

COVER SHEET

IN THE MATTER OF THE PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO UNDERCOVER POLICING

I, Joan Hillier, c/o Designated Lawyers, PO Box 73779, London, WC1A 9NL, WILL SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1. This witness statement is made in response to a Rule 9 request dated 26 September 2018. It provides my full recollection of my work within the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).
2. I am known in this Public Inquiry by the nominal HN328. There is currently no Restriction Order in force in respect of my Real Name. When I was working on the SDS my rank was Detective Constable, and when I retired/left the MPS it was the same.

Personal details

3. My full name is Joan Florence Hillier and my date of birth is the 5 in the 1930s.

Police career before and after serving with the Special Demonstration Squad

4. I have been referred to a document MPS-0722817 pg. 2-3 and can see I joined the MPS on 17 November 1958 and Special Branch on 18 March 1968. I

became a WDC when I joined Special Branch. I think I joined B-squad initially and from there I joined the SDS from day 1 of its setup, which with reference to a document MPS 0724119 pg. 3-9, was the 31 July 1968.

5. I don't remember doing any undercover work using a cover identity prior to joining the SDS. I joined Special Branch in March 1968, the day after the Grosvenor Square demonstration. At that time I was still learning the ropes. I may have attended the odd public meeting whilst on B-Squad. I don't really think I was undercover when on the SDS, I don't think any of the women were.
6. The work I did prior to joining the SDS and the work on the SDS didn't really differ, it was just another squad in Special Branch. I have been referred to two documents with the references MPS-0732692 and MPS-0732693 these are public meetings I attended before joining the SDS. Such meetings may have been advertised in magazines such as 'Tribune' or their dates might have been ascertained from leaflets or from the attendance of other Special Branch officers at prior meetings. Sometimes you wouldn't know how Special Branch had ascertained those details. I note one of the meeting reports indicates I attended a meeting alone, this is in contrast to the work I did on the SDS where I don't think I ever attended a meeting alone. I think I was always accompanied, on the couple of meetings I attended on the SDS, by Helen Crampton, who was a Sergeant. I don't know why this was, perhaps because I was new to Special Branch. The first of those documents notes I attended a public meeting with a Sergeant, this would probably have been to show me the ropes about what you did at such meetings, such as trying to make a note of the names of people who attended. The second meeting I seem to have attended on my own. You would go to a meeting, try to recall who attended and

what was discussed, you'd pick up publications which might be available, find out the details of future meetings and pass them on.

7. We would regularly attend public meetings as part of our duties as Special Branch officers; at the meetings we would dress down in order to blend in and wouldn't have given any real names.

Special Demonstration Squad – Formation

8. I believe the SDS was set up to try and infiltrate groups so as to better understand what would happen at the planned demonstration in London in October 1968. The police wanted to ensure there was no repeat of the problems that occurred at the March 1968 demonstration. I recall I joined Special Branch the day after that March demonstration; the newspapers at the time were asking how this public disorder could have happened and the police and Special Branch were very concerned as the demonstration had appeared 'touch and go' with the American Embassy nearly being breached.
9. I don't know who set up the SDS, but I was given to understand it was the Home Secretary, not that he said "lets form 'the hairies'", as we called the SDS, but that he put pressure on the police to come up with a solution to stop what happened in March 1968 happening again. Special Branch officers would regularly attend public meetings of such groups. The difference was that SDS officers would go beyond just attending the public meetings, they would try and 'get in' with the organisers and try to get invited to the private meetings of the groups.

Selection for the Special Demonstration Squad

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
10. I recall Conrad Dixon held a meeting with a big group of about 20 people, of which I was one. I recall him asking at the meeting for ideas about what we should do. There were several such meetings from which eventually the idea came up that officers would attend some of the meetings of the groups involved in these demonstrations and grow their hair so as to fit in with the other attendees. I don't know why I was selected to be at that meeting, I suspect they just went down a list, there was no selection; we were just told to go to a room.
11. I don't think I really had a choice about joining the SDS, I was told to attend the meeting and there would have been no reason not to do so, that was it. In Special Branch at that time you didn't know what you might be asked to do from one day to the next, you were allocated your duties for the next day at about 4-5pm and you tried to complete them the following day, this was no different. The only difference on the SDS was that you were taken off that duty rota and marked as unavailable for those ordinary duties.
12. I joined the SDS on day 1 of its creation, I remember one of the first tasks I and Helen Crampton were asked to complete was to obtain premises away from Scotland Yard. I believe this was in ^{11A} [REDACTED] West London. I don't recall any SDS managers talking to me before or after joining the SDS about what the work would entail. I wasn't married, and wasn't in a stable relationship at the time of joining the SDS.

