiffin had gone upstairs to her office and did not take part in the meeting. The Youth Association workers tried to get a formal meeting structure going, with Martha Osamor in the chair, but as she told us, she could not play a chair's role:–

"It's difficult to say who chaired it. What I wanted to do was for me to speak to them, then introduce Bernie from the council to say that the council has agreed things like this Inquiry, and other things

that we were demanding for them to do. But they didn't even let me finish or let Bernie start."

Councillor Grant spoke of the intensity of the anger in the room:–

"The fact that they didn't allow me to speak seemed to indicate to me that if I had spoken it wouldn't have made any difference at all. People were really hyped up. I have never seen anything like it. People were very, very threatening. They were very aggressive."

Mrs Scott, the mother of Millard, Stafford and Roger Scott, recalled what happened in vivid language:–

"And Bernie was mentioning marching to Downing Street and the House of Commons, but the voice of the children went over Bernie, and he couldn't talk. And because Bernie wasn't able to talk there, I shouted at them and asked them to listen to what Bernie had to say. But they think Bernie was more White minded. That was the opinion of most of them, that Bernie wasn't going to give them the right."

5.13 Mrs Scott spoke strongly for the proposal to go back to the police station:–

"And I said to them, 'let's go back to the police station today, and whatever they are going to do let them do it out there'. I said, 'when we get there we'll sit in the road and we'll stop every car that comes down. So let them take us up off the road and do what they like, because the next one can be me'."

George Martin was also content with the police station decision. We asked whether in view of the anger it would have been a peaceful demonstration. He replied that there were enough older people that were respected by the youths to make sure of that. "I don't think they would have created any problems while we were there."

5.14 The decision to go again to the police station reflected the established custom in the Black community, which had been expressed on many occasions in the past, that when they believe that the police have been responsible for an outrage, it is to the police station that people must go to express their feelings and to demand information. Stafford Scott described the reasons:–

"We knew that by going to the police station we wouldn't achieve anything. The police would not suddenly say OK, we did wrong, you can all go home. But we wanted the police to see that this community was going to stand together, that this community would not accept the death of one of its older members, a law abiding

older member at that. And yes, we would like to stop traffic, we would like to cause enough inconvenience that television cameras are down there, so what we are feeling is actually being made known to the public."

5.15 Around 6.30 to 6.45 pm the meeting broke up and people began slowly to move towards the police station. There was not to be a march. Groups were just going to make their way there. If they had reached the police station, there would have needed to be a further example of sensitivity on the part of the police for a confrontation to have been avoided. It would have been the duty of the police to have done everything possible to have enabled that demonstration to have passed off without disorder. But in the event those who resolved to go back to the police station got no further than the edge of the estate.

THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE POLICE

5.16 We described earlier how the Tottenham police were saying well before 5th October that a riot was likely in their area. Their precautions intensified after the shooting of Mrs Groce at the Brixton disturbances. We have read the reports of Mr Kennedy, the Fire Officer in charge of operations for North London. In a report written after the Brixton disturbances, he said:—

"It should be known that every day since 28th September, the brigade had been advised by the police that civil disturbances had been expected in both North and South London areas, with Brixton, Balham, Lewisham, Tottenham, Harlesden and Hackney as possible sources where trouble on a large scale could be expected."

In his report on the Broadwater Farm events Mr Kennedy said:—

"Due to closer liaison with the police in all divisions since the Brixton civil disturbance the previous weekend, the duty officer in the J Division had been informed on 5th October 1985 by the police that trouble was expected that weekend in the areas of Tottenham High Street and Wood Green."

He set up a "forward control point" on 5th October at the New River Sports Ground in White Hart Lane in order to be accessible to both areas.

5.17 It is clear from these reports that the police were generally expecting riots in areas with large Black populations in the week following Brixton, and were specifically targeting the Tottenham/

Wood Green area for the weekend of 5th/6th October, before the death of Mrs Jarrett. Dolly Kiffin recalls going shopping on the morning of 5th October in Wood Green and Bruce Grove and seeing "a whole heap of police cars and vans".

5.18 Since the police were expecting riots in the Tottenham area they would also have had the Broadwater Farm Estate in the forefront of their minds. It was revealed in the *Police Review* that there had for many months been in existence a document entitled "*Contingency Plans for the Control of Disorder on the Broadwater Farm Estate – Tottenham*". A visitor to Tottenham police station had observed that in four or five parts of the police station there were pinned up maps of Broadwater Farm, which stood out as the only maps apart from the map of the district.

5.19 So there was already a keen state of readiness on 5th October. By the morning of 6th October, the police leadership would have been well aware of the reaction of the community to the death of Mrs Jarrett. According to the Richards report, the reserve manpower for the area was increased for Sunday to 200 officers in each of two eight hour shifts, made up of some coach serials and some district support units in transits. One of their bases was a feeding centre in Northumberland Park, half a mile north of the estate. In the early afternoon they would have heard of the demonstration at Tottenham Police Station. We have already given credit for the policing of that demonstration, and the fact that the reserve units were not called out to confront it. But as the Richards report states:—

"Police officers who were present had differing conceptions of the intention of the demonstrators. Some thought that the threats that had been made were more rhetoric arising from a release of anger and tension; others were quite convinced that there would be attacks on police and/or serious disorders later in the day."

As the day shift (10.00 am – 6.00 pm) waited through the day, the atmosphere must have been charged with anticipation of trouble.

5.20 At 3.15 pm on 6th October two of the Broadwater Farm home beat officers were visiting an address in The Avenue when bottles and missiles were thrown at them. The Richards report says that a crowd of Black youths were responsible. A witness whom we interviewed saw the two officers retreating "under the attack of two coloured youths, who threw bottles and missiles at the police". One officer, PC

Caton, was struck in the back and suffered a severe injury to his spleen. Information about the attack must have been passed back to the waiting officers. They must also have been aware that the people who had been at the demonstration outside the police station had gone into the Broadwater Farm Estate for the groups leaving the police station would surely have been observed and followed. Indeed the police received calls between 3.15 and 4.15, according to the Richards report, that up to a 100 youths, some of them wearing masks, were running through the estate banging on doors. We have had no direct evidence about this. But whether true or not, it confirms that the attention of the police was centred on Broadwater Farm.

5.21 Then for two hours, while the meeting was going on in the Youth Association, nothing happened. According to the Richards report this was also the period of change over of the police shifts at the Northumberland Park "feeding centre". The report says:—

"It was necessary, in order to provide all day coverage to have a 10.00 am to 6.00 pm shift and a 4.00 pm to midnight shift, each of 200 men, the two hour overlap being required for briefing, feeding and changeover purposes."

