



**The Sheku Bayoh Public Inquiry
Witness Statement**

Lorraine Bell

Taken by [REDACTED]
In person
On 26 October 2022

1. My name is Lorraine Bell. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1966. My address is [REDACTED] I am employed as a head housekeeper.

Morning of 3 May 2015

2. I am asked how I first became aware that something was not right with Sheku on the morning of 3 May 2015. Collette came into my bedroom and said that she'd had a call from Zahid saying that he and Sheku had had a fall-out, and he didn't want Collette to go home. Collette gave me the baby. I was working that day, so she said she was going to nip down to see Sheku because she was worried. Sheku and Zahid never fall out, so she was just worried as to what had gone on.
3. She went down to Kirkcaldy, and she phoned me and said that she'd gone into the house and the back door was lying wide open. Sheku's jacket was lying on the kitchen floor, and she didn't know where he was. She was going

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to go up to Templehall shops to see if she could see him. She phoned me back when she got to Templehall shops, and I heard her shouting to Sheku's friend, "Have you seen Sheku?" To which he had said, "No, but I'll come down the road with you," and she said, "No." I said, "Right, I think you'll need to phone the police."

4. She phoned the police, and the police told her to go back to the house, but I had the baby. I was meant to be on shift that day. She came up the road and collected us. I phoned work to tell them I was going to be late. We went down to Kirkcaldy. When we got to the house the first car we saw had 2 police officers in it. I think it was plainclothes police or CID. There must have been a second car because there were more than 2 police officers in the house.
5. When we entered the house the two plainclothes officers came into the living room with us and then we saw officers in uniform coming in. To begin with I think there were 2 uniform officers. One went into the kitchen, and one went upstairs. I am asked whether the officers asked for Collette's permission before looking about the house. No, they just came in.
6. I am asked about what happened when you were in the house and what discussions took place. Collette was asking "Where's Sheku? Have you found him?" The two guys said "Oh, we're not from this area. We've just come on shift."
7. I think Collette needed to feed [REDACTED] He was getting a bit fractious. So, she was going to take [REDACTED] upstairs to feed him, and at that point one of them said "If you can get a bag together for the baby, it looks like this is the beginning of a crime scene." We were thinking "Really? Why?" So, we took the baby upstairs, and Collette sat in the nursing chair, and I started getting bits and pieces together for [REDACTED] The drawers were in front of the window, and I looked out the window. There was officers out in the back garden and there was a sniffer dog, and I said to Collette "there's a sniffer dog in the

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garden!" She said "How? What's happening?" I said, "I don't know. They're putting polythene over bits of the grass." She was asking "Why?" I said, "I don't know." Then she said, "Is Sheku dead?" I said "No, don't be stupid." She said "No, I think he's dead," and I told her, "No, I don't think so. Stop being silly."

8. The officers had stayed downstairs when we were upstairs. When we came downstairs they said they needed Collette to go to the police station. They asked how I would get home and I said, "I'm not going home." They police said that a police station is no place for a baby. I said "Well, I don't care. She's not going by herself. I'm coming with her."
9. I thought that it was a bit suspicious that they didn't want me to come to the station, and it was "no place for a baby." I thought, "It's a police station." It was like they were trying to discourage me from going with them to the station.

Attendance at Kirkcaldy Police Office and delivery of death message

10. I am asked if it was at this point that we all made the decision to go to the police station. Yes. We were asked to follow them down to the station. We got into Collette's car, got [REDACTED] strapped in, and we took off for Arran Crescent. Then we got down to Templehall Road where we go left. We went along a little bit, then they started indicating that they were doing a U-turn. I'm saying to Collette "Where are they going? That's not the way to the police station." They signalled to us to follow them. We did a U-turn, followed them, and couldn't understand why we were going that way. It was a long way for a shortcut, but there was nobody to say why we're going this way. I am asked why I thought the police did a U-turn. We would have seen what was going on because that little mini roundabout that we go across is where it happened. If we went down to that road, we would have passed it in order to get to the police station