Role, training and guidance in the Special Demonstration Squad

13. I don't really remember what the role I was given was, I recall we, Helen Crampton and I, would go to the odd meeting, these were public meetings with the Notting Hill Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC). But I don't think we went

undercover. After October 1968 I stayed on in the SDS but I was only involved in office activities, I think this was largely as a go between for the Yard and the other office. For example, an undercover officer might want a particular file or report and I would obtain it and bring it to the relevant officer. As CID officers the undercover officers would also have to fill out a CID diary (which recorded their duties that day and expenses) and again I would often have to go and collect that document so it could be filled out by the officers at the address they were based at. In this second period I was always on duty in one of the offices. I was always in civilian clothes, but this was because all Special Branch officers were. I don't recall pretending to be a member of the VSC, I would have attended a couple of public meetings alongside a lot of other people who may not have been members. I didn't form any relationships with supporters of the VSC. If I'd been asked my name at one of these meetings, I probably would have made one up on the spot but I don't recall any that I used. The difference between the work I did and that of my male colleagues, with respect to these kind of activities, was that my male colleagues would have also attended the private meetings of those groups.

14. I have been referred to a document with the reference number MPS-0724119 pg. 3-9 I don't understand that my role was ever like the 'uncommitted officer' that is described therein. The description in that document is news to me and I wasn't aware of any of my colleague's male or female undertaking a similar role.

15. There was no training for the role. On joining Special Branch I attended a couple of public meetings with someone else and you just learnt as you went along.

There were no tools or training or materials to assist you. We were all police officers; we used our police experience and our common sense.

16. I was never made aware of the document reference MPS-0727104 pg. 2-3 to my recollection, but there were discussions in those early meetings of the SDS about not being an Agent Provocateur, but I can't recall who told me that, probably Conrad Dixon or one of the senior officers, it was a general discussion. It was also a part of the general knowledge of a police officer in Special Branch, I don't think I needed to be made aware of the document; I don't think it really applied to me, in any case I think what it says is pretty much common sense to anyone in the police.

17. We weren't given any advice, guidance or instruction on how far it was acceptable for undercover officers to become involved in the private lives of those they interacted with whilst undercover. Likewise, there was no advice, guidance or instruction on entering into sexual relationships, the participation in criminal activity, provoking or encouraging criminal activity (aside from what I mention above), what to do when arrested, what to do if you were brought before a court as an undercover officer, what to do if an undercover obtained legally privileged information or any other ethical or legal limitations. To be honest, I don't think we really needed it, we were all experienced police officers and knew what we should and shouldn't be doing.

18. We did not have any training on race equality either prior to or during my time on the SDS.

Deployment

19. As I mentioned, I only attended a couple of public meetings at the Notting Hill VSC. I have been referred to a document with the reference MPS-0724186 pg.64-67 which I understand was created in the 1990s, the reference to me having a 'field' of Havering VSC is an error, I had no involvement in that group. Having reviewed the documents provided to me by the Inquiry for the purposes of this statement, I don't have any idea if there are documents missing, and there are no specific documents, that I recall, that should have been included. I should also point out that some of the reports that are signed by me are often on behalf of someone else. In those circumstances the person who had obtained that information would have written out a report in rough and asked me to type it up and sign it on their behalf. I don't remember a specific instance of doing that, but I imagine it was part of what I was doing in the office, certainly after October 1968.

20. In the period before October 1968, there wasn't really formal tasking for me, it was far more casual; I would simply be asked by one of the Sergeants or Inspectors, "Joan could you and Helen go and do this or that". I wasn't told how long I'd be on the unit, I wasn't really tasked to do anything, we were just asked to go along to a meeting, just like any meeting on Special Branch or the SDS, I never chose which meetings I would go to. I would have had access to Special Branch files, I may have taken a note of who was at the meeting and then checked to see if that person had a Special Branch record, and if so make a note of their record number and submit it with my report. I don't know why I was asked to go to the Notting Hill VSC; there were a lot of groups, I went where I was asked to. After October 1968 I wasn't tasked to go to any more meetings on the SDS.

Management and Supervision

21. I think Conrad Dixon managed the SDS very well, he knew he was asking a difficult job of people and he let them get on with it. He was always there and available for a discussion and was very approachable, the whole squad was very informal. I think he was trying to get as much information as possible about the what the VSC planned to do on the October 1968 demonstration so that there was no repeat of the disorder that had occurred at the March demonstration. As I understand it, the squad obtained a lot of information and as a result the police were ready for the October demonstration.