5.22 Because the police have not participated in the Inquiry, we do not know what was said at the briefing of the new shifts. We do know from the Richards report that at around 6.30 pm there was an order that only protected district support unit vehicles should answer calls to the Broadwater Farm Estate. The report states that this was ordered because of the attack on PC Caton, and because of a second attack at 6.30 in The Avenue, when two Black youths on a motor cycle had smashed a bottle into the driver's window of a police car. We do not know what other instructions were given to the large force of police that was assembled to deal with the situation that had developed through the day. It was obvious by the end of the afternoon that Black youths had gathered on the estate in large numbers and that the situation was still very tense. Some plans must have been made to deal with possible disorder on the estate.

THE OUTBREAK

5.23 After about 6.45 pm some people left quite promptly from the Youth Association after the meeting. Mrs Scott wanted to take her young daughter home and go on from there to the police station. She walked up Willan Road and onto The Avenue, where she saw two big

transit vans coming up "full with officers in uniform with riot gear". They passed the head of Willan Road and continued down The Avenue. Then she saw a third van. She looked back and saw the third van turn down Willan Road:—

"So I thought: 'Oh my God, they gone down there and those children are there'. But I still didn't think there was going to be anything."

She went on her way to Bruce Grove. Martha Osamor was very tired and drove home to have a rest. She too saw the three transit vans driving down The Avenue. At the time that she left the youths from the meeting had not begun to come up Willan Road.

5.24 A woman who lives at the junction of Willan Road and The Avenue left home at about two minutes to seven to go to the shop on the corner of The Avenue and Mount Pleasant Road. As she came back, she saw two minibuses with metal grills come past and turn into the estate. About three cars which were coming out of the estate made U-turns and followed the police vans back in. Soon afterwards she heard a sound as if bottles were being smashed.

5.25 The view from inside the estate was given to us by Arthur Lawrence and George Martin, who with Vernon Moore, were representatives of the West Indian Leadership Council. They were being driven by Vernon Moore out along Willan Road from Tangmere. They were just reaching the bend in Willan Road when the first clash occurred. About ten youths, the first group to come from the meeting, were walking up towards the Willan Road exit. Arthur Lawrence recalls seeing one police transit van which had reached a point in the road by the day nursery. The youths went up and knocked on the van with their hands. They had no weapons. The van reversed back and the youths ran after it. At that moment two other police transit vans approached from The Avenue.

5.26 George Martin also described the first contact between the group of youths and the lead van:—

"They rushed out in front of the vans, attempted to stop them coming any further and shouted out that they are coming. Obviously the other youths that were behind us heard and chased up to pass us, to make sure that it didn't proceed any further. They banged the van to make sure that the van didn't come down there." He too saw no weapons used. He said that the three vans came

down one after the other in line, but we think, looking at the evidence both from those outside and those inside, that one van came down first and two others followed shortly afterwards.

5.27 Joanne George saw the scene when the vans had reversed back and reached the junction of Willan Road with The Avenue. She was being driven back in a mini-cab from the Bruce Grove area. As she reached Willan Road, two of the police vans were reversing out. A group of about ten youths ran down from the direction of Stapleford and threw some bottles at them. She had her young children with her, and ordered the driver to go straight on and away from the estate.

5.28 A woman living in Rochford, with a good view over Willan Road, saw three or four youths going up the hill. Then a police van came half way down the hill. She believed that it reversed into the driveway near the day nursery and turned around to go up the hill again. Then other police vans came down. Soon the whole area was swarming with police and youths.

5.29 Stafford Scott had stayed behind to help lock up the Youth Association, and caught up the main group as it moved up the hill towards the exit. He could see vans at the junction, and one or two missiles thrown. He went with a large group towards Mount Pleasant Road. The officers were getting out of their vans at the junction of Mount Pleasant Road and The Avenue. By the time he reached the junction, officers in riot uniform were already out of their vans, hitting people with truncheons and telling them to get back into the estate. He was pushed back. He spoke of the fury in the voices of the police:—

“There was cries of ‘wait until we get in there and get you, you coons, you don’t come out until we tell you, get back in there, you bastards, get back in there’. So the whole group got pushed back into the estate. The only people who may not have been pushed back were a few of the older ones. Most of the people ran down — this was a very frightening moment, people had just seen police officers jumping out of vans and attacking them with truncheons, people pushed back into the estate with no apparent reason. A lot of people said ‘no, don’t go back, why should we go back?’ So a lot of people wanted to resist the police pushing us down the hill. A lot of people were not interested in resisting, they decided to run back down the hill. It was a general state of confusion. There were

young girls there with young children and then a lot of screaming, a lot of shouting.”

5.30 At a little before 7.00 pm Cliff Ford heard a shout and looked out of his window on the 12th floor of Northolt block. He saw a group of lads running up Willan Road and off the estate. Within a few minutes “the group seem to be running back”, and he saw the Willan Road exit “sealed off by the police”.

5.31 Arthur Lawrence and George Martin saw the three vans return to the junction and move down towards Mount Pleasant Road. Mr Moore then drove his car across the junction and stopped a short way across in Marsden Road. George Martin and Arthur Lawrence got out while Vernon Moore went to park his car further away. By the time they had returned to the junction, The Avenue was completely blocked by police in riot gear, out of their vans, at the Mount Pleasant Road junction. The youths were on the corner of Willan Road and The Avenue. Some of the youths then began to turn over cars, and missiles were thrown at the line of police. Two cars were turned over and burned close to the junction. They attempted to turn over another car but were stopped by George Martin and his colleagues. Soon after a wall at the corner of Willan Road and The Avenue was knocked down and dismantled for ammunition to throw at the police line. The fighting had started.

Nick Wright of the Police Research Unit had been, with his colleague Debbie Wild, observing the movement of police vehicles in Tottenham High Road. From about 6.00 pm to 6.30 pm he had seen a build-up of police traffic in both directions both district support unit vans and big green buses. At a certain point towards 7.00 pm it became clear that something serious was going on, because police vehicles were coming from both directions and turning into Bruce Grove toward Lordship Lane. They were clearly in a hurry:—

“There was one incident where two big green police coaches were detained at the red traffic lights at the junction of Tottenham High Road and Bruce Grove. They were so anxious to go up Bruce Grove and Lordship Lane that they jumped out of their vehicle and banged on the roof of a car that was waiting at a red traffic light, and told the car to move so that they can jump the lights.”

The time of this observation would correspond with the time of first contact between the group of youths and the police van on Willan Road.

