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Witness: First Witness Statement of John Cracknell

Exhibits Referred to: JC/1

Date Statement Made: 12 October 2022

UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

Witness: John Hamilton Cracknell

Occupation: Retired Deputy Assistant Commissioner

Address: c/o Metropolitan Police Service, Directorate of Legal Services, Cobalt Square, 1 South Lambeth Road, London, SW8 1SU

1. I have been asked to provide a voluntary witness statement to the Commissioner's Lawyers for the purpose of assisting the Undercover Policing Inquiry with matters relating to a department called A8 and my roles in A8 and A District dealing with public order during the Tranche 1 period (1968-1982).
2. In the preparation of this witness statement, I have been shown MPS-0748306, MPS-0748318, MPS-0733126, MPS-0748319 and MPS-0739487. I have not refreshed my memory by looking at any other document.
3. There is no restriction order in place in respect of my real name.

Personal details

4. My full name is John Hamilton Cracknell. My date of birth is 1 1930.



Police career

5. I joined the Metropolitan Police on 3 November 1952.

6. As a Constable in uniform, I was first posted to Camberwell Green police station. I think I was there for about two years. I was then transferred to Peckham and remained there for three years.

7. My Central Record of Service (MPS-0748306) records I was promoted to Sergeant on 4 November 1957, which sounds about right. I was transferred on promotion to W Division and I was based at Lavender Hill police station. I think this posting lasted for about six years.

8. I was then promoted to station Sergeant. My Central Record of Service records this as being on 1 July 1963, which seems accurate. I was transferred to Tooting police station (which was also within W Division) and remained there for about a year. I then attended Bramshill Police College for the A course, which lasted for six months.

9. I returned to Tooting from Bramshill, and about two weeks later I was promoted to Inspector. The date for this promotion is recorded in my Central Record of Service as 12 April 1965, which seems right. I was transferred on promotion to A District, based at Gerald Road police station. I remained there until July 1969, when I was promoted to Chief Inspector.



10. I was transferred on promotion to H District, based at City Road police station. My Central Record of Service records I was promoted to Chief Inspector on 14 July 1969, which seems right. I was at City Road for just over a year before being transferred to Scotland Yard and joining A Department. I was a substantive Chief Inspector when I joined A Department because there was no rank of Superintendent in the Force at that time. I was posted to A8. Whilst on A8, the Superintendent rank returned and so I was promoted in A8. My Central Record of Service gives the promotion date as 4 December 1972, which seems right. My job remained roughly the same as a Chief Inspector and Superintendent. I was then promoted to Chief Superintendent whilst on A8 and, from memory, I was retained in A8 for a short period of around six months because there was no one with sufficient experience at that time to take over from me. I think I was in A Department for roughly five years overall and was in A8 for this whole period. When I first joined A8/A Department, Wilford Gibson was Chief Superintendent. Later he, like me, went out to Division and returned as a Commander.

11. In January 1975, I was posted to Carter Street police station (M District) as Chief Superintendent. I took command of that Division. This lasted for about two years. I was then transferred back to A Department/A8. They were drawing on my previous experience. It was suggested to me by Commander Maybanks that we would train all police officers in public order, which A8 had done once before. I was not prepared to do this all again. By now Wilford Gibson was the Assistant Commissioner A Department and I told him that this suggested public order training was a matter for D department, not for A8. I think I was only back on A8 for about four months; I did not want to be there, and I made that clear. I was



later transferred to C District, based at West End Central police station as the divisional Chief Superintendent – that is to say, deputy to the Commander. I was there for about four months.

12. I was then promoted to Commander. My Central Record of Service shows this as being on 12 September 1977. I was posted to W District, based at Tooting police station. As Commander, I was responsible for policing in Tooting, Battersea, Putney and Wandsworth. After just over one year I was transferred to A District, based at Cannon Row police station. I was there for two years and eight months. Every time there was a major demonstration the Commander had to be there. In one of the years I worked 30 weekends (out of 52). I was becoming tired and I let it be known to Wilford Gibson, the Assistant Commissioner A Department, that I did not want to stay in that role for longer than three years because I did not feel I would be able to do my job as I should. I had regular dealings with A8 whilst I was on A District.

13. I was then transferred as Commander to Z District, based at Croydon police station. At that time I was the only Commander in the Force who had commanded three districts. I was responsible for everything in my district. I did not have a role in public order as such, but if there was public disorder event it was my responsibility. I was at Croydon until my promotion to Deputy Assistant Commissioner.

