

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

Tuesday, 10 May 2022

(10.01 am)

Introductory remarks by LORD BRACADALE

LORD BRACADALE: Good morning. Let us begin this hearing by standing, if you're able to do so, and observing a minute's silence in memory of Sheku Bayoh.

(A minute's silence was observed)

Thank you. Welcome to this first evidential hearing in the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry.

I wish to extend a special welcome to Mrs Aminata Bayoh, Mr Bayoh's mother, who has travelled from Sierra Leone where she lives to attend the Inquiry. She is sitting at the table with her daughters.

I am accompanied by my Assessors, Raju Bhatt and Michael Fuller. I introduced the Assessors at the preliminary hearing and there are further details about each of them on the website. I and the Inquiry team have already benefited greatly from the combined expertise and experience of the Assessors, whose assistance on a range of issues has been invaluable. As we move into the evidential hearings, I expect that support only to increase.

The Terms of Reference of the Inquiry are extensive and require me to address a number of issues. In order to manage the progress of the Inquiry, it will be

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 divided into a number of evidential hearings, of which
2 this is the first. The evidence in the first hearing
3 will primarily focus on the events of 3 May 2015 leading
4 to the death of Sheku Bayoh.

5 I continue to be determined that the Inquiry should
6 be conducted in an independent and impartial manner. In
7 order to fulfil the commitment of transparency and
8 openness, and to allow maximum access by the public and
9 the press, the hearings will be broadcast on the
10 Inquiry's YouTube channel and will be available, along
11 with the transcript of evidence, on the Inquiry's
12 website.

13 I intend that during the evidential hearings, the
14 Inquiry should sit on Tuesday to Friday each week,
15 between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm with a mid-morning break
16 and a break for lunch between 1.00 and 2.00.

17 If particular legal or administrative issues require
18 to be addressed, it may be that the Inquiry will sit on
19 a Monday to deal with these issues.

20 The general rule is that witnesses will be examined
21 by Counsel to the Inquiry. In some circumstances,
22 counsel for core participants may, with my permission,
23 ask questions.

24 Tomorrow we shall begin hearing opening statements
25 from Senior Counsel to the Inquiry and the legal

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 representatives of the core participants. But I have
2 set today aside for a different purpose. Every aspect
3 of this Inquiry derives from the sudden, unexpected and
4 untimely death of Sheku Bayoh who died on 3 May 2015,
5 aged 31 years. On a number of occasions I have said
6 that I want the families of Sheku Bayoh to be at the
7 heart of the Inquiry. As part of that commitment, I am
8 allocating this first day of the hearing to family
9 members to allow them an opportunity to communicate to
10 the Inquiry and the public the person Sheku Bayoh was,
11 what he meant to each of them, and the impact on each of
12 them of his death.

13 This is not their evidence to the Inquiry. I would
14 expect certain members of the family to give evidence in
15 hearing 3 in relation to what happened after the death
16 and in the course of the investigation into it, but the
17 focus of today is on Sheku Bayoh himself and what he
18 meant to those he left behind.

19 With professional assistance, family members have
20 participated in making a video as a tribute to the life
21 of Sheku Bayoh and their memories of him, so first, two
22 of Mr Bayoh's sisters, Ms Kosna Bayoh and
23 Mrs Adama Jalloh will address the Inquiry, then the
24 video will be played. That will be followed by a short
25 break, then Mr Bayoh's sister Mrs Kadi Johnson will

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 address the Inquiry, and that will be followed by
2 Mr Aamer Anwar who will address the Inquiry on behalf of
3 Collette Bell who was Mr Bayoh's partner at the time of
4 his death and the mother of one of his children.

5 So Ms Kosna Bayoh, may I ask you to address the
6 Inquiry now.

7 Commemoration of Sheku Bayoh by his family and friends

8 MS KOSNA BAYOH: Good morning. Good morning, everyone.

9 May I take this opportunity to thank all of those
10 present here today, as well as the many who cannot come
11 in, but are watching the live stream. Well, I thank you
12 for your support with the Bayoh family during this
13 difficult time.

14 As you may all know, our brother Sheku died in the
15 streets of Kirkcaldy on 3 May 2015. Seven years since
16 we lost our brother, the pain is still there. It has
17 been a long journey, but we are grateful for finally
18 being here today.

19 We the family put together a short video for
20 everyone to find out who Sheku was and how he was much
21 loved by us and his family and all those who had the
22 privilege to meet him.