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[REDACTED]

11. I am asked to talk about what happened when we arrived at the police station. We were told to meet them inside. We went inside to the front desk, and we were told to take a seat and that somebody would be with us. One of the guys stood with us. Me and Collette were just sitting chatting. The guy wasn't really engaging with us to begin with, but then we saw the picture of [REDACTED], the missing person that had been missing for a while, and we said, "Oh my God, I can't believe he's still missing." The police officer joined in with us at that point and said that [REDACTED] hadn't done the guy any favours for finding him, that he had been to the press, and it was all over Facebook. We thought that was a bit insensitive because [REDACTED] had been missing, I think that it was maybe a year. No, it wasn't as much as that because we were actually out that night with Collette and Sheku when he did go missing. The officer that was with us at the station was the same plain clothes officer that had been with us at the house. I am being given the names DC Wayne Parker and DC Andrew Mitchell but none of those names ring a bell to me.

12. I am asked how long we were waiting and what happened after the wait. We were waiting about 15 minutes. It felt like forever, but it must have been about 15 minutes. They then took us through, we went along a long corridor, down another corridor to the very bottom room, and went in, sat down, and one of the officers came in. I'm sure he had an accent, and said, "Look, there's no easy way to say this, so I'm just going to say it. Someone matching the description has been found dead on the street."

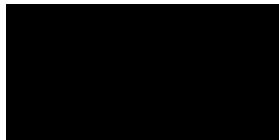
13. I am asked how we both reacted to being given the death message. Collette freaked out. She was jumping around. She was screaming; she was crying. She was kicking me because I was trying to give her a cuddle, but I had [REDACTED] in my hand. So the other guy took [REDACTED] off me, and he went outside until Collette calmed down a bit. The officer that was in the room was just watching what was unfolding in front of him. It took Collette about 5 minutes to calm down but during that time Collette was asking the officer questions like "What happened? Where was he? Has he been hurt?"

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[REDACTED]

14. I am asked what responses we got to those questions. The officer said that there were no obvious injuries, nothing that they could see. They gave no explanation as to how he died, just that he had been found dead on the street and they were looking for someone in connection with it.
15. I am asked what happened after the news had been broken. Collette had said, "Where is he? I want to see him." They had said that "You can't see him just now, we need you to give a statement," and Collette said, "No, I want to see him. I want to see him," and me being me, I didn't have any reason to mistrust the police, never, ever have. I had said, "Look, just give the statement, then we'll go and see him," and the guy had said, "Yes, give the statement, then you could go and see him." Collette seemed like she didn't want to give a statement she just wanted to see Sheku. The officers didn't offer her a break or time to come out the room they were straight into taking the statement.
16. I am asked if I recall what kinds of things they were asking Collette during her statement? Was he a Muslim? How many times a day did he pray? Did he eat bacon?" which I thought was a bizarre question. I thought, "What?" "Did he drink? Did he smoke?" They seemed to ask a lot of religious based questions they even asked Collette had she been asked to change her religion as well.
17. I am asked if either me or Collette questioned about the questions or if she just answered the questions. We weren't questioning why they were asking the questions, but I was questioning in my head why they were asking the questions.
18. I can't remember how long the statement took. It felt like we were in there for hours, but we probably weren't. I am asked if at the end of the statement if I recall Collette being given the opportunity to read over the statement and to sign the statement? No, I don't think she did. I definitely felt like Collette

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should have been given a break. We didn't have time to think from the moment we actually went in the room.

19. That day at the station I felt that the officers treated me and Collette very matter of fact. I don't know, at times they seemed a bit worried, they were looking at each other, all a bit confused like they didn't know what was going on.

