Zephaniah Remembers Colin Roach

“I was actually just down the road when it happened and I was amongst the first people to gather outside the police station. In those days we did a lot of demonstrating outside police stations, usually demanding that someone be released.

“The Colin Roach case was always a strange one. One of the things that was being said was that he was shot twice in the head; of course we went crazy saying how could someone shoot themselves through the head twice.

“For a while the case was a rallying point for the black community but in the years to come the fight against the SUS law, and the many other suspicious police cases, and the struggle against the National Front overshadowed the case.

“Just after the death of Colin I wrote ‘Who Killed Colin Roach.’ It’s a rather simple poem but it was written for chanting at demonstrations rather than reading in the comfort of your home, but even when I performed it at readings a large section of the audience would always join in with me.”

Who Killed Colin Roach?

Who killed Colin Roach? A lot of people want to know
Who killed Colin Roach? dem better tell de people now,
what we seek is the truth, youth must now defend de youth
Who killed Colin Roach? tell de people now.

Murder, murder, some a shout
some of you might have your doubts
but what about our liberty, we want public enquiry,
violence, violence, some have said 'Cause our brother is lying dead'
put this in your diary, we want public enquiry.

Who killed Colin Roach? Our people are shouting
Who killed Colin Roach? These marches are not outings,
our marches are not picnics where you go to have a ball,
our banners have the writings saying 'Justice stands for all'
cause Colin Roach is human, and our blood is the same
but every time black blood get spill no one get the blame,
the judge and the jury retire for a time,
but we are on the streets shouting 'punishment for crime'.
Who killed Colin Roach? a lot of people want to know
Who killed Colin Roach? dem better tell de people now.

Murder, murder, some a shout,
some of you might have your doubts
but what about our democracy,
we want public enquiry.

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