

Title:	N297 - Risk Assessment
Summary:	Assessment of risk in the event of identification during the Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI)
Relevant to:	UCPI
Author:	Graham Walker
Peer Reviewer:	Brian Lockie
Reference:	
Version:	Gisted
Date created:	03/07/2017
Security level:	Official

PURPOSE

This risk assessment has been prepared in relation to the Undercover Policing Inquiry, and concerns the officer known as N297.

The purpose of the document is to provide an objective assessment of the creation of or increase in risk to N297 and third parties if information is disclosed by the Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI) which directly or indirectly leads to the identification of N297 as a former undercover police officer (UCO). The report covers the situation in relation to both his pseudonym and real identity if details became known.

DATE OF DOCUMENT

03/07/2017

A risk assessment is a 'snap shot' in time. New information received, or a change in circumstances, could raise or lower the risk.

On 03/07/2017 I was provided additional material¹ by DLS to supplement their profile of N297. I have reviewed the additional material and can state that none of this material would alter my view in my conclusion or scoring for N297. ***Details of additional material***

It is appreciated that assessments require regular monitoring, and may require further updating.

AUTHOR

The author of this risk assessment is Graham Walker² It has been peer reviewed by Brian Lockie³

THE PROCESS ADOPTED

There are a number of methods used in the assessment of risk. The process adopted in the production of this report has been documented.⁴

The terms have been documented.⁵

The risk assessment includes the sources of the material as requested by the Chairman of the Inquiry (Risk Assessments – note to core participants - paragraph 11). A copy of the material is annexed to the assessment (paragraph 12). The risk assessors are aware of the contents of that direction, and note the Chairman's need for evidence and assessment of present risk, as well as future risk should the restriction order not be made (paragraph 17). They also note the comments re differential risk in terms

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of disclosure of the undercover identity (paragraph 18), and specifics around how the 'jigsaw' could be completed (paragraph 19).

The reports are structured to include all of the areas covered by the Chairman in his note dated 20th Oct 2016, specifically in paragraphs 29 and 30.

LIMITATIONS ON THE RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND GENERAL COMMENTS⁶

There are a number of documented limitations placed on the process, either due to time constraints, or in compliance with directions given by the Inquiry. This includes the parameters set for researching subjects or organizations that may present an ongoing risk to the former undercover officer.

Documents used to compile this report are referenced as follows:

References (also at Appendix 'B')

The documents reviewed but not considered relevant to the risk assessment are referenced as follows:

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Other material generated from, or pertinent to, this risk assessment is referenced as follows:

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MPS DLS
OFFICIAL
LOG D5934

1. REAL IDENTITY

- **Real name:**
 - Name (deceased)⁷
- **Undercover pseudonym:**
 - Rick Gibson⁸

1.3 Other names used / referred to as

- **Reference**
- Cipher: N297

1.4 Core participant and / or investigation

- N297 was not a core participant in the Inquiry
- ***Details of whether or not N297 was the subject of an investigation***

From this point he is referred to as **N297**. The only exception is when quoting material in the public domain (or where specifically commenting upon the pseudonym)

2. SUMMARY

N297 was deployed as an SDS UCO between July 1974 and November 1976. The initial deployment was into Troops Out Movement (TOM) and Big Flame, a Trotskyist group.

During his deployment in 1976, N297 was confronted by an activist from Big Flame who appeared to be in the possession of the birth and / or death certificate of the deceased child N297 had used as his cover name. N297 told the activist that he had adopted the identity as he was wanted by the police and therefore needed to hide his true identity. N297 was soon after withdrawn as a UCO.

N297 returned to the SDS later in his career in a non-UCO role.⁹

N297 died in Year¹⁰

3. SUMMARY OF OFFICER'S LIFE PRE-DEPLOYMENT¹¹

3.1 Life before joining MPS

Date of birth: Date

Location: Area

Parents: Not known, presumed deceased

Siblings: Not known

Locations: Not known

Schools / University / college: Not known

- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11

Occupations: Not known

Other factors of note: None known

There is nothing from this period that affects the current risk assessment

3.2 Police career history pre-UCO role¹²

Joined the MPS: *Date*

Warrant number: *Number*

Completed initial training: *Date*

Postings:

- *Details of postings*

Postings to SB pre-UCO role

- *Details of postings*

There is nothing from this period that affects the current risk assessment

3.3 Recruitment to UCO role

Recruitment to SDS: N297 was recruited to the SDS by unknown means, but recorded by *Name on Date* that N297 had 'been approached with a view to joining the SDS and is willing to do so'.¹³ *Details of N297's family.*¹⁴

Recruitment to SDS by: Not known or recorded

Psychometric testing: Not known or recorded

When posted to the SDS back office: Not known or recorded

Formal or informal training for role: Not known or recorded

Back story sufficient: Not known or recorded

Legend: Not known or recorded

3.4 Guarantee or assurance of anonymity

Guarantee or assurance of anonymity provided, and if so by whom: Not known or recorded

Was anyone else present: N/A

4. UNDERCOVER DEPLOYMENT

4.1 Dates of deployment

N297 was deployed as a UCO from July 1974 to November 1976. This was a shorter span in comparison to others, and cut short by compromise.

