

The Sheku Bayoh Public Inquiry

Witness Statement

James Hume

**Taken [REDACTED] by telephone
on Tuesday 21 December 2021 and Monday 14 February 2022**

Witness details

1. My full name is James [REDACTED] Hume. My date of birth is in 1976. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I work in [REDACTED] for a company called [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] I have been working there for about 4 years.
3. Before that I was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] I was there for about a year or so.

Professional experience

4. Before that I was with a company called [REDACTED]. They were a homeless charity and I was an addiction [REDACTED] worker. I was there for a couple of years. The charity dealt with people in scatter flats, temporary accommodation, and during an initial interview if it was disclosed that they had addiction problems then myself or one of my colleagues would step in to help them get treatment or do a little bit of harm reduction advice. The advice

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was pretty basic stuff, make sure they were making appointments, giving them advice to keep themselves healthy and alive and making sure they take up services.

5. Before [REDACTED] I was a Harm Reduction Worker at a company [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I was involved with detox stages, referring people on for treatment, giving people general advice and things like that. I was there for about a year to 18 months. In the charity sector it's rare to get more than one year's funding.

6. I also had a placement with [REDACTED] Community Drugs Project in college. The type of drugs I dealt with were hard, Class A drugs like heroin, crack cocaine and also alcohol. These are very addictive and very damaging drugs, for health and socially.

7. The drugs that Shek may have taken are more about recreational, party drugs. Things like ecstasy. My professional work doesn't really relate to any drugs that Shek may have taken. Very rarely would we ever deal with a recreational party drug.

8. I don't know the party drug scene in Kirkcaldy in 2015 very well at all. A lot of years ago I was into the rave scene and the times change. I've very limited knowledge of the party drugs here. It's not something I did on a regular basis at all although we maybe did dabble now and again.

Sheku Bayoh

9. I knew Sheku Bayoh as Shek. He called me Jim. I saw quite a lot of him. I saw him in the gym most days at Templehall. I think I first got to know him through the gym. Over a few years we've just kind of spoken. I saw him down the town in like clubs and pubs and always kind of spoke to each other, stood and had a drink with each other. The friendship grew organically.

Signature of witness. [REDACTED]

10. Shek was about 5' 8" or 5' 9". I'm a big guy at 6' 5" and Shek was quite a bit smaller than me. He had a good physique about him. He wasn't huge like a massive bodybuilder but you could tell he went to the gym. He had a bit of shape about his shoulders and arms and stuff.

11. Shek told me he was an immigrant and used to live in London. His family come from Sierra Leone. He was very close to his sisters and his mum. When I knew him he was with Collette Bell and had a baby with Collette. He loved his baby, a very devoted father.

12. Shek was an all round good guy. He would quite happily help you out. He would go out of his way to give up time for you. He would come out his house to help his neighbours bring shopping in. He'd help people across the road. In my memories Shek was always happy, full of life, friendly and playful with people.

13. He used to come up to my mum and dad's house and I'd come up there after work and Shek would be sitting in my dad's company having a laugh. It was good because they were two totally different generations, totally different cultural backgrounds, but Shek was just a very friendly, amicable, genuine guy. That's why I socialised with Shek.

14. Shek was a sociable guy so I think he was well known round the town. He used to work in one of the clubs out doing a bit of promotion at first. I think the club is called Blue Monday now but it may have been called Living Rooms at the time. Promotion means he would go out on the street and hand out tickets for 2 for 1 drinks and try and convince people to go to that club. He would go out and mix with people, promote the club and try and get people into the club.

