

1 Introduction

- 1.1 **Operation Herne** is the title given to the independent investigation led by Derbyshire's **Chief Constable Mick Creedon QPM** into the **Special Demonstration Squad (SDS)**. The SDS was a covert unit of the **Metropolitan Police Special Branch (MPSB)**. Operation Herne's terms of reference are to review the former SDS from its origin in 1968 to its closure in 2008, examining how it operated throughout its existence.
- 1.2 This report examines "collateral reporting" and "mentions" of Justice Campaigns recorded within SDS intelligence submissions. Following the Peter Francis allegations that the SDS targeted the family of murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence, Operation Herne has investigated the extent of similar information held within SDS documentation.
- 1.3 This report will refer to SDS reporting on a number of Justice Campaigns. A "Justice Campaign" would usually form as a result of family or public concerns surrounding the:
- Investigation, detention or treatment of a subject who died in police custody,
 - Investigation, detention or treatment of a subject who died following police contact
 - Victim of a murder
 - High profile prosecution or investigation
 - Miscarriages of Justice

The majority of these cases involved black males, hence the commonly used term "Black Justice Campaign."

- 1.4 Operation Herne has identified emerging evidence that in addition to the Stephen Lawrence Campaign, a number of other Justice Campaigns have been mentioned within SDS records. Seventeen such Justice Campaigns have been identified so far. These range between 1970 and 2005 and are as a result of deaths in police custody, following police contact and the victims of murders. It is the intention of Chief Constable Creedon and Operation Herne to inform all of the families involved and share, where possible the knowledge and information held. This process will inevitably take time to research and complete given the historical profile of many of the events and the natural difficulties in tracing some families. The work to identify such families or campaigns continues and those identified will be personally appraised of the detail by investigators from Operation Herne.

11 N81 Account

- 11.1 In a statement provided to Operation Herne, N81 disclosed that the target group became involved in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry with the clear objective of exploiting it for their own purposes. They wanted to befriend the Stephen Lawrence Family and promote their own often violent agenda but were unsuccessful because it became apparent that **Suresh Grover** and **Imran Khan**, the Stephen Lawrence family's solicitors, sought to protect the family. The family and their legal advisors wanted a wholly peaceful Justice Campaign and distanced themselves from any violent protest groups who they saw could undermine their work.
- 11.2 N81 also noted that the group didn't just focus on the Stephen Lawrence Family and the reality was that they were constantly trying to 'cast their net' in order to become involved with a number of Justice Campaigns.
- 11.3 **The Operation Herne report confirmed that N81 was never directly or indirectly asked or tasked by anyone at any level in the MPS to do anything in relation to the Stephen Lawrence family or campaign. They were not tasked or directed at any stage into any Justice Campaign. N81 never met Neville or Doreen Lawrence, nor attended their home or even spoke to them during this deployment.** This detail is corroborated by the Ellison review who also interviewed N81.
- 11.4 Both Operation Herne and Mr Ellison have previously reported that N81 did report some personal information about the Stephen Lawrence family. Since the publication of the reports, this information has been shared and discussed personally with Baroness Lawrence and her solicitor Imran Khan. Unfortunately the opportunity to apprise Mr Lawrence in person has not been achieved as he has left the country and he has been informed via a letter to his solicitors. The information relates to personal information which was not widely known at that time. This knowledge was obtained by N81 who was present at a public meeting where it was announced by the speaker addressing a large crowd.
- 11.5 There is no evidence to suggest that "collateral intrusion" was a consideration or factor in N81's deployment or that there was any apparent consideration given to how the SDS Management would address it, despite the fact it would be an inevitable consequence of

13 Conclusion

- 13.1 Although enquiries continue, the findings of Operation Herne indicate that the information or 'mentions' reported by SDS undercover officers on these Justice Campaigns are as a result of information and knowledge that was obtained from conversations often in public meetings or by members of the target group. Operation Herne does not criticise the officers that collected this material. There is no evidence of covert operations targeted against any of the respective families or Justice Campaigns.
- No documentation has been identified detailing any targeting or infiltration by the SDS into any family member of any Justice Campaign or any Justice Campaign itself.
 - There are no references to any SDS undercover officers directly meeting or being tasked in relation to solicitors or legal representatives engaged to represent any family member of any Justice Campaign.
 - No recording of personal information about family members has been identified.
- 13.2 Notwithstanding the above findings there remains a large quantity of material held within the MPS Special Branch and SDS records that should either not have been recorded, or when it had been should not have been retained, and has been held in direct contravention of RIPA and MOPI. The stated SDS remit, the operating methodology and requirement placed on its officers meant that such a collection of information by them was inevitable. For the most part it was appropriate and enabled an informed assessment of potential disorder, and references to provide context could be justified. However some information recorded simply does not meet this criteria. The concern is that there is no apparent MPS policy statement that properly dealt with how such collateral information should have been dealt with - both pre and post the RIPA legislation.
- 13.3 It is quite clear that maintaining the secrecy of the unit and protecting the identity of the officers was of paramount importance to all involved - and in being so focused on this aspect the management of the SDS, of the MPS Special Branch and ultimately the MPS Executive Leadership of the day collectively failed. They failed in respect of keeping abreast of changes in practice and legislation, in considering the clear risks of