



The Sheku Bayoh Public Inquiry

Witness Statement

PC Christopher Harris

**Taken by [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]
on Monday 21 November 2022**

Witness details

1. My full name is Christopher [REDACTED] Harris. My date of birth is in 1968. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I joined Lothian and Borders Police Force in January 2012. I've been working as a Police Constable since that date.
3. In May 2015 I was based at Howdenhall Station in Edinburgh.

Previous statements

4. I have read the statement I provided to PIRC on 8 July 2015 (PIRC-00342).
5. I have been referred to my statement (PIRC-00342) at page 1: "*They have confirmed to me that my status is that of a witness.*"
6. I believe I was given status as a witness because I'd been on duty in Kirkcaldy Police Station and I may have had interactions with the officers that had attended the incident. Therefore they wanted to clear up if I had any contact or meaningful conversation those officers. Or if I'd received any

Signature of witness..... [REDACTED]

information on a mobile phone because I'd been seen using it while carrying out my duties in the station as well.

7. They interviewed me at Howdenhall Police Station in a statement room that we have there. I can't recall who the request for me to give a statement came from, but I imagine PIRC's request came through my Sergeant who allocated me my duties that day.
8. I can't recall them confirming my status as a witness. But on the basis that I'd only been within the station and had not seen the event, I realised I would just be a witness, as they thought I might be able to provide something meaningful from my conversation with the officers that had attended the incident. It does seem odd to say I'm a witness, I understood I wasn't a defendant or a suspect in any form. I suppose it's just for clarity from their side.
9. I did provide PIRC a true and accurate account to the best of my recollection at that time. I can't recall signing the statement but I remember it being read over to me by the male PIRC investigator. It's normal practice to sign the statement and I'd certainly expect to sign it. I have been shown a handwritten copy of my statement and confirm that they're all my signatures at the bottom of every page. My memory was certainly better when I gave these statements that it is now.

Training

10. I'm aware I had some training in race awareness and equality and diversity at college in basic initial training. The Scottish Police College had a centralised training programme. All officers from all forces are given the same training. I had that in January 2012 and afterwards for a couple of months.

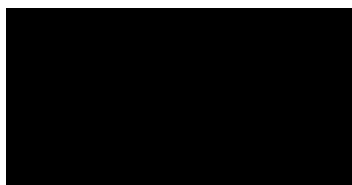
Signature of witness..... 

11. I expect the training would've been delivered as an instructor at the front of a classroom of officers with classroom-led or that instructor-led conversations and interactions. The training would've covered prejudices, and that you shouldn't act on prejudices but that you should be aware that you might hold some prejudices but not be aware of them. I didn't do any other race-related training that I can recall at this time.
12. In May 2015 it would've been the Sergeant who would have been in charge of my training. I had two sergeants at that time in my response shift in Howdenhall in 2015. They would've been copied into emails should I be required to undertake any training. They should be aware of training I went on. That is on my Scope record.
13. I can't recall specific training material but there is certainly a work product from Police Scotland that is around diversity and equality issues. As a community officer I worked with different sections of society, in particular working with the Central Mosque. I would've read up on equality and diversity matters that affected Muslims. I would've read equality and diversity issues from Police Scotland or Lothian & Borders as it was before.
14. These materials on equality and diversity are online and accessed through emails or links in the emails that take me to the intranet where I can read them that way. I can't remember any specific document.

Media

15. In terms of following the inquiry, I have looked at document that mentioned the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry such as news articles in Edinburgh local news or BBC news. I have also watched some of the evidence given by the officers who attended the event on the Sheku Bayoh Public Inquiry website. I couldn't recall their names but one was the female who claimed her back was stamped on and another male officer but can't remember his name or what

Signature of witness.....



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would identify him. Perhaps that he was one of the custody officers on duty with me.

16. The male was one who was in the custody suite. It could've been PC Brian Geddes but I can't remember. I remember he was shown CCTV. I don't remember anything else. I did see myself on duty sat in the chair in the cell. From my positioning there I was watching the person. Then I stopped the recording because I didn't want to watch anymore in case I would be asked later on because I knew I was going to be giving a statement. I saw the evidence up to the point that I saw myself but nothing further.
17. I've seen the case crop up on social media. I tend not to follow it on social media and prefer Edinburgh Evening News or BBC news. It might be there because the Inquiry is being held in Edinburgh.
18. I do not believe that my recollection has been affected in the slightest by what I have read in the media or seen in the inquiry evidence. My involvement is very minor. I listened to it more because I was interested in what the female officer was saying. I was concerned for her because she said she was injured I was interested in her welfare. There have been conversations in the police since that incident, general conversations and my mentioning that I was giving a statement today.