14. I think I was promoted to Deputy Assistant Commissioner in 1982. Unfortunately, I cannot verify this date from my Central Record of Service as there is a big ink



blob on the copy I have been provided. I was Deputy Assistant Commissioner for 3 Area based at Nottingdale police station in Kensington. I was responsible for policing in the area. I did not have a role in public order as such.

15. I was then transferred to the Royalty and Diplomatic Protection Department, as it was then called. My Central Record of Service records a transfer to "RDPD" on 11 March 1985. I remained in this role until I retired on 26 October 1990, after nearly 38 years' service. This was unusual: as Commander, I would normally have been required to retire at the age of 57, but because of the specialist appointment to Her Majesty the Queen I was given an extension and retired ■

at a later date

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Role and responsibilities in A8

16. When I first joined A Department, and A8, I was a substantive Chief Inspector. At that time we were experiencing an enormous number of political demonstrations in London. My primary role was to select divisions to supply aid to the central area and compile operation orders for these demonstrations. In order that we in A8 maintained our operational experience we took command of demonstrations. I cannot now remember specific demonstrations that I attended in this period – there were so many. Demonstrations would have been happening weekly and I would have been involved every time. I attended the weekly briefings at Scotland Yard and would contribute, and communicated with Special Branch. As Chief Superintendent I remained involved in operational matters and also had an additional responsibility for training police officers in public order. At that time this training was carried out by A8.



17. When I returned to A8 as Chief Superintendent for about four months, my work was substantively the same as before. I was involved in operations but refused to take on the second round of training officers in public order.
18. When I was Commander A District based at Cannon Row I had regular dealings with A8. Because I had been a member of A8 in a lower rank I knew exactly how it functioned. A8 functioned in much the same way as it had done when I was a member of it. It ran like a Swiss watch.

A8 generally

19. A8 was responsible for organising the policing for large scale events in London. When there were big demonstrations, A8 would get in touch with divisions to bring in officers from across London, deal with the catering arrangements, inform hospitals of the event in case of large-scale injuries, arrange for the attendance of first aid personnel, inform the mounted branch in case they were needed. Everything would be set out in the operation order. At the time I was in A8, they were also responsible for training the Force in the control of large-scale demonstrations, but this was a temporary arrangement and something which was normally performed by D Department (training). I believe A8 only carried out the first round of training which took place during my first period as a Chief Superintendent in A8.
20. I think A8 was born from the Vietnam demonstrations in Grosvenor Square in the late 1960s. To my knowledge, it did not exist prior to those demonstrations. I



cannot be specific as to the year in which it was created. A8 was a small department under command of a Deputy Assistant Commissioner. At that time there was a rising wave of public disorder which mainly affected central London, and A8 was required to respond to this threat. A8 grew in importance, and its role in the Force became more important. Around the time of the Vietnam demonstrations, John Gerrard, then Commander C District, was brought into Scotland Yard on promotion and put in charge of A Department but his main focus of attention was A8. He was the person in central London with knowledge. At this time there were 24 divisions in the Metropolitan Police District, each of which was looking after local policing. When events got too big, help was required – hence the need for A8. There was then no other mechanism available to gather sufficient policemen to police these large demonstrations.

21. When I first joined A8, I think there were eight to 10 people in it. It comprised a Chief Superintendent who was in charge of the department, a Superintendent, an Inspector who was the office manager, a Sergeant, and about six Constables who would type up the operation orders. A8 was always around this size.

22. A8's work was like a weekly treadmill. On about a Tuesday, information would start coming in from Special Branch and/or the local division (which could include the Ceremonial Office at Cannon Row police station) about the demonstration or event taking place on the Sunday. From Tuesday, staff on A8 would start putting together a draft operation order and by Friday it would be complete, published and sent out to Commanders of the districts who were providing officers for the operation. Senior officers would attend Scotland Yard on the Friday to be briefed.

[REDACTED]

Saturday was a 'no' day when we waited for the next day, and Sunday was the 'big day'. On the Monday, the day after the demonstration, we prepared a report for the Home Office. The process I have described here and which I set out in more detail below was the same throughout my time in A8. We aimed to be a very efficient branch.

