

INQUEST PRESS RELEASE
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**DR JOANNA BENNETT, SISTER OF ROCKY BENNETT, WINS
SPECIAL MENTAL HEALTH MEDIA AWARD**

Dr Joanna Bennett, sister of Rocky Bennett, received a special Chair's award tonight at the Mental Health Media Awards 2004 ceremony held at Café de Paris, London. In presenting the award Jane Drabble, OBE, Chair of Mental Health Media said:

"It's likely that Rocky's story would never have come to light had it not been for the determination of his sister Joanna. Her judicious use of the media has really opened up issues arising from the experiences of people from black and ethnic minority communities who access psychiatric services. Joanna Bennett's achievements demonstrate the power of the media as crucial agent for change and a platform upon which previously denied voices can be heard".

Helen Shaw co-director of INQUEST has worked with Joanna since shortly after Rocky's death in October 1998 said:

"Joanna rightly deserves this award for her courage, strength and determination and her ability to articulate so eloquently her experiences following Rocky's appalling death. I hope that the occasion of these awards will remind the Health Minister that urgent action is needed. Seven months later we are still waiting for the government response to the Inquiry Report recommendations and yet another detained patient has died whilst being restrained."

Notes for Editors

1. Rocky was a 38-year-old black man who had been a detained patient in the Norvic Clinic for three years. His death on October 30th 1998 followed an incident involving the use of restraint. The jury at the inquest returned a verdict of 'accidental death aggravated by neglect' on 17 May 2001 and said that the cause of death was due to prolonged restraint and long-term anti-psychotic drug therapy. Following the inquest the family, their lawyers and INQUEST called on the government to consider holding a public inquiry. Instead the Minister agreed to an extended form of the usual inquiry that follows a death in psychiatric detention with a public element looking at the national lessons to be learnt. Following the publication in February 2004 of the Independent Inquiry Report the government promised to set out their full response in parliament.
2. Covering seven categories, the Mental Health Media Awards recognise excellence in portrayals of mental distress in the broadcast media across news, documentary and drama.

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