

Absolutely devastated

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Adrian Kwintner

THE mother of a teenager stabbed to death over a row about an umbrella spoke of her anger after the pensioner accused of his murder walked free.

Terry Gregory, 19, was stabbed nine times outside the Albion pub, in Woolwich Church Street, Woolwich, following the argument at a bus stop three days after Christmas.

His friend Sammy Nelson, now 20, received a deep cut to his hand in the incident.

But after two juries at Inner London Crown Court failed to agree whether George Edwin, 66, of Maryon Road, Charlton, was guilty of murder or manslaughter, the Crown Prosecution Service said there was not enough evidence for a third trial.

Edwin, who had told the court he had no memory of the stabbing despite admitting pulling out the kitchen knife, was also cleared of causing grievous bodily harm to Mr Nelson.

Terry's mother, Sue Gregory, 47, says the family is "absolutely devastated" by the decision.

She said: "A man walks out of court having stabbed my son nine times. He has admitted in court to carrying a knife and is now free to do it again.

"My son was not a racist thug as was implied in court. My family has always maintained this was not a racist attack and we objected strongly to the defence counsel stating Terry had lived in the same borough as Stephen Lawrence.

"Both young men lost their lives in violent circumstances and that is the only similarity. I'm in the same position as Doreen Lawrence."

Mr Gregory, who lived at home in Hickin Close, Charlton, had jumped off the bus to pick up an umbrella when Edwin suddenly snatched it from his grasp.

The court heard the teenager threw punches at the pensioner who then rejoined his three women companions on the bus.

Mr Gregory, his 16-year-old girlfriend Louise Reed and Mr Nelson continued to walk the remainder of their journey home when they saw Edwin in Church Street. The prosecution had claimed Edwin attacked both teenagers with the knife.

The court heard how the National Front tried to cash in on the killing by holding a demonstration against race attacks on whites near the murder scene.

Both Mr Gregory's family and the police made it clear in court they were disgusted at the far-right group's actions and did not view the killing as racially motivated.

Mr Gregory, who worked as a lifeguard at Eltham Leisure Centre, is to have a swimming trophy named after him in a London-wide gala.

And his family will hold a candle-lit memorial outside the Albion pub on the anniversary of his death at 2am on December 28.