5.32 The Richards report states that at 6.40 pm there were two district support units of local officers in the vicinity of the estate. 999 calls were made at 6.49 pm and 6.53 pm, saying that police were needed in The Avenue. The report continues:—

“A D.S.U. (Y 32) went to the scene to investigate but shortly after their arrival, at 7.05 pm, they were subjected to a violent attack by a large group of Black youths, who threw bricks and petrol bombs at their vehicle and struck at the bodywork with machetes. The ferocity of this attack was such, that had the officers not been in a protected vehicle, they would almost certainly have been killed or seriously injured.”

The report adds that Y 32 then withdrew to a safe location in order to put on protective equipment, and the Wood Green control room began to mobilise the men who were immediately available. The report continues with a paragraph which we will have to examine with great care:—

“Units began to arrive at the scene from 7.10 pm onwards. They found that a barricade of blazing vehicles had been erected at all four vehicular entrances to the estate, (Gloucester Road, Willan Road, Griffin Road and Adams Road) and at each location they came under missile and petrol bomb fire as they approached.”

5.33 This report conflicts with the evidence which we have received in a number of very important respects:—

(1) The evidence is that the first van came into the estate and down Willan Road as far as the day nursery. The Richards report does not state this, saying only that the van was called to The Avenue, and went to “the scene”.

(2) The report mentions only one district support unit van. But the evidence is that three vans were on the scene in the initial stages and came down Willan Road into the estate. They would contain a total of over 30 officers.

(3) The evidence before us is that the initial contact between the lead van and the initial group of youths was through the youths banging with their hands against the vans; but they did not use bricks or petrol bombs or machetes; that missiles were not thrown until the vans had reached The Avenue and officers began to block the road; and that bricks began to be thrown at that point by some of the youths who obtained them by demolishing the wall.

(4) The evidence is that, while cars were over-turned and set alight in The Avenue, that happened after the officers from the vans had

blocked The Avenue, and not before.

(5) The evidence from many witnesses is that the police officers in the vans were already in riot gear and did not withdraw to any location in order to put on their equipment.

(6) The precise number of youths is difficult to determine. The evidence is that the initial clash with the lead van involved a small number of youths, around ten. Others followed behind them to the junction, but of these many ran back when the police blocked the road. The numbers involved in any actions against the police in this initial phase were small.

5.34 How then do we conclude that the disturbances began? By the evening of 6th October, police community relations at Broadwater Farm had reached a very low point indeed. The youths leaving the estate were extremely angry. They not only knew that a Black woman had died in the course of a police raid; they were also sure that senior officers had not taken this death at all seriously. They were leaving the estate to demonstrate their feelings outside the base of local police power. They are confronted by three police vans with riot protection containing police in riot gear. They express their anger by banging on the side of the lead van with their hands. The police in the vans know that young people have been assembling on the estate. They are aware that their colleagues have been attacked twice during the afternoon. They react to the banging on the side of the van by immediately calling for assistance. The nature of the call is indicated by the claim in the Richards report that “they would have almost certainly have been killed”. As a consequence the police response is massive. It takes the form of officers in riot gear coming out of their vans, stopping the youths from going further and pushing them back into the estate. For many of the youths this blocking of their free movement at such a time is intolerable. They react to it by using any means which are available.

5.35 Yet in the afternoon a different method of policing had been used. The same youths had stood and expressed their anger for 90 minutes in front of the police station. Here, the police had accepted that it was necessary to allow this to take place. We have no doubt that the youths were just as angry at this time as later on when they were leaving the estate. But in the afternoon there had been no disturbance. Why was the response different in the evening? We have already identified two very different approaches to policing in this

area. We have noted the disagreement of many officers with the approach of Chief Superintendent Couch. In the afternoon, his strategy of policing was followed. In the evening, the strategy deployed was one of massive force.

THE FIGHTING SPREADS

5.36 The view of Cliff Ford from his twelfth floor flat in Northolt covered both Willan Road to the south and Griffin Road to the east. Four or five minutes after he had seen people running down from Willan Road, he saw police at Griffin Road:—

“I saw them all arrive there and go straight across the road and block it.”

When he saw them arrive nothing was happening at Griffin Road, and no barricades had been built.

5.37 A woman whom we interviewed had seen the confrontation at Willan Road and decided to leave the estate with a friend by the Griffin Road exit where nothing was happening:—

“At the point of getting to Griffin Road, about eight lines of police came around the corner in formation, trotting, with all their riot shields, and as they swooped round the corner and filled up the road, my friend and I had to squeeze by on the pavement. Abuse was shouted at me, like ‘Black slag’.”

She too was clear that there were no disturbances at Griffin Road at that point.

5.38 It seems that some of the police officers who arrived at the Griffin Road entrance actually came down Griffin Road and under the Rochford block. Stafford Scott, after coming down from the Willan Road junction, says that he saw police officers emerging from Rochford, and that a crowd rushed toward them and forced them to retreat back to Griffin Road. Leonardo Leon, who lives in Rochford, with views from different rooms in his flat facing both south to Willan Road and north towards Griffin Road, saw people moving up towards Willan Road and then suddenly running back. He could see police officers blocking the road, bricks being thrown, and a car set alight. Then he heard shouting underneath Rochford. He went to the window on the north side of his flat. He then saw people pushing cars up, towards Griffin Road towards police lines at the mouth of Griffin Road.

5.39 Nick Wright and Debbie Wilde had hurried towards Broadwater Farm after seeing the rush of police vehicles in that direction. They cut through the back streets to the Adams Road entrance, just to the north of Griffin Road. Nick Wright said that as they arrived, various police units were also arriving, a short shield unit and then a long shield unit arriving in a green bus. They deployed across Adams Road. There were some people in the estate on Adams Road, shouting and arguing, but there was no fighting and no barricades. Soon after that missiles started to be thrown and a vehicle was pushed up and set alight.

5.40 The only other entrance for vehicles onto the estate is at Gloucester Road. A resident with a view over the Gloucester Road entrance smelt burning outside, at about 7 pm, and when he looked out saw three or four vans burning on the entrance road near the edge of the estate. But he could see no activity going on there at all. Indeed Gloucester Road remained quiet for the greater part of the evening, and there was never the same pattern of missiles being thrown at lines of police officers, as was the case at the other three exits. We did not have evidence as to how the three vans at the Gloucester Road entrance got set on fire.

