

British policeman jailed for life in Sarah Everard's case

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London, October 1 (RHC)-- A UK police officer has been sentenced to life imprisonment for raping and murdering marketing executive Sarah Everard in a case that shocked Britain and stirred protests over violence against women.

The Old Bailey court heard on Thursday that Wayne Couzens, 48, a serving London officer who had guarded diplomatic premises, had used his position to stop Everard and force her into a hire car in south

London.

Her body later was found in woodland around 50 miles away in southeast England, while a post-mortem concluded she had died as a result of compression of the neck.

“Nothing can make things better, nothing can bring Sarah back, but knowing he will be imprisoned forever brings some relief,” Everard’s family said in a statement after the court hearing. “Wayne Couzens held a position of trust as a police officer and we are outraged and sickened that he abused this trust in order to lure Sarah to her death,” the statement added.

One witness saw Everard being handcuffed before her abduction and according to the police, Couzens may have used COVID-19 protocols violation as an excuse to arrest and kidnap her. The murder prompted anger and frustration from the public, especially from women who have recounted their own experiences and fears of being out alone at night.

Judge Adrian Fulford said Couzens had long been planning for his vicious plot on a yet-to-be-selected victim, adding that “I have not the slightest doubt that the defendant used his position as a police officer to coerce her on a wholly false pretext into the car he had hired for this purpose.”

The Metropolitan Police Force was at pains to admit that it was “sickened, angered and devastated” by Couzens’ crimes, with Commissioner Dame Cressida Dick saying that she is “so sorry” he was able to use his “position of trust” to “deceive” Everard before murdering her.

“He has very considerably added to the sense of insecurity that many have in our cities, perhaps particularly women,” the met police commissioner added. Opposition lawmaker Harriet Harman called on Dick to resign, saying that “Sarah Everard was simply walking home. Women must be able to trust the police not fear them. Women’s confidence in police will have been shattered.”

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