23 You will also see the impact of Sheku no longer
24 being here. I miss him so much and we will carry on to
25 make his legacy live on. Thank you.

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 LORD BRACADALE: Thank you.

2 Mrs Jalloh.

3 MS ADAMA JALLOH: Sheku was a fun-loving, cheeky boy, but
4 one thing that was unquestionable is the love that he
5 had for his family. No doubt he was a mummy's boy.

6 LORD BRACADALE: We will adjourn.

7 (10.10 am)

8 (Short Break)

9

10 (10.13 am)

11 LORD BRACADALE: Mrs Johnson, I think you are going to take
12 it up from there, are you? Thank you.

13 MS KADIJARTU JOHNSON: Thank you, this is Adama's statement.

14 Sheku was a fun-loving, cheeky boy. One thing was
15 unquestionable, in that he loved his family. No doubt
16 he was a mummy's boy. Adama was the third child of my
17 mother. I wish I was -- sorry, and my mother wished
18 I was a boy as she had longed for a son, but surprise,
19 surprise, it was another girl. There was no turning
20 back. I believed my mother prayed like she has never
21 prayed before, and on 30 September 1983, a bouncing baby
22 boy was welcomed into the Bayoh family.

23 Our family was now complete. Sheku grew up from
24 a bouncing baby boy to a cheeky toddler, to a fun-loving
25 teenager and became a gentle man. Nothing mattered to

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 Sheku when he was with his two sons. They were his
2 world. He had a loving partner, loving friends and
3 family.

4 There was never a dull moment when Sheku was around.
5 As you watch this video, you will see an insight of our
6 dear brother. Thank you.

7 (Video played)

8 LORD BRACADALE: Thank you. We will take a break now for
9 15 minutes.

10 (10.42 am)

11 (Short Break)

12 (11.16 am)

13 LORD BRACADALE: Now, Mrs Johnson.

14 MS KADIJARTU JOHNSON: Thank you. Thank you for taking time
15 to watch this video of our dear brother Sheku. As you
16 can see, a piece of our family has been taken away.
17 I have my daughters here present today, Tara, Latifah,
18 Zara, who are in the other room. During our short break
19 I had to go through to console them. That just shows
20 the impact of losing an uncle.

21 A piece will always be missing in his friends'
22 lives. The only son in a family who should have carried
23 the Bayoh name is no more.

24 Because of the joy, love and freedom I experienced
25 in Scotland, I told my little brother at the age of 17

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 to join me. I thought it will be a safer place for
2 a young black man to grow up than London was. I did not
3 know my brother's life would be cut short at the age of
4 31.

5 When Sheku moved to Scotland he had no problem
6 settling in and quickly made friends, who until this day
7 fight on his behalf for justice. Sheku's two sons have
8 been robbed of a father. Sheku will never see them grow
9 up. They are growing up fast with lots of questions
10 that their mothers do not know the answers to. For
11 seven years we have suffered heartbreak, anger and
12 disappointment through this journey as we fight for
13 justice.

14 Following my brother's death, so much was said about
15 him, some was good and some tried to smear his
16 character. We appreciate over the course of this
17 Public Inquiry we are likely to hear good and bad, but
18 I urge you, however long this Inquiry takes, to always
19 remember Sheku was a kind, loving, friendly man who
20 would help anyone who needs it.

21 He was a man who loved his two boys and lived for
22 them. Since his death, we lost so much. Our lives
23 changed. But our loss is nothing compared to the loss
24 of our brother. I can only imagine the pain my mother
25 goes through, who is sat here today heartbroken, but

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 I commend her as she always pull herself together for us
2 three girls.

3 No one deserves to go through what we are going
4 through. No parent should ever have to suffer the loss
5 of a child. It makes me sad, and you, the Inquiry, may
6 not want to hear this, but I don't feel safe any more in
7 Scotland. I feel nervous and worried for my children.
8 I fear for the safety of my nieces and nephews. Why
9 should I have to feel this way? Scotland is a place
10 I loved and I always gave back. These children were
11 born in Scotland. This is all they know. Why should we
12 not have the privilege to enjoy Scotland like any other
13 white person?

14 Once again, on behalf of myself and my husband, my
15 dear mother, my sisters, Collette, Sheku's two boys, his
16 friends and the rest of the Bayoh family, I want to
17 thank all those who have supported our family. We are
18 on a long journey. I hope you will continue to support
19 the cause of justice in Scotland and the rest of the
20 United Kingdom. Thank you.