3 May 2015

19. My role on 3 May 2015 was as a response officer. I was sent to carry out observations of the high risk person in the custody suite at Kirkcaldy Police Station. I would imagine Kirkcaldy Police didn't have enough officers so required mutual aid. Myself and PC Stuart Cockburn were sent across to help out.

Signature of witness.....



- 20. I would call them custodies or detained people. I can't remember any of the other people who were in custody that day. They were all closed behind solid doors. The person I was watching was behind a glass screen. I wasn't told at the start of the shift who was in there. You usually write the first names of the detained people on the doors so the custody officers can speak to them using their first name.

- 21. I have been referred to my statement (PIRC-00342) at page 3: *"I would also like to state and confirm that during one of my refreshment breaks I made my way to the "piece room" (canteen) where I saw a number of officers, roughly 10 in number, which included a uniformed Chief Inspector. As the officers were separated from other staff and were effectively being supervised by a uniformed Chief Inspector I assumed that they were potentially the officers involved in the ongoing incident. I had no verbal interaction with these officers, other than to ask how to switch on the Coke machine. I thereafter purchased a Cola and was then asked politely by the Chief Inspector to leave, which I did. I did not know any of these officers or the Chief Inspector."*

- 22. It was a male Chief Inspector that asked me to leave the canteen. I wouldn't be able to say when it was. He was a Chief Inspector because of three pips on his shoulder. I don't recall what he said other than I possibly shouldn't be there. I suspected they were the responding officers and I shouldn't engage with them in any way shape or form. I felt that he was keeping them away from people rather than wanting them to interact or discuss important facts or collaborate. I expect he wanted to preserve their memories rather than collaborate and form a joint view.

- 23. I left the station and came back. I can't remember exactly how I got in and out of the station, but I remember there is a car park at the back of the station but I remember using the front because my pass wouldn't allow me access on the day so I would've had to knock.

Signature of witness..... 

- 24. I can't recall anything that was actually said by the attending officers. When I was in the Custody Centre there is no radio so I would've heard from others about what they had heard on the radio. On our breaks I would've heard the radio and would've discussed what was happening but I was ware they were getting it from the radio as well.

- 25. I don't remember any terrorism aspect being discussed at all.

CCTV on 3 May 2015

- 26. I have been shown CCTV footage of Kirkcaldy Police Station of Camera 12 (PS00196) at 08:27:17.

- 27. I can't hear what is said. I haven't seen that footage before. I don't know who the other officer was who wasn't PC Brian Geddes. I don't remember who was in the other cell.

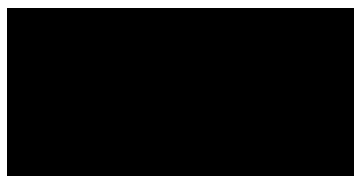
- 28. The term "ISIS staying in the station" doesn't mean anything to me. I don't recall saying that. I don't recall using that term at all. It doesn't ring any bells and if that was a term used. I wouldn't say ISIS. It might be "is he staying in the station".

- 29. Me using the word ISIS in that circumstance doesn't ring true, I don't recall ever thinking it was a terrorist incident. It was a male walking down the street with a large knife as far as I was aware.

- 30. I can't imagine why I would say ISIS staying in the station so if I was referring to him. I don't recall the other male in the other cell at all. I don't recall seeing anyone coming and going whilst I was in the station.

- 31. That would be out of character for me. I can't imagine that I would've used a term about someone injured. I wouldn't refer to somebody of Asian

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appearance I would not refer to them as ISIS. If there was a person I would've referred to them or used their name that was on the door. I don't recall anybody else appearance or details.

32. I can't hear the words "ISIS staying in the station" but equally I can't hear what I'm saying in the footage.

33. It wouldn't be an appropriate comment to make. Just because of his appearance that doesn't mean he has those ideologies at all.

34. I'd never been back to Kirkcaldy Police Station after that day.

35. I've not had any follow up after this. The only contact I've had about this is this statement and the PIRC statement. I've had nothing from Police Scotland.

Race

36. I have not come across any examples of discriminatory behaviours by police officers and I am not aware of any racist views held by police officers. I also have not heard any racist comments or jokes made by any police officers.

37. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that this statement may form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and be published on the Inquiry's website.

January 10, 2023 | 7:57 AM GMT
Date.....Signature of witness.....

