

# Billie-Jo's father accuses doctors of giving 'false evidence'

By CHARLOTTE GILL 13th July 2007 Daily Mail

Sion Jenkins, tried three times for the murder of foster daughter Billie-Jo, has issued complaints against two doctors whose evidence helped to convict him.

In papers submitted to the General Medical Council, the 49-year-old accuses disgraced paediatrician Professor David Southall and child psychiatrist Arnon Bentovim of giving "false evidence" at his first trial nine years ago.

The former deputy headmaster is calling for the men - both important witnesses in the case - to be investigated for professional misconduct.

Sion Jenkins, left, has issued complaints against two doctors whose evidence helped to convict him of murdering foster daughter Billie-Jo

Professor Southall was banned from child-protection work by the GMC in 2004 for his "high-handed intervention" in the case of solicitor Sally Clarke, who was jailed in 1999 for murdering her two baby sons.

After watching a television documentary on the deaths, he accused Mrs Clarke's husband Stephen of killing the children. Mrs Clark was freed on appeal in 2003 and died in March.

Professor Southall's fitness to practise is being considered by the GMC and all criminal cases involving him reviewed over fears he may have withheld information from lawyers.

The investigation could lead to the appeal and acquittal of any parent convicted of harming or abusing their children on Professor Southall's evidence.

Mr Jenkins was found guilty of murdering 13-year-old Billie-Jo in 1998 but successfully appealed against the conviction in 2004. He was retried twice but a jury failed to reach a verdict on both occasions.

He was formally acquitted by a judge following a third trial last year.

Mr Jenkins, who has since remarried and lives in Hampshire, has written a book about his ordeal, which is due to be published next year.

His application to the GMC is likely to infuriate Billie-Jo's natural parents and his ex-wife Lois, who divorced him after the first trial. She lives in Australia with their four daughters.

Mr Jenkins has always denied killing Billie-Jo, whose battered body was found in a pool of blood on the patio of the family's home in Hastings, East Sussex, on February 15, 1997.

At first police believed she had been attacked by a stranger. But after tiny spots of Billie-Jo's blood was found on his clothing, Mr Jenkins was arrested.

At the trial, Professor Southall said that Mr Jenkins's defence - that Billie-Jo could have breathed out blood spray on him as she lay dying - was "impossible".

In his complaint to the GMC, Mr Jenkins argued that Professor Southall was not a neurosurgeon and was therefore not competent to deal with such issues.

He also attacked Dr Bentovim for filing a report stating he was abusive towards his wife and children without speaking to any family member.

Mr Jenkins said yesterday: "I believe that Professor Southall and Dr Bentovim must answer for their false evidence.

"Together these two men paved the way for the destruction of my family and my wrongful conviction and also allowed the murderer of Billie-Jo to remain at liberty."

His lawyer Frances Swaine said: "It is absolutely essential that any doctor who provides evidence in the prosecution of a murder suspect should do so with the highest possible regard for his professional conduct."

The GMC declined to comment yesterday. Both Professor Southall and Dr Bentovim could not be contacted last night.