



The Sheku Bayoh Public Inquiry

Witness Statement

Derek Connell

Taken by [REDACTED]

on MS Teams

On 16 March 2022

Witness Details

1. My name is Derek [REDACTED] Connell. I am 45 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I am currently a Detective Constable with the Police Service of Scotland. I have 12 years' police service. I work in the Criminal Investigation Department at [REDACTED] Police Station. As at May 2015 I was based at Kirkcaldy Police Station. I had been working there for around 1 year and 5 months prior to that point.

Previous statements

3. I have had sight of my operational statement which is dated 4 May 2015¹. The content of this statement was truthful and accurate at the time. Having read it over there, I accept the statement's content.
4. I have had sight of the statement I gave to PIRC on 6 May 2015². The statement I gave to PIRC was given to the best of my memory at the time and

¹ PS00757

² PIRC-00047

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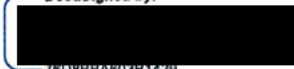
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I did my best to be truthful and accurate in what I said. I've read over the statement and accept the content is correct.

5. My memory of events of 3 May 2015 is hazy now. I can recall my statement, but anything other than that is just really, really hazy. I'm asked if there was any discrepancy between this statement and what I've said either to the PIRC or in my police statement, which statement is likely to be more accurate. I think the police statement would be the most accurate and should be preferred.

3 May 2015

6. On 3 May 2015 I was working 0700 to 1600 hours in Kirkcaldy. I was working with DS Samantha Davidson. DI Colin Robson was also on duty. I don't know his shift that day but he was present on that day.
7. At around 0715 hours I became aware of a call on the radio to Hayfield Road, where a black male was in possession of a large knife. DS Davidson and I prepared to leave the station to attend at locus. I can't recall if I was asked to respond to that call. However, a type of call involving a knife would be something we would generally respond to anyway. Due to the mention of a knife, I put my body armour on and collected my PAVA spray prior to leaving the office. My PAVA spray would've been within my secure cabinet at the office.
8. DS Davidson and I then went to our CID vehicle, which was at the rear of Kirkcaldy Police Station. I was aware that other uniformed officers were responding to the call. I think I was aware of that hearing other officers acknowledging the call on my radio and I'm sure I saw police officers leaving the station also. I can't recall the amount of police vehicles that would've been in the back yard at that time, only that our vehicle was in the back yard. Our vehicle was a silver marked CID police vehicle. DS Davidson and I got into the car. I was driving.

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9. We were driving out of the rear of Kirkcaldy Police Station, I heard the emergency activation of a police radio. The emergency button is pressed if someone's requiring assistance. I have heard numerous activations over the years. So, from that point of view, it's probably not entirely unusual. I then heard on the radio that an officer had been assaulted. I don't recall knowing at that time who.
10. Hayfield Road is about a mile or so from Kirkcaldy Police Station. It takes about four minutes or five minutes to get there in a car. From my statement I see that we arrived at Hayfield Road about 0720 hours. Our route to the locus took us up Hendry Road, driving north, and then we turned right at the roundabout at Hendry Road onto Hayfield Road. As I turned into Hayfield Road, I could see police officers to my right hand side. I only remember seeing officers there, but in terms of how many officers and who they were, I don't recall that.
11. From my statement I see that I said *"When I got out the vehicle, I observed officers struggling with the now deceased on the pavement on the south side of the road."* I recall that the police officers were on the ground, but I couldn't say what position they were in. At that time, the deceased he was on the ground from what I can remember. I can only remember seeing the officers were struggling, but in what way, I can't remember. I can't visualise it now. In terms of what officers were there at the time, I don't know the names of all the officers and I couldn't describe them; however, I do recall PC Craig Walker being there.
12. I went over to the officers and I heard someone say that a PC Short was injured. I observed there was a police radio, three police batons and a set of police handcuffs on the ground. I think these items were just a couple of metres away, or thereabouts, possibly on the pavement. From my statement, I see that I picked up the handcuffs and batons and placed them in my police vehicle, due to a safety and risk point of view.

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This is a standard thing to do. I'd expect that to be done if they're just lying about and if they've not been picked up by the officers, then I would expect someone to pick them up.

13. Then I began to look for the knife as I was aware that there had been a mention of a knife nearby, but I don't know from who. I started looking for it on the street when a male uniformed officer shouted to me that it may be on the grassy area on the north side of the road. I don't know who that officer was at the time – that's all I remember.

14. I conducted a search of the grassy area on the north side of Hayfield Road, across from the roundabout with Hendry Road. I found a silver knife on the grass a few feet away from the pavement there. I then made DI Robson and DS Davidson aware that the knife was located. DI Robson was at the locus at this point. He instructed me to photograph the knife in situ. I'm asked if this is normal practice. Under normal circumstances, it probably wouldn't be the best thing to do. But I think, due to the weather conditions at that time, that's maybe why he'd asked me to do that. The weather conditions were that it was drizzly. I don't think it was heavy rain at that time.

