

**PRESS PACK- FOR SHEKU BAYOH DEATH IN CUSTODY PRESS CONFERENCE 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2015**

Please note that a meeting will take place with the Lord Advocate at 11.30am in private.

A short statement will be made following this meeting.

Attending that meeting will be Aamer Anwar Solicitor, Sheku's partner Colette Bell, her mother Lorraine Bell, Sisters- Kadijartu Johnson, Kosna Bayoh, mother Mrs [REDACTED] Bayoh, and brother-in-law Adeyemi Johnson.

**Statement issued at Press Conference by Aamer Anwar- pages 1-4**

**Solicitor for the family of Sheku Bayoh**

Good morning- my name is Aamer Anwar- I am the solicitor acting on behalf the family of Sheku Bayoh.

Sat on my right is Collette Bell the partner of Sheku and mother to his youngest son [REDACTED] who is only [REDACTED] old. On my left is Kadi Johnson the elder sister of Sheku, both of them will speak this morning in what are extremely difficult circumstances.

Just to advise those who shorthand skills are not that great- copies of the press release and statements given by everyone today, with spellings of names will be handed out by [REDACTED] at the back.

I'd like to start by making a statement on behalf the family. Sheku Bayoh was a well-liked, peaceful and healthy young man who at the age of 31 had no previous history of violence.

It would appear he left his home sometime between 7 and 7.30am walking an approximate distance of a mile.

The family is advised that police officers who were in the midst of a shift change at Kirkcaldy Police Office responded to an alert following calls from members of the public.

We are advised that some six police cars went to the scene and that a minimum of 9 uniformed police officers engaged with Mr Bayoh.

Of course any use of force must at all times be lawful, necessary and proportionate in the circumstances.

Reports of any officer having been stabbed are simply untrue and

Mr Bayoh was detained and restrained with handcuffs to the rear and leg restraints, following which he lost consciousness.

CPR was attempted at the scene, an ambulance called and he was officially pronounced dead at Victoria hospital at 9.04 am

Following Sheku's death five different versions of events were given to the family by Police Scotland officers over the course of ten hours until they were finally told he had died in police custody, that is a matter of grave concern.

Sensitive and thorough handling of the investigation in the 'golden hours' following the death is critical to evidence gathering and setting the direction and quality of the investigation to follow- the family has grave concerns with regards to what happened on Sunday.

Furthermore the family does not understand why the officers involved in engaging with Sheku Bayoh were not immediately suspended without prejudice after his death.

It is a matter of wider public concern that officers remain at their desks or in contact with the public pending the outcome of the investigation into a death in custody.

For the Chief Constable to suspend the officers without prejudice is not a question of prejudging the outcome of the investigation but ensures neutrality, integrity of the investigation, transparency as well as protecting officers involved in such incidents.

The Bayoh family understands that neither PIRC nor the Lord Advocate can enforce such a decision and would strongly urge Chief Constable Stephen House to take full control of the situation.

The family welcomed the Lord Advocate's instruction last on Tuesday to PIRC to take over the whole investigation into the death of Sheku Bayoh.

However they were saddened to learn that some 11 days after Sheku's death that Police Scotland has still not provided all the essential information to PIRC's investigation team.

This approach simply beggars belief and prolongs the agony of Sheku's family.

I would strongly urge Police officers to co-operate with the investigation to help provide Mr Bayoh's family, the Crown Office and the PIRC with accurate information about how and why Mr Bayoh died.

The family are trying to remain open minded but neither the Crown pathologists or our own independent pathologists can reach a conclusion into the cause of death until a full account of what happened that morning is given by the Police Officers who detained Mr Bayoh.

There has been a great deal of speculation in both the papers and the local community, none of which is helpful in a live inquiry.

The family retain full confidence in the PIRC and would urge both police officers and members of the public who have information to come forward and fully cooperate with PIRC's investigation.

The findings of the post mortem are not complete and could take several more weeks to complete.

We have instructed some of the UK's most eminent pathologists to act independently on behalf of the family; they will offer every assistance to the Lord Advocate's team as we are aware that such deaths in custody are a rare occurrence in Scotland.

Today the family are putting their total faith and trust in the Lord Advocate and PIRC. There are many grave concerns that the family will express in private to the Lord Advocate later on this morning which cannot be mentioned due to a live inquiry.

Crown Office, Police Scotland and PIRC must now act decisively to restore confidence and satisfy the need for a robust and demonstrably independent investigation.

Nobody should be allowed to evade accountability or frustrate the investigation process and Sheku Bayoh's family will not rest until they have the truth.

**Statement read out on behalf of the family at press conference by the sister of Sheku Bayoh- Kadijartu Johnson (aged 37- Staff Nurse).**

Sheku was the only boy in my family and had three elder sisters; he was always our baby brother.

Sheku moved to this country from Sierra Leone when he was 11 years old and moved to Scotland when he was 17 because I was living in [REDACTED].

He had grown up to be a hard working father, who lived for his two boys and was always so proud of them and loved his partner Collette.

He was a kind man at the heart of his community and loved by so many people. My family is grateful for all the message of support and condolences we have received from hundreds of his friends and acquaintances.