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15. Lots of people knew Shek from the job he did at the club. I'd see him speaking to people out shopping or out on the town.
16. I'd see him at the gym and sometimes we'd arrange a night out with a few of us. It wasn't a weekly or regular thing but sometimes we'd say we need a night out together. We had a circle of friends that was maybe about half a dozen of us running about together. We all went to the gym and had nights out together. He was very close with us.
17. We had quite deep, meaningful conversations and he'd talk about growing up, things like that, and his family. If there was something we didn't agree on then we'd discuss it and if we had a difference of opinion then that was the end of it. It would be forgotten about.
18. One thing that springs to mind for this is I had another friend, Zahid Saeed. Shek and Zahid were both Muslims and I'm an atheist. I don't like religion. Zahid was always trying to convince us that the Muslim faith was right. Now sometimes we'd have conversations, not an argument, about things like that and Shek was the sort of guy who would say to Zahid to just leave it, it was a difference of opinion and to just leave it alone. That was Shek's attitude, just to let it slide.
19. Shek was happy to tell people he was Muslim. Zahid was the sort of guy that would try and bring you books to re-educate you and try and convert you to Islam. I'd say to Zahid I'm not interested and it's not for me. But he would still try and get you to come along to the mosque for a cup of tea. Sometimes I would laugh it off and other times he'd be maybe a bit too forceful and that's when Shek would step in and say that I'm not interested and to just leave it.
20. The group was me, Martin Dick, [REDACTED] Zahid Saeed and Shek. I don't socialise or talk to Martin or Zahid anymore and I think Shek was the glue that

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bound us all together. He was very good at smoothing things over. He was quite deep and diplomatic at times.

21. He was emotionally clever. He had great insights to your feelings and stuff like that. Sometimes we'd speak about stuff that was bothering us. He had great empathy. If you weren't quite feeling yourself or feeling a bit down then he's the sort of guy who would say "Do you need to talk? Is there anything bothering you or that?". He was good at picking up on people's moods and how they were feeling.

22. When I was with Shek I never had any interaction with police or ambulance or anything like that. There wasn't anything he told me about his feelings on the police. We didn't speak about the police.

23. When we were out on the town everybody knew Shek. The doormen were always like "How are you doing? What have you been up to?". They were shaking his hand, talking to him. The only place he didn't get in was a club called [REDACTED]. He didn't get on with the owner for some reason, I'm unsure why, I think it was a personal reason because Shek used to promote another club. We just stayed away from that club.

Weekend before Sheku Bayoh's death

24. I can't remember exact dates but the last time I saw Shek was the weekend before he died. It was an impromptu night because [REDACTED]. I think we ended up in the Exchequer. It was Shek, myself and I think [REDACTED] a girl who used to train at the gym with me.

25. I wasn't drinking. Shek and [REDACTED] were drinking. I think they had a couple of pitchers, fruit punch pitcher things. Shek left early because he wanted to get back to Collette. He was only out for two or three hours and he didn't want to go on to a nightclub or make a night of it.

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26. There was MDMA but we never really took any. Shek had some and he'd made a comment about it didn't taste right, it tasted funny or something. So I had a tiny wee taste. I took two or three crumbs on my finger to taste it and I agreed with him something's not right with that. MDMA has a kind of white, flaky, crystallised product. A mixture between sugar and dandruffy-type texture. It's a dry or flaky kind of appearance. It's a white or off-white colour. What Shek had did look how it would normally look.
27. The drugs were a small amount in a wee snap bag in his pocket. The bag was maybe 3cm by 2cm. The amount would be a couple of grams, if that. It was a personal amount you would buy for yourself. There were no tablets in the bag it was just powder.
28. It didn't taste how it should taste. There was drugs there but it was just to confirm to him there's something not right with that. MDMA usually has quite a distinct taste, not a nice taste but distinct. This just didn't taste how it would usually taste. It was metallic, acidic-type taste. The two of us agreed that it was nasty.
29. I've been told in the second previous statement I gave to PIRC (PIRC-00232) at page 2 I say: *"Sheku had already prepared a few 'bombs' basically a fag paper with a few wee crystals in it. I reckon there was about 1/4 of a gramme maximum. I swallowed it as did Sheku. The reason for wrapping it in paper or 'bomb' form is to be discreet so that nobody sees you."*
30. I'm questioning myself now but I honestly thought I just had just a wee taste of it. I think I remember I didn't take a full one but basically sprinkled a wee bit out to taste it. I remember there was a metallic-y, battery-like taste and I wouldn't taste it in a cigarette paper. In a "bomb" it's basically in your mouth, take a drink of juice or whatever and it would be gone. I'm quite sure about the taste of this.


