

MARK BLANCO

City limits

IT IS almost 20 years since Mark Blanco (pictured) was fatally injured falling from a 15ft balcony having mysteriously toppled over 4ft-high railings at a messy gathering attended by drugged-up Libertines frontman Pete Doherty. The latter was seen on CCTV running past Mark's body in the street and has denied any knowledge of how Mark fell. An inquest ruled out suicide.

In December, Mark's mother Sheila Blanco told *Private Eye* she felt "cautiously optimistic" that her tireless campaign for justice might finally be bearing fruit when her request for a Victim's Right to Review was picked up by

City of London police (*Eye* 1666).

But eight months later it remains in limbo after the force pulled out due to insufficient resources and handed it on to Liverpool, who then sent it back to the Met – which Sheila blames for botching the initial investigation (*Eyes* 1644 & 1652). Sheila, her lawyer and her MP, Mike Martin, are now awaiting a first meeting with a new team. "It's beyond ridiculous," says Sheila. "I seriously wonder if they are hoping that if they keep delaying, I will die and the problem will go away."

Meanwhile, her detailed complaint about alleged failures of the Met to investigate the death as a murder and subsequent "cock-ups and cover-ups" has been dismissed in its



entirety. Sheila hoped it would be passed to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and is unhappy the complex complaint was instead investigated by a detective constable within the Met.

The officer admitted a lack of time and resources had prevented a review of all material, much of which is in "deep storage". Only three of the officers involved had been contacted as others had left the force or retired. The report dismissed every aspect of the complaint, found the service provided was acceptable and concluded no lessons needed to be learned.

Sheila said: "If this is acceptable, what would be unacceptable? It's a scandalous whitewash." She has lodged an appeal with the IOPC.

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