21 LORD BRACADALE: Thank you, Mrs Johnson.

22 I am now going to ask Mr Anwar to address the
23 Inquiry on behalf of Collette Bell. Mr Anwar.

24 MR ANWAR: Thank you, your Lordship.

25 Before I start reading the statement on behalf of

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 Collette Bell, I want to pay tribute to the family of
2 Sheku Bayoh. This Public Inquiry would never have
3 happened had it not been for their courage and the
4 perseverance of Sheku's loved ones who have refused to
5 walk away, have refused to be silenced, bullied or
6 patronised. This Inquiry is a testament to their desire
7 to seek the truth and to ensure that Sheku is never
8 forgotten.

9 The statement I'm now making on behalf of
10 Collette Bell. Collette was the partner of Sheku Bayoh
11 and the mother of Sheku's youngest child, Isaac, who was
12 only three months old when his father died in police
13 custody.

14 I will speak mostly in the third party but also
15 sometimes in Collette's own words. Those listening to
16 Collette's words should know that Sheku was called Shek
17 by Collette. Collette is grateful to the Inquiry for
18 giving her the opportunity of hearing her words today.

19 Collette met Sheku whilst on a night out
20 in September 2012. She truly believes it was love at
21 first sight and Shek used to say it was like Cupid had
22 shot him. It was easy to fall for Shek as he
23 was loving, genuine, charismatic and had a larger than
24 life personality. He was down to earth, grounded and so
25 popular with everyone he met. Even if he was in a rush,

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 he would always stop and chat.

2 Shek had a passion for music and rapping. He also
3 enjoyed keeping himself healthy and going to the gym.
4 He was a lot of fun and lived life to the fullest but
5 more than anything, he was a family man. He would do
6 anything for his friends and family and they meant the
7 world to him. From the moment that Collette met Shek,
8 they became inseparable, spending most of their time
9 together. Their relationship was fast-tracked from
10 their meeting in September and Collette moved in with
11 Sheku in January 2013, but Collette said they were just
12 madly in love and it seemed like the natural
13 progression. Collette says she will always be grateful
14 for the many happy memories of the time they had
15 together, of their holidays and the nights away. It was
16 during a holiday to Cornwall that they spoke about their
17 future and the thought of retiring to Cornwall as it was
18 so beautiful. They both dreamt of growing old together
19 with their children and their grandchildren visiting
20 them. They would speak about their future a lot and
21 especially about getting married and what their big day
22 would be like. Shek loved the idea of having a full
23 weekend of celebrations but it would also have been
24 a celebration of his culture and his religion with
25 a blessing by an imam and the wearing of traditional

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 clothing. Collette was in no doubt they could see
2 a future together.

3 As a partner, Shek was incredibly loving and
4 thoughtful. Collette would always have fresh flowers in
5 the house as he bought her flowers every week with no
6 reason required. Every morning she would wake up to him
7 having prepared her coffee. He was always so supportive
8 and affectionate and they had a beautiful relationship
9 filled with deep love for each other.

10 Shek always used to laugh and say he was unique, he
11 was one of a kind. There was never a truer word spoken
12 as he was the best partner and perfect gentleman to
13 Collette and others. One of the things Collette loved
14 most of all was seeing Sheku being a father. Collette
15 loved seeing the relationship Sheku had with his oldest
16 son Tyler. Sheku was such a caring, fun and doting
17 father. Their bond was beautiful and it only made
18 Collette love him more and she was in no doubt that she
19 would want Sheku as a father to her children.

20 In February 2014, all of Collette's dreams came true
21 when they found out she was expecting. Unfortunately
22 this pregnancy was not meant to be. However, it made
23 the couple realise just how much they would like a baby.
24 Collette believed she was so lucky to fall pregnant
25 again quickly, and in January 2015, they welcomed Isaac

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 into the world. Just when Collette thought she couldn't
2 love Shek any more, seeing him as a dad to their son was
3 breathtaking. He was such a hands-on dad and always
4 wanted the best for his boys. His boys were his pride
5 and joy.

6 They were only just beginning the rest of their
7 lives together when Shek was cruelly taken from
8 Collette. She said it is so hard to think of the many
9 possibilities, not to mention the empty space left in
10 her life with not having Shek. Each day only gets
11 harder for Isaac as he grows up not having Shek around.
12 He often asks how daddy died and why he had to go to
13 heaven.

