



# **Black and Asian Police Association Greater Manchester**

Newsletter: *Special Edition*

July 2015.

*"I get by with a little help  
from my friends"*



**Shazia Awan pictured outside the Tribunal court during the trial held in July 2015.**

Part 1:  
Pre Verdict.

**Manchester Evening News  
Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014:**

*“An award winning police worker had three heart attacks after she was disciplined for allegedly using the term ‘coconut’ about an Asian colleague.”*

I am not sure that outside of Shazia Awan’s immediate family and friends that anyone remembers this story or the impact that it has had on Shazia. As a colleague and now a friend I have seen a lot of what Shazia has gone through over the past couple of years; but even I would not claim to have seen the true price, the human cost of her ordeal.

Having been disciplined by GMP and having suffered a life changing illness anyone would have forgiven Shazia if she had thrown in the towel and walked away from the police, but that did not happen. What happened next was totally remarkable.

Without representation, legal training or legal assistance Shazia mounted a claim as a ‘litigant in person’ for racial discrimination against GMP.

Her case was simple; that she had been disciplined disproportionately because of her race and victimised by an employer that claims to be fair and claims that it is no longer institutionally racist. This is a classic tale of David and Goliath the underdog against the strong favourite who has no shortage of resources.

Shazia showed throughout the determination of a person who wanted to right a wrong, a person who would risk life and limb to be vindicated in the eyes of the world, a person who wanted justice.

The evidence concluded this morning, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015, whatever the result Shazia has shown what is possible when we try.

By Paul Bailey



By Shazia Awan,

At the start of this hearing I recall many people contacting me to convey their support either in person or over the phone as to how "brave" I was. After all I was holding the second largest Police Service in England and Wales to account. Taking action against Greater Manchester Police was not in mind an act of bravery, but an imperative action that I had to take. I brought this action for one simple reason; I was subject of a racist, discriminatory and disproportionate investigation, judgement and appeal. I was treated less favourably than my comparators and was subject to victimisation and harassment by investigating officers. I suffered a detriment due to the discrimination where I was excluded from opportunities to progress within the organisation and now have a disability as a result.

The tactics and revelations throughout these proceedings did not cease to amaze me. I just felt sick! I recall the first morning of the Hearing 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015. GMP had appointed a Pakistani barrister in these proceedings. How interesting... I was accusing the police service of being racist and GMP was visually trying to demonstrate that they were not. I was then faced with the entire entourage of the Respondents witnesses all sitting in the courtroom with notebook and pens waiting to hear me give evidence. I was never going to give evidence on that first day of my hearing. Thankfully the honourable Judge on this case shared the same sentiments

and asked them all to return to their day jobs until they were called to give evidence. Despite this, two Police Inspectors stayed.

I was first to give provide evidence. I was cross examined for three days by GMP's barrister regarding the case. I remember being called a 'fantasist' and the idea of accusing so many officers in the GMP of racism was based on my lived experience as a black officer within GMP and upon documentary evidence presented before the tribunal.

I remember hearing gasps and sounds of total shock from the members of the public at the back of the courtroom when I spoke of my comparators. This was a difficult time for me to recollect the conduct of Officers within GMP who had subjected black officers/ staff to discrimination because of racism. I could not bring myself to repeat the disgusting terminology and racist conduct of the comparators. I cried that evening. How could GMP do this? They did this because of race hate.

When the Respondents witnesses gave their evidence I was presented as a "fiery, highly strung, aggressive woman who would explode if not handled properly". Again, I was subject to racial stereotyping. I was, accordingly to GMP, an angry black woman with a chip on her shoulder. Typical. Inspector Scott Winters was subjected to the same vitriolic attack on his character during his hearing in February 2015.

The motivations and subconscious and unconscious bias of the Respondents witnesses also became apparent. I was reminded during the hearing that I did not have a 'good command of the English language. Not one of the Respondent's witnesses understood any of the policies and procedures presented in this case. In fact, the lead for misconduct stated that the entire police staff within GMP relied on what was "in her head and experience" when it came to assessing misconduct matters! In fact no policies existed for that either!

