

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release 24 November 2006

INQUEST TO BEGIN INTO DEATH OF MAN FOUND HANGING IN POLICE VAN

**Before HM Coroner for the West Manchester District, Mrs Jennifer Leeming
Sitting at Paderborn House
Civic Court
Howell Croft North
Bolton BL1 1JW
10.00am Monday 27 November 2006**

The inquest into the death of Wayne Lawrence is due to begin on Monday 27 November and is scheduled to last for one week.

Wayne Lawrence died on 8 January 2004 following an incident on 5 January when he had been arrested and subsequently hanged himself in the rear of the police van using a ligature which he attached to the light fitting.

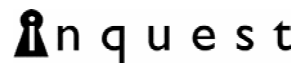
Tragically Wayne's brother Philip Lawrence also died whilst in police custody 10 years ago. Philip was in Marsh Lane police station, Bootle, Merseyside where he hanged himself from the light fitting in the cell.

On 5 January 2004 the police received reports of a burglary in progress at the Dixons store in Market Place, Wigan. Wayne was detained at the scene and was placed in the rear of the police van at approximately 21:20 hours. It is believed that a short while later Wayne was removed from the van for an identification to take place before being returned to the back of the van. At around 22:05 a police officer opened the van to find Wayne hanging.

Wayne was taken to Wigan Royal Infirmary where he died three days later. At the post mortem it was noted that Wayne had fractured ribs, which were unlikely to have been caused by CPR.

The family of Mr. Lawrence hopes that the inquest will look into the following issues relating to his arrest and subsequent detention:

- The design of the police vans which allowed this incident to occur;
- whether the police recognized Wayne's risk of self harm and the decision to place a vulnerable man in the back of a police van;
- why Wayne was left in the van for such a long period of time and not transported to the police station;
- the police officers' decision to cancel the ambulance they had requested.



Mr Lawrence's family are being represented by INQUEST Lawyers Group members Joanne Kearsley of Farleys Solicitors and barrister Nick Stanage of Garden Court North Chambers.

Notes to Editors

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.

Further Information	www.inquest.org.uk
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