4.2 Main group infiltrated

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- **Troops Out Movement (TOM)** – N297 is described as a leading member of TOM South East London Branch¹⁵

4.3 Peripheral interactions

N297 was linked to, or occasionally reported upon, **Big Flame** – a Trotskyist group formed in Liverpool in 1970 and described as a revolutionary socialist feminist organisation with working class orientation.¹⁶

4.4 Covert identity adopted

Use of deceased child identity:

Not confirmed or recorded, but appears to have been a tactic adopted by N297 due to the documented compromise circumstances and the apparent acceptance of N297 of the document authenticity when confronted.¹⁷

Methodology for creation: Not known or recorded

4.5 Cover occupation

Occupation: Not known or recorded

Company / organisation (include 3rd party notification if applicable): Not known or recorded

4.6 Details of other behaviour which may raise risk¹⁸

4.7 Tasking

Tasking: Not known or recorded

Team meetings: No indication of any deviation used by other UCO's for weekly / bi-weekly meetings away from police premises

Risk assessments:

Details of risk assessments¹⁹

4.8 Assimilation into the group

Method: Not known or recorded

4.9 Key associates

Not known or recorded

4.10 Group size

Not known or recorded

4.11 Geographical location(s) based

South East London²⁰

4.12 Compromises or security concerns during deployment

N297 was compromised to the extent that he was confronted by Big Flame members who were in possession of the details of the birth and death certificates of the pseudonym he had adopted, presumably from a deceased child. N297 attempted to explain that he was in fact wanted by the police and so had adopted the details to avoid detection and arrest. He left Big Flame stating that if activists could find him so

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could the police. He was withdrawn as a SDS UCO; the SDS management having confidence his true identity was intact.²¹

There is a further documented reference to this incident The author is **Name**, 'In 1976 an officer (N297), targeted against the Trotskyist organisation Big Flame, was confronted with the death certificate for his covert identity by fellow members of the group. No violence was used and he was expelled from the group after a lengthy tirade of abuse.'²²

Photographs known / in existence: None confirmed

Moving images known / in existence: None confirmed

Other: None known

4.13 Relationships entered into

None identified²³

4.14 Other behaviour that could heighten the risk

Not known or recorded²⁴

4.15 Arrests

No record exists of N297 being arrested or otherwise detained

4.16 Other Undercover officers who would be affected if a restriction order was not issued

Not known or recorded

4.17 Withdrawal / exit strategy

N297 appears to have been compromised to the extent that Big Flame activists were in possession of the birth and death certificate of the deceased child whose details N297 had adopted. He was withdrawn from the UCO role.²⁵

4.18 Support during deployment

Not known or recorded

4.19 Return to regular policing

Discussion, including that N297 returned to the SDS later in his career in a non-UCO role and that he worked in close protection duties at some point after ending his deployment.²⁶

4.20 Commendations / acknowledgement / other (re UC deployment)

Details of any commendations²⁷

5. Post UC Deployment – Police

5.1 Career path

Details of N297's career path

5.2 Sensitivities

None identified

5.3 Areas of concern (including 3rd party recognition)

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None identified

6. Post police employment or engagement

6.1 Position(s)

Following retirement from the police, *Details of N297's post police employment or engagement*²⁸

6.2 Sensitivities

None identified

6.3 Areas of concern (including 3rd party recognition)

It appears that there is little doubt of a continued belief that 'Rick Gibson' or certainly 'Gibson' has been suspected of being a UCO following his compromise and exit, and that 'Gibson' is in the public domain.

7. FORMAL INVESTIGATION

Discussion

7.1 If yes, details: *Discussion*

8. CURRENT SITUATION

8.1 Age & current marital status

Not applicable as N297 is deceased.

