West Midlands Police Research

A police unit in the English West Midlands which operated from 1974 to 1989. [Historical photos](https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/gallery/historical-photos-west-midlands-police-19053021).

Mid-August 1989 - chief constable of the West Midlands in the 1980s, Geoffrey Dear, suspended the entire senior staff of his Serious Crimes Squad. More than 50 detectives were shifted in a purge designed to clear the way for an inquiry into the squad`s operations.

- Geoffrey Dear went after Chris Mullin’s revelations of police brutality, corruption, and incompetence in his force’s investigation

into the Birmingham pub bombings by the IRA in 1974.

Look up cases from 1987-1989 - fabrication of how in nine cases in the past two years, police officers had fabricated confessions by

inserting fresh pages containing them into their notebooks and how original documents containing alleged confessions mysteriously came up. Missing confession statements from two men.

- [From Mullin’s](https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v44/n07/chris-mullin/diary): “The West Midlands Police, in common with much of the legal profession, were content to believe that the six men whose convictions had been quashed were, in fact, guilty.” The convictions had been based solely on confessions that were found to have been fabricated.

- Home Office involvement - West Midlands Police - Six men arrested - pure policing by design? or was a strategy in place to bring

about changes the establishment wanted?

Andrew Molloy, thought to be involved but was later acquitted of all charges. New evidence later found by police revealed that he could have been a ringleader of a gang operating in Birmingham. Wasn't enough evidence to convict him of any crime. Later found not guilty due to insufficient evidence, even though cash and weapons were seized from a lock-up rented by Molloy. Properties and vehicles were also seized as part of the investigation, including villas in Turkey and Spain along with nearly a million in cash. Molloy was known to have connections in Italy, Turkey, and Spain. New forensic techniques were used to show when statements had been tampered with, usually adding incriminating phrases.

Look into police being involved with the bombs – getting warning to leave the buildings.

In the 1970s and 80s, WM used beating, placing plastic bags over heads until losing consciousness, conducting mock executions, burning skin with cigarettes, taking them to the roof and threatening to throw them off, putting guns into their mouths with threats to shoot unless a confession was forthcoming. Starting repetition in the most serious offenses including terrorism and armed robbery. Perjured evidence in Birmingham Case from the police and the conspiracy of those involved ranges from detective constables and police constables.This comes from Bridge Judge’s (presiding judge in the case) warning to the jury in the case that became true.

When Birmingham went back to appeal, Widgery LCJ referred to one of the men’s black eye inflicted during police custody said that this was nothing beyond the ordinary.

Defense experts lied on Birmingham.

West Midlands Drug Squad: torture, police brutality, coerced confessions, denial of legal advice, perjury.

West Midlands Police admitted that another bomb that failed to explode - and had been kept as evidence - was later lost. It meant the explosive could not be examined with new forensic techniques.

Significant overlapping of police personnel involved. Of the identifiable 24 West Midlands policemen who questioned the Birmingham Six at the time of their arrest, at least twelve of them have served in the Serious Crimes Squad at some time and four of these were serving in it at the time of its disbandment. The four: Chief Inspector Ray Bennett, head of Squad Detective Inspector Peter Higgins, Detective Constable John Davies, Sergeant Michael Hornby. Another name officially revealed has been that of Detective Inspector Paul Matthews, who was required to resign from the police in 1986 for disciplinary reasons. Sergeant Hornby had been involved in at least two cases in which the Court found that evidence had been fabricated, those of Clifford Jones and Ronnie Bolden. Since the disbanding of the WMSCS, Hornby has taken early retirement.

Another police officer closely involved with the interrogation of the Six, but not a member of the WMSCS, was Superintendent George Reade. Reade was the author of the so-called Reade Schedule, a hand-written timetable of interviews of the Six found by the Devon and Cornwall police during their investigation prior to the 1985 Appeals Court hearings. This contained serious discrepancies that Reade was unable to explain satisfactorily to the Appeals Court. It has recently emerged that he was involved in the arrest in 1975 of a Phil Buckley, who successfully sued the police for assault and wrongful imprisonment.

According to press reports, of the 20 police officers involved in the interrogation of the Six, 11 have since been either disciplined, involved in criminal and civil actions for assault or become the subject of complaints about the fabrication of evidence.

Notes on pleading guilty: “The figures for 1973 and 1974 show that no fewer than 70 percent of defendants in Birmingham pleaded guilty at the Crown Court, a figure considerably higher than the national average.” (From “Negotiated Justice: Pressures to Plead Guilty” by John Baldwin and Michael McConville)