



NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
November 30, 2009

For immediate release

BCCLA demands Coroner call inquest into Boyd death

The BCCLA is demanding that the Coroner call an inquest into the death of Paul Boyd at the hands of the Vancouver Police Department. Recent media reports have suggested that the Coroner is not certain whether or not Paul Boyd was in police custody or not, and therefore whether or not a coroner's inquest is required.

"The Coroner has the ability to call an inquest whether or not someone dies in police custody, this issue is irrelevant to the fact that this death is of huge interest to the community," said Robert Holmes, President of the BCCLA. "The role of the Coroner is to investigate deaths just like this, not shovel them under the carpet using legal technicalities."

Holmes compared the death of Boyd, a mentally ill man who was shot eight times by the Vancouver Police Department, to the death of Frank Paul, a homeless man who froze to death after being left unconscious in an alley by Vancouver Police. In that case, Paul was deemed not to be in police custody, and therefore there was no coroner's inquest. After 10 years of advocacy by the urban aboriginal community, a public inquiry into the death was finally called by the provincial government.

"This equivocation over the unquestionable fact that Mr. Boyd was detained by the police will only lead to further delay," said Holmes. "It has already been two years since Mr. Boyd's death. How long must the family and the public wait to hear the details of this incident?"

Witnesses report that Boyd was shot four to five times when completely unarmed, and that the final shot was into Boyd's head while the man was on his hands and knees in the middle of Granville Street near 15th Avenue. He had been stopped for questioning by plain clothes police officers who were investigating allegations he had been acting unusually.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Robert Holmes, President, 604-838-6856

David Eby, Executive Director, 778-865-7997