Information provided to A8 by Special Branch prior to demonstrations

23. A8 received information from Special Branch about upcoming demonstrations or events in the form of a report which was an assessment of what may occur. The reports dated 26 March 1980 and 23 April 1980 concerning the demonstration organised by the Friends of Blair Peach Committee due to take place on 27 April 1980 (MPS-0733126 pp.6-8, 29-30) are examples of this. We called them 'Special Branch reports' or 'assessments'. Special Branch acquired information from a "delicate source", whatever that was. I did not know what it was; I thought, in some cases, it was telephone intercept but Special Branch did not tell me that. Generally the initial information provided by Special Branch would not be that specific – the organisers themselves did not know how many people would turn up. However, their information would become more specific by the time we had the final operation order.

24. Special Branch only provided us with information about political events. They would not inform us about Her Majesty the Queen or the Royal Family, and they would only tell us about events involving Downing Street if they knew there was something in the wind.



25. The report dated 26 March 1980 concerning the demonstration organised by the Friends of Blair Peach Committee due to take place on 27 April 1980 (MPS-0733126 pp.6-8) is typical of the kind of information we would receive from Special Branch. However, it would be abnormal for us to receive this kind of information a month before a demonstration. We would not plan our policing response this far in advance. I recognise the name of the officer who wrote the report. He might appear to be a low-ranking officer, but he would be the person who had this information and so he would write the report. The first sentence of paragraph 12 ("There are at present no known intentions on the part of any of the organisations likely to take part for a violent confrontation with police") is Special Branch being careful. The report dated 23 April 1980 concerning the same demonstration (MPS-0733126 pp.29-30) is also typical of the information we would receive from Special Branch. It is an incredibly detailed report. I note paragraph 1 states it is further to the report of 26 March 1980 (pp.6-8) and that the minute sheet describes this as the "final assessment of the Friends of Blair Peach Committee demonstration due this coming Sunday" (p.2). It did happen that we received more than one Special Branch assessment because they might get more information, but I would not say it happened often.

26. The Special Branch reports/assessments were both specifically requested by A8 and would also come to us as a matter of course. We only sought Special Branch information if it was necessary. If you knew the demonstration in question would be peaceful, for example because it by agricultural farmers, then there was no need to request information from Special Branch. If you knew something would be happening and information was required, you would call your contact in



Special Branch and ask for information about it. Such requests were made both by telephone and in writing, but I think primarily by telephone because it was quicker. If an officer of a senior rank asked for an assessment, you would make a note of this and request it of the person in Special Branch: it was considered very important. The letter of 27 March 1980 (MPS-0733126 p.14) is typical of how the Special Branch reports/assessments would arrive with us in A8. Getting the information was often difficult because it was marked secret. As soon as it landed on my desk, I would have to lock it a way and no one else would see it.

27. There would be times when, as a Chief Inspector, I picked up the telephone to someone in Special Branch and asked if they had more information about someone or something or, for example, if it sounded about right to have 20 serials out in five groups for a particular demonstration. We could not hold fire with the printing and production of an operation order: we had to let divisions know in sufficient time how many officers were needed because if their leave was cancelled with less than 8 days' notice they would be paid overtime; we also had to brief for the operation. I would telephone to Chief Superintendent rank in Special Branch. You would speak to different people in Special Branch about different interest groups – if it was an Irish issue you dealt with one person, if it was a left-wing issue it would be another person. Special Branch was so confidential/secret that officers within it did not know what each other was doing.

28. I have been referred to a report dated 23 March 1971 (MPS-0739487 pp.2-3) and the accompanying minute (MPS-0739487 p.1) which states “The items marked at ‘A’ and ‘B’ were discussed by D/I TN0038 ² with C/I Cracknell of A.8. who



undertook to inform the Commander 'N' Division on a 'need to know' basis." I would discuss information with a Special Branch officer, as and when needed. It was quite normal for me to discuss any information that was relevant, on a need to know basis, to the local Commander as suggested by the minute. This is why you had difficulty getting out of A Department once you were in it. The person doing this role was important; local officers and Special Branch knew who to talk to, and you were a reliable and trusted colleague. No one else in the Force doing this work and you became a valuable asset. When I was promoted to Chief Superintendent I should have been transferred to division, but there was no one with sufficient experience to take over and they had to authorise me to be retained as an over-ranked officer.

29. I have been shown minute 2 dated 27 March 1980 (MPS-0733126 p.1) which says in respect of the report dated 26 March 1980, "the assessment was compiled at the specific request of the Home Office" but "as the report has been done it is suggested that a copy also be sent to Commander A.8.". I was not aware of Special Branch producing assessments for the Home Office as well as for A8. However, this does not surprise me in the slightest.