22. I have been referred to a document with the reference number MPS-0724119 pg. 3-9, when the squad started Conrad Dixon was in charge, but it was all very friendly, we were all on first name terms. Looking at that document I recall there was a Ray Wilson who I think was on the squad, though I don't think he was a DI at that time. I think DI Wilson might be Ribie Wilson. There wasn't however really a chain of command, there was just the Chief Inspector, Conrad Dixon. After October 1968 however the squad did change and it became a bit more professional with more of a structure in the command. I think the document I have been shown is accurate as to the make-up of the SDS then. The structure outlined at page 6 of that document appears to be broadly correct, but it was less rigid in practice. I think there were probably more Sergeants. I couldn't say who my DI was and whether they were head of 'press and liaison' as is referred to.

23. I think ¹⁶ [REDACTED] HN332 [REDACTED] was a DI but I don't think was my DI.

24. I worked in the SDS administration as did Bill Furner. We did the filing, organised the card systems, post and took phone messages. We were the go-betweens, if any of the officers needed a file we could retrieve it and take it to the office they were based in. We would collect their reports, we may have typed them up and then taken them to the officers for signature.

25. We had an office on the 18th floor of the Yard, we were all a close group and very friendly. I wouldn't really describe my colleagues as managers, it was far less formal than that. I would see those colleagues daily. The managers would have discussions with the officers about which groups to go into, who was at the meetings, whether it was worth going to another's group's meeting; these were generally face to face discussions. I wasn't privy to all such discussions. I assume intelligence reports would have been compiled every week but this would have been done by someone else in the hierarchy. I don't recall any responses to any of the reporting I provided.

26. There weren't any arrangements for monitoring the welfare of members of the SDS, but Conrad Dixon was a nice man and would have been there for anyone to come to him. Indeed it wasn't just Conrad, everyone was willing to assist. I think the system worked, Conrad was respected and he got the best for the officers involved and got the best out of them.

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27. The SDS operated out of New Scotland Yard, there **were also two** **properties in West London** The latter was a bedsit and we only had it a matter of weeks as it wasn't big enough. These weren't safe houses as such, they were offices, I did however sleep there a lot so that the neighbours thought someone lived there.

28. As I explain above I was largely office based, and solely so after October 1968.

I would frequently travel between the offices of the SDS and undertake administrative tasks for the squad. Prior to October 1968 I attended a couple of public meetings of the Notting Hill VSC as I was told to do so.

29. I have been referred to a document with the reference MPS-0722098 pg. 186,

I think Special Branch wanted the names and addresses of people at these meetings so as to obtain as much information about the demonstration in October, they needed to know what these groups were doing. Dates of birth were useful for criminal record checks and addresses were needed so that the police could find the individuals if they needed to. The report would have been sent to Conrad Dixon and where it would go from there was his decision. I doubt I would have had any involvement in the intelligence in that document. I can't recall, but I imagine someone would have gathered that information and asked me to put a report in.

30. I am now being referred to 4 documents MPS-0739188,

MPS-0739187 MPS-0730070 and MPS-0730758 I

would have attended the meetings recorded in those documents alongside Helen Crampton. I attended those meetings to find out what the group was planning and I imagine it was Conrad Dixon who would have asked me to attend. I don't know why I was specifically sent, it may have been just to give me some experience, I was still quite new to Special Branch at that time. Why I was needed in addition to the others, I don't know, again it may have been as an afterthought that I should go along too or possibly to accompany Helen. I accompanied Helen as two women going to a meeting stood out less than a woman attending on her own. Helen's attendance might have been required so

as to save the undercover officer the need of writing up a report themselves. I would have gone and sat and listened, I never said much and would have gone in civilian clothes, I do recall on one occasion I wore a wig and may have worn some old jeans. I remember discussing wearing the wig, the men on the squad had grown beards and grown their hair; to be honest wearing the wig was a little bit of fun. That was different to the meetings I attended on Special Branch, though we probably would have dressed down on attending those public meetings. I can't recall specifically, but had I been asked I may have given a false surname at the meeting, but I can't remember now what it may have been. I probably would've only been asked to give my forename in any event and I probably would've given my real forename. This practice was similar to what we did on Special Branch generally. We used a false name as it was an element of subterfuge, we were there to find information and it was harder to find out about us if we gave a false name. I didn't have many interactions whilst at those meetings, there might have been a general conversation with the person sitting next to you. DC ^{18:} **HN68** and DC ^{19:} **HN331** did attend the meetings in undercover identities and their interactions may have been similar to what I and Helen were doing.

