

TRANSCRIPT of an Article which appeared in The Times on the 1 March 2013.

## Nadir's lawyer calls on SFO to reveal evidence

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Last updated at 12:04AM, March 1 2013

The Serious Fraud Office should reveal the whole truth about the fabrication of a plot to bribe a judge in the Asil Nadir case, a senior barrister said yesterday

Nadir's conviction for theft from his Polly Peck business empire was called into question by the discovery of three long-lost boxes of evidence at the SFO's London headquarters.

The material relates to an alleged plot in 1993 to bribe a High Court judge, a senior policeman and Nadir's defence counsel.

But the SFO, which had to apologise for alleging a judge had been bribed, has indicated that it wants to keep the documents secret on national security grounds.

Anthony Scrivener, QC, Nadir's defence lawyer, said there should be openness rather than secrecy about the "mysterious re-appearance" of the long-lost evidence.

"Most people have forgotten, but the SFO has already had to make a statement to parliament explaining the bribery allegations were entirely false," said Mr Scrivener who was named in court in 1993 as a party to the bribery plot.

"The time has come for the SFO to tell us the whole truth. I would like them to explain where these boxes came from, who filled them with relevant documents and who failed to disclose them to the defence."

Mr Scrivener, Mr Justice Tucker and Assistant Commissioner Wynn Jones subsequently received apologies for being implicated in the allegations.

The bribery claims had originated with Michael Francis, a paid police informant, but the SFO later had to admit that they were "spurious and groundless".

Mr Scrivener, a former chairman of the Bar Council, said: "I took the view back in 1993 that Michael Francis's allegations were completely false and had been fabricated to cover weaknesses in the prosecution case.

"There was questionable conduct 20 years ago and it seems to have persisted right up to the present day."

Nadir, 71, was jailed for 10 years last August after being found guilty of stealing £28.5 million from Polly Peck International. The SFO said last night that the rediscovered material was not disclosable under the current legal framework. A spokesman added: "Mr Nadir's convictions remain and we do not believe their safety is in doubt".