

PRESS RELEASE

November 24th 2004 for immediate attention

FULL JUDGMENT IN JUDICIAL REVIEW OF UNLAWFUL KILLING VERDICT IN THE CASE OF ROGER SYLVESTER TO BE GIVEN ON FRIDAY

10am November 26TH 2004

Court 2

High Courts of Justice

The Strand

London

The full judgment in the judicial review of the unlawful killing verdict returned at the inquest into the death in police custody of Roger Sylvester will be handed down at 10 am this Friday 26th November.

The family, their solicitor and INQUEST will be attending and available for interview.

Between 3 - 5 November 2004 the High Court heard the case brought by police officers involved in the fatal restraint of Roger Sylvester in 1999 who sought to overturn the verdict of unlawful killing returned by an inquest jury last year.

The submissions made on behalf of the officers and the Commissioner alike rested essentially upon the argument that the evidence heard at the inquest did not justify the unlawful killing verdict of the jury or, indeed, the decision of HM Coroner Dr Andrew Reid to allow the jury to consider the verdict in the first instance. The family of Roger Sylvester, argued that the verdict was perfectly justified by the evidence heard at the inquest.

The family were represented at the hearing by INQUEST Lawyers Group members Paddy O'Connor QC and Phillipa Kaufman of Doughty Street Chambers instructed by Raju Bhatt of Bhatt Murphy Solicitors.

Notes to Editors

Case

Roger was a 30-year-old healthy black man who died after being handcuffed and restrained by 8 Metropolitan police officers in Tottenham in January 1999. INQUEST has been working with the Sylvester family since his death. We are particularly concerned about police restraint methods and the disproportionate number of black men who have died in police custody following the use of

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force. The investigation into his death carried out by Essex police under the supervision of the Police Complaints Authority was passed to the CPS in October 1999. 13 months later in November 2000 they announced their inevitable decision that no police officer would face criminal charges. When the family sought to challenge this decision Lord Chief Justice Woolf ruled in May 2001 that the challenge should await the outcome of the inquest. Some two years went by before the arrival of a new Coroner at St Pancras resulted the inquest being heard and an unlawful killing verdict being returned in October 2003. When news leaked out the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) had agreed to fund the police officers' challenge to the inquest verdict, INQUEST and the family successfully campaigned for similar funding for the Sylvester family.

INQUEST

INQUEST is the only non-governmental organisation in England and Wales that works directly with the families of those who die in custody. It provides an independent free legal and advice service to bereaved people on inquest procedures and their rights in the Coroner's Courts.