

PRIME MINISTER

*M*

**LAW AND ORDER: BRIXTON AND TOTTENHAM RIOTS**

You will remember that Hartley Booth had come across very disturbing stories that petrol bombs were being manufactured in bulk in Tottenham, and that the ingredients to make Napalm had been sold by chemists in the same area. You were very concerned and asked for further enquiries to be made.

---

Hartley has now provided an up-date on these matters (his note is attached). The truth seems to be that after riots like the one in Tottenham, rumours are everywhere, and it is very difficult indeed to separate fact from fiction.

But, so far as the police are concerned, they do not think there is a case for taking further action on either of the reports at present.

*Mark Addison*

(Mark Addison)


20 November 1985

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL  
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)  
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

19 November 1985

CF  
Civil Liberties  
edit ppn plan  
116A 19/11

CIVIL DISTURBANCE UPDATE

1. Theft of milk bottles for petrol bombs: The Home Office have now received a number of reports about large numbers of stolen milk bottles in Liverpool, North and South London, and even as far away as Buckinghamshire. Police are in touch with the situation, but have not yet confirmed that petrol bombs are in fact being manufactured in bulk. There is considerable rumour and innuendo rife. Home Office and police do not at the moment feel the situation is serious, as there is no confirming evidence of imminent disorder. The Chief Constable of Liverpool and the Commissioner's staff confirm the Home Office report.
2. Napalm: It has been confirmed that a chemist in North London reported someone buying small quantities of the rare ingredients that make napalm. There is little use for  so the report was taken seriously. Police have not apprehended anyone for questioning, nor has the purchase been repeated. Police are keeping the matter closely under review. They have not had further reports.
3. Water cannon: Home Office (Giles Shaw) announced yesterday that water cannons may be used against rioters. Your concern is having effect.

H. Booth

HARTLEY BOOTH

CONFIDENTIAL