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31. I've been told in the second previous statement I gave to PIRC (PIRC-00232) at page 2 I say: *"He did take some MDMA crystals that night. I would say that Sheku was uncomfortable that night, a wee bit paranoid, and he was overreacting a wee bit to some things, but nothing serious."*
32. I remember that now that I've heard it. He was kind of questioning. Not touchy, as such. He just didn't feel things were quite right. He made the excuse that he wanted to go home to Collette. He was quite uncomfortable.
33. I didn't get any sort of psychoactive effect off it at all. There was not enough taken to get any sort of effect.
34. I've been told in the second previous statement I gave to PIRC (PIRC-00232) at page 2 I say: *"After about 20/30 mins I remember getting a strange feeling. I have taken MDMA in the past but this had a different sensation, I wasn't comfortable with it. I was warm, sweating, a wee bit anxious. I was out of sync with the world. I wouldn't say I was paranoid just anxious."*
35. I now remember that. I can't remember if it's the same weekend but there was a time I was out with Shek and I did feel kind of anxious and didn't feel right.

Drug use

36. Back then we all used drugs occasionally. It wasn't a regular thing, it wasn't every week or couple of weeks, just occasionally. Shek just took them every now and again, same as the rest of us. We would usually take MDMA.
37. There's no way of telling if the MDMA was mixed with anything else. Unfortunately the way things are with the drugs trade, you're buying from unscrupulous people. If they want to mix it to make more money off it that's what they do.

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38. Shek wasn't daft, he would know there might be things mixed in with the MDMA. That's probably why he asked me if it tasted funny. The taste of the MDMA made me think it's been mixed with something or you've been sold something that isn't MDMA.

39. I hadn't heard of Alpha-PVP until PIRC mentioned it to me. I looked into it and it was a legal high or something. At the time it was getting used quite regularly to mix with other drugs to bulk them up and make more money from them. It wasn't something I was aware of at the time, it was something that I did go and look into. I didn't know Alpha-PVP could've been mixed with the MDMA.

40. I've been told in the second previous statement I gave to PIRC (PIRC-00232) at page 1 I say: *"I have been asked about my knowledge of the drug Alpha PVP. As I know it, Alpha PVP is a psycho active substance. I have come in contact with it through my work as a Substance Misuse Worker. I have seen it in it's physical form, an off white crystal substance, it's basically a legal high. Its branded in shops and online GOGAINE and things like 'white' and 'snow'."*

41. I've been told in the same statement at page 2 I say: *"As far as I am aware, the local drug takers have little to no knowledge of Alpha PVP. I know that Alpha PVP has and is getting mixed with other controlled drugs, MDMA, coke to bulk it up to make bigger profit margins."*

42. I remember going looking it up at my work to see what it was all about. Maybe in between speaking to PIRC, I don't know. I remember talking about Gogaine and stuff. I had come across Gogaine and stuff like that at my work but I didn't actually realise it was Alpha-PVP. I had come across it before but I didn't know what it was. I didn't know the chemical name.

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43. We did quite a lot of work with legal highs at my work and Gogaine was one of the ones we had come across. Alpha-PVP was never written on the packet, any ingredients were always put down as bath salts or something else.

44. When we were all at the gym we all took things. Normally it's creatine and protein, things like that, which is all over the counter stuff you can buy. We were health mad back then and I'm still health mad. I'm in the gym every day and my diet's counted down to every gram of protein, carbohydrate and fat. Shek was the same. We'd talk about what supplements we were taking. Sometimes we did go out and we did take ecstasy or we did drink alcohol but we were pretty health conscious.

45. I'm not talking about steroids or anything like that. I've no idea if Shek took steroids. I'm talking about things like whey isolate, which comes off a milk by-product, or protein powders.

