

PRESS RELEASE 13 DECEMBER 2005

FAMILY OF AZELLE RODNEY CALL ON THE IPCC TO REFER CASE TO CPS - DEMONSTRATION OUTSIDE IPCC 3.30pm TODAY

The family of Azelle Rodney, a 24-year-old black man who was shot dead by the Metropolitan Police following a pre-planned operation on Saturday 30 April 2005, today called on the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) to send the evidence file from their criminal investigation to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for advice on criminal charges.

The IPCC investigated the shooting in Hale Lane, London NW7, but have not had full access to all the relevant evidence for public interest reasons and the related criminal case against the two men who were in the front of the car that Azelle Rodney was travelling in when he was killed.

Azelle's mother, Susan Alexander, said:

"The family have today challenged the IPCC to answer how can it ever be right for the police to shoot someone when the suspect does not present a visual threat to anyone? The CPS should be asked if there is evidence to support criminal charges of murder or gross negligence manslaughter. If an officer makes an honest mistake and others have made mistakes along the way in a police operation, a criminal jury should decide whether the mistakes amount to gross negligence, not a non-independent 'police expert'."

The family want to highlight the following:

1. The IPCC and the police failed to publicly correct a false impression the police created that Azelle was seen holding a firearm when he was shot, despite the obvious significance of the mistaken reporting.
2. No one has told the family that Azelle Rodney was killed because he was seen holding a gun.
3. Officers should not be able to write their notes together when they know there is a criminal investigation under way. The IPCC do not have an official position on this issue.
4. Officers have not been made to properly account for the planning of the operation and their conduct on the day.

The family renews its call for the police officer who killed Azelle Rodney to be suspended from all police duties.

Helen Shaw, Co-Director of INQUEST said:

"There have been 17 fatal police shootings since 2000. INQUEST urges that the death of Azelle Rodney should be thoroughly and impartially investigated to ensure that his family obtains the justice they deserve."

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.

The inquest into Azelle Rodney's death was opened on 5 May 2005 and adjourned, pending the outcome of the criminal investigation by the IPCC

Susan Alexander, Azelle's mother, is now aware that Azelle Rodney had a criminal record, but three of his five convictions were for possession of drugs, including his most recent conviction which was more than two and a half years before he was killed. He had no convictions for firearms offences and no record of drug dealing or carrying or using firearms, but the police officers who killed him did not even know who he was despite following him and the other men in the car around for some time.

Police Shooting Deaths (England & Wales) in the last 5 years

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
2	4	2	2	2	5	17

Source: INQUEST casework and monitoring

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