

CLEOPATRA however received thousands of allegations some of which constituted the most heinous acts of depravity one could imagine being perpetrated upon defenceless young boys; we had to prioritise the workload based on their severity. The allegations regarding Cyril SMITH fell far short of others we were receiving.

The allegations regarding Cyril SMITH were minor in comparison to what we were dealing with and low on our Priority list. The priority was VICTIM based not OFFENDER based. There were so many allegations to be investigated that we decided that offences contrary to Section 47 and section 20 Offences Against the Person Act would not be pursued unless there were other accompanying factors such as serious indecency allegations. The allegations we received concerning Cyril SMITH would have constituted assaults no more serious than Section 47 assaults.

When I was appointed SIO in charge of Operation CLEOPATRA a police officer I had never met called Mary HOUGH was working with Vince HILL. As stated my policy was that police officers on the enquiry would work jointly with a social worker. As also stated Vince HILL, amongst others, had problems with these arrangements and was vocal on a number of occasions regarding his objections to the system. On each occasion I reiterated that my decision must be adhered to and that the joint investigation system would continue.

I remember that Anne HEWLETT had found out that Vince HILL and Mary HOUGH had either made arrangements to go and see a witness or complainant or had done so and come back without taking their allocated social worker. This was in 1999 and must have been prior to the 14th June, 1999 because I have been informed that was the date Mary HOUGH left the enquiry.

I felt that they had had enough instructions from me that all officers should work closely with their allocated social worker but I took it that they were ignoring my instructions. I felt strongly that the system I had introduced was sound. It appeared to me that these two officers had deliberately conducted their enquiries without their social worker because ~~that~~ how they wanted to work. In view of this I arranged to see them and Mary HOUGH took responsibility for making the arrangements. This disappointed me as I would have expected Vince HILL as the Sergeant and supervisor to take responsibility for what happened.

I then explained to Mary HOUGH that she could either submit a report to leave the enquiry or I would return her to Division myself. Mary HOUGH went away and thought about it and she refused to put in a

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report asking to leave. I actually respected her for that however, I submitted a report and Mary HOUGH was returned to Division.

Mary HOUGH was unfortunate to leave but I had to draw a line under the situation, there had been a number of rumblings within the staff regarding the working arrangements and I had told them on more than one occasion that joint working was the way forward. Mary HOUGH and Vince HILL knew that but they had still gone against my decision and so I was left with no alternative.

I cannot recall sending Mary HOUGH a letter after she left the enquiry although it is something that I could have done. If I had written to her it would have been to wish her well for the future. As I have stated I was very disappointed in Vince HILL for letting Mary HOUGH take the blame and it didn't sit easily with me. If I did send her a letter it would have been via the internal mail and not to her home address, as has apparently been suggested. I do recall where Mary HOUGH returned to but I may have rung my equivalent rank at her Station regarding her.

Initially there wasn't a harmonious working relationship between the police and social workers although I do not recall any specific instances of Mary HOUGH or anyone else being rude to one of the social workers. That being said, the removal of Mary HOUGH from the enquiry was specifically as a result of her actions as stated above.

I have been told that Vince HILL left the enquiry on 24th November 1999. The decision to remove Vince HILL was a really hard decision, I had known Vince since I was 17 and I considered us to be friends, not close, but we had a good working relationship. During my 30 years Police career, 24 years were spent as a Supervisor and in all that time I only had to have strong words with 4 people and 2 of those were on Operation CLEOPATRA. Vince HILL didn't grasp the system and embrace what I was asking, in fact quite the contrary. He was probably the officer who was most vocal regarding his disgruntlement in having to work with a social worker. He continued to submit unnecessarily lengthy reports despite my instructions not to include superfluous information. Eventually, after he submitted a further statement that had numerous pages with inconsequential details I decided to remove him from the operation. I remember that we had a long meeting and it was conducted in the office of the social services supervisor with just Vince HILL and I present.

I cannot remember the full details of our conversation but I told Vince HILL that he would have to return to Division. He looked shocked and I recall him saying at the end of our discussion words to the effect

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that this was ironic as he was just beginning to appreciate that what I was saying was right. I told him that it was too late and he returned to his Division.

I would describe Vince as quite vocal and having a belligerent attitude. I would not have put details in the policy book as to why anyone was leaving the operation as that was a decision on policy although I may have made a pocket book entry.

I do recall that once Vince had left the operation I addressed the staff and I informed them of his return to division. I said that if anyone else wanted to leave then they could. I think Shelagh MATTHEWS got up straight away and left the room. She did ask later to be returned to Division and I spoke with her and her return to Division was facilitated.

During the course of operation CLEOPATRA I had regular meetings with the Assistant Chief Constable Vince SWEENEY and Ian RUSH who was a senior official from Social Services and liaison person to the ten local authorities. We met to discuss policy and how we were progressing with the Operation.

I cannot remember a meeting with Detective Superintendent HUNTBACH and Inspector WALLER on the 23rd February, 2000 when a file was handed to them, ~~that~~ not to say that it did not take place.

I cannot recall ever having any meetings specifically about Knowl View School and Cyril SMITH.

I can state that no person either internally within the Police or externally has ever attempted to exert any pressure on me to either investigate or not to investigate anyone including Cyril SMITH. I would have been appalled had anyone tried to do so and I feel sure that anyone who knows me and who has worked with me would corroborate the fact that I was not a person who would have acceded to such a request / order.

Had there been evidence to investigate and arrest Cyril SMITH then we would have done that. We were, however, dealing with allegations of very serious cases of sexual abuse committed by people who had been and in some cases still were in a position of care and control over vulnerable young children. These had to take priority over the allegations of comparatively minor offences concerning Cyril SMITH.

I have subsequently been informed that, following investigations by officers engaged on Operation CLIFTON, a typed copy of Exhibit VH/2 has been discovered. This however has been found not to have been typed onto the HOLMES system. Five people are named in the report submitted by Vince Hill, which, it has now been discovered, formed an 'advice ~~file~~' that was sent to the CPS. A written advice letter from CPS has also been discovered in response to Vince HILL's submission. The letter is addressed directly to Vince HILL and, as in the case of the original submission, was never processed through the CLEOPATRA system.

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