

Who killed David Kelly?

David Halpin

Six experienced doctors are requesting that the inquest into the death of Dr David Kelly, who was found dead in 2004, be reopened. One of them, Dr David Halpin, explained why on BBC Radio 5 Live on 6 December 2009.

BBC: Six doctors are trying to get the investigation in to the death of Dr David Kelly reopened. They say there isn't enough evidence to suggest the weapons expert killed himself, even though that was the finding of the official enquiry. Retired general orthopaedic and trauma surgeon, David Halpin, is one of them.

Six years now since Dr Kelly's death, why have you brought this up at this point?

HALPIN: We've been keeping at it for the last six years, since in fact I wrote a letter, in December six years ago, to the *Morning Star* saying that I couldn't accept that he had died of haemorrhage from the division of arteries in one wrist, and as I thought a man of his scientific knowledge would have chosen more certain methods with which to kill himself. And that drew a small group of us together. We examined the evidence and we concluded that the inquiry was inadequate, and from that time on we've been appealing for a proper inquest.

BBC: The Morning Star being a left-wing paper, a Communist paper many would say, does this mean that you are coming at this from a very particular political standpoint?

HALPIN: No. I do read the paper and contribute to it. I am a Socialist. But I believe that it is important that we all tell the truth. And to be quite frank, a colleague had written a letter, I learnt later, had written to three other papers three months before, bringing important facts about the statistics to the public, and neither of these leading papers would publish his letter. It points to the need to have outlets for people for their thoughts.

BBC: *Just outline for us the deficiencies as far as you saw them in Lord Hutton's investigation.*

HALPIN: There are many, and it would perhaps bore your listeners if I went through them all.

BBC: *What are the most compelling?*

HALPIN: The main thing is that the Hutton Inquiry was appointed by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer, within twenty-four hours of Dr Kelly's death. It was then an *ad hoc* inquiry, which was not going to be a replacement for an inquest. Three weeks later, Lord Falconer cunningly added what we call 17a. This part of the 1998 Coroners Act, which he'd in fact drafted or had a lot to do with, allowed for inquests into multiple deaths to be carried out at one go for reasons of efficiency and for kindness to relatives. The Southall train crash is one example. The trawler *Gaul* was looked at twice under this. But Falconer applied it to the death of one man, which was clearly improper.

BBC: *So you're saying the absence of a formal inquest really adds to the weight of the suggestion that he didn't commit suicide ... Is there any evidence to support the idea, the theory, that he was assassinated?*

HALPIN: A great deal because we don't believe that the verdict as given, both from the death certificate and word for word by Lord Hutton, are verdicts which can stand up. The first cause of death is haemorrhage. We do not believe that you can bleed to death from the matchstick thin ulnar artery being cut across in his left wrist. And with that as the essence of an opinion we have written in these last few months, which will be sent shortly to the Attorney-General, asking that she provide the autopsy reports to see if their verdict, the verdict of Hutton, is substantiated. If it isn't substantiated then we will ask again for a proper inquest.

BBC: *There is a danger here that you are stoking up the conspiracy theorists. Have you also perhaps considered the impact all this might have on Dr Kelly's family?*

HALPIN: Yes, or course. In that letter I referred to in the *Morning Star*, I made it very plain I'd hesitated to write the letter for about three months for that very reason. But you know the law is our law, and an unnatural

death, and this is one of the most high profile unnatural deaths for years, has to be dealt with by our law, and it has not been. That is our main motive in driving this. You talk about conspiracy theories – you generate conspiracy theories when you do not follow due process of law, and due process of law has been subverted in this case. You probably know that it's emerged in the last year, under freedom of information requests from a journalist called Garrick Alder, that first of all, the Thames Valley police provided this on request, that there were no finger prints on the knife found beside Dr Kelly's body. Now that evidence was withheld from the Hutton Inquiry. That, in my view, is a conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. The police would have known that that would have been required at that inquiry, and the same goes for the evidence that came out from the requests made by Mr Alder. The search helicopter, which flew over the wood where Dr Kelly was found about six hours later (the helicopter flew over about 2:30 in the morning), no infrared image was found. Now that evidence, too, should have been brought to the Inquiry.

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Haiku

Something there is that
doesn't love a wall,
wrote Frost,
wiser than he knew

Alexis Lykiard

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