5.41 We can now examine again the statement made in the Richards report that the units arriving on the scene “found that barricades of blazing vehicles had been erected at all four vehicular entrances to the estate, and at each location they came under missile and petrol bomb fire as they approached.” D.A.C. Richards relies on this allegation that barricades were erected before the arrival of police, as being proof that this was part of a pre-arranged plan, rather than a spontaneous reaction to police surrounding the estate. The evidence which we have heard shows that this is **not correct so far** as Willan Road, Griffin Road, and Adams Road are concerned. At Willan Road no cars were burnt until after a large number of police officers were in position across The Avenue and pushing people back towards the estate. At Griffin Road the evidence of Cliff Ford, who saw the police arrive, is very clear, and supported by other sources. As for Adams Road we had direct evidence from Nick Wright, confirmed by Debbie Wilde, and based on notes which they made at the time. They are very clear that on the arrival of the first police officers, which they witnessed, there were no burning cars. Only at Gloucester Road is the picture unclear.

5.42 The speed with which the entrances were blocked by the police was remarkable. In the absence of direct police evidence we do not know with certainty what messages were passed over the radio to the many police units in the vicinity. The most likely explanation is there was a call for urgent assistance to prevent a crowd of youths from leaving the estate. Whether it was a pre-arranged plan, or an immediate response from the units on the spot, the fact is that the exits were blocked. When they were, the youth on the estate felt even more the sense of being trapped and under siege. It was in those circumstances that they began to push cars toward the police lines and set them alight. It was then that the fighting at Griffin Road and Adams Road, which was the fiercest in the whole area, began.

THE ACTIONS OF THE CROWD

5.43 The fiercest encounters were at Griffin Road and Adams Road, and they took on a pattern which continued for many hours from soon after 7.00 pm to about 10.30 pm. From the side of those on the estate, there were constant volleys of dangerous missiles. Slabs of pavement were broken up and thrown. When the available slabs from nearby were used up, young people were seen rushing through the estate carrying missiles in various containers. A shopping trolley, a milk crate, and a large communal rubbish bin were all mentioned to us as being used. At a later stage, tins stolen from the supermarket became a common form of ammunition.

5.44 Many petrol bombs were thrown. On the clear evidence that we have, they were crudely and hurriedly made on the spot, not carefully prepared beforehand. Leonardo Leon, looking from the Rochford block over the Griffin Road area, saw:—

“People with bottles, then some people syphoning off fuel from cars, three or four people laughing and putting cloth inside. There was a white cloth, a large piece, and they were tearing it apart and then putting it into the bottles, and throwing it. But of ten bottles they threw, one of them would actually light up and land in the road. All the others would just be nothing.”

Michael Keith, a research assistant at St Katherine's College, Oxford, had been preparing a history of rioting. He went to Tottenham after hearing of the death of Mrs Jarrett. He witnessed the disturbances both from outside and inside the estate, and later in the surrounding streets and the High Road. He saw how easy it was to make petrol bombs while he was watching the action in the streets

outside the estate:—

“Two people, both Black, started shouting orders at the others: ‘we need more ammunition’. Immediately five or six responded by running round the houses gathering up empty milk bottles, while four others turned over a car for petrol. In less than five minutes I counted more than 50 petrol bombs completed.”

5.45 We conclude that it was entirely possible for many petrol bombs to have been assembled within a short time. In a large estate there were many milk bottles ready to hand which could be quickly gathered. People were seen to fill them on the spot. We have no evidence whatever that they were prepared beforehand. In the light of this we have considered with care that prosecution reports of the statement made on behalf of the in Court on the 12th June that “petrol bombs were prepared in advance and stored”. On all the evidence, we consider this to be both unproven and unlikely.

5.46 A great number of cars were burned. 47 wrecked vehicles were later removed from the estate by the council's contractor. Many of these were in the Griffin and Adams road area. Mr and Mrs Kemp, watching from their flat in the Rochford block, counted at least eight or nine in Griffin Road. As one burned out, another was set on fire. A mini-bus was pushed out from one of the schools and burned. A rubbish skip in Adams Road was also set on fire.

5.47 One building on the corner of Adams Road at its closest point to the edge of the estate was burned out. Families living in the maisonettes in the building were evacuated.

They were not injured, but they must have suffered a terrible experience. We have no evidence as to how that house caught fire. It was situated beside the centre of the action in Adams Road, by the area of road where cars were set on fire. The Richards report states that the house was set on fire “as the result of the actions of the rioters in petrol bombing the cars outside.”

5.48 Many of those involved in the actions against the police wore masks or scarves to disguise themselves. But several of the people who we interviewed who lived in flats overlooking Griffin Road were sure that there were many strangers among them, both Black and White. Leonardo Leon gave a vivid picture of four strangers who played a prominent part:—

"It was like when you look at ants, you see how ants move and you identify which ones are the soldiers and which ones are the workers. Because you see them from high. Now what I saw was three or four people moving and giving signs to each other with their hands. They were people in bomber jackets with trainers and jeans. I cannot say absolutely for sure if they were White, but I think they were White. And they were moving like a group. You could see they were White by their hands."

One other woman, a retired White woman whom we interviewed, who was watching from Hawkinge block, was also struck by a group of four White men:—

"There were these four White young men that I would call the thug type, they came from under Lympe, and they had on their heads these hoods."

She described how she could see they were White from their hands, and from the fair hair of one who took his hood off. They had petrol bombs in their hands. She continued:—

"I can't describe the hatred that I felt on that night, that I still feel, for those four Whites that I saw. They were outsiders doing it to our estate."

5.49 However from the general pattern of the evidence, it is impossible to say that people were being "organised" or "led". Some people were more active than others. Some threw missiles, some shouted, some just watched. Michael Keith had the strong impression that all were united in their anger against the police. He said this on the question of "organisation":—

"Most of the people were united by a sense of anger which regularly escalated to fury. In this situation a dramatic cast, representative of any cross-section of society was clearly evident. Here were the people who were 'all mouth', loudest in the cries of abuse, standing furthest away from the police lines, throwing the occasional brick from the safe distance of a 100 yards or more. Others were more committed, outdoing one another in their attacks on police, going as close as 30, 20 or ten yards away from police lines before throwing brick, bomb or baked bean can. Many more spent most of the time giving moral support, joking with each other, but no less committed in occasional forays against the rows of riot shields. Amidst all these characters, there inevitably emerge those who try and impose some order upon confused actions. In this sense organisation was extemporised."

There was evidence that some people had whistles, and one person had a bell, which fitted this pattern of "extemporised organisation". Arthur Lawrence of the West Indian Leadership Council, who with his colleagues walked around both inside and outside the estate, gave similar evidence of people supporting each other in a loosely organised way:—

"When people thought that their lines were a bit thin, then they went to reinforce the lines, running from one point to another. There were no generals."

