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PRESS RELEASE

29 April 2004

Protest at Home Office to demand public inquiry into death of Christopher Alder in police custody

Home Office 'review' prompted by BBC documentary condemned by family and campaigners

On Wednesday 5th May between 12.30pm to 2pm, the United Families and Friends Campaign (UFFC), the coalition of relatives and friends of those who have died in police custody, will be protesting outside of the Home Office to demand an independent public inquiry into the death of Christopher Alder in police custody.

The protest has been prompted by the government's reaction to the BBC documentary 'Death on Camera', which broadcast CCTV footage of Christopher's last moments on the floor of the custody suite at Queen's Road police station in Hull. Home Secretary David Blunkett announced on the day after the broadcast that he had instructed the new Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), which began work on April 1st, to review that circumstances of Christopher's death. The United Families and Friends Campaign believes this was nothing more than government spin – an attempt to try and manage the negative publicity that 'Death on Camera' had generated. A review by the IPCC will consider only "lessons to be learnt" from the case and will not force the officers who watched Christopher die to answer the questions they have avoided over the last six years. We support the Justice for Christopher Alder Campaign's demand that only an independent public inquiry can enable the truth to emerge. In the last two weeks, UFFC supporters have therefore been lobbying IPCC Chair Nick Hardwick, asking the IPCC to demonstrate its independence by referring the 'review' back to the Home Office.

Brenda Weinberg, UFFC chair and the sister of Brian Douglas, who died in police custody in south London in 1995, said:

"The long struggle for justice by Christopher's family, in the face of vigorous obstruction by Humberside Police, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Police Complaints Authority, has helped prevent the truth from emerging about why Christopher died. It has also prevented anyone from being properly held to account for their actions. A 'review' by the Independent Police Complaints Commission is a wholly inappropriate response to what has finally been publicly exposed by 'Death on Camera'. Only a public inquiry can establish the truth."

ENDS