

RESTRICTED - INVESTIGATIONS

A further twelve statements were taken between the 19th February 1970 and the 9th March 1970 and the name that features on all but three of these further twelve statements is DCI WHEATER himself. It therefore appears, for whatever reason, that the files were removed from TASKER and COURTNEY but that the investigation was actually continued by senior officer's WHEATER and LEACH. It is possible that WHEATER or LEACH arranged for these two unknown officers to take all the files in order to protect the two Detectives from any pressure or influence from elsewhere in the organisation. It is feasible the two officers 'seizing' the documents in this manner were instructed to ensure that TASKER and COURTNEY were genuinely unaware that any further enquiries were being made and for the documents to make it to the CPS without being 'blocked'. Given the amount of time that has now passed since this event and a lack of evidence, it is not possible to say with any certainty whether this course of action was taken due to prior issues of interference or cover up by senior officers.

The chronology indicates that there is not a single day's delay between COURTNEY'S last statement taken on the 18th February, and WHEATER'S first statement dated the 19th February suggesting this investigation was not delayed at all. On 14th October 2014 DS MAHMOOD and ISO SOUTHWELL visited Jack TASKER at his home address and asked him to run through his recollection of the events of this 'seizure' of the documents. He confirmed that the two officers were unknown to him, as he knew WHEATER and LEACH personally it could not have been them. He confirmed they were wearing plain clothes and introduced themselves as a 'Supt and a Chief Supt from Hutton'. TASKER confirmed they did show their identity cards but he could not recall their names. He estimated this date as being 'late 1969'. TASKER stated that when they were originally tasked with the investigation they were asked to do so in an 'under the radar' manner and he surmised that LEACH and WHEATER may have taken this 'seizure' course of action in order to continue the investigation in a similar manner. He remembers asking WHEATER about the documents being seized, and WHEATER saying words to the effect of 'that's what happened the last time we tried'.

It therefore appears that despite the confusion and rumour surrounding this investigation it progressed uninterrupted in less than two months, from COURTNEY and TASKER being given the investigation in January 1970, to a response being received back from the DPP in March 1970. There are still unanswered questions in this area however, for example TASKER reiterated to DS MAHMOOD that he interviewed SMITH along with COURTNEY