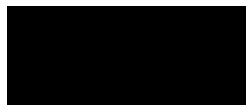
20. I am asked if at the end of the statement I recall whether there was any discussion about what would happen next? Collette had said, "Right, can I go and see him now? Where is he?" And they had said, "Oh, well, no, you can't go and see him just now, but someone will be in contact with you, and you could go and see him." Collette got really upset about that again, because she felt they had lied to her: "Do this, then you could go and see him." I didn't say anything at that moment, I just wanted to get out of there because I felt something wasn't right. As we came in Collette's car once the statement was finished, we just drove ourselves home. Though we sat in the car for about ten minutes outside, just thinking, "What was that?"

21. I am asked if they offered Collette the ability to speak to anyone. No. I think at the time we were just eager to help them find whoever had done this to him, and we had no reason to disbelieve their intentions.

Engagement with Police Scotland

22. After the station Collette needed to get her frozen breast milk out of the freezer, and I said, "Well, we'll run by, and I'll go in and get it." So we went back to Arran Crescent.. When we arrived, there was Police on the door. I didn't even get in the gate. I said, "I'll need to come in and get the milk," and they said, "No, you can't come in," I said, "But I've already been in. I've just come from there." They said, "No, you can't come in, you'll contaminate the scene." I explained , "But I've been in. I've been in this morning. I've been in every room." They said "No, no, you can't come in. Where is it? I'll go and get


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it for you.” The house wasn’t taped off but there was an officer at the front door. I am asked how that officer treated me? I think he was a bit annoyed that I was there and I was insisting I was coming in.

23. After retrieving the milk, I went back to the car while Collette talked to a neighbour. I am asked if I recall at that point any conversations with either an officer at the house or officers in the police station about when Collette was going to get her house back? No, we had no idea. I also don’t recall if they had asked Collette if she had a place she could stay.

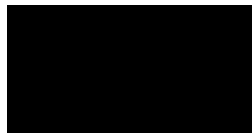
24. After Collette talked to the neighbour, we went back to my house. It was after 12 when we arrived. I am asked if when we got to the house, was Collette receiving any updates from anybody? No. The next thing we knew it was Kadi had phoned her. Kadi knew that Sheku was dead, and she was upset. So, Collette said, “Do you want us to come down?” and we went down to Kadi’s house.

25. I am asked when we arrived at Kadi’s house and if I recall what Kadi thought had happened to Sheku? No, I don’t remember. I think they were both crying and were both talking to each other sort of at the same time. I think I took  into the kitchen or the living room. When we first arrived at the house there wasn’t a police presence, but the police had spoken to Kadi and Ade already.

26. I am asked whether when I was at the house if I recall if any further police attended when I was there? Two police officers came, and I think that’s when we got a wee bit of information that Sheku had come in contact with the police, but I don’t remember what they said about it, and they swiftly left. I think the questions that they were being asked, they weren’t comfortable answering, so they left.

27. I am asked if I remember what the questions were that were being asked to the officers. I don’t remember what the questions were, but there was a lot of

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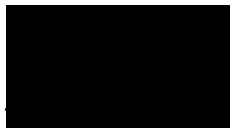
questions because by that time it wasn't just the four of us. Some of their friends had come in.

28. Ade had asked for Garry McEwan. He was the next officer that I remember seeing arrive at the house. I am asked if I remember what Garry McEwan said had happened. He said that they'd come into contact with Sheku and there had been a forceful arrest, that batons had been drawn and that basically they took him down. Garry then said that he was running about with a machete, and I said, "No, I think you've got the wrong person here." Then when he said that they all went in with batons, I was absolutely raging. So, at that point I said, "So you effing killed him?" and to that he just shrugged his shoulders. He couldn't answer me. I am asked whether Garry McEwan shrugging his shoulders was a dismissive thing or whether he genuinely didn't know. I think he truly didn't know.

29. I am asked at the point if I remember how the others within the group reacted to the news. Well, Collette, she shouted. She stormed out of the room. I said my piece. I stormed out of the room, and there was quite a bit of hoo-ha from the rest of the people. I mean, by this point, I don't know what they were saying.


