

FAMILY OF MAN WHO DIED IN POLICE CUSTODY IN VIGIL ON 3RD ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH

On 17 July 1997 the third anniversary of the death of John Leo O'Reilly who died in Walgrave hospital, Coventry after being taken there from Little Park Police Station will be holding a vigil to highlight their campaign to uncover the truth about their father's death. They will be outside the police station at 11am until just after noon.

Mr O'Reilly was a 60 year old grandfather, who on the evening of 3 July 1994 suffered a fall at a friends house where he was baby-sitting with his wife. He suffered a serious head injury when he fell and was confused and incoherent. An ambulance was called and Mr O'Reilly was deemed to be drunk by the staff who called the police. The police conveyed Mr O'Reilly to Little Park Police Station where he was put into a cell on his own. He was left in the cell for some 13.5 hours after which an ambulance was called. At that time he was found to be semi-dressed, shivering and lying in a pool of his own urine and vomit.

INQUEST have supported Mr O'Reilly's family throughout their long struggle to uncover the truth about what happened to him. There was an initial inquest in the Autumn of 1994 which was quashed in the High Court in 1995 on the grounds of insufficiency of inquiry. The original inquest jury returned a verdict of accidental death. A second inquest was held in April 1997 at which disturbing evidence was heard about the failings of the police to adequately monitor Mr O'Reilly during his time in custody and about the loss of the original documentation produced on behalf of the Police Complaints Authority by West Midlands Complaints Investigation Bureau. The jury at this inquest returned an open verdict.

Mr O'Reilly's family are still waiting for the conclusion of the Police Complaints Authority supervised inquiry to find out whether any officers will be disciplined.