# Retired officer’s anti-Semitism warning leads to contentious police arrest in Kent



In a troubling incident that has sparked debates about freedom of speech and policing methods, a retired policeman was arrested at his home in Gillingham, Kent, by six officers after he raised concerns about anti-Semitism in Britain. Julian Foulkes, 71, was taken into custody after a tweet he made, which he claims was a warning about potential escalation of anti-Semitic incidents associated with pro-Palestinian demonstrations, was flagged to the police.

The fallout from the incident unfolded dramatically in November 2023, as police arrived at his property armed with batons and pepper spray. Body camera footage showed officers referring to Foulkes's collection of literature as "very Brexity," an assessment that reflects the ongoing cultural clash surrounding British identity and political discourse. Among the items searched were personal belongings, including mementoes from his late daughter's funeral, revealing a disturbing insensitivity during what should have been a sensitive inquiry.

These events took place against a backdrop of heightened tensions following Hamas’s attack on Israel in early October, which had provoked a series of pro-Palestinian protests in major cities including London. In a context where divisions appear stark, Foulkes, who had been warned by Jewish friends about rising insecurity during the protests, considered his tweet a preemptive observation rather than a threat. His response to a pro-Palestinian account was meant to signal potential dangers, articulated through the lens of an ex-police officer who had dedicated a significant part of his life to public service.

After spending around eight hours in a police cell, Foulkes was issued a caution which he reluctantly accepted, believing it was necessary to avoid complications for future travel to see his daughter in Australia. He stated, “My life wouldn't be worth living if I couldn't see her,” adding that while he feared a conviction would restrict his travels, he felt pressured under the circumstances to comply with the police.

Recently, following backlash over the incident, Kent Police conceded that the caution issued was not appropriate, subsequently expunging it from Foulkes's record. This reversal highlighted broader concerns about misuse of police powers and the fine line between ensuring public safety and encroaching on civil liberties. A Kent Police spokesperson acknowledged the urgency of reassessing their approach, citing a need to identify “learning opportunities” from the situation.

The complexities of speech, particularly around sensitive topics like anti-Semitism, require careful navigation. The police's response to Foulkes contrasts sharply with a growing number of incidents involving actual racist and offensive behaviours within police ranks, including cases where former officers have been convicted for sending grossly offensive racist messages. Recent developments indicate a clear double standard that risks undermining the credibility of law enforcement.

In these challenging times, the incident brings to light broader societal issues regarding free expression versus the responsibility to combat hate speech. High-profile cases, such as that of Peter Kandalaft, who pled guilty to making anti-Semitic posts on social media, illustrate the legal and ethical dilemmas facing law enforcement in dealing with hate speech while also safeguarding civil discourse.

As the UK grapples with escalating tensions over the Israel-Palestine conflict and anti-Semitism, the Foulkes case underscores a critical need for dialogue about the balance between policing, civil liberties, and the responsibilities that come with freedom of expression. In an era where societal norms are challenged, maintaining this balance will be crucial in preventing further erosion of public trust in law enforcement.

The implications of Foulkes’s case extend beyond the individual, prompting an essential examination of how institutions can better respond to expressions of concern without infringing upon fundamental rights. As discussions continue, it is imperative that both police and the public remember that the right to express one's worries about societal issues should not be criminalised.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.
2. Paragraph 5.
3. Paragraph 7.
4. Paragraph 5.
5. Paragraph 6.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14699287/Retired-policeman-tweeted-threat-anti-Semitism-Britain-ARRESTED-handcuffed-home-six-cops-thought-crime-say-collection-books-Brexity.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/national/former-met-police-officer-convicted-of-sending-racist-message-102822/> - Michael Chadwell, a former Metropolitan Police officer, was convicted of sending a grossly offensive racist message via WhatsApp. The message, shared in a private group of retired officers, depicted a racist image with parrots and children of different races. Chadwell, 62, from Liss, Hampshire, denied the charge but was found guilty after a trial at City of London Magistrates’ Court. The court highlighted the clear racist implication of the message, stating it was a grossly offensive generalization about ethnic people. Chadwell had retired from the Met in November 2015. ([kentonline.co.uk](https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/national/former-met-police-officer-convicted-of-sending-racist-message-102822/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz4781vg03do> - Peter Kandalaft, 57, pleaded guilty at Westminster Magistrates Court to making antisemitic posts on X (formerly Twitter). Between November and December 2023, he sent 21 tweets that were reported to the police by a charity. Kandalaft's X account had been suspended by the time police investigated. During a police interview, he claimed his account had been hacked and that he had 'no particular views on Hamas or Jewish people'. He was released on conditional bail and ordered not to post on X. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz4781vg03do?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2023-12-08/retired-met-police-officers-sent-grossly-offensive-racist-messages> - Six retired Metropolitan Police officers were sentenced for sending grossly offensive racist messages in a WhatsApp group. The messages, shared between September 2020 and 2022, included references to public figures and were deemed criminal behavior. The officers, who had served in various parts of the Met, received sentences ranging from six to 14 weeks' imprisonment, all suspended for 12 months. The case highlighted the issue of discriminatory content within police ranks. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2023-12-08/retired-met-police-officers-sent-grossly-offensive-racist-messages?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/07/former-met-officers-given-suspended-sentences-for-racist-whatsapps> - Six former Metropolitan Police officers received suspended prison sentences for sharing offensive and racist WhatsApp messages. The messages, which referenced public figures and included discriminatory content, were shared between 2020 and 2022. The officers, who had retired between 2001 and 2015, were sentenced to between six and 14 weeks in prison, all suspended for 12 months. The case underscores concerns about racism within the police force. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/07/former-met-officers-given-suspended-sentences-for-racist-whatsapps?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/national/met-officer-who-posted-racist-tweets-found-to-have-committed-gross-misconduct-130679/> - Metropolitan Police officer Ruby Begum was dismissed for posting offensive tweets about Jewish people and non-Muslims. The tweets, made between 2013 and 2019, included derogatory comments about Jewish individuals and references to the September 11 attacks. Despite undergoing two rounds of equality and diversity training, Begum's actions were deemed gross misconduct, leading to her dismissal. The case highlights ongoing issues of discrimination within the police force. ([kentonline.co.uk](https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/national/met-officer-who-posted-racist-tweets-found-to-have-committed-gross-misconduct-130679/?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-police-arrest-3-soccer-fans-over-anti-semitic-tweets/> - Three British men were arrested for posting anti-Semitic comments on Twitter following a soccer match in October. The arrests were made in London and Wiltshire after complaints about tweets referencing Hitler and gas chambers in connection to a match between Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United. The arrests highlight ongoing concerns about anti-Semitic content on social media platforms. ([timesofisrael.com](https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-police-arrest-3-soccer-fans-over-anti-semitic-tweets/?utm_source=openai))