

1 February 2024

# Justice for Jay Abatan

January 2024 marked the 25th anniversary of the murder of Jay Abatan. Learn about the murder and how can support the Justice For Jay campaign in their quest for justice.

Jay Abatan, a 42-year-old father of two, was murdered in a racist attack in Brighton 25 years ago.

He and his brother Michael were attacked by a group of white men on 24 January 1999 and Jay died in hospital five days later, having sustained severe head injuries.

Two men were arrested and charged with manslaughter. However, by the time of the trial the charges were reduced to affray and actual bodily harm to Michael.

On the instructions of the trial judge the jury was not told that Jay had died of his injuries. The two men were cleared by the jury.

To this day no one has been brought to justice for Jay's murder and [the Justice for Jay campaign has now launched a Crowdfunder](#) to raise funds to pursue a legal challenge.

"Twenty five years on, nobody has been successfully prosecuted for my brother's death," said Michael, Jay's brother. "It is my view that only a public inquiry can establish the true facts of what happened in my brother's case."

To mark the 25th anniversary of Jay's murder, a vigil was held outside Brighton police station at 2pm on Sunday, 28 January. On Monday, 29 January, there was an anniversary event at the Houses of Parliament from 6-8pm attended by Michael Abatan, Sir Peter Bottomley MP, John McDonnell MP and Zita Holbourne, a former national vice president of PCS.

In 2001, an article in The Observer detailed numerous serious failures identified by Essex Police in their review of the investigation of Jay's murder by Sussex Police. These include:

- The failure of the senior investigating officer to involve himself with the case, which may explain why officers at the scene failed to record any details or comments from witnesses.
- The failure of the investigating team to ask the hospital for updates on Jay's condition and to interview hospital staff to ascertain if Jay had spoken to them about the attack.
- The delay in asking the Home Office pathologist to examine Jay's body.

Sussex Police subsequently apologised.

Both Jay and Michael had previously been civil servants and were members of the PTC, a predecessor union of PCS. PCS has supported the Justice for Jay Campaign and Michael has spoken at PCS events, including our national conference.

The PCS National Black Members' Committee also played a key role in providing practical support for the campaign and organising fundraising initiatives.

Mark Serwotka, who recently stepped down as general secretary of PCS, said before his retirement that he is "immensely honoured to have shared platforms with Jay's brother Michael, who has led the campaign and was also a member of our predecessor union.

"The determination of Michael and the rest of Jay's family, whose grief has been compounded by a 25-year injustice, is inspirational," he added. "For far too long, racist thugs have got away with committing atrocious crimes against people because of the colour of their skin."

#### **What you can do:**

- BARAC UK is administering [a crowdfunder for Justice for Jay, in order to raise money for legal fees so the family can launch a legal challenge](#). Please share and donate if you can.
- Contact the Justice for Jay Abatan campaign if you have any information relating to the killing of Jay Abatan, email: [justiceforjayabatan@outlook.com](mailto:justiceforjayabatan@outlook.com) or [barac.info@gmail.com](mailto:barac.info@gmail.com)
- Write to the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner calling for a new public inquiry into the killing of Jay Abatan - email [pcc@sussex-pcc.gov.uk](mailto:pcc@sussex-pcc.gov.uk) or write to: Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, Sackville House, Brooks Close, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2FZ.