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Operation Cleopatra was set up as a result of complaints made to other police forces of sexual abuse of children who had been in care and whom had also been residents in care homes in Manchester where similar complaints had been made. It was decided that under these circumstances ownership of investigating these offences would be undertaken by Greater Manchester Police. The senior investigating officer when Cleopatra was set up was Detective Supt STELFOX, and I think he also had responsibility for Stockport Division. The team structure at that time was Det Inspector Ann HEWLETT, myself, Det Constable Naraine OLDHAM and indexer Carole WALKER

Some months into the enquiry it was apparent that there was going to be a high volume of work involved and at some point I met with Det Supt STELFOX to discuss some of the emerging issues and potential work load. Mr STELFOX was keen that this enquiry wasn't conducted by using HOLMES system. However it was recognised that this may need to happen.

By 1997 Detective Superintendent Bill ROBERTS was appointed Senior Investigating Officer. Mr ROBERTS was an experienced investigator and had managed protracted and complex cases in the past, including the Strangeways riot enquiry. He was also experienced with the HOLMES system and he implemented its use on Operation Cleopatra. DI Ann HEWLETT remained as Deputy Senior Investigating Officer. There were three Detective Sergeants, with an outside enquiry team consisting of three or four Detective Constables at any one time. I was in charge of one of these teams and DS Louise EVANS and DS Tony GRIFFITHS were in charge of the other team. DS Neil PRUNELL was the HOLMES Office Manager and he ran the HOLMES system. He also had members of staff indexing and researching.

Sometime after 20th March 1998 I had a meeting with the head of Greater Manchester CID, Detective Chief Superintendent Tony KEEGAN who handed me a bundle of documents abstracted from the original enquiry in 1970 by Lancashire Constabulary investigating allegations about Cyril SMITH and sexual assault against boys. As a result of handing me these documents I was instructed to review these documents and consequently I interviewed [REDACTED] at his home address of [REDACTED] Rochdale on 21st October 1998. Then on Thursday 12th November 1998 I interviewed David BARTLETT at [REDACTED] Rochdale. Mr BARTLETT handed me documents, probably copies, of affidavits from alleged victims and documents made as a result of his own enquiries into the activities of Cyril SMITH as he had perceived them. As a result of these interviews I produced my report dated 2nd December 1998. I handed my report, together with the bundle of papers given to me and documents from Mr BARTLETT personally to Detective Chief Superintendent KEEGAN. I have never seen these documents since but kept a copy of my report which I produce as exhibit VH/1. To my knowledge none of these documents were registered on HOLMES. I do not know what the outcome of my report was and I was never told.

Early in 1999 I was instructed by Det Supt ROBERTS to make enquiries as a result of my 1998 report; I do not recall how I was instructed whether it was by an allocated action or verbal command. In March 1999 I interviewed [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. As a result of these interviews and further information I had gained I produced and submitted my report entitled 'Allegations re Cyril SMITH' dated 18/3/99. I personally handed the report with my recommendations to Det Supt ROBERTS.

My report was in order for Mr ROBERTS to review the evidence put forward and make actions as he saw fit. He did tell me that he did not want recommendations on the report, however I felt that I could not submit an accurate and balanced report without my professional recommendations.

My report was handwritten and signed by me and had one last additional paragraph consisting of eleven lines detailing my recommendation despite my instructions. Some days later my report came back to me with a typed copy. This was standard procedure in order that I could proof read the typed copy with my original. Upon examination and subsequent proof reading I noticed that my last paragraph had been marked with scribbled line and that it was omitted from the typed copy. The typed copy was dated 29th March 1999. I signed it and I kept the original handwritten report. I now produce this as exhibit VH/2, I remained on Operation Cleopatra until the end of 1999 when I returned to Stalybridge and then I was posted to Bootle St Police Station until my retirement from the force on 10th October 2001. During my enquiries I met up with Martin DIGAN. He showed me several documents including the Val MELLOR and Phil SHEPHERD reports. I have reported during my meeting with DIGAN that I have submitted copies of these documents with my report. I do not know if DIGAN

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Page 2 of 3

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