

**26<sup>th</sup> January 1999**  
**INQUEST VERDICT DUE IN DEATH IN METROPOLITAN POLICE  
CUSTODY OF NATHAN DELAHUNTY**

9.30am Wednesday 27 January 1999  
Coroners Court 65 Horseferry Road, London SW1  
Coroner Dr Knapman

The inquest into the death of 29-year-old Nathan Delahunty who died on 24 July 1998 in police custody will conclude tomorrow morning. The inquest has lasted three days.

Mr Delahunty was a businessman who ran an employment agency for builders and labourers. He was detained by officers from Battersea police station who had been called to his flat in Battersea Park Road, London SW1. Mr Delahunty was taken in a police van to Springfield Hospital, Tooting. On arrival at the hospital he was found to have stopped breathing and was pronounced dead.

The jury have heard evidence from both the Coroner's and the family's pathologists that he had significant bruising and abrasions to his body in 52 different places – some of which, it was agreed were the result of firm restraint. In evidence, none of the police officers involved have given any explanation for the restraint related injuries. Dr Nathaniel Carey, the country's leading expert on deaths related to restraint has given evidence that in his view postural asphyxia could have been responsible for Mr Delahunty's death and that the police version of how they treated Mr Delahunty is inconsistent with the post mortem findings.

All six independent civilian witnesses have told the jury that they saw Mr Delahunty handcuffed behind his back and carried into the police van in direct contradiction to the police evidence. Dr Carey gave evidence that this is crucial in deciding how Mr Delahunty died. They also heard from the nurse who was present at the hospital when the police van doors were opened that Mr Delahunty's hands were cuffed behind his back.

The jury will need to decide whether the police used excessive force or were grossly negligent towards him with the result that he died.

The Coroner will sum up the evidence to the jury tomorrow morning at 9.30 and will guide them as to the verdicts they can consider.