5.50 Two of the schools next to the estate to the north of Adams Road were damaged and property was stolen. The Moselle School had extensive damage to glass and doors and the loss of seven computers, a television and other equipment, and a large photocopier. We have no evidence as to who removed such bulky items. Both the William C. Harvey School and the Broadwater Farm Junior School had damage to windows and doors, and some equipment stolen. On the Tangmere block, as we shall describe in more detail, the supermarket and newsagent's shop were broken open, looted and burned, and one flat was ransacked. Many of the lights on the estate were broken. That, plus the burning of cars, was the extent of property damage, and there were no attacks on residents of the estate.

5.51 The actions which we have described so far all concern the Griffin Road/Adams Road area. At Willan Road, after the police had blocked off The Avenue, the action had started with the throwing of bricks from the demolished garden wall. A local resident was struck by how young they were. She saw "kids of 12 and 13" and no older men though generally people spoke of young people of a variety of ages taking part. Arthur Lawrence spoke of about 30 youths being involved at Willan Road. People who lived in the Avenue were coming out and trying to move their cars, and it seems that surprisingly little damage was done to cars in The Avenue area. After a time, the brick throwing eased off and the police were able to block the top of Willan Road, where they were preventing people from entering and leaving the estate. Nick Wright observed a "second confrontation" at Willan Road at about 8.45 pm, which worried the police because they thought that they had secured that area. In general there was no sustained attack after the initial confrontation; rather there were intermittent forays.

THE ACTIONS OF THE POLICE

5.52 For hour after hour at Griffin Road and Adams Road the police stood in their lines across the road, behind their long perspex shields, passively fending off the missiles which came at them. From time to time they would advance a short distance, 40 or 50 yards, and then retreat again. Occasionally the short shield squads made what one witness called "half hearted sorties" towards the estate; but the difficulty was that the space was too confined for the short shield officers to be covered by long shield units. The short shield units are intended to be "snatch squads" who make arrests, but on this occasion hardly any arrests were made. We understand from police sources that on one occasion a small unit did succeed in getting into the estate and staying there for about half an hour, but it had no support and eventually was forced to retreat. The officers beat on their shields in unison and gave voice to a cry that was described as "the gorilla chant of the football terraces", "oooh oooh noises", "a zulu war cry". The evidence which we heard from many onlookers fully confirmed the statements made in the *Police Review* in October 1985 that officers were "required to crouch behind static lines of long shields to become Aunt Sallys of the petrol bombers".

5.53 We have no doubt that for the officers who were required to stand in this way **the experience was terrifying**. Directly opposite the Griffin Road and Adams Road corners were the elevated balconies of the Rochford and Martlesham blocks; and although most of the missiles came from ground level, some also were hurled from above. Fire extinguishers began to run short, and according to a journalist close to the police lines the officers were told not to use fire extinguishers to put out petrol bomb fires, but only if a person was burnt. Some officers became more confident at their success in batting down the missiles with their shields, and some hurled missiles back into the crowd. But any confidence turned back to fear when, as we shall describe, it became known that gun shots had been fired. Howard Simmons, the council's head of community affairs, described the officers behind the lines along Mount Pleasant Road:—

"A considerable number of police were stood down. They were standing around looking shaken, looking exhausted. Some of the police were lying on the pavement, stacking their shields up in people's front gardens. There was an immense emotional feel amongst the police in that area."

5.54 At Willan Road, where the police had more of the upper hand, much more aggression and abuse was directed at Black people, many of whom were trying to get in or out of the estate. It was there that Steve Platt, reporting for *New Society*, overheard some disgusting racial abuse:—

"A Black couple trying to leave the area via Willan Road were turned back at the police lines, to a chorus of the monkey noises used to abuse Black footballers by racists at soccer matches. 'Fuck off niggers' yelled one of the policemen 'Go and live in the zoo.' 'You can burn that down.' 'Get back in your rat hole, vermin,' echoed another. 'We'll be in to get you soon enough'."

Other witnesses spoke of similar shouts. A woman resident in The Avenue spoke of police "riling up the kids" with cries of "you wogs, you vermin". Whatever the circumstances, racist abuse of this nature is wholly unacceptable in a force which even under pressure should be disciplined and impartial.

5.55 At the Gloucester Road entrance the situation was **far more calm and controlled**. The officer in charge at Gloucester Road was Chief Superintendent Couch. In contrast to the other entrances many people were able to get in and out through Gloucester Road without being stopped or harassed. Many of the officers there were not in riot gear. Arthur Lawrence and his colleagues from the West Indian Leadership Council made their way to Gloucester Road around 7.45 pm, and spoke to Chief Superintendent Couch. He said that he was glad to see them and asked them to do something to help calm the situation. They went down The Avenue towards Willan Road, where they saw a police van moving towards the crowd at the junction. They went back to Chief Superintendent Couch and asked him to withdraw the van as it was aggravating the situation. Chief Superintendent Couch agreed. They went back and the same thing happened — two vans were moving into the crowd. This time Chief Superintendent Couch said that he couldn't give them instructions, as they were not under his control. Chief Superintendent Couch continued to ask help from the community leaders by asking them to try to ensure that no houses were set on fire. Arthur Lawrence's group did in fact secure an undertaking from the crowd at Willan Road that no property would be set on fire.

5.56 The evidence of Mr Lawrence and his colleagues, and the lack of confrontation at Gloucester Road, indicates clearly to us that there

was sensible leadership in that location which could act flexibly to minimise the trouble. Unfortunately it appears that the police leadership at the other locations was not of the same quality, and at Griffin Road and Adams Road appeared not to be in control of the situation at all. Howard Simmons walked down Mount Pleasant Road between about 8.30 – to 9.00 pm identifying himself as a senior council official and trying to find someone in command. The junior officers whom he spoke to were in a state of confusion and had no idea where the control point was. He said:—

“My view on the night was that the chain of command and communication between police was virtually non-existent. The police themselves did not know what was going on. I was staggered to find them standing shoulder to shoulder about ten deep in receipt of all these missiles, but clearly they were going to sustain substantial injuries. God knows what their senior officers thought they were doing.”

5.57 The junior officers believed that they could and should have gone into the estate with maximum force and subdued it. They said so in the pages of the October 1985 *Police Review*. They were saying so on the night. A journalist heard an officer who had served with the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Belfast say that they should have used plastic bullets to disperse the crowd and then move into the estate for “search and seize”.

