



The Sheku Bayoh Public Inquiry

Witness Statement

Paul Castledine

**Taken by [REDACTED] by MS Teams
on Thursday 4 April 2024**

Witness details

1. My name is Paul Castledine. My date of birth is in 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

2. I have been asked about my work in the police. I joined the police on 2 June 1993. Prior to that I was in Her Majesty’s Royal Marines for eight years. Then I decided to join the police. I did my two years’ probation stationed in Cowdenbeath, and then I spent another three years after my probation in Cowdenbeath, and then I was sent to Dunfermline and Dalgety Bay where I worked in different crime teams. I was in public order and I was firearms trained. Then I was then sent to Glenrothes where I was stationed there for just about the rest of my career. That’s just a brief outline of my time with Fife Police and later Police Scotland. I left Police Scotland in 2017. At that time I was a police officer working in productions.

SEMPER

3. In my last 15 years, I became involved in SEMPER Scotland, which is basically the equivalent of the English Black Police Association. Our remit was to address

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issues minority ethnic police officers and staff face and trying to overcome them and also advise different police forces and authorities of any wrongdoings - just try to help them do their job so we can do our job.

4. There was always a problem with numbers. The government and the police were looking to raise the profile of police officers from a minority background - to recruit them and to retain them.
5. Latterly I was chairman of the association, and my job was to sort of be the go-between. If we found that if an officer from a minority background was being investigated, they would tend to be going to an all-white team to have their thoughts known, and they weren't listened to by people from the same sort of background, so there's no sort of understanding of any culture. It was just to make sure it wasn't brushed under the carpet and that their voices were listened to.
6. We dealt with a number of cases during my time. It's just really a support mechanism, and as far as I'm aware, it's still going today, but we're just addressing the balance. We had a very small proportion of officers from minority backgrounds, and we wanted to see if we could try and encourage more people to join, offer them the support that we were able to give them, and let them know that there was always going to be some sort of safety net for them should there be any problems.
7. We attended various meetings with the Black Police Association and had conferences and stuff just to learn from them. Obviously, they've got a larger remit, more officers to deal with, but we were able to learn stuff from them as well. So, we had quite a few meetings, that was part of the job as well.
8. I have been asked if my role with SEMPER was full-time, or work I undertook in addition to policing duties. Initially, it was part time, and then the then chief constable of Fife agreed for me to be seconded full time. I worked about a year

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full time, but restraints forced me back to work again. I did about a year, I think, full time.

9. I have been asked approximately when this was. I would say 2010, something around then. Between 2008-2010.

10. It was up to the relevant chief constables whether or not they gave the officers the time. It just became an agreement that they wouldn't afford the time to another full-time person, so you would still have a chairperson, and also their secretaries. We'd have another two or three people who would help stand in for various meetings and stuff, but it was also part time as well as our normal jobs.

11. I have been asked if, when I left Police Scotland in 2017 it was still at the discretion of senior officers what time officers were given to devote to SEMPER work. Yes, it was really up to the individuals. You used to be able to get the weekend off to go and play cricket for whoever, and then that all stopped - it was just the restraints, and it just came under that that they just couldn't afford to allow people time off, and that was one of the things. I don't think there was another full-time officer after myself.

12. I have been asked what else I worked on during my time as chairperson of SEMPER. It was recruitment and retention, and addressing any issues that came up. The police would come to us as a body and say, "Look, we've got this. Can you help us?" and we were able to intervene and to assist. I think that the statistic came out - some years before I started - was that a minority ethnic police officer was three times more likely to be interviewed by their colleagues than a white officer in connection with professional standards. That was sometimes just purely because they looked at it as, "It's really important that we do this right because this person is from a minority background," and it was quite shocking to me.

13. Having been on that side, and having been investigated myself, I know what it's like. I can see why that was done, but we need to address that and point that out to the Police Authority that sometimes, where a white police officer would

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get, "Look, don't do that again," that would be the comment from the police, if it was minority officer it becomes, "Right, we need to do this by the book, and we can't just slap his wrist and tell him to get on with it. We need to address this properly." Once it was put on paper, there was nothing else that could be done. Often we were certainly wrongly investigated. I'm not saying that every person should really be investigated, but when it could be dealt with without an investigation, we weren't given that option, so we had to address that.

14. I have been asked if I feel this issue improved at all while I was working with SEMPER. I don't really think it got any better to be honest. I think that people were more aware and we made the officers aware that if something was going to happen - just to make sure that they're getting dealt with in the right ways. We would also point out to the individual forces "Are there not officers that have done exactly the same thing that have not been investigated?" and, "We're wondering why you're pursuing this particular thing," which made them feel uneasy, but we were just trying to make a point and it was often a correct point.

