

# Let Him Have **It**, Chris!

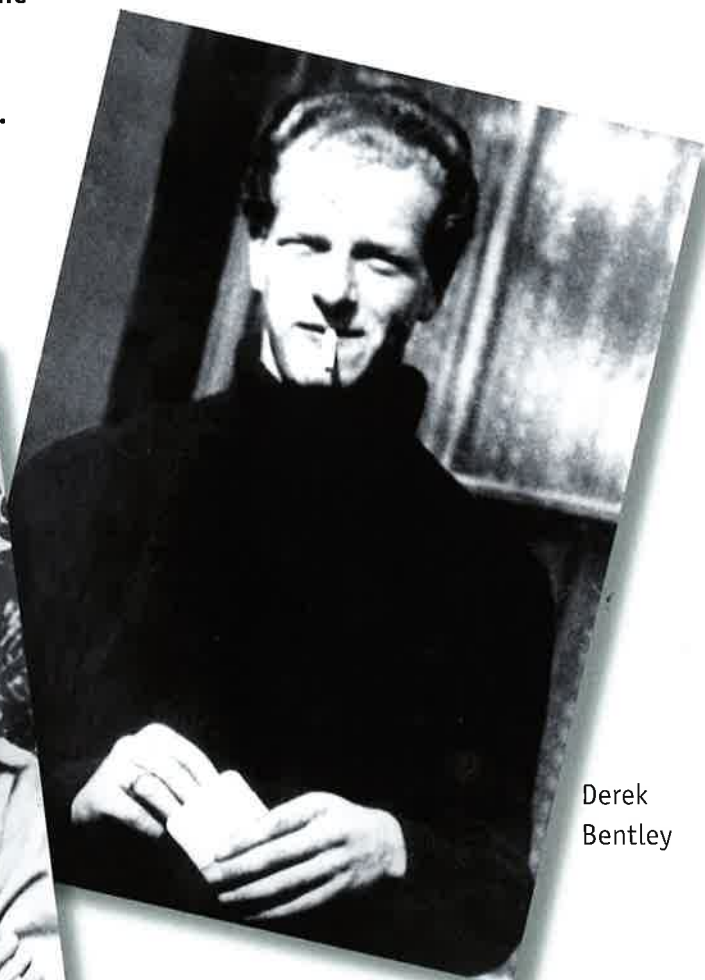
In 1952 **Derek Bentley** and **Christopher Craig** started a chain of events which finally ended in 1998 after nearly half a century of legal battles.

The two boys were surprised by the police as they tried to break into a warehouse in Croydon, South London. Derek Bentley was arrested immediately but Christopher Craig decided to fight it out, producing a gun that he had in his pocket and shooting wildly at the police. After Bentley had shouted the words "**Let him have it, Chris**", a policeman, Sidney Miles, was killed by a bullet from Craig's gun.

Although it was Craig who shot Miles, Bentley was also convicted of murder because of what he shouted to Chris. Being 19 years old Bentley was condemned to hang; he had an IQ of 66 and a mental age of nine. Craig on the other hand, a bully and a rebel who hated the police, was only 16 years old and too young to face the death penalty.



Christopher  
Craig



Derek  
Bentley



producing · tók fram  
 death penalty · deyðadómi  
 guilty · sekir  
 lethal · drepanði  
 satisfied · sannfærdur um  
 encouraged · eggjaði  
 pass · dæma  
 wilful · tilætlaði  
 execution · avrættning  
 life sentence · lívlangt  
 fongsul

## Police Killers Found Guilty

Derek Bentley and Christopher Craig were both found guilty of murdering Police Constable Sidney Miles on a rooftop in Croydon, South London in November. Acting like an American gangster it was Craig who fired the lethal shot, but only after Bentley had shouted to him "Let him have it, Chris". The judge, Lord

Goddard, was satisfied that Bentley's words encouraged Craig to fire at the policemen on the roof. Placing his black cap on his wig Lord Goddard sentenced Bentley with these words; "Derek William Bentley, you are nineteen years of age; it is my duty to pass upon you the only sentence which the law can pass for the crime

of wilful murder. The sentence of the Court upon you is that you be taken from this place to a prison, and there to a place of execution, there to suffer death by hanging. May the Lord have mercy on your soul".

To Christopher Craig the judge said, "You are under nineteen, and in my judgement you are the guiltier of

the two. Your heart was filled with hate and you murdered a policeman without thought of his wife, his family or himself; and never once have you expressed a word of sorrow for what you have done ... you are one of the most dangerous young criminals who has ever stood before me" and gave him a life sentence in prison.