5.58 We are in a state of some uncertainty as to who, if anyone, took overall charge of the night’s operations. The Richards report states that there were four senior officers – Couch, Sinclair, French, and Rowe – who took command at each of the four main locations. Two hours later Chief Superintendent Jeffers took over at Griffin Road. Above them there were high ranking officers at the district headquarters at Wood Green, the area headquarters at Chigwell, and the Metropolitan headquarters at Scotland Yard. According to a report in *The Job* magazine, traffic on the police radio wavelengths was seriously overloaded, so that clear commands could not be issued and implemented. This information was confirmed from fire brigade sources, for their operations too were affected. According to their report, they had a senior officer in the Wood Green Police control room who experienced considerable difficulty because no facilities were provided for a brigade radio to be installed, and so he was out of touch for much of the time with the brigade’s involvement. At the

time of finalising this report we had not had sight of the report of the Metropolitan Police’s internal review of the disturbances, which may provide, if published, more information about the chain of command on the night. Our view on the evidence available is of confusion, which was likely to lead to unnecessary danger to officers in front lines, and to minimise the chances of scaling down the confrontation.

5.59 It is difficult without police evidence to determine the total numbers of police officers involved on 6th October. Lord Gifford asked for this information in a parliamentary question, and received this reply from Lord Glenarthur:—

“I understand from the Commissioner that the number of officers deployed at the Broadwater Farm Estate on 6th October 1985 varied as the disturbances developed. At 10 o’clock pm, some three hours after the riot began, about 600 police officers, drawn from all areas of the Metropolitan Police district, were deployed in the vicinity of the Broadwater Farm estate.”

The answer is incomplete, and we are not told whether the time chosen of 10 pm was the time when the maximum number of officers was deployed. Further information is available from the report of the Commissioner for 1985, in which it is stated that “nearly 2000 officers were available for deployment within four hours of the outbreak of violence”. As to the numbers injured, Lord Glenarthur in another parliamentary answer said that 71 officers required treatment in hospital, of whom 17 were detained for longer than 24 hours.

‘LAKES OF PETROL’

5.60 The Richards report contains two references to lakes or floods of petrol. In seeking to justify the police strategy of “containment”, the report states:—

“Any concerted effort to advance into the body of the estate (in which lakes of petrol were seen) could well have resulted in death or serious injury to police and/or members of the public.”

Later in the context of dealing with the anti-police character of the attacks, the report states that:—

“Subsequent inquiries reveal allegations that some basement garage areas on the estate had been flooded with petrol, for the alleged purpose of use in the event of an incursion by police.”

Predictably these references became banner headlines when the report was leaked to the press.

5.61 At the meeting of the Community and Police Consultative Group on 13th March 1986, which was attended by members of our panel, D.A.C. Richards was asked directly by Councillor Mitchell whether there were any lakes of petrol. In answer D.A.C. Richards said that people had had plastic bags of petrol and two litre bottles which were lobbed to the police lines. The police were confronted by sheets of petrol which came about from these bags bursting in the basement area. There was evidence of a police officer who finished up in a deep puddle of petrol. A civilian witness had said that petrol was poured down the stairs to the garage area. Some petrol was set alight and the flames shot towards police officers. Councillor Mitchell asked him whether he had therefore withdrawn his allegation about lakes of petrol. D.A.C. Richards said that he had corrected statements in the press. There had been a misunderstanding. The allegations of floods of petrol were made after the event. A further statement was made by D.A.C. Richards in a letter to the *Police Review* on January 24th 1986, which mentions evidence of a police constable about the plastic bags, and continued:—

“He saw an expanse of petrol which he estimated was equivalent to a car’s full tank of petrol. He then sustained serious injury and fell to the ground in what he once more thought to be water. However his footwear and clothing were saturated with petrol.”

5.62 We have concluded that there have been two quite separate allegations made about petrol which, whether deliberately or not, have become confused. On one hand, there was undoubtedly a quantity of petrol on the ground and in various places, particularly around Griffin Road and Adams Road, because of the actions of members of the crowd in throwing petrol bombs and possibly other petrol filled missiles, many of which did not ignite when landing. The fire brigade report contains a contemporary record from Adams Road at 9.20 pm saying “copious amounts of petrol spread on the road unignited at this time”. These quantities which D.A.C. Richards more accurately referred to as “puddles”, clearly represented a danger of injury if they were to ignite.

5.63 On the other hand the use of the word “lakes” was clearly calculated to convey the impression that whole expanses of the

basement car-parks were awash with petrol which had been spilled deliberately by people in the estate in order to be ignited and burn up police officers if they came into the estate. If this were true, it would have been a horrific plan. But it was not true, and D.A.C. Richards in his reply to Councillor Mitchell appears to accept that. As members of the council’s Building Design Service have observed to us, there are no “basement garage areas”. The under-deck parking spaces could not have been turned into “lakes of petrol” without the construction of additional walls and the blocking of rainwater gullies. The reference in the report to “lakes” was therefore grossly misleading.

GUN SHOTS AND FIRE ARMS

5.64 The Richards report states that at 7.55 pm an officer deployed at Griffin Road sustained a bullet hole in his shield, and shortly afterwards a police officer was found to have been struck in the body by a bullet. The report states that following this, at least one shotgun was fired in Griffin Road and several officers and two BBC cameramen sustained pellet wounds, fortunately none serious; and that one officer experienced in the use of firearms said that he heard a shotgun fired more than 30 times in the Griffin Road area. Seven people whom we interviewed in our door-to-door inquiries had heard gun shots, in each case two to three shots. Those who gave a time put it between 9 and 10.30 pm. Two people said that the shots came from the Rochford area. A journalist whom we interviewed was behind the lines at Griffin Road at about 9.30 when he heard a gunshot sound and saw that a BBC cameraman had fallen. He had “pepper shot” across his face and upper body and his chest was bleeding. He noticed also that a riot shield had been peppered with shot. There is no doubt at all that a shotgun was fired, but we do not accept the suggestion of 30 shots made in the Richards report. The number of people hit would suggest a very low number of shots. We have no direct evidence of the bullet shot, but we have no reason to dispute the facts given in the Richards report. A riot shield pierced by a bullet was shown to the press, and it was reported that surgeons had removed a bullet from the stomach of the police officer.

5.65 The Richards report states that officers from D11 Branch, the force’s firearms unit, were alerted soon after 8.00pm and sent to Tottenham to stand by. It states that at 9.45 pm the Commissioner authorised the use of baton rounds (plastic bullets) and/ or CS gas as a last resort, and that the officers equipped with these weapons arrived

at Griffin Road at about 10.20 pm. In the event, the baton rounds and CS gas were never used. Howard Simmons saw a section of police armed with plastic bullet launchers march past him and stand behind the cordon. He thought the time was about 9.45 pm. In an interview on the *TV Eye* programme four nights later, Chief Superintendent Couch said that he had been authorised to use baton round and CS gas but he had been concerned for the public; and that if he had used the ultimate weapons, the bridge would have been more difficult to build. However, the Richards report suggests that the reason why they were not used was because “the severity of the attack had lessened considerably” by the time that the team arrived.