Police Scotland officers involved in incident on 3 May 2015

15. I have been asked if I knew any of the following officers: Alan Paton, Craig Walker, Nicole Short, Ashley Tomlinson, Alan Smith, Kayleigh Good, Daniel Gibson, James McDonough, and Scott Maxwell. Putting PC Alan Paton to the side for a moment, Nicole worked on the same shift as me in Glenrothes for a number of years, and she's friends with me and still is to this day. I only know Gibson [REDACTED], I never actually met him, but I knew of him, but other than that I barely know the rest of them. I've probably met them, but I wouldn't know them if I walked past them in the street.

16. I have been asked how long I have known PC Paton for and how we met. I would say from 2002/2003 at a guess. Around that time, I moved to Glenrothes and we were on the same shift just about straight away, and we worked together for a good few years in Glenrothes. I then went off to do other stuff, he went off

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to do other stuff. We worked together again later on. I think he diversified, to CID or something like that. I think we were about four or five years on and off working together.

17. I have been asked what I would want to tell the Inquiry about PC Paton. He is a very likeable chap, and we worked together as a team. Alan is the same sort of stature as myself, over 6ft, and we made quite a good van team. We would find, certainly on a night shift, that we were partnered off together - we'd smile at each other to say, "Right, okay, that's a van team, we're the A team," and we looked forward to going out and working together.

18. Alan and I worked together as a really good team. He was very knowledgeable with the police methods and all the law and stuff like that; I was more streetwise. He dealt with everybody fairly, and there was never any sort of suggestion that he was discriminating against anybody. Everybody was treated exactly the same. We became really good friends. I haven't seen him recently, I can't really remember the last time I saw him, maybe it was about six/seven years ago, or maybe slightly less. I haven't got a bad word to say about him to be honest.

Experience in Police Scotland

19. I have been asked how I would describe my experience in Police Scotland as a black police officer, particularly around 2015. I think there's different "isms" in every sort of walk of life and the police aren't any different. Having experienced my time in His Majesty's Forces where, if you had red hair, you were called names; if you were Irish, you were called names; if you were black, you were called names; it was just accepted that anybody was slightly different would be called names. It was called "character building" - this is just back then. My nickname in the Royal Marines was "Chalky," and when I joined the police, the deputy chief constable, Mr Graham Bennett, at the time, told my police station not to call me by that name. This was back in 1993, so they laid some guidelines down. I think I was one of the first minority ethnics to be joining Fife police, that was pretty early days.

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20. Did I experience racism within the police? Yes, I'm pretty sure I did. I've got pretty thick skin, so a lot of it just was like water off a duck's back and really didn't affect me. I can't sit here and say that I wasn't discriminated against, you know? Some people thought that I got certain jobs just because of my colour, so it was never a case for me of getting a job and being accepted like most white officers. I got it because I'd passed all the tests. It would be thought by some that I got it just because I was black.

21. There was that sort of side of it and some resentment as well, but I do believe that the Fife police, and laterally Police Scotland, did try to do their best to eradicate any racism within the police force. When I mentioned earlier about being complained about and then being investigated, they did think or feel it was really important that somebody from minority would have to go down on paper, and once it goes and makes a paper trail and is reported, as opposed to the slap on the wrist, that was a problem. I found myself on the other side of that quite often, unfortunately, but looking back, that's the way it went. Yes, I do think that there were problems, but that was something we were trying to address.

22. I think it's not dissimilar to females, from my point of view, within the police. When I first started, females weren't allowed to be in the firearms, weren't allowed to be in the public order. To me, that's real discrimination, and now that's changed. I feel as if, hopefully, things are changing for the better with minority ethnics, but I think, as I explained, if you had red hair, if you were Irish, or if you were this, if you were that, in the police. If you were white and Scottish and male, you would go places, you'd be able to go anywhere freely but anything other was looked upon slightly different. I fell by the wayside quite a few times, but that's of the nature of myself. I'm quite outgoing and I'm not a shrinking violet, and if there was ever something to be said or something to be spoken to harshly, I wouldn't shy away from it. I wouldn't think, "Hold on a minute, what am I saying here?" I'd certainly go for it. So, sometimes I'm my

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own worst enemy, but at the same time, I do feel as if that was just the way it went, I don't have any sort of massive complaints about it to be honest.

