

ROGER SYLVESTER JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

UNISON CONFERENCE JUNE 2003

The family of Roger Sylvester and the Roger Sylvester Justice Campaign would like to express their thanks and gratitude to UNISON and its members for your financial and practical support of the campaign.

We are still living through an emotional nightmare as a result of the unprecedented delay and the obstacles inherent in an inadequate and dishonest process that is designed to thwart justice, openness and accountability.

After four and a half years of waiting and three investigations into his death we have finally been given an inquest date of the 8th of September 2003 for a four week duration. This is the only opportunity for us as family and friends to hear at first hand the details and results of the investigations.

The hearing itself because of its narrow remit will not answer crucial questions nor tell us why he had to die, that may never be told but we hope it will go somewhat toward finding out how Roger died.

We have been informed that the Inquest will proceed at St Pancras Coroners court. We are extremely unhappy with this venue because on a practical level the court has extremely limited facilities for the number of people who will wish to attend. It will not accommodate all representatives, legal teams and a compliment of family members who wish to be present, let alone give members of the community the opportunity to attend. We feel it is in the public interest that those wishing to attend can do so.

Indeed the representatives of the other interested parties have expressed concerns and the coroner has also acknowledged the fact. We are aware of other coroners using accommodation outside the confines of their district to deal with inquests such as ours, but despite this we are unable at present to find alternative accommodation suitable for all concerned.

We therefore seek your assistance in helping the coroner find a suitable venue within or outside his jurisdiction of Islington, Hackney, Camden and Tower Hamlets.

Despite the obstacles before us the aims of our Campaign remain in that:

1. We are demanding a full independent and open inquiry into Roger's death. A Public inquiry to us is the only way to bring change to this shameful and discredited system. It is quite clear that we also need a Public investigation into all deaths in custody.
2. Full and positive disclosure of information arriving from the investigation. It is a disgrace that the MET who is being investigated also owns the documents and exhibits. Disclosure must be made compulsory in all such cases.
3. We still demand the police officers found responsible for his death face criminal charges whether or not they are retired.
4. Prosecution should follow where unlawful killings are returned at an inquest.
5. Legal Aid for victims families. It should be a positive duty of the authorities to provide Legal Aid for victims families in 'Death in custody' cases.

We are truly grateful for all you have done and look forward to your support in numbers during the Inquest. We also hope that with your help the death of Roger and other deaths in custody will not have been in vain.

For further details of the campaign please contact us at the following:

Roger Sylvester Justice Campaign; PO Box 25908

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If anyone wishes to make a donation all donations should go to: The Roger Sylvester Justice Campaign.

All Cheques made payable to: The Roger Sylvester Justice Campaign

Account No: 31238892

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Justin. Waldron