5.66 There were also police marksmen on the scene. The police had been given access to one of the houses in Mount Pleasant Road which backed onto the estate, and were looking through windows at the back. They had set up an infra-red night sight, and an officer looking through the sight claimed to have identified someone on a balcony in the Rochford block. He said to a senior officer: “We could take him out.” The senior officer replied: “No, there is no question of that, we are not doing that”. There was a heated exchange between the two officers.

THE SHOPS ON TANGMERE

5.67 On the Tangmere precinct there was a supermarket and a newsagent's shop, side by side. At about 9.30 pm Arthur Lawrence and his colleagues went into the estate by the Gloucester Road entrance. Superintendent Dick Stacey had seen them at the Gloucester Road entrance and had told them that he believed there was looting on the Tangmere precinct. He asked them to go and see if this was the case. Mr Lawrence and his colleagues felt that it was the police's duty to investigate looting. Even so, they went into the estate. One of the remarkable features of the evening is the way in which Arthur Lawrence, George Martin, and Vernon Moore, and (for the earlier part) one other man, went about the scene throughout the whole evening and night, apart from one short break for a snack, quietly helping to calm things if they could. We have seen how they helped Chief Superintendent Couch on The Avenue. Later on “four well dressed Black gentleman” – obviously the same group – were seen by Mr and Mrs Kemp to be talking quietly to people at Griffin Road. And later in the night on Tangmere, as we shall see, their actions almost certainly saved many lives.

5.68 When they reached the precinct, they saw that both the newsagent's and the supermarket had been broken into. People, Black and White, were “running in and out of the supermarket with bags of goodies”. They spoke to seven or eight of them, and told them it was not right to do that. There was a child of eight or nine with a carrier bag. There was “this little White kid with two carrier bags” saying to his mother “Mum, what shall I do with this?”. There was another White boy with a suitcase full of groceries who said that he didn't live on the estate, but in Downhills Park:—

“When he spoke I discovered he was an Irish boy and he said that it's the first time he has had so much food in six months because he's unemployed.”

Others looted the shops for ammunition such as cans and bottles to throw at the police.

5.69 Arthur Lawrence and his colleagues went over to the Griffin Road area and observed the scene there for a while. They came back to Tangmere around 10.00 pm and saw smoke and a few flames coming from the newsagent. It was a small fire, and they thought that somebody tried to put it out. Unfortunately they did not stay on the precinct, but went back over to Griffin Road, and then out of the estate by the Willan Road exit. They were very hungry and went to the High Road for something to eat. They came back to the estate between about 11.30 pm and 12 pm by the Gloucester Road entrance. The period during which they had been away had seen the tragedy of PC Keith Blakelock's death. He had been sent into the estate with other officers to protect the fire brigade as they put out the fire in the Tangmere shop. As stated earlier, we can make no comment about this tragic episode because of the sub judice rule.

5.70 By this time Roy Limb and Dolly Kiffin had returned to the estate. They had left after the Youth Association meeting in order to attend a reception for Mike Henry, the Jamaican Minister of Culture, who had been visiting Haringey. They had hurried back from the reception when they had learned of the intensity of the disturbances. Arthur Lawrence and his colleagues spent some time escorting Roy Limb onto the estate and later off again. Arthur Lawrence, George Martin, and Vernon Moore remained around the Tangmere precinct. It was by now after 1 am. The precinct was full of water from the previous actions of the fire brigade, and a fire hose was still there.

5.71 Suddenly George Martin saw a frightening sight:—

“There were three White youths and they were going in and out of the supermarket and the tobacconist’s shop, catching the place fire. I see fire start to come up from one end of it. I keep chasing back and forward to this fire. I say to them, you are catching this place afire. They were doing it with matches. Eventually the one in the tobacconist’s became the largest fire.”

Dolly Kiffin was in her office inside the Youth Association. Through the window, which looks over the precinct, she too saw the fire started:—

“I saw three men, one blonde, a fattish one, and the next one, he threw something in the paper shop, it came red, and then bang — the fire was raging.”

5.72 We accept the evidence of George Martin and Dolly Kiffin that this fire was deliberately started by three White youths. Mr Martin in particular was very clear about his observations. Other witnesses including Arthur Lawrence saw the White youths — one witness described them as “three White skinheads” — but did not actually see them start the fire. The possible implications of this evidence are frightening. There were, as the fire brigade confirmed in their report, exposed gas pipes in the newsagent’s shop, which is presumably why it caught fire again after the previous fire had been doused. Who were these three White youths? Why were they doing this? Had they been responsible for the earlier fire in the shop? It is worth noting that journalist David Whitfield saw a group of White youths in The Avenue at around 1.00 am who may be the same group. They stood out as being a group that were not making common cause with Black youths. He told us:—

“What was interesting was that there were Black and White young people on the streets together. At one stage I’d seen a bunch of White youths and I was a bit nervous because I didn’t know whether they were facists. But what was clear was that there were a lot of Blacks and Whites on the streets together mixed in with no animosity. Apart from these boys who — didn’t look too pleasant.”

5.73 Dolly Kiffin ran out with fire extinguishers from the Youth Association, and Arthur Lawrence and George Martin tried in vain to put the fire out. They went back to Gloucester Road and asked the fire officer to turn the hose back on. But it was twisted and there was no pressure. The fire was burning fiercely with flames coming out of

the top and smoke spreading upstairs. George Martin and a youth went upstairs and knocked on the doors upstairs to get people out, but nobody came. By now there was a large group of 30 or 40 youths around the precinct, and George Martin argued with them to get the fire brigade in, and eventually they agreed. The three men — Arthur Lawrence, George Martin, and Vernon Moore — went back to the fire officer and told him that the fire was getting out of hand. The fireman asked: “Can you guarantee our safety?” There were several trips backwards and forward between the fire officer and the youths on Tangmere, and George Martin was finally able to say: “We can guarantee that they won’t interfere with you”. The fire officers assured the community leaders that only they and no police would come onto Tangmere. George Martin gave this account of the arrival of the firemen:—

“I then went upstairs and I said to all the youths who were literally trying to put out the fire to move away and go over the far side and wait. And I managed to get them all over there and then I shout to the fire officer to come upstairs. Then myself, Mr Lawrence and Mr Moore stand between the fire officers and where the youths were standing.”

5.74 Eventually, after more trips in and out with hoses, the fire was put out, except for the gas pipe that remained alight but safe. We pay the highest tribute to George Martin, Arthur Lawrence and Vernon Moore for this action which they took; and also to the fire officers and the senior officers of police who responded to the negotiations in the knowledge of what had happened to PC Blakelock on the occasion of the earlier fire. The fire had reached a stage of intense danger. Sheila Ramdin lives below the newsagent. The room where her children were asleep was filling up with smoke when she went in and got them out. As she said to us:—

“If the fire brigade never come, the whole of Tangmere would have just caught alight.”