30. If Special Branch gave us information about something that would happen, we would respond to it. For example, if they told us there would be violence, we would ensure we had sufficient reserves on the day and that officers deployed would be briefed about it. At the briefing, we would say – based on the information we received from Special Branch – that such and such is going to happen and we are not pretending. I think the British public should be pleased that we took



the information we received very seriously. Generally Special Branch information was accurate. The intention was to give us information on which we could act. If it was not accurate because, for example, particular groups did not attend or respond as expected then that was that. If we did not have this information from Special Branch, we would have been blind men. The general opinion within A8, which I shared, was that Special Branch reports/assessments were vital.

Other information provided to A8 prior to demonstrations

31. A8 also received information from the local division where the demonstration would be taking place, and from the organisers of the demonstration. Information from the organisers came to A8 via the local division: the organisers would go the police station in the local division to inform them about the demonstration and that information would be passed to A8. We did not want the organisers coming direct to us in A8.

32. The Ceremonial Office at Cannon Row would usually provide us with information about a central London demonstration. Cannon Row was an unusual division because they were responsible for the central area which covered Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Downing Street, Trafalgar Square and Buckingham Palace – at one end was the Prime Minister, often attracting protest, and at the other end was the sovereign. If there was to be a demonstration by Parliament or Downing Street, for example, the organisers would go to Cannon Row police station to inform them about it and the Ceremonial Office would pass that information to A8.



33. The press department would also gather and put into circulation reports affecting policing. If there was something which affected A8, it would be marked for our attention.

34. To my knowledge, the Security Service did not speak to us in A8; they would go to Special Branch. We would not be told if the information we received from Special Branch had come from the Security Service. We did not need to know.

Operation order

35. MPS-0728381 is the front page of an operation order. MPS-0748318 appears to be a full operation order. The latter records that I was in charge of the central London reserve for that event (p.2). You can tell from the number of officers listed on page 3 – nearly 60 Chief Superintendents and over 7,000 Constables – that this was a huge event and operation. This was only for public order: the operation order records that these numbers “do not include officers employed on football on Districts” (p.3).

36. The operation order had a set format which would be agreed upon by us in A8. The document would be put together by the junior officers in A8 and then taken to the man in charge who signed it. We would then send it to the printers and distribute it. If I was called in as aid for an event or demonstration, I would receive an operation order like those I have referred to.



Pre-demonstration briefings

37. As I have said above, there would usually be a briefing on the Friday before a demonstration on the Sunday. It took place in a briefing room at Scotland Yard. I would always attend. I often led these briefings for A8, probably more so when I was Chief Superintendent because I was more senior, but I would have contributed as a more junior officer.

38. Briefings were attended by all the senior officers participating in the policing operation on the Sunday; depending on the event, generally it would be officers of the rank of Inspector and above in attendance. If a senior officer was sick or on leave, they would send someone else to the briefing in their place. The officer in charge of the event – either a Commander or Deputy Assistant Commissioner, depending on the size of the event – would also be in attendance. A8 would be represented at the briefing by two or three officers. There could also be someone from Special Branch in attendance, but if they had given us all of the information they needed to give us there would be no need for them to attend.

39. At the briefing, you would go through the operation order. The officer in charge of the event would talk through everything that would happen – including refreshments, which was an important matter in those days – and make sure that every eventuality was covered. After the officer in charge had gone through everything, A8 would be asked if there was anything to add: this could be anything including matters as insignificant as where the toilets are or where the buses park. This is where I might contribute as a more junior officer. If there was

[REDACTED]

new information from Special Branch which we needed, they would provide this orally at the briefing and add to the information we had already.

A8 report to the Home Office

40. On the day after the demonstration or event, the Monday, A8 wrote a report for the Commander which then went to the Home Office by 4pm that same day. Sometimes the report would be dictated to the secretary of the Deputy Assistant Commissioner A Department, who was a shorthand typist, in the office off the operations room immediately after the event finished. The Home Secretary would usually inform Parliament about what had happened and this would be based on the report we provided. Every event had to have a report. It would be drafted by the Chief Inspector or Superintendent in A8 and the Chief Superintendent would check they agreed with it. Sometimes the Chief Superintendent would cross out a paragraph and ask you to re-write it. I wrote some, but not all, of these reports to the Home Office when I was Chief Inspector and Superintendent on A8.