31. After the meeting we'd report back, I think the reports may have been sent to uniform branch somewhere along the line. It was all being gathered for a bigger purpose, the October demonstration, and so all of it would've been passed on. I do remember the comments made by Mr Murray at one of those meetings regarding the use of pen knives, needles, fireworks and pepper for use on the police horses. That information would have been passed on to uniform to forewarn them, though in the end I don't think such tactics were used by the

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

demonstrators. Likewise the reference to arson would've been passed on, but I don't remember any specifics, there was a lot of that sort of thing which would've been passed on.

32. I don't remember witnessing any public disorder whilst I was on the SDS nor did I participate in any.

33. I don't remember witnessing any violence whilst on the SDS and likewise I wasn't involved in any either.

34. I think Special Branch and the Security Services were a part of countering subversive activity. We, as Special Branch officers, were an extension of MI5, were agents for them, carrying out enquiries on their behalf. Presumably when I joined Special Branch someone would have told me this, but I don't now recall who and when.

35. A lot of the people we were reporting on would have had files in MI5 also, hence MI5 were sent copies of our reports, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]. I didn't have any direct contact with the security services myself.

36. I wasn't involved in any legal proceedings whilst on the SDS and I didn't become aware of any legally privileged information.

37. The information which I provided may have been sent to the department dealing with demonstrations, again whether they were or not was a decision made by the Chief Inspector. Those reports would've given the police the foreknowledge of what was planned by the demonstrators so they could better plan their policing of the event.

38. I have no idea how long I was on the SDS, I recall being moved from that squad to A-Squad. We were often swapped in roles, I don't know why, it was just one

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

of those things, you were told one day that you would be moving on. I wasn't debriefed by anyone on leaving.

39. I don't know if any senior managers visited the SDS whilst I was there, I suspect they probably did. After October 1968 everyone was delighted with the work we had done. I don't think we had any visits from any regulatory body and I didn't receive any commendations for the work I did on the SDS.

Deployment of contemporaries

²⁰
40. The name [REDACTED] HN322 [REDACTED] rings a bell but I can't recall much about him.

²¹
41. I remember [REDACTED] HN331 [REDACTED], but I don't know what cover name he used when deployed.

²²
42. I remember [REDACTED] but I don't think he was on the SDS.

²³
43. I recall [REDACTED] HN68 [REDACTED] and he was on the SDS.

44. I recall a man called Ribie Wilson who was on the SDS, I think there was also a Ray Wilson, but I'm not sure of his rank.

45. I recall David Fisher on the SDS, but I don't know what cover name he used.

²⁵
46. I remember [REDACTED] HN332 [REDACTED] on the SDS but again I don't know what cover name he used. I don't recall ever working within him at the same meeting of the VSC.

47. I recall Helen Crampton being on the SDS, but again I don't know what cover name she used.

²⁶
48. I remember [REDACTED] HN294 [REDACTED], but I don't think he was on the SDS, if he was I don't remember what cover name he used.

49. I imagine Conrad Dixon did use a cover name, but I don't know what it was.

²⁷
50. I remember there was another officer called [REDACTED] TN0032 [REDACTED] in Special Branch, but I don't know if he was on the SDS.

51. To my knowledge none of my contemporaries committed a criminal offence whilst undercover, or provoked or encouraged someone else to. Likewise I'm not aware of any of them being engaged in sexual activity with others in their cover identity. I am not aware of any of them being arrested charged, tried or convicted in their undercover identities. I don't recall any of my contemporaries being involved in incidents of public disorder, violence or any other criminal activities. I don't recall any of them reporting legally privileged information. I don't recall any of my contemporaries reporting on the activities of any elected politicians.

52. I don't recall any other members of the SDS squad who served with me.

Post deployment

53. After working on the SDS I stayed in Special Branch until I left the Metropolitan Police in 1984 at the rank of DC. I worked on A-Squad on administration, I worked on E-squad and on the vetting squad on A-squad. These were all based at New Scotland Yard. I don't believe my postings subsequent to the SDS were impacted at all by my work on the SDS, I do think in general on exiting the SDS managers did try to put officers on a squad that wasn't publicly facing, so that you'd be forgotten.

54. I don't think I used any SDS intelligence in my subsequent roles.

55. I retired from the Metropolitan Police on a pension, I am now retired.

Any other matters

56. There are no other matters I want to raise of relevance to the Inquiry.

Request for documents

57. I don't have any other documents or other information relevant to the Inquiry. Nor has my memory been refreshed by any document not in my witness bundle.

Diversity

58. I am female and I would describe myself as White British.

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed: Joan Hillier 28

Dated: 04.11.2018