23. I have been asked if senior officers dealt appropriately with any racist behaviour or culture that they were aware of. Yes, I think there were two sides of it. I think, even in my probation, about 1995, where I knew there was some sort of plot afoot to get me out of the force, it was the then assistant chief constable, Mr Matheson. He called me to his office and he said, "Look, I know what's been going on here," and didn't actually spell it out, but he knew that I'd been picked on and it was just due to race, just by a few officers. In your probation you do two years, then you become confirmed as an officer. I was confirmed six weeks earlier than everybody else, just to make sure I got through, and that was from him realising and being informed that there were people trying to get me out of the job and it wasn't for the right reasons.

24. I have been asked if I had many colleagues as at 2015 who were from a minority ethnic background. There was a few in Strathclyde, Glasgow Police, and Fife itself. There was [REDACTED] who passed away some years ago now, but he was half Chinese, and he was actually one of the founding members of SEMPER Scotland. When I joined, I think he was a few years ahead of me. So, I didn't really know many at all. In the Royal Marines I was a huge minority. There just weren't many of us who joined and stuck it, so I was used to being the minority, so I never really looked at myself as anything other than being the same as everybody else, and bearing in mind that my mum's white, my dad is black, I'm half and half, so I never really looked at anything other than me being the same as everybody else.

25. I have been asked if I recollect the training that was provided to officers in 2015 on issues of race, and equality and diversity. Most things like that were treated pretty seriously and the courses were thorough. We helped with some of the courses. We actually did courses at police headquarters at Tulliallan, and we did the superintendents - it was a chief inspector to superintendents, we attended and helped them with that side of it. Many of them were pretty

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clueless, to be honest with you, but that filtered then down to the street level where there were new acts being brought out, certainly the different racism acts that were introduced. A lot of it, I think, was just down to sort of common sense, and there would be legislation come out and the officers would be told, we had to sign for this thing to say, "I understand," but it was as thorough as it could be, because it was just impractical, because things change daily.

26. I have been asked how I would describe the culture within Fife Police around 2015 and if the phrase "canteen culture" has any meaning for me. It certainly changed a lot by 2015. I used to shy away from any of that stuff. I do like a laugh and a joke, but when it's at the expense of somebody else, then it's not really funny. People have got different tolerances to these sorts of things. The canteen was a place where, basically, you were able to relax and you'd be able to let off steam a little bit, and if comments were made we were actively encouraged to report it - there was a lot of reporting going on.

27. If somebody was making comments and it offended anybody, they were chancing their luck, because there was always a chance, certainly back then, that somebody would report you and that would be the end of it. There might have been a small culture of it, but I really don't think that it was wise for anybody to be involved in that. I don't think it really happened, and if it did happen, there was people who were looking to further their careers who would happily go and tell one of the senior officers, "This is what I heard."

28. I have been asked about the statement made by the then-Chief Constable Sir Iain Livingstone who talked about institutional racism within Police Scotland. I thought it was a stupid comment to make, to be honest with you. I don't know whether he made it under duress, or whether he thought it was a good idea, or it would get him out of some sort of trouble. I really don't think that's something that anybody should have said, and I don't think it's a true fact. It's a massive statement to make, and I think he was just on his way out. He left shortly after that, and why he made it, I've got no idea. That was maybe his opinion, and he was told to say it. That's only my thoughts. We need to build things, and I think

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Police Scotland have built, certainly over the years it's got better, but institutional? I don't know, I don't agree with that particularly.

29. I have been asked if I have any existing knowledge of the events on 3 May, or if I have followed the Inquiry evidence at all. No, not really. All I know is that I get shocked every year that is still going on. Occasionally, once every sort of three or four months, I bump into or get contacted by Nicole [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and then the Inquiry might come up, and I'll have to say to her, "Is it still going on?" because I just can't believe it is still going on. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I don't really pay attention. I watch the news probably once every couple of years. I do have news alerts and people tell me about things and I have been on social media, but I just pay no attention at all. I haven't really been following it. I know what the end result was of what happened, and I know two of the officers involved, and the Inquiry's going on, so that's really as much as I know.

30. I have been asked if there is anything else I want to include in my witness statement for the Inquiry. I have to say that having worked with Alan - we were never best of mates, but when the team were going out for a drink, we would all sit together and have a drink together and we would telephone each other every now and then. I was shocked by any allegation of him being anything other than an upright police officer. He wouldn't bend the rules, he certainly would not discriminate against anybody, and if I thought that, I would have felt uncomfortable working with him, and I felt very comfortable working with him, and anybody he dealt with he dealt with exactly the same. Those are my thoughts and my observations as a working police officer who's done lots of night shifts with him over a four maybe five-year-period, seeing him socially as well, knowing his family. We had mutual friends, and even the mutual friends, would probably be shocked, although I've not spoken to them about it. I'm quite saddened that it's got to this for him. My experience has been nothing but positive with Alan.

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31. 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.

May 16, 2024 | 1:07 PM BST

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