41. These reports had the appearance of a normal report and were typed up on sheets of A4 paper. The content of the report was almost like a newspaper article which set out what happened: where the demonstrators came from, how they were met with police, whether it was a happy day with the sun shining or whether there was violence. The report was a distillation of all of the information available. It was written based on knowledge of the day having been there, information which came into A8, and information which came from other sources such as from Special Branch. At the end of the demonstration or event, the Inspector in charge of a serial would hand a proforma to the Superintendent which contained



information about what happened under his watch, for example if someone was injured or arrested. This information would also make its way into the Home Office report. We would include in the report to the Home Office all the information we had. If information was unconfirmed, we would say so.

42. I remember taking a report over to the Home Office by hand to give it to them because they wanted it yesterday. However, I was not aware of what specifically happened to the report after it went to them. I do not remember us getting feedback from the Home Office on the report, but it could have happened. If the report did not cover something they were looking for, the Home Office would ask.

43. These reports were written as a matter of course rather than specifically requested. They were written to the Home Office. I do not know whether they went to anyone else such as Special Branch. A8 did not send any other reports to the Home Office.

Knowledge of the Special Demonstration Squad

44. I was not aware of the existence of the Special Demonstration Squad. I do not suppose the majority of Special Branch was aware of it either.


45. I was not aware of any information coming from undercover officers to A8.

Role and responsibilities in A District

46. When I was Commander A District based at Cannon Row my role was to command the district and ensure that public order was maintained, and in so



doing to maintain a close liaison with Parliament, the Prime Minister's Office, Department of Environment who had to be told about the use of Trafalgar Square and Westminster Abbey.

47. The Ceremonial Office was based at Cannon Row and so came under my command. It gathered information about events and demonstrations in A District. ⁴
 was the Sergeant in charge of the Ceremonial Office. He was under-ranked and should have been an Inspector. He was the person with the most knowledge. The Ceremonial Office was the only organisation of its kind that existed within the Force. It was based at Cannon Row because the main events and demonstrations affected central London. The Chief Superintendent at Cannon Row could not do the work the Ceremonial Office did because it would have been too much in terms of workload beyond his normal divisional duties.
48. As Commander A District I dealt with A8 on a regular basis. A8 relied on information coming to them from local divisions about an event or events and they would be on the telephone with local divisions multiple times a day to update information. A District was one such division. Information concerning central London would come into A District. Occasionally it would go to D District, who were responsible for the area just outside Speaker's Corner. The information would land on my desk and would go to A8 in my name if it was not given over by me personally.
49. The Ceremonial Office would find out about events or demonstrations from the organisers and met with organisers to gather information about the event or



demonstration. I was seldom involved in these meetings; it would usually be ⁵ and often someone would sit in with him. These meetings were a very good mechanism for gathering information. The quality of the information drawn together was reflected in the information provided by the division to A8 and the way the event was finally policed. The Ceremonial Office might also find out about an event or demonstration from the press, for example the Morning Star which proudly printed information about upcoming events and demonstrations to get left-wing support.

50. If, having become aware of an upcoming event or demonstration, Commander A District needed assistance to police it, A8 would agree this with the Commander. Of the three police stations within A District – Cannon Row, Rochester Road and Gerald Road – Gerald Road had the least manpower. We had to leave officers available to patrol the streets and so could not put every officer on a demonstration. For an event in A District the commander on the day would generally be me. It could be a higher-ranking officer, but the Deputy Assistant Commissioner would not come in to command something which was a small event. There would probably be a meeting between Commander A District (me), Commander A8 and the Deputy Assistant Commissioner about how to police the event. Input from the district Commander was more important than Commander A8; the latter was an important administrator, but if the flack hit the fan on the day it was the district Commander as commander on the ground who had to take responsibility. If I said a certain number of serials were required to police the event, that is what happened. A8 did not generally argue when we said what was needed; they were not in a position to do so. If the demonstration was on Sunday,

[REDACTED]

this meeting would take place in about the middle of the week leading up to it – once the event is shaping up and we are getting the feel of the event and so how many people are needed. [REDACTED] ⁶ would arrange for me the officers we would supply from A District and A8 would then deal with the rest – they would be the primary movers in terms of bringing in other divisions, printing the operation order and distributing it.

51. I have been shown a form entitled “Proposed Arrangements for Demonstrations and Public Events” which has been completed in respect of the demonstration organised by the Friends of Blair Peach Committee for 27 April 1980 (MPS-0733126 pp.22-25). It is signed by [REDACTED] ⁷ and countersigned by me as Commander A District. I did not oversee A8 at this time. To my knowledge, this kind of proforma was completed by the Ceremonial Office and sent to A8 about an upcoming demonstration. By countersigning it, I would have been confirming the information is correct and that this is the policing arrangement proposed and needed. Completed proformas like this one would have come across my desk frequently. It is likely that [REDACTED] ⁷ put this proforma into his typewriter after any meeting with the organisers of the demonstration and added to it over the next couple of days before sending it to A8.

