

TITLE: CINEMA AND TELEVISION BENEVOLENT FUND
OUTLET: BRISTOL POST
DATE: 21ST JULY 2015
PAGE NO: ONLINE

DDA
PUBLIC RELATIONS



Tragic tale of Bijan Ebrahimi's murder to be told in film



Tragic tale of Bijan Ebrahimi's murder to be told in film

A film about the vigilante murder of Bristol man, Bijan Ebrahimi, who was killed when he was wrongly thought to be a paedophile, is being made.

The short film titled *Murderous Injustice*, by award-winning filmmaker Gavin Scott Whitfield will premiere later this year.

Iranian Mr Ebrahimi was beaten to death in Capgrave Crescent in July 2013 before his body was set alight in Whitmore Avenue.

The disabled 44-year-old had taken pictures of youngsters vandalising his garden to show them to police as evidence.

His neighbour Lee James, 24, was jailed for life and ordered to spend a minimum term of 18 years behind bars for his murder.

Accomplice Stephen Norley, 25, who lived in the same street, was sentenced to four years for assisting an offender, after he supplied the white spirit to set Mr Ebrahimi alight.

The judge called their deed "an act of murderous injustice".

Filmmaker Mr Scott Whitfield said he was angered by the killing and the "apathy" shown by the community towards James.

It was his feelings that inspired the project, which has just been filmed in Liverpool and is expected to be shown for the first time in Manchester later this year.

It shows the story from James' perspective and includes the consequences for him as he comes to terms with the lives he destroyed.

"This was a racist hate-crime masquerading behind an act of vigilantism," Mr Scott Whitfield told the Independent.

"As well as his act, which was abhorrent, the community's apathy angered me.

"I'm from a working-class community and felt particularly angry at the local indifference.

"Bijan Ebrahimi was a man who should have been welcomed and made part of the community, not ostracised."

Mr Scott Whitfield wrote and directed the short film with £5,000 of cash from the John Brabourne Awards, backed by The Cinema and Television Benevolent Fund.

Independent production company, Through Our Eyes Films, based in Liverpool managed to raise the same amount through a Crowdfunding appeal for the 12 minute film.

In it Joe Reel, location manager, described it as an "important but tragic" story that needed to be told.

On the funding bid, he said: "Murderous Injustice is based on the shocking real life murder of an Iranian refugee.

"This particular murder shocked and moved us because it was about a man who fled persecution in his own country and then found peace and happiness living here in the UK for many many years only for that all to be taken away from him in the most brutal and devastating fashion you can imagine.

"We hope that our film will be a powerful statement against the intolerance that exists at times in our own country today and how intolerance can sometimes lead to tragic consequences."

THE PANEL

Three police officers have been accused of misconduct following the investigation into Mr Ebrahimi's murder.

The victim has asked police for help just hours before he was beaten to death.

PC Kevin Duffy, 51; PCSO Andrew Passmore, 55; and PCs Helen Harris, 40; and Leanne Winter, 37, all stand accused of wilful neglect in public office.

Passmore is also alleged to have perverted the course of justice.

A four to week trial is set to take place at Bristol Crown Court in November.

Mr Ebrahimi's death prompted an Independent Police Complaints Commission investigation.

A further six officers and seven members of staff will be subjected to disciplinary action once the trial is concluded.

<http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/Tragic-tale-Bijan-Ebrahimi-s-murder-told-film/story-27449014-detail/story.html>