30. I am asked if I remember whether there was anyone else from the police that came during my time in their house? I remember about teatime Kadi was making Collette have something to eat, and there was plainclothes officers again, and Collette was asked if she needed anything from the house. She needed a change of clothes, she needed her underwear, things like that. So, she was writing it down and she was to give it to the guy. Collette said, "That guy's not going in my knicker drawer." She ultimately didn't give over the list so then she didn't get any of her things. As they were plain clothed officers I didn't know if they were liaison officers. There were so many people in the kitchen it was hard to decipher who was who.

Signature of Witness.....



31. I am asked if I am able to characterise how Garry McEwan treated everyone while delivering the death message. I think he was just nervous; he was confused himself. I don't think he knew exactly what had happened either. You got a sense that he was trying to tell you, but he wasn't sure. I was angry at what he was saying but I wasn't angry at him.. I am asked if I was there when he left? No, he was just going out the front door when I came back out of the kitchen.

32. We left Kadi's and were back up the road for about seven o'clock. I am asked whether when we left Kadi's house, we had any sort of understanding at that point about what was going to happen next and if the police had given any information about that. No. I think we were just going to take the lead from Kadi and Ade. I think they were more switched on to asking questions, whereas we were just sort of going with the flow and being led.

33. I am asked if I recall at anytime on that day whether there had been any discussion about identification of the body or a post-mortem? There was talk, but I really can't remember what it was. The majority of the time, I had  and I was trying to keep him quiet.

34. I am asked if when I was at my house if I had any further engagement with Police Scotland at my house? No

Engagement with the PIRC

35. I am asked if I had any engagement with PIRC at my house and if so, do I remember who attended the house. I had engagement with PIRC a few days later, they had come to take statements. However, before the statement I did not have any family liaison officers come to my home.

36. I am asked if the statements taken by PIRC were from me and Collette and how I felt that they treated us when taking them. Yes, they took the

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statements from me and Collette. It just felt like they were there to do their jobs. They got the statements, and they went. Very business-like.

37. I am asked if I ever attended any meetings with Collette and the PIRC. I went to some but not them all because I had to return back to work. My perceptions of the meetings was that they weren't very sympathetic. I remember being in a big room and it was the head of PIRC that wanted to speak to us, and I remember Collette being quite upset at her. Collette was upset by the fact that she was quite matter of fact and business-like as well. It was like there was no consideration for her feelings. Quite a lot of the time Collette was arguing back with her, and I was trying to calm her down and say, "Shh, it's fine." I am asked if I recall if the other family members were there and also if Aamer Anwar was involved? Yes, they were.

38. I am asked what my perception was of how Collette was treated by the likes of PIRC and Police Scotland. I don't really feel that Collette was in control of what was happening, or she was being informed of what was happening. It was like she had taken a backstep and Kadi and Ade were the main ones and at meetings and things we had to take [REDACTED] We had no one else to look after him, and you got the feeling it was an inconvenience if he cried or whatever and I'm trying to keep him quiet. I got the impression from the external bodies that it was inconvenience for example, when we were giving statements to PIRC. I think [REDACTED] was having a bad day that day and you could see that he was getting quite irritated and I'm thinking "Well, it's my house. My child's here." At one point I was asked to take him out the room and I said "No."

39. I am asked whether organisations could have made more of an effort to involve Collette or to give more information to Collette. Yes, it was just the way that it was unsympathetic. Collette was a new mum. She had a 12-week-old baby. I felt that statements "A police station isn't the place for a baby," is failing to understand what it's like for a woman who's just had a baby.

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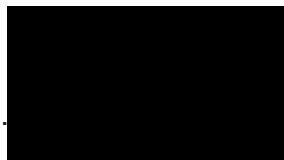
[REDACTED]

40. I am asked if I ever got approached by anybody other than the police or PIRC about giving information. Yes, newspapers. They were constantly rattling at my door, shouting through the letterbox, leaving cards, sitting in the Lomond Centre car park, which is visible from my house, so they could see me coming out and they would come running. Then when Collette got her own house, they came to me and then they found out where she was, so I actually videoed the guy that was rattling at my door, sent it to her, and ten minutes later she said, "They've just been to my door and it was the same guy," and I said "My God, will they not just leave us alone?"