At this point in time our family is heartbroken, not able to grieve; his body is still in mortuary all alone.

Even once we have buried my baby brother we will not be able to grieve until we know the truth.

I still cannot believe that Police Scotland chose to lie to my family just hours after my brother's death.

Even at 3pm on Sunday they were claiming that they were looking for two people and that a member of the public had found Sheku lying on the street.

Several versions of events were given to my family for several hours after his death until finally we were finally told he had died in police custody in early evening.

All we are asking for is the truth of what actually happened to my brother Sheku on morning of Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May. We all have grave concerns at the role of Police Scotland and are asking the Lord Advocate and the Police Investigation Review Commissioner PIRC to help us get the truth. Thank you

**Statement from Collette Bell- partner of Sheku**

Sheik was my soul mate and my best friend.

He was kind, caring and affectionate and had so many aspirations.

He was working hard to make a better future for our family and we had so much to look forward too.

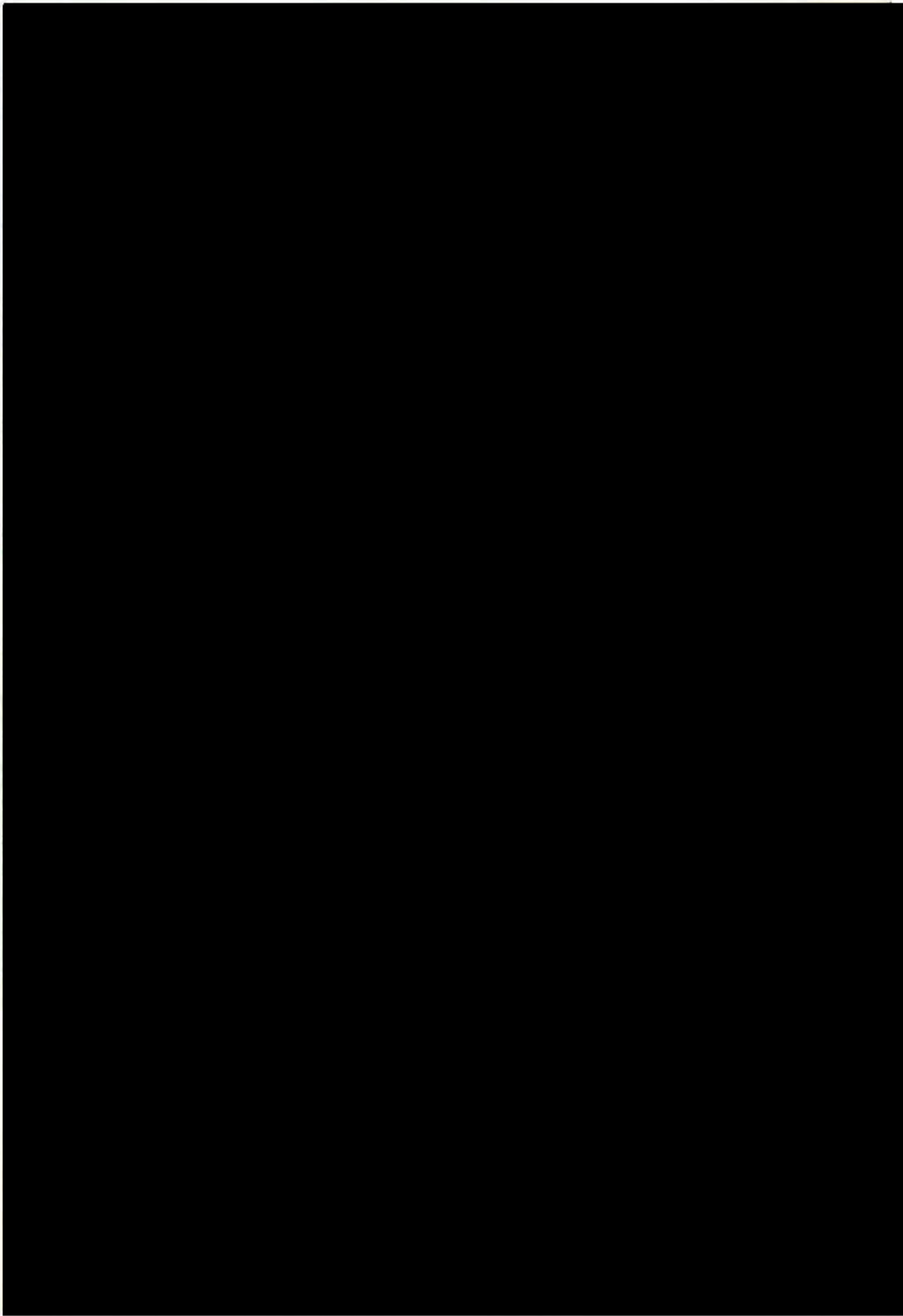
I need answers as to why he was taken from me.

I need to know why as my partner lay dying a few streets away the police were busy lying to me in my house then a police station.

I want to know the whole truth of the circumstances surrounding his death so that one day I can explain to my son [REDACTED], why he has had to grow up without his daddy.



Sheku Bayoh (31)



From left to right [redacted] Sheku (31 years) & [redacted]