3rd party concerns: *Discussion*²⁹

8.2 Current location

Address: Not applicable

Any other property of relevance: None known

8.3 Family circumstances *Discussion*³⁰

8.4 Children *Details of any family*³¹

3rd party concerns: *Discussion*³²

8.5 Current employment (if not included in 6. above) Not applicable

8.6 Route to work Not applicable

8.7 Role within the community Not applicable

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8.8 Partner employment

None known

Sensitivities: None known or apparent

8.9 Internet profile

Not applicable

8.10 Knowledge of their role amongst family and close friends

Not known

8.11 Physical health

Not applicable

8.12 Psychological health

Not applicable

9. CURRENT LEVEL OF EXPOSURE

The Chairman of the Inquiry makes clear that any risk caused by self-disclosure or third party disclosure will be material considerations (Part 6, conclusions and summary of findings, the public interest balance under section 19 (3) (b), section A.6)

Information currently in the public domain regarding deployment and identity is as follows:

9.1 Cover name

From the compromise and subsequent media enquiries (detailed at 9.4 below) it is safe to say:

The cover name of N297 is in the public domain.

9.2 True identity

Whether or not true identity is in the public domain

9.3 Where sourced:

The cover name is known to media sources seeking further information and photographic evidence of 'Gibson' being a UCO. (see 9.4 below)

9.4 Compromises / potential compromises subsequent to UC posting

It has been recorded that in 1986 Mike Hollingsworth and Nick Davies, The Observer, were investigating the work of the SDS. They were attempting to discover more detail regarding a man named 'Gibson' who was involved with Big Flame in the 1970's, and appear to have been trying to obtain photographs of him.³³

In 1989 Geoffrey Seed, Channel 4 producer, was also making enquiries regarding 'Gibson'. Mr Seed sought a photograph of 'Gibson' which is reported to have been distributed by Big Flame.³⁴

In the book 'Undercover' there is a reference by 'Peter Black' (N43) that an SDS officer in the 1970's was confronted by his target group with his birth and death certificate. There is no specific mention of N297 in his true identity or his pseudonym but the incident is similar to the one he endured.³⁵

9.5 Details of pseudonym

Discussion

9.6 Official confirmation regarding deployment and/or identity

There has been no self-disclosure, no court order, no police revelation, and no official disclosure

9.7 Other deployments as a UCO

Discussion

10 INTERVIEW BETWEEN RISK ASSESSORS AND THE UCO

Not applicable as N297 is deceased.

11. CAUSAL LINK IN TERMS OF COMPLETING A MOSAIC / JIGSAW EFFECT

This section does not intend to prove the existence of the Mosaic effect, but looks at the likelihood of it applying in this case.

11.1 General impact

In general terms, a number of matters can be said.

Firstly, the risk assessors do not assume that the material currently in the public domain represents the totality of the information available. For example, there is evidence that people 'build a picture' before naming a person as an ex-UCO. Therefore the risk assessors cannot reasonably know what other 'pieces of the jigsaw' are required before the full picture is revealed.

Secondly, the risk assessors acknowledge that 'believing' is different from 'knowing'. Assessing how official confirmation of the identity of a UCO impacts upon risk is speculative. The argument is that official confirmation raises the risk as it will increase the efforts to establish the real identity of the officer, and additional time and resources will be put into those attempts. In essence, that would depend upon a number of factors, including the level of certainty with which the person is already exposed. If there is no real doubt that the person was a UCO then official confirmation of that person is unlikely to add to the attempts to identify him or her, as those attempts will have already occurred or be proceeding. However, if the exposure is largely speculative then official confirmation could add significantly to the attempts to discover their real identity.

11.2 Specific impact

In the case of N297, his pseudonym is already in the public domain.

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12. THREAT CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable as N297 is deceased.

13. RESEARCH CONDUCTED

13.1 Initial research on HOLMES and Relativity

The individuals and organizations that could be considered to present a risk have been identified from researching the HOLMES accounts for HERNE and PITCHFORD; accessing 'Relativity'; interviewing the officer; and considering other reports.

HOLMES and Relativity hold separate albeit overlapping documentation. All of the material on HOLMES has been used for the assessment, as recorded against their nominal profile. It is accepted there may well be material that is not shown within that profile, particularly generic documents, that could be argued to have relevance to risk. However, given the time scales that apply this is deemed a proportionate search.

Relativity contains a vast amount of material. To check all of the documents would be simply impossible within the time scales, even should fairly restricted search terms be used. As a result there is reliance upon the DLS profile that has been prepared and submitted to the Risk Assessor. The risk assessors do have access to Relativity should further enquiries be required.

The risk assessors have worked through examples to quantify the amount of material. The results of these searches are recorded and have been retained. Should it be felt that the risk assessors should have attempted to review more material in preparing the risk assessments these details can be provided.

13.2 Basic research on individuals (PNC / PND)

Not known or recorded

13.3 Additional research

Not required

13.4 Open source research (also at Appendix 'A')

The open source research undertaken has been focussed and conducted at a level of competence. It does not seek to assert that a more experienced and dedicated individual, group or state sponsor with extensive knowledge and access could not uncover more information.