The Daily News  
 Friday 12th December 1952





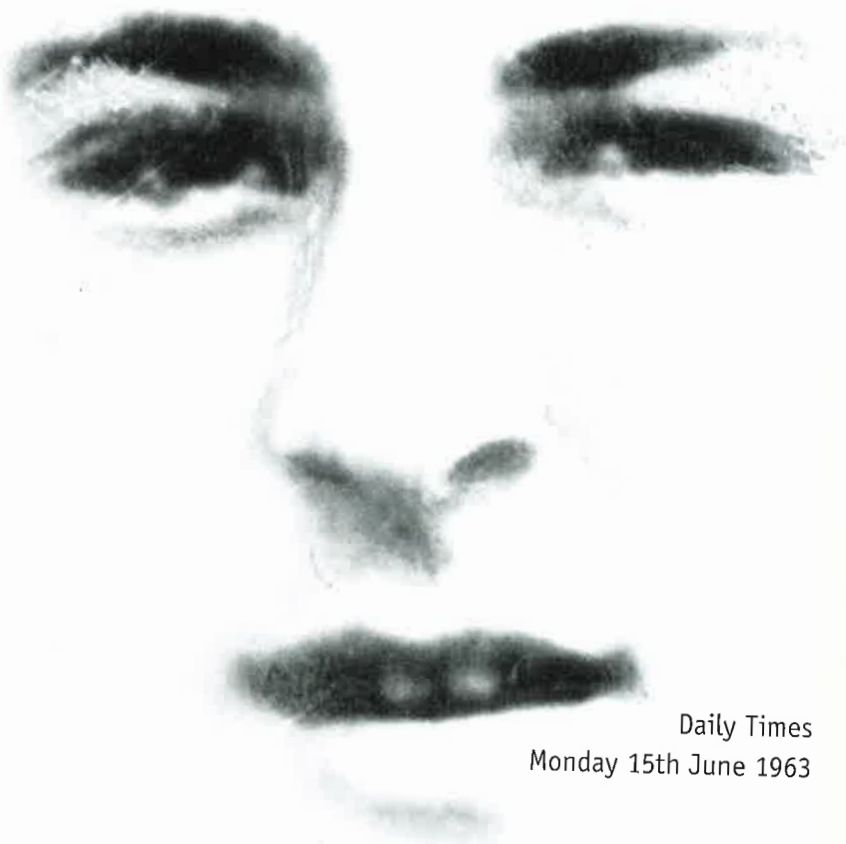
## Bentley Hangs for Killing PC Miles

A large group of demonstrators gathered outside the front gates of Wandsworth Prison to protest the execution of Derek Bentley, nineteen and a half years old. The mood of the crowd turned very ugly when, a little after

9 o'clock this morning, a notice was pinned up outside the prison announcing that Bentley had been hanged and was dead. Sources inside the prison say that Bentley's last words were "I never killed that copper".



London Standard  
Wednesday 28th January 1953



## Cop Killer Released from Prison

Christopher Craig, the 16 year old who gunned down PC Sidney Miles on a rooftop in Croydon in 1952, has been released from prison on parole. Craig, now 26 years old, refused to comment on the case as he was smuggled out of the prison by his legal advisor.

Daily Times  
Monday 15th June 1963



released on parole ·  
royndarleystatin  
pardoned · fingið gríð  
quash · ógildaði  
pardoned · náðaði



## Bentley Pardoned after 46 Years

Today, the Court of Appeal finally quashed the conviction of 19-year-old Derek Bentley, who was hanged in 1953 for the murder of a police officer, and pardoned him. Christopher Craig, his accomplice, and the one who actually shot and murdered the policeman, was only sixteen at the time and was too young to hang. Craig has spoken of his relief at the court's decision:

"Today, after 46 years, the conviction of Derek Bentley has been quashed and his name cleared. While I am grateful and relieved about this, I am saddened that it has taken those 46 years for the authorities in this country to admit the truth.

I am truly sorry that my actions on 2 November 1952 caused so much pain and misery for the family of PC Miles, who died that night doing his duty.

Also, for the Bentley family, I regret that Iris, Derek's sister, who fought all those years for Derek's pardon, died recently before this appeal was concluded. A day does not go by when I don't think about Derek and now his innocence has been proved with this judgment."

BBC Online News  
Thursday July 30th 1998

