Twitter Thread by Hashi Mohamed

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I received the sad news that Sir William Macpherson, the retired High Court judge who led the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, has died at the age of 94.

A distinguished army career, followed with time at the Bar and then on the bench, he had a major impact... 1/

Almost twenty-three years ago he was tasked with coming out of retirement to lead the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, and was accused of being out of touch by virtue of coming from high Scottish gentry as the head of the Macpherson clan. How wrong people were...

In 2019, I was lucky to speak to him about his reflections on two decades since the seminal report on how the Met Police handled the aftermath. He hadn't spoken about it since, was reluctant to speak, and understandably suspicious of the media in general. https://t.co/4ZNjSCzAN9

At the time the inquiry was being held at the Elephant & Castle (famously where suspects walked); he would catch the bus every morning at dawn from Islington and let himself into the building to start his work. He had no drivers, no security, nothing but a clear focus for the job

When I spoke to Jack Straw (then Home Sec) he told me the appointment of Macpherson was met with suspicion by everyone (including the Lawrence family). Macpherson knew this. And he was determined to show his fierce independence to follow the evidence without fear or favour.

The report is remembered for that one phrase; 'institutional racism' but it said so much more than that; a nation grappling with race & racism, incompetence, corruption, murder and grief, unconscionable acts & omissions, & much more. Worth re-reading it: https://t.co/NDbZx0D0Gv

My own reflections as a young black boy growing up in London when this unfolded is hard to summarise. In essence I got to meet a man who was, in real time, improving society and race relations as I was experiencing it. The twist of fate - I joined his old chambers as a pupil....

You can find a more detailed interview and my reflections here: https://t.co/b36teZvlHd

The reflections of many other people whose lives he had impacted are well worth looking at, as summarised here: https://t.co/OydI9DAPSZ

The Met Police has undoubtedly been impacted by his findings too and some even say 'the curse' of his report. Commissioner Dick says that the lable of institutional racism is unfair, and much has moved on. Personally I think a lot has improved, but some things have got worse...

..but no one event nor one man can transform race relations overnight, or make the police behave better. Macpherson has unquestionably advanced us and it is up to us to build on his legacy. In an imperfect world, we are blessed with 1st class minds able to grapple with....

...the pressing problems of our time. None more consequential as the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny and Blairgowrie. My condolences to the whole family. RIP https://t.co/1osah2ICjK

https://t.co/55IC6tA3nv