15. I then took 3 photographs of the knife in situ at the locus. I was trying to take the photographs in such a way that it would show the position of the knife in relation to its surroundings. The third image was the best from that perspective. I then seized the knife. In my PIRC statement, at page 2, I say "*I thereafter recovered the knife as forensically viable as I could*". I'm asked to explain what I mean by that. Basically, I made sure I put on a set of latex gloves before handling the knife. I tried not to pick up the knife by the handle and then placed it into a production bag. I then placed the knife in my police vehicle. I then had a further search of the area to ensure that there were no other weapons. I didn't find anything further.

16. I then looked over and saw that PC Walker was with the now deceased and carrying out CPR. I have been asked how long the ambulance took to come.

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I can't remember how long it took to come, but it felt like a long time. The only thing I can remember after that is DS Davidson requesting me to go with the ambulance crew. At some point I was given a lighter and a mobile phone belonging to the male. I'm not sure who gave these items to me.

17. I went in the back of the ambulance with the paramedics. Both of the paramedics in the back of the ambulance. One of the paramedics asked me to give chest compressions during the journey to the hospital. I don't recall anything during that period other than doing the CPR at that time. When I was looking down, I think all my attention was focused on that.
18. I continued with the chest compression until the paramedic took over from me. I couldn't say how long I was doing that until the paramedic took over. I remember he placed defibrillator pads on the chest of the male.
19. I then accompanied the paramedics into the A&E department with the male. I remained with the male for a short period of time before being relieved by DCs Brown and Balsillie. I have been asked about the removal of handcuffs from Sheku Bayoh. I have no recollection of this or who removed them.
20. I returned to Kirkcaldy Police Station about 0810 hours. I attempted to email the photographs from my mobile phone to my Police Scotland email account. Only one of these photographs sent. From my PIRC statement, at page 3, I see that I describe that *"I have a 5 megabit data limit on my mobile e-mail account. I believe the picture/image that transferred was approximately 3 megabit"* However, the photograph that transferred to my police email was the photograph that gave the best view of its location. I have had sight of PIRC-00996. This contains a backing sheet, on which I see my name and signature together with the third photograph of the knife. This is the photograph which I have described as being the best of the three photographs taken by me on 3 May 2015. I later deleted all three photos from my personal mobile. I don't remember exactly when that was, but it would have been later

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that morning. There was no longer a reason to have the images on my phone.

21. I seized three batons and handcuffs, which had been collected from the locus. Then around 0830 hours, I seized a lighter and the mobile phone. I also printed off the photograph of the knife from a police computer.

22. At around 1100 hours, I returned to the A&E department of Victoria Hospital with DS Davidson to ascertain the identity of the deceased from a [REDACTED] image, and another image. I don't know where the other image came from. I'm asked whether it was a photograph taken from Facebook. I have no recollection of that. From the scar on the deceased's cheek, it was confirmed that the now deceased was Sheku Bayoh, and his date of birth.

23. I'm asked whether it was unusual for a deceased person to be identified from photographs rather than by a family member. It was certainly unusual, but I don't think I was privy to the reason behind it. I don't remember any discussion about why it was being done by photograph.

24. At the time of providing my statement to PIRC, I was shown a map of Hayfield Road by Inspector Rhodes. I was asked to place an X on the map, in the position that where I recalled finding the knife. I have had sight of this map³. The backing sheet is dated 6 May 2015 and it bears my name and signature. On the map itself, you can see the White Heather pub opposite a junction between two roads. Neither road name is marked. The road running north and south is Hendry Road and road running west to east is Hayfield Road. At the corner of that junction there is an area of grass and trees. The X marked on the grass is approximately where I found the knife.

³ PIRC-01058

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25. I'm asked if I remember going into the canteen that morning when I first returned from the locus back to Kirkcaldy Police Station. I do have a very vague recollection of going to the canteen. Very, very vague. I think the only person I remember being there was DS Samantha Davidson. And there was other officers there, but I'm not sure who all was there. I have no recollection why we were there or whether I spoke to anyone.

26. I'm asked if I have any recollection of the police officers who were involved in the restraint being provided support, or any kind of debrief, in the canteen. No, I don't. I would've thought that would've been a natural thing to have happened, but in terms of that happening or that being discussed, I have no recollection of that whatsoever. But yes, I would be aware of a need for that.

27. I'm asked how well I knew officers who were working in Team 4 at Kirkcaldy Police Station. I think the CID shift pattern that I used to be on, you didn't correspond with any response teams and the CID were in a different area of the building to them. So, I didn't really know them. I think I remember PC Walker from when I worked at another station but I didn't really know him either, I just knew who he was.

Contact with other witnesses

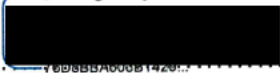
28. In terms of knowing other witnesses, I know Samantha Davidson and Colin Robson from being my supervisors, but I'm not aware of the other officers. I haven't worked with them in any capacity. I'm asked if I have spoken to any other witnesses in this case or discussed this case with them. Not that I recall.

Media

29. I'm asked if I have been following this case on social media or the news. No, I've tried to avoid all of that.

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30. 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 12, 2022 | 2:19 PM BST
Date..... Signature of witness..... 

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