The open source research for N297 has been conducted and is attached at Appendix 'A'. It has focussed on whether a link can be made from the known pseudonym 'Rick Gibson' to the true identity of N297.³⁶

14. THE RISK CURRENTLY POSED BY THE GROUPS INFILTRATED

Not applicable

15. THE RISK FROM INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE GROUP

Not applicable

16. INDICATORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK REQUIRING EXPERT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable

17. ASSESSMENT OF RISK OF INTERFERENCE WITH FAMILY AND PRIVATE LIFE

The risk assessors are aware of the comments of the Chairman of the Inquiry in relation to Article 8, and an individuals' right of respect for private and family life terms (Part 6, conclusions and summary of findings, the public interest balance under section 19 (3) (b), section A.10)

17.1 Perception of the risk

Not applicable

17.2 Nature and gravity of the risk

Not applicable

17.3 Media intrusion

There have been previous attempts to identify 'Gibson' by various media outlets to date without further revelation; however this has been conducted without official confirmation.³⁷ The online requests for photographic images of 'Rick' have apparently proved fruitless to date but it would not be safe to assume that they do not exist.

17.4 Effect on friends and family

*Discussion*³⁸

18. MITIGATING THE RISK

The Chairman of the Inquiry makes clear that any alternative methods available to avoid or reduce a risk of harm or damage will be material considerations (Part 6, conclusions and summary of findings, the public interest balance under section 19 (3) (b), section A.6).

He has subdivided that grouping (B.1) into "means other than a restriction order that may be available to avoid or reduce a risk of harm" (section B.1.7) and "whether those means would, without the restriction order, avoid the risk or the extent to which those means would, without the restriction order, reduce the risk" (section B.1.8)

18.1 Previous Risk Assessments and recommendations (if allowed access)

- No formal risk assessment seen.³⁹
- *Details of other research for a risk assessment*⁴⁰

18.2 Security arrangements in place

Not applicable

18.3 The anticipated result of revealing pseudonym only

Minimal consequence to the revelation of the pseudonym of N297 as:

- N297 is deceased

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- The pseudonym is already in the public domain
- **Details of reasons**

18.4 The anticipated result of revealing groups infiltrated / associated with

Minimal consequence to the revelation of the groups infiltrated as:

- N297 is deceased
- TOM and Big Flame do not exist in the form when N297 was deployed

18.5 The anticipated result of revealing dates of deployment and geographical area of operation

Minimal consequence to the revelation of the dates of infiltration and area of operation as:

- N297 is deceased
- TOM and Big Flame do not exist in the form when N297 was deployed
- The pseudonym is already in the public domain and those suspecting will have knowledge of these details

18.6 Withholding, redacting, or gisting documents in the context of this UCO

In general terms, these would need to be considered on a 'document by document' basis, and falls outside of the scope of this risk assessment.

There is not a specific exemption to this principle in this case.

18.7 Using a cipher

Not applicable

18.8 Screening

Not applicable

18.9 Voice modulation

Not applicable

18.10 Prohibition around publication

Not applicable

18.11 Evidence in private

Not applicable

19. CONCLUSIONS

19.1 General comments

- N297 is deceased **Comment**
- The pseudonym of N297 is assessed to be in the public domain; however no official confirmation has been made of his deployment in this cover name.
- The general risk from the group targeted is minimal as the organisation he was deployed to report upon no longer exists in the same form.
- The risk of attack from former associates is considered as not applicable as none have been identified and N297 is deceased.
- The risk of attack to N297 from people currently involved in Irish Republican issues and left-wing extremism issues is not applicable as he is deceased.
- **Discussion of other risks**

19.2 Assessment scores

N297 – Risk of physical attack if pseudonym officially confirmed

Not applicable as N297 is deceased

N297 – Risk of physical attack if real identity officially confirmed

Not applicable as N297 is deceased

N297 - Risk of interference with family and private life if pseudonym officially confirmed

The risk of official confirmation of the pseudonym being released is diminished as the pseudonym is considered to be already in the public domain and has to date not affected **N297's family**

N297 - Risk of interference with family and private life if real identity was officially confirmed

The probability of the media seeking out the **family** of N297 is low and the impact could be reasonably managed without significant assistance.

The risk of media intrusion is unlikely: low (2). The impact: minor (2).

Therefore the overall risk of interference with family and private life is '4'.

Signature of author:

Date:

Signature of moderator:

Date:

Appendix list

20.1 - Appendix 'A' N297 - Open source research (*Reference*)

20.2 – Appendix 'B' N297 – *Reference*