

Stephen Lawrence

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Doreen Lawrence: meeting with Theresa May was promising

Stephen Lawrence's mother talks to home secretary after revelations that police tried to undermine campaign for justice

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The mother of the murdered teenager [Stephen Lawrence](#) has said she felt "quite sick to the stomach" when she first heard of revelations that undercover police had sought to undermine the family's campaign for justice, but described a meeting with [Theresa May](#) as "promising, very promising".

Doreen Lawrence said she had made her demands for a public judicial inquiry into allegations that a special unit of the [Metropolitan police](#) looked for evidence to smear campaigners after the teenager's murder in 1993, and the home secretary had told her "all options were open and nothing was closed off".

Lawrence insisted such an inquiry should not take years to set up and must not take place behind closed doors. "Without a public inquiry, we will never get to the bottom of it," said Lawrence, who was accompanied by Stephen's brother Stuart and their legal representatives, adding that she wanted to know what had been going on "once and for all". Asked whether she thought there could be other revelations, she said: "How long is a piece of string? We have no idea."

[Claims made by the whistleblower Peter Francis that undercover police sought to undermine the Lawrence family were first revealed in the Guardian](#) last week.

Bernard Hogan-Howe, the Met chief, will appear before the Greater London Authority on Thursday.

[David Cameron](#) has said "nothing is off the table", indicating a further inquiry is possible, but for the moment the government has asked Mark Ellison QC, who is leading a review of alleged police corruption in the original Lawrence murder investigation, to also investigate allegations first reported by the BBC that [Scotland Yard secretly bugged meetings with Lawrence's friend](#) and murder witness Duwayne Brooks and his lawyer.

At the same time, ministers have said, the spying allegations would be looked at by an existing internal **Metropolitan police** review, Operation Herne, led by the chief constable of Derbyshire, Mick Creedon.

The family had been talking about corruption for 20 years, said Lawrence. "I want answers. I want to know who were the senior officers who signed that off, what was the report that was going in. We had no idea what was going on since 93 up until 97."

Lawrence said May expected Ellison to report by the end of the year but had given no hint of when Creedon's report might be ready.

Michael Mansfield QC, one of her lawyers, said before the meeting that Lawrence wanted something done in public. "The nearest example is Leveson, or an alternative scenario is one like the Hillsborough panel that looks at all the material. One of these two has got to happen. Not another internal inquiry which will not be made public because they will claim it's sensitive information," he said.

"It doesn't necessarily have to take particularly long. Leveson was done in a year and it's a good example of something that was done in public and quite searing questions were asked. Hillsborough was very efficient too.

"We're not talking about a public inquiry that takes years and a report that gets left on the back burner. We're talking about an efficient, focused inquiry.

"This has been a very sorry saga. Doreen has been extraordinarily patient."

Speaking on his weekly phone-in radio show for LBC, Nick Clegg said he wanted to see the truth come out quickly.

"I think letting it fester like that, it's bad for the morale of the police because the police feel they are being blamed for mistakes that were being made 20 years ago. It's bad for obviously communities who feel that they were put upon."

He said it was impossible to imagine how victims had themselves being spied upon by police: "The heartache, I just find it unimaginable that at a time when police should be there to help victims who have suffered this horrific murder, to find out later that they themselves became the object of suspicion, it is unimaginable and thankfully I'd like to believe that it is unimaginable that it would happen today."

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