14 Collette dreads the day that she will have to try
15 and explain to Isaac the truth surrounding his father's
16 death. Collette says she has made it her priority for
17 Isaac to know and remember his dad. Shek was a well
18 loved man in the community and his death has impacted on
19 so many. Shek lived by the mantra of "you only live
20 once, live your life to the fullest, you don't know
21 God's plan and tomorrow is never as promised so make the
22 most of every day". Collette is glad that Sheku lived
23 by this mantra. He was thankful for all he had, the
24 life he was blessed with, and was always optimistic
25 about his future. Shek had started going to college to

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 further his career and become a gas engineer. He had so
2 much to look forward to. Collette said Shek always
3 dreamed of being famous for his rapping and she said
4 Shek would always say "Watch this space, one day I will
5 be famous and my name will be in lights". He was right,
6 but it should have been for his music and never because
7 of his death and the struggle for justice.

8 Collette said it was so hard to try and put into
9 words what she felt. For her there will never be enough
10 words to explain how amazing Sheku was and how much she
11 loved him. Collette was left devastated by his death,
12 but has built herself back up from the shell she became,
13 stronger each day, wanting to fight for Sheku but also
14 to be there for their son Isaac.

15 As the years have passed by, Collette says she has
16 grown tired of the excuses, the lies, the arrogance and
17 the false hope she was given. Collette has been angered
18 by the attempts to turn Sheku into a monster, knowing he
19 was unable to answer for himself, whilst those who loved
20 him were expected to keep silence. The past seven years
21 without Shek has been difficult and heartbreaking. His
22 loss was hard enough without the pain of waiting for
23 what followed, which once again left her heartbroken.
24 Collette often wonders how many families over the years
25 have suffered in silence, how many more will have to go

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 through similar ordeals before things improve. The pain
2 of losing Shek will never go away. It breaks Collette's
3 heart that Isaac missed out on the future they should
4 have had together as a family.

5 Today it will be seven years and seven days since
6 Shek was taken from Collette and she does not have the
7 strength to be here today, but hopes to speak to the
8 Inquiry herself soon, rather than through her lawyer.
9 But there is a warning: for those powers who thought
10 patronising Collette, trying to fool her, making broken
11 promises and believing that the passage of time would
12 fracture her desire for justice, she states Sheku will
13 not be forgotten. She will never stop loving and
14 remembering Sheku and today and in the months ahead she
15 does not want empty words of condolences and promises,
16 she wants you, the Inquiry, to uncover the truth hidden
17 for so long.

18 Over the years, Collette reached her limit and had
19 to look after herself so she could take care of Isaac
20 and rebuild her life as Shek would have wanted, but that
21 does not mean she is any less determined. She still
22 yearns for justice for her Sheku, that is the very least
23 this Inquiry owes to her son Isaac. Collette felt naive
24 as she was hopeful that this Inquiry would have been
25 over long before Isaac was at school. It is extremely

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 hard to keep all of the circumstances of Shek's death
2 and this Inquiry from Isaac and it gets harder the older
3 he is becoming.

4 Collette says that she keeps Sheku's memory alive
5 for Isaac because she wants him to know Sheku from the
6 stories and the memories she has of him, not what is in
7 the papers or spoken about in the playground.

8 To conclude in her own words Collette wishes to say
9 today:

10 "Having the Inquiry going on for so long will make
11 life difficult as you never get any closure. It's with
12 you day and night. When it comes to the surface it just
13 brings dread, especially when all I experienced
14 previously was disappointment after disappointment.
15 I can't help but suspect there was a hope that people
16 would stop caring about injustice and that we would
17 simply give up. It is now our time our questions were
18 answered. No family should ever have to go through the
19 burden of losing a loved one in police custody. We
20 should never have had to rely on our own efforts to make
21 sure the full facts about Sheku's death were known.
22 I really hope this Public Inquiry fights for the truth
23 and fulfils the promises made to our family and to my
24 son, giving him a legacy where he can be proud of his
25 father."

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1 Thank you.

2 LORD BRACADALE: Thank you, Mr Anwar. Well, both in the
3 video and in the addresses we have heard moving tributes
4 to Sheku Bayoh from members of his family and his
5 friends, as well as powerful expressions of the impact
6 of his death on them.

7 The Inquiry will now adjourn and sit tomorrow
8 morning at 10 o'clock.

9 (11.30 am)

10 (The Inquiry adjourned until Wednesday,
11 11 May 2022 at 10.00 am)

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

INDEX

Introductory remarks by LORD1

BRACADALE

Commemoration of Sheku Bayoh by his4
family and friends

Transcript of the Sheku Bayoh Inquiry

1

2