



Closing Report – Operation Conifer

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SUITABLE FOR PUBLICATION SCHEME	No	DATE CREATED	14/02/2019
IOPC REFERENCE	DPA	CRIS REFERENCE	DPA
TITLE AND VERSION	Closing Report for Op Conifer Op Winter Key Professional Standards Team Investigation		
MODE OF INVESTIGATION	Managed		
INVESTIGATION TYPE	Conduct Matter		
APPOINTED INVESTIGATOR <small>REG 24 POLICE (COMPLAINTS AND MISCONDUCT) REGULATIONS 2012</small>	DS Michael Stonehouse		
CASE OFFICER	Civilian Investigator Christopher Lemon		
IOPC OFFICE AND LEAD INVESTIGATOR	Alan WRIGHT		
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Introduction

1. On 8th January 2018, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) became the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). I have referred to this body as the IOPC within this report.
2. In April 2015, officers from Operation Fairbank met with retired police officer, Bryan COLLINS, a former Sergeant with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Mr. COLLINS sought to pass on information that he believed was evidence of corruption by police officers during the late 1970s and early 1980s.
3. Mr. COLLINS relayed information concerning an investigation conducted by him whilst he was attached to the Obscene Publications Squad (OPS) which he joined in the 1970s.



4. Mr. COLLINS recalls visiting a young male in Feltham Youth Offenders Institute (FYOI - FELTHAM BORSTAL) together with his colleague PC Jim Donnelly. Mr. COLLINS could not describe this male in any further detail but recalled that he had admitted being a 'rent boy' and had been involved in sexual activity with Cyril SMITH MP. Mr. COLLINS also states 'He also spoke of a second MP that he visited, he did not know his name but described him' **DPA**

DPA This person was identified as **WM-F26**
DPA
DPA Both men are now deceased.

5. During the course of the investigation into the allegations made by the youth, Mr. COLLINS conducted police General Registry searches on Cyril SMITH but stated 'We did not find anything of relevance'. Mr. COLLINS also states 'We did not search any files for the other MP'.

6. During the course of this investigation it was established that there was a 'secret file' in existence which related to sexual offences alleged to have been committed by Cyril SMITH MP and **WM-F26** This file has been viewed by Operation Winter Key investigators. It contained details of a C1 investigation into the same allegations made by **Name Redacted** which Mr. COLLINS has referred to. Checks reveal that a Detective Commander and Detective Chief Superintendent both of C1 were in charge of this investigation. Efforts were made to trace the two retired officers through pension's branch. The retired Commander (Cmdr.), who is now 93 years of age, did not reply to a letter sent to him and it was decided not to pursue this line of enquiry. Pension branch had no trace of the Detective Chief Superintendent (DCS) which tends to indicate that person is now deceased. If alive he would be 92 years of age.

7. At a later date Mr. COLLINS alleges that he was called to the office of the Detective Chief Superintendent (DCS) C1. C1 was one section of C Department and known as the Central Office. Its remit included crimes necessitating enquiries on several divisions (areas of the MPS or outside the MPS), enquiries made at the request of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and confidential enquiries relating to crime for government departments. Mr. COLLINS was unable to identify the DCS.

8. The DCS had then allegedly produced a 'Red File' (a file that had been marked 'Secret') that contained a statement from Cyril SMITH MP denying an allegation of abuse against a nine-year-old boy, possibly from **DPA** The boy in this file and the male in FYOI are not believed to be the same individuals, as the male in FYOI was aged mid to late teens at the time of making the allegations to Mr. COLLINS.

9. During the course of the enquiries conducted through Operation Conifer, the identity of the young male described by Mr. COLLINS has been confirmed as being Andre THORNE.

10. It is Mr. COLLINS' opinion that the allegations regarding Cyril SMITH MP were covered up.



Andre THORNE

38. Andre THORNE withdrew his allegations against WM-F26 by a statement to police on 18th May 1976.
39. On 21st May 1976 Andre THORNE provided an affidavit which stated his allegations against Cyril SMITH were lies.
40. On the 23rd of May 1976 Andre THORNE made a public apology in the national press. He admitted in a published Sunday People article⁵ on 23rd May 1976 that he made up the allegations. A copy of the relevant newspaper article in the Sunday People was obtained from the British Library.
41. The article contains an interview with Andre THORNE in which he describes how he lied to both the police and a reporter from The Guardian newspaper about the alleged existence of a film which had included prominent politicians engaged in sex acts with children. It was headline news entitled "*I lied about that blue film.*" It has been confirmed that Andre THORNE is deceased.
42. With regards to Cyril SMITH MP he withdrew his allegations via a statement under caution to police on 28th May 1976. The withdrawal statements and affidavit are contained in the secret file.

Jim DONNELLY

43. On the 19th of August 2016 retired Constable Jim Donnelly was interviewed by officers from Operation Winter Key DPS⁶. Donnelly had worked with Bryan Mr. COLLINS on the OPS. He stated. *'I worked with Bryan COLLINS on quite a few jobs. Our main daily remit was dealing with obscene publications including the printing of it. I have been asked about an allegation of child abuse made by a young boy in Feltham prison at the time when I was on obscene publications. I can categorically state that I never heard nor dealt with an allegation by the young boy against Cyril Smith. I can also state that in all my career in the police force I have never attended Feltham prison. This is the first time that I am hearing of this allegation. I had never even heard any rumors.*

Review of Secret File

44. A review of the secret file and the investigation it refers to was undertaken by Operation Winter Key. The file contained thirty eight statements and forty three other documents including a signed affidavit, signed on 21st May 1976 from Andre THORNE stating he had lied. This investigation was subsequently closed.

⁵ Sunday People 23rd May 1976 news article 'I LIED ABOUT BLUE FILM'

⁶ Jim DONNELLY Statement 19/08/2016



career in the police force I have never attended Feltham prison. This is the first time that I am hearing of this allegation. I had never even heard any rumors.

53. It has been established that there was an investigation into Andre THORNE's allegations. Because of its 'secret' classification, it is unlikely that Mr. COLLINS would have been notified of the outcome. Having reviewed all available documentation, including the affidavit written by Thorne, there is no evidence that it may be considered would support any allegations of misconduct.
54. Because of Andre THORNE's retraction of his allegations C1 closed their investigation as NFA.

Organisational Learning

55. Systems for recording intelligence and information have evolved since the 1970s and digital recording of such information is readily available to all police officers (subject to appropriate security clearance), providing transparency and clarity to intelligence gathering and storage.
56. No specific organisational learning has been identified in this inquiry.

Name: Chris Lemon	Signature:	Date: 14.02.2019
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