

# Six arrests in Morley murder

Police and activists not linking murder of local gay man to homophobic lyrics

By SOREN BILLING

Six people were arrested Thursday in connection with the murder of a gay man on London's South Bank. The victim was a survivor of a homophobically motivated pub bombing five years ago.

David Morley, 37, was sitting on a bench near the Royal Festival Hall with a friend, aged 29, when the two were attacked by a teenage gang shortly after 3 am on 31 October.

The Metropolitan Police said in a statement Wednesday that there were two white males, two black males and two white females between 15 and 20 years of age.

The gang targeted four more people in two incidents between 3.15 am and 3.30 am. After attacking Morley and his friend, who escaped with minor injuries, they moved on to a group of two men and a woman. Minutes later another man was battered over the head with what he thinks was a bottle.

"While clearly robbery is a motive, as some property was taken, the fact remains that victims from two of the three incidents are gay," said Detective Chief Inspector Nick Scola, head of the murder inquiry, in a press statement. "While I cannot be certain that the victims



David Morley was murdered 31 October in London's South Bank area. Six people have been arrested in connection with his death.

were targeted because they are gay, until I know otherwise, I am treating the attacks as homophobic hate crimes."

"I'd be anxious not to create a panic," said Reverend Steven Penrose of Lambeth Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Forum, a

voluntary community group. "[London] is as safe as anywhere else."

He said he did not think that the murder took place in an area frequented by gay men seeking sexual contacts. It is, however, within walking distance of several well-known gay

venues, such as the nightclub Heaven in Charing Cross.

The Metropolitan Police have dismissed reports in this week's press that they are linking the murder of gay barman David Morley to reggae singers whose songs call for violence against gays.

"The two investigations have nothing to do with each other," a spokesperson said in an interview this Wednesday.

Detectives from the Racial and Violent Crime Taskforce have been analysing the lyrics of eight different dancehall artists for several months, over claims their songs incite people to kill gays and lesbians.

Gay rights campaigners have urged police to ban Sizzla, a Jamaican reggae artist, from appearing in Britain this week, following the incident.

But gay activists in South London, which has a thriving dancehall scene, are reluctant to make any connections between hate crimes and specific artists.

"Personally, I think that people are looking for scapegoats," said Mary Rogan, Voluntary Co-ordinator of the Metro Centre, a gay community centre in Greenwich focusing on south-eastern London, adding that homophobic crime is "a much, much wider issue that needs addressing".

In the song "Boom Boom", Sizzla says: "Queers must be killed". In another, "Pump Up", he sings: "Shoot queers." The Home Office has announced this week that Sizzla has been banned from entering the UK in advance of his planned British tour.

In September, police stopped a concert in Manchester by another Jamaican artist, Buju Banton, amid concerns over his lyrics, which describe throwing acid over homosexuals.

The murder sent shockwaves throughout London's gay communities, not least because Mr Morley was a survivor of a 1999 nail bomb on the Admiral Duncan pub in Soho, in which three people died and 70 were injured.

David Morley continued working at the Admiral Duncan until December last year, despite suffering flashbacks and panic attacks.

Speaking to the *Gay Times*, he described how he burst into tears when he opened the door to a group of Asian teenagers who had brought a sympathy card from families in Brick Lane—the target of another attack by the bomber David Copeland.

"I stood there crying in front of them," he said.

## Inside

Council, 2

Local, 3

Education and Minorities, 4

Local, 5

Goldsmiths, 6

International, 7

Features, 8

Editorial, 9

Sports and Entertainment, 10

## Black-led charity finds Lewisham Council apathetic

By NEHA BHAYANA

Even as Lewisham Mayor Steve Bullock smiles for the cameras on his 'It's our borough—Let's Talk' mission, a Deptford-based charity still struggles to get him to listen. Young People's Platform (YPP), a black-led organization that works with young people who have been excluded from mainstream education, claims it has been ignored for the last five years.

"Steve Bullock was actually involved in setting us up but he seems to be suffering from amnesia since he stepped in as mayor," YPP co-founder and head Sandra Longville said in

an interview this week. Despite numerous calls, letters and e-mails, Sandra claims she has been unable to reach the mayor.

Formerly known as Positive Mental Attitude, the charity was established by the council in 1996 but was quickly left to fend for itself. YPP dragged the council to court when the funding stopped coming in and its office building was sold to an Indo-Chinese community group. The council was directed to adequately compensate and relocate the group. While the latter was done, the compensation, which was supposed to be given in the form of three

(continued on page two)

## Councillors to take drama lessons

By EMILY MACKAY

Lewisham councillors could be resorting to dramatic measures to help them ask questions more effectively. Councillors are to take lessons from the Royal Academy for Dramatic Art (RADA).

Gareth Wall, from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, gave the suggestion last night, as part of a presentation on how councillors could make the Mayor, Steve Bullock, and his Cabinet answer their queries.

He said: "When you see parliamentary select committees grilling ministers on TV, a lot of that is theatre—it's not strictly necessary."

RADA's website says: "The ability to think on your feet, to respond to a question at a

moment's notice, to sell yourself or a policy to the public—these are skills required of all high-flyers in today's local authorities."

They offer training for public bodies that aim to "help councillors and officers communicate more effectively by understanding the effects that voice, eyes and body language have on others".

Councillor John Muldoon said: "The idea of getting RADA in is something I thought about before, and is something we should perhaps revisit if funding is extended, to learn how to become better at questioning."

Councillor Peter Dawson said: "I only know one RADA

(continued on page two)