

Impact statement of [redacted] wife of HN349 [redacted]

I wish to express my feelings as a result of my husband becoming involved in the Undercover Policing Inquiry.

My husband and I are both over 70 years of age and have been married *for many years* [redacted]  
When I first met him, my husband was a police officer in the Metropolitan Police.

After we were married he applied for and joined the Special Branch. I was not privy to what the Special Branch did in those days and never asked, because my husband said it was all to do with the Official Secrets Act and he couldn't talk about his work. After a while he told me he had been asked to join an undercover unit of the Special Branch; the work meant he would have to grow his hair long and work odd hours and behave as if he was not a policeman. He again stressed that he couldn't talk about what he would be doing but that it could involve some element of risk. However, he wanted to do it and I went along with it, never asking about the work, merely accepting that he was doing his duty.

This posting certainly put a strain on our relationship, not least because we had [redacted] and I was left to fend for myself and the baby most of the time. What little time my husband did spend at home was spent sleeping. It is now apparent that I was suffering *sets out medical condition* [redacted]

[redacted] Ultimately my husband came off the undercover work and returned to ordinary Special Branch duties, whatever they may have been. However, the long hours and secrecy aspect of his work added to the strain in our relationship and eventually we moved *out of London* [redacted] in the hope of improving our relationship and making a better life for the family.

It was not long before he was asked to *do another role* [redacted] and [redacted] was once more working long hours, with little time at home for me and the children [redacted]. Again the secrecy kicked in and I was left wondering and worrying about him, especially as he was often out alone late at night travelling all over the [redacted]. The long hours and solitary nature of his job at that time- permanently on call for months with no day off- took their toll and resulted in his being off work for two months. *Sets out impact on HN349 and family.* [redacted]

I continued to struggle *with my health* [redacted] for a number of years but kept the faith. I still never enquired about his work and understood the 'Need to Know' principle which he had told me about years previously. *Sets out of later career* [redacted]

[redacted] He at last retired from the police in [redacted]

As time went on we were able put distance between his life in the police and Special Branch in particular and rebuild our relationship in a spirit of openness and harmony.

All was going well until a few years ago when the Inquiry into undercover policing began. It

was then what I discovered that the SDS was. At first my husband was confident it would not affect him, but as the inquiry progressed it was decided that all undercover officers should be investigated. This was a shock to us both and has had an adverse effect on our feelings of well-being and added a great amount of stress and anxiety to our lives. It is ever-present now, despite my husband putting on a brave face it does affect him and if I am honest me as well. We should not be dealing with this at our time of life.

We have both always been loyal to the Police Service; as far as I know my husband never indulged in the activities that seem to have occurred with some later undercover officers, like forming relationships with women and fathering children by them. He has assured me he never did any of those things and never used a dead child's identity for his own undercover name. This aspect has caused some anxiety, because in respect of sexual relationships, how can one ever be sure? I trust my husband, but as he says, it must have caused a flicker of doubt in my mind when this sort of behaviour was exposed.

My husband has always assumed his activities as an undercover officer were never to be exposed and yet here we are with the possibility that they might be. I am angry about this betrayal by the police and it leaves me feeling physically sick, stressed and nervous with all the problems we had all those years ago looming up again, in the autumn of our lives. It is not fair.

I have always accepted the Official Secrets Act played an important part in our lives and I have always taken it at face value and observed it myself.

There were many disadvantages when serving which impinged on our family life and relationships and we don't want to start having problems again, now that time is at last hopefully resolving a lot of issues within the family. My life has been dictated by my husband's work, leading to marriage and health problems in the early years- I just knuckled down and took the lot on the chin.

Above all I am concerned *sets out particular concern* [REDACTED] with my husband being identified as an undercover officer, what effect it will have, not only on us and our friends and acquaintances, but particularly on our immediate family. The thought of journalists pestering family and friends to dig the dirt on my husband fills me with horror.

I am also concerned for my husband's mental welfare- whatever he says it is weighing heavily on his mind.

Signed: *HN349's wife's signature and name*

Date: 3 – 2 - 2018