

Police operations against protest groups extended into Scotland

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The Pitchford Inquiry into undercover police surveillance conducted against protestors during the 2005 G8 summit in Gleneagles, near Perth, may soon be extended to Scotland. The inquiry's remit only covers England and Wales at present.

Scotland's *Herald* newspaper has published exposures of the spying operations in recent weeks, highlighting aspects of the surveillance that were previously undisclosed. The investigative reporting has been published against the backdrop of hearings in Scottish parliament in relation to the use of undercover spies against the demonstrations.

Particular scrutiny has been directed towards the role of Mark Kennedy, one of a small number of police spies whose names are known. Kennedy, an officer in the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU), masqueraded as an environmental activist and protestor from 2003 onward, infiltrating protest groups for years before his cover was blown in 2010.

The NPOIU was set up in 1999 under the Labour government of Tony Blair, as part of efforts by the British government to target left parties, trade unions, environmental activists, anarchists, opponents of controversial construction projects, animal rights activists and "protest activity" in general. In 2011 the NPOIU, along with the National Domestic Extremism Team (NDET) and the National Extremism Tactical Coordination Unit (NETCU) were merged into the National Domestic Extremism and Disorder Intelligence Unit.

The NPOIU has carried out covert operations against opposition groups in England, Wales, and has worked with local police forces to carry out similar operations in Scotland and Northern Ireland, according to a review by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

Kennedy's activities, which are detailed in a 2013 book "Undercover" by *Guardian* journalists Rob Evans and

Paul Lewis, are a case study in the techniques of police spying and entrapment. Known as Mark Stone or "Flash", he appeared in environmental activist and protest circles in 2003. He is suspected to have been replacing another spy, Rod Richardson. As "Flash", Kennedy quickly gained a reputation for having considerable organisational capacities, access to vehicles, technology and lots of money. Initial suspicions of him seem to have been overcome by his willingness to get involved in all the activities of the groups on which he was spying, and by a string of relationships with female activists.

During the Gleneagles G8, Kennedy and the NPOIU focused on harvesting intelligence from the protest groups.

"There was no greater NPOIU priority at the time than gleaning intelligence about how protestors planned to disrupt the meeting of world leaders..." Evans and Lewis note in relation to the G8.

Protests were expected to fall into two camps—a "large moderate coalition of trade unions, charities and campaign groups coalesced under the Make Poverty History banner" and "the more radical contingent of anti-capitalist protestors, of whom Kennedy was a part, mobilising under the name Dissent," Evans and Lewis write.

Kennedy volunteered and was trusted to organise a protest camp near the G8 venue. To this end, he hired numerous vehicles, tents and portable toilets on his credit card, employing the resources of the British state to develop a network of spies within the protests on behalf of the NPOIU.

The Special Demonstrations Squad and German police intelligence also sent a number of agents to the event. British undercover police suspected of attending the G8 events include Lynn Watson, Mark Jacobs and John Dines.

Kennedy may have intercepted press releases on the

event that he considered to undermine the government's narrative, Berlin-based documentary filmmaker Jason Kirkpatrick told the *Herald*.

Kirkpatrick had entered a years-long friendship with Kennedy while working as an activist at the G8 protests, without knowing that his "friend" was in fact a government agent, according to his account.

In addition to his "friendship" with Kennedy, Kirkpatrick told the *Herald* that he "may have been unwittingly targeted to have an intimate relationship by a possible undercover officer 'Khris' from London". 'Khris' disappeared, according to Kirkpatrick "in a manner similar to the 'extraction' process used by known undercover officers."

Police agencies targeting the protests employed a range of other "dirty tricks" according to a friend of Kirkpatrick's, who reported receiving "multiple phone calls... where anonymous callers gave false and misleading information, for example, about riots, flipped over police cars, or US marines being stationed in the forests which were then proven false," while doing press work on the G8 event.

"There is a concern these anonymous calls may have come from police intending to spread lies and false rumours, possibly with intent to discredit our legitimate press work," Kirkpatrick's friend said.

As early as 2011 it emerged that Kennedy's spying was not restricted to Britain. Following his success in organising police-riddled protests in 2005, he appears to have been approved to play a similar role in Rostock, Germany in 2007 for that year's G8 Summit.

German authorities specifically requested Kennedy attend the protests in Heiligendamm, near Rostock, according to statements by Jorg Ziercke, head of the Federal Police in Germany, to the *Guardian*.

Kennedy may have visited Germany on at least five occasions between 2004 and 2008, according to various reports.

The Gleneagles operation was only one component of a continent-wide project between European Union member states to