**Question: Do you think GMP are institutionally racist? To which she replied "yes".**

An Assistant Chief Constable encapsulated the entirety of this case for me in her response to the following question: Do you think GMP are institutionally racist? To which she replied "yes".

A Chief Superintendent in his responses during cross examination nearly made me fall off my chair in the court room. His explanation for not recording the incident as a 'hate crime' as I had requested was because I was the offender and not the victim.

Even funnier was his departure, the honourable judge offered him 'management advice' to tuck his shirt in his trousers and pull them up! Professional standards of dress for a senior officer were far from the required standard in GMP.

The judges in this process were excellent. They gave consideration to my ill health when I had an episode of angina and also told me I had been very professional throughout the proceedings. For me that was one of the biggest compliments I received during this period and to me it echoed the word of DC Paul Bailey who told me continually - I was a winner!

So how do I feel now.... without knowing the judgement? I am glad I did this and stood up for what is right. I had my day in court and held GMP to account.

The biggest blessing and lessons that I received throughout the last two and a half years was the unconditional butt kicking, support and belief invested in me by Paul Bailey. I will never be able to repay what Paul and BAPA did for me.

Thank you Inspector Winters and Charles Crichlow too! I hope I am honoured to do something for you all in my lifetime.

# "And Still I Rise"

Part 2:  
Post Verdict.

*Rosa Parks*  
1913 - 2005



Yesterday I learned that Shazia Awan had been unsuccessful in her bid to prove that she had been racially discriminated against by GMP. I had not been at the court for the verdict myself but spoke to Shazia moments afterwards; I could hear the disappointment in her voice mixed with the steely determination that I have come to recognise as one of Shazia's most endearing traits.

I was going to write a piece about how the search for justice will never leave those who have been wronged; about how GMP appear to have unlimited funds when it comes to employment tribunals whilst not being held accountable in this time of austerity; about the future for Shazia Awan, but last night I saw a message from one of our members to Shazia that said everything I wanted to say in just a few words. Rosa Parks said it all; I do not think that this is the end of this story.

By Paul Bailey  
24<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

By Shazia Awan,

When the Judge began reading out his judgement today I knew that the judgement was in the favour of the Respondent. I was a litigant in person and not an experienced Barrister. GMP were for the majority of the claims brought forward not found to be racist or discriminatory, I lost. I still however, disagree with some of the judges decisions and cannot understand how you cannot take into account the documentary evidence put before you.

My ego was not bruised and nor did I think for a second what I had gone through for the past two and a half years was a waste of time. For me, this was never about winning, losing or saying "told you so", I stood up for what I believed in, what I believed was wrong and held my perpetrators to account. I still would speak out if I felt I or anyone else was wronged. My experience as a Black officer within GMP remains the same I was disproportionately investigated and sanctioned. Sending an email regarding CIC counselling services to someone does not demonstrate your compassion or concern. Ignoring and ostracising someone who dies in theatre twice is the complete opposite! Telling someone in writing that you have no basis for a grievance is victimisation. Breaching all internal policies and procedures and in fact having no policies and procedures in relation to that is in my mind completely bonkers!

Within Islam we have a Arabic saying "inalillahee wainallayhay rajioon" (this is usually said when someone passes away). In English this line means "unto him we return". I accept the decree of Allah as I continually prayed for whatever is good for me to manifest. My learning throughout this experience is the goodness will come.

"inalillahee  
wainallayhay  
rajioon"

Maybe the decision of the Judge is better for me at this point. I have lost nothing. I still have a job, a beautiful daughter, amazing people; DC Bailey, Inspector Winters, Charles Chrichlow, Sergeant Coburn and Chief Superintendent Wasim Choudhury in my life and I have survived the experience.

Would I do it again? YES.

One of my favourite poems comes to mind and I leave you with that:

You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may tread me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.  
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.

Maya Angelou



**Maya Angelou 1928 – 2014.**