THE ENTRY OF THE POLICE

5.75 Long before the episode of the second fire, the conflict had been dying away. Sometime before 11.00 pm a police helicopter had arrived overhead, shining a strong beam of light, and causing youths to take cover to avoid identification. After 11.00 pm it began to rain. Roy Limb had persuaded Chief Superintendent Couch that the news of the officer’s death ought to be communicated to the youths inside.

When George Martin and Arthur Lawrence escorted him on to the estate, it was to give Dolly Kiffin that message, and she passed it on. For all these reasons the fighting ended, but the ranks of police remained for many hours at the entrances to the estate.

5.76 There were a number of incidents off the estate in the latter part of the evening. Michael Keith had left the estate around 10.30 to 11 pm and witnessed severe attacks on the police line in Mount Pleasant Road from Wimborne Road. A garden wall along Wimborne Road was rocked and demolished for further ammunition to throw at the police. A car was turned over and an unsuccessful attempt made to light it. Michael Keith counted over 200 people, the majority involved in verbal abuse, a minority doing the brunt of the attacking. For over an hour police officers moved backwards and forwards against this crowd and eventually forced them away from the estate through the surrounding residential streets. They finally reached Bruce Grove and the High Road, for a further half hour the police were seen to be clearing people from the High Road in a fairly violent way, causing injury to at least two bystanders.

5.77 At 4.30 am a massive number of police in riot gear entered the estate. The estate was by now completely quiet; many of those who had taken part would have been able to leave across the Lordship Recreation Ground, which was never sealed off by the police. A great number of the officers came up the steps onto the precinct of Tangmere. Arthur Lawrence, George Martin, Vernon Moore, Dolly Kiffin and about six youths were in the Youth Association premises, some of them taking a nap. They saw the officers arrive, with the Community Liaison Officer Superintendent Stacey in front. George Martin described what he then saw:—

“I was standing at the door of the Youth Association, and we saw the police as they came upstairs, and they went towards the supermarket, and I saw one of them hitting something. I was trying to see but it was in darkness. He had a shield and he had a baton. He was hitting this thing, down like this. Eventually when I managed to look, he picked this thing up and chained it against the door. Then I realised it was a young chap.”

Arthur Lawrence saw two youths being beaten. He said that the police had found them inside the shop, and beat them “with truncheons and kicks and that sort of thing”.

5.78 The officers came up to the glass door of the Youth Association, and asked Arthur Lawrence to open up. He had not got the keys, and one of the youths went upstairs to get them from Dolly Kiffin. Before she came down, the officers smashed through the glass with their truncheons. The community leaders were surrounded by officers in riot gear armed with plastic bullet launchers. Arthur Lawrence said:—

“By that time I was having 10,000 butterflies, because I thought my number had been called, because things were being pointed at us.” George Martin told us, “at that time I thought we had had it, quite honestly”. Vernon Moore told us that an officer shook a truncheon in his face. There was a youth in the building, and the officers took him out onto the precinct. Arthur Lawrence described what he then saw:—

“They kicked and punched and throw him on the floor and stamped on him, kneed him. Then they hung his head over the balcony.”

The officers then spread out and took positions, occupying the whole estate.

CONCLUSION

5.79 It will be apparent from this chapter that during the evening of 6th October there were many people involved in many different kinds of action. Some were trying to use their position as community leaders to be intermediaries with the authorities, as far as they were able to be. Some were looking on, and we have heard many stories of residents coming out on to the balconies and chatting to the youths who were more directly involved. Some threw missiles of various descriptions, and set cars on fire. Some, for reasons which may have been entirely separate and personal to themselves, broke into the schools and stole equipment. Some looted the shops for ammunition; others looted simply to steal food. Some were prepared to commit arson which endangered life. Some were prepared to endanger life by shooting.

5.80 Some of the actions done that night were shocking and inexcusable. But many of the actions were not condemned by many witnesses. They said that the youths were defending themselves against officers who had first interfered with their right to walk to the police station, and then were frightened to enter the estate and attack them in force. Sheila Ramdin, chair of the Resident's Association,

was one of those who put this view:—

“They weren’t looking to start any riot, they didn’t want trouble. It just happened. It was just in self-defence, they had to defend themselves and they tried to defend the Farm.”

Michael Hutchinson-Reis put it in similar terms:—

“They had nothing to gain from what they did. The motivation was something else. And that motivation quite clearly in my mind was that they saw themselves defending their community, they saw themselves under threat, they saw themselves threatened physically, and they defended themselves. And that understanding of the motivation of those arrested, when you actually follow through the implications, that’s got serious consequences not just for social workers but for this society as a whole.

This issue of “reasonable self defence” may be raised at the forthcoming trials. We must therefore avoid making judgements about the legality of particular kinds of action, which may be the subject of argument before a jury. The purpose of this chapter has been to describe, as fully as possible upon the evidence which we have gathered, what happened on 6th October at Broadwater Farm.

We return in Chapter 8 to discuss why it happened and how to stop it happening again.

Chapter 6 THE AFTERMATH

THE FIRST WEEK

6.1 On 7th October the police remained on and around the estate in force. In the evening the Police Research Unit staff noted around 200 officers on the estate, the majority dressed in riot overalls and carrying shields; two coaches full of police parked in Adams Road; another coach at the junction of Mount Pleasant Road and The Avenue; and ten transit vans parked in The Avenue. In the whole Tottenham and Wood Green area, they calculated that nearly 1,500 officers were deployed. The focus of attention on the estate was the Youth Association. Outside there were police officers spread all over the precinct and balconies of Tangmere. Inside people gathered, talking about the night before, unsure what was going to happen now. Councillor Andrew Mitchell tried to act as a mediator between the youth and the police. He met D.A.C. Richards, who said that he would only agree to reduce the level of policing if the council would agree to let the police have a flat or an office on the estate. He also said that it would help if the Youth Association could be shut for the night. The council refused to offer accommodation, and the officers of the Youth Association reacted with considerable hostility to both of the requests which the police had made. Councillor Mitchell remained on the estate until 1.00 am pleading with the police to step back from their positions close up to the Youth Association doors, which eventually they did. We think that Councillor Mitchell showed considerable moral courage in his actions on that day. Although he failed to achieve any concrete agreement (which in the circumstances was not surprising), by staying around and being in touch with both sides he helped to ensure that there was no further flare-up in the course of that day and night.

6.2 The estate was also swarming with journalists and broadcasters. The events of the night had been reported in the morning papers,