46. I've been told in my first previous statement I gave to PIRC (PIRC-00231) at page 2 I say: *"I know that Sheku took steroids to build himself up and give himself a boost in the gym. He would undertake an 8-12 week cycle. That means 8-12 weeks on and then a similar time off it to let his body recover. On the 3rd May I have no idea if Sheku was on the cycle.*

The last time I spoke to Sheku about steroids was about 6 months ago and he asked me or told me that he intended to use natural substances, protein, as a replacement.

I have no idea what type of steroids he was using."

47. I remember saying that now. Obviously I've just been trying to protect Shek's name, if you like, but I remember talking about steroids. But Shek had decided to come off the steroids and just go onto natural supplements. That's

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why I said he was on whey and creatine and stuff like that. He had dabbled, but he wasn't a heavy user, and he had decided he was coming off them.

48. It was six months before his death that he told me he wanted come off the steroids and go onto protein and creatine. The conversation took place at the gym. We were talking about eating healthier. I had turned vegetarian. I can't remember more of the specifics of the conversation.

49. It's probably just me subconsciously trying to protect his name, but I haven't gone out my way to tell lies or deceive anybody, that's just what my memory is now.

Sheku Bayoh's death

50. I remember hearing that Shek had died. I don't remember the date but it was a Sunday morning. On a Sunday I would get my mum and dad rolls, newspapers and stuff and drop them in the house. Collette called me to see if Shek was with me. There had been occasions when Shek would end up back at my house drinking to the late hours, talking about rubbish. I said Shek wasn't with me.

51. I then bumped into her again at the shops and I asked if she'd found him. She said she didn't know where he is and couldn't find him. She was quite upset, quite distraught. I said to her she could ask me to come and give her hand to look for him. I can't remember if it was Collette or Zahid who called me later to say that Shek had been involved in some incident with the police and died.

Interview with PIRC

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52. Within a week or so PIRC contacted me and asked if they could come and speak to me. They said they wanted to speak to all of his friends. They made an appointment to come and speak to me at the house.
53. When they came they said they were ex-police officers but were unbiased. They said they were only here to get the truth and don't think they're on the side of the police. Because they were saying all this it made me wonder if they were independent or not.
54. They started asking when I'd last seen Shek and I told them I didn't see him on the weekend of his death, I saw him the week before. They asked if he was drinking, was he taking drugs, how much drugs did he take, how often did he take drugs and did he take steroids. A couple of times I said to the guy I'm not happy with this. They said they needed to build up a picture of the type of person Shek was. I said they were trying to build their own picture of how they wanted Shek to be. They were trying to lead the conversation and lead me on the type of person Shek was.
55. They also wanted to know if he was aggressive and if he got involved in fights. I just felt really uncomfortable. It was definitely leading questions and it felt like accusatory rather than fact-finding. It was like they had a picture built up and they were just confirming what they already thought with me.
56. They said to me they knew he took drugs. They asked where he got them from. They asked if Shek ever got drugs for me, or friends or other people. I didn't know why this was relevant. I think they were trying to get at the question "Did Shek sell drugs?".
57. After they left I was quite upset. It was like they were trying to smear his name. I answered their questions but I felt like I'd let him down, betrayed him a bit, because it was like I never got a chance to say what type of person

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Shek was. It built up a wee bit mistrust towards PIRC and the police just because of the way that went.

58. When I first heard they wanted me to take part in a public inquiry it brought back the memory of what PIRC were like with me and I was kind of reluctant and mistrusting that it was going to be the same. I want to get across that when giving this statement I feel the conversation has been more objective and fact-finding than with PIRC.

59. I remember signing my PIRC statements and I gave them a true and accurate account at the time. My memory definitely would've been better back then than it is now, it was a lot closer to the time. It was fresh in my mind and everything was new. I wouldn't have lied to the police or fabricated anything. I just told them that's how it was. My memory now isn't as fresh as it was.

60. 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.

Signature of witness.  Date. 31/3/22