52. The memorandum entitled “Suggested Manpower for 27.4.80” (MPS-0733126 p.27) might have been prepared by [REDACTED] ⁸ Often I would walk into the Ceremonial Office and talk over these matters with them. The local area would lead on the operation but A8 would assist. The named officers are all from A District – “AD” is Cannon Row. Where no name has been provided next to a given



rank, these officers needed finding by A8. As the Commander in charge, I would have done the briefing for this event and been on the ground on the day. On the day, A8 would assist by manning the operations room. The operations room at Scotland Yard was a separate entity which would be opened for major events as a support service to ensure that anything that could go wrong would be covered.

53. As a general rule, as Commander A District I would not have been expressly aware that information was provided by Special Branch to A8 about an event or demonstration in A District. If the information itself was shared with me and the Ceremonial Office, we would be aware of it. Even if we were not expressly told that particular information came from Special Branch, we could often deduce it was from there. For example, no organiser would come in and say that they are organising a demonstration and it is likely to become violent; if they did, they would find themselves in the charging room.

54. When I was Commander A District, there was one occasion where I personally received Special Branch information before an event. It was very unusual and only happened this once. Because of my experience at Speaker's Corner, I was asked to take charge of an assembly of about 150 people assembling at Speakers Corner and marching down Oxford Street. As I was leaving my office a Special Branch officer came in and gave me a piece of paper which said the demonstration would be attacked. When I went to Speaker's Corner Special Branch and I were the only ones who knew this. I told my deputy it was going to occur. As we went along Oxford Street we did get physically attacked with violence – it was not just people shouting at us. The value of the information was



that as Commander I was aware of what was going to happen and I was able to tell the Inspectors and Sergeants to keep things tightly under control. We had no reserves.

55. As Commander A District, I felt that A8 was effective in the way it assisted us. You could not manage without a department doing what A8 did – we needed aid from other districts, and you could not police without the operation in writing. The primary source of reliable information for A District was Commander A8. As the local Commander, I would have been unable to police these events or demonstrations without the information provided by A8 about what was likely to happen. It enabled us to plan, organise and implement the operational policing factor.

Case study events

56. When I was at Gerald Road police station I was plucked to go to C District for two of the three large demonstrations at Grosvenor Square concerning the Vietnam War. I think it was the last two of the three demonstrations, but I cannot be sure. One of the demonstrations went off peacefully and the other did not. I think the latter demonstration was in March 1968 because I have a framed photograph of me in Grosvenor Square, in uniform, at that demonstration which appeared in the paper. I exhibit the photograph as JC/1 (MPS- 0748339). I am the officer in the peaked cap, next to the constable who is moving forward in the photograph. The back of the frame has a label on it with the date March 1968, but I do not know who put it there. It is not my writing. I was at that demonstration as an Inspector in charge of serials. There were sufficient police officers – several hundred – to



police Grosvenor Square immediately outside of the Embassy but we were inundated with hundreds of demonstrators who began to physically attack the police with weapons. Officers were very much in fear of their safety and we only just managed to control it. Anyone with any rank on their shoulder was very aware and conscious that the American Embassy had to be defended. I later learned that there were US marines in the Embassy who were armed and I was told they would have defended the Embassy with weapons if the protestors had made it inside. We would have received briefings from A8 for the demonstrations but I do not remember it. At the time I was not aware where A8 got their information from, but it is fair to say now that it would have been from Special Branch.

57. I remember attending the demonstrations in Red Lion Square on 15 June 1974 at which Kevin Gately died. I was a Chief Superintendent in charge of eight reserve serials on coaches parked in Bedford Square. Eventually I gave orders for all of them to be debussed which was unusual; usually it would be done in dribs and drabs, but we needed all of them. Again, at the time I was not aware where A8 got their information from but it is fair to say now that it would have been from Special Branch. I would have been given an A8 briefing before the demonstration but I do not remember it. I would not have been told in the briefing that certain information was from Special Branch; I would simply have been told what to do.

58. The Battle of Wood Green on 23 April 1977 does not ring a bell.



59. The Battle of Lewisham on 13 August 1977 does not ring a bell either and to my knowledge I was not there.

60. I have an idea that I went to Southall, but I am not sure that I was involved in the riots on 23 April 1979.

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

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Signed:

JH Cracknell

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Dated:

12.10.2022