41. I am asked if at any point I thought to mention this to the police? I would never phone the police again. I am asked to explain this comment. Well, Collette's tyres were slashed just after it and she had a meeting to go to, and everybody said, "You need to phone the police," and I said, "We're not phoning the police." So, we just left it. We didn't phone the police. Then another incident happened. There was somebody hanging about in the stairwell of my flat, and we wouldn't phone the police. We couldn't phone the police. Because I felt like I couldn't trust them. This distrust in the police is directly related to what happened, absolutely, because 100 per cent I had every faith in the police. I had had that conversation with Sheku before because Sheku had said "Well, if I ever came in contact with the police, I'd run," and I had said, "Don't be ridiculous. What?"

42. I am asked to explain in my own words what exactly it was that the police did in this case that resulted in me not trusting them. Well, as it unfolded, we knew they were lying left, right and centre. Why did they tell us, "We found him on the street dead"? He wasn't found. I think it was that first lie that we thought, "No." and when we actually found out what happened it was from Garry McEwan at Kadi's house and from there on in there was a lack of trust in the police.

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43. I am asked if I felt that there was any attempt to try and rebuild that trust. No. Where I work, sometimes the police would come in and look for missing people. Because I have been on the telly with Collette at press conferences they knew who I was but they would look at me and they would look away,

44. I am asked if I had similar feeling of distrust towards PIRC? I had trust in everything that was going on at that time. Because I was brought up to respect the police, trust the police. It's a shame they didn't respect and trust us.

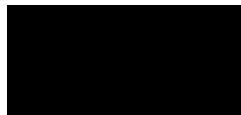
Engagement with the Lord Advocate and Crown Office

45. I am asked if I ever accompanied Collette to any meetings with the Lord Advocate and if so what my views on the Lord Advocate was and how they handled things. Yes, I did accompany her to meetings. I think the first couple of meetings with Frank Mulholland he seemed to be okay, but then it sort of turned a corner and he said something, I don't know if it was PIRC or if something just fell out of his mouth but that upset Collette. I can't remember exactly what it was, but I could remember Collette being annoyed and speaking back to him. I am asked how he dealt with being challenged by Collette. I think he thought it was quite funny that he was getting challenged by Collette or rude, that he was getting challenged and that he wouldn't have expected that to take place.

46. I am asked if I recall attending any meeting with the other Lord Advocate James Wolffe. I think I was at one, but I really can't remember much about that one.

47. I am asked if I remember how the news was delivered that the decision had been taken not to bring criminal prosecutions against the officers? I read it online. Yes, someone had texted me and said, "It's online and there's been no charges," and I thought, "How do you know this? We don't know that." At that point Collette hadn't even been told by the Crown Office or the Lord Advocate

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of the verdict. I was gobsmacked that it had made its way online first. We were led to believe that it would have been shared with the family in advance or that the message would have at least come from Amer.

48. I am asked if I recall whether anything was done about that or if anything was said about how the family had been told about it. I know Amer was really unhappy that it had broken that way, and I think he was going to deal with it.

49. I am asked if there is anything else I would like to add to my statement. I'm just really disappointed and really shocked. Just the way things unfolded. Things were coming out in the paper, things that we should've been told personally and not reading or reading online, and we were told not to speak to the press, yet Peter Watson was blabbing his mouth off, which really made us angry.

50. I am asked if I can recall some of the things I saw from Peter Watson. Not right now I can't. It wasn't good things. It was basically making Sheku out to be someone he wasn't. This was allowed to happen to get the public on side with the police. These stories were coming out to damage Sheku's reputation.

51. I am asked how this all impacted Collette when these stories were published. Terribly. Collette stopped going out. She couldn't go anywhere by herself. She had to wait until I came home from work. If she needed to go out, I had to go with her. She had a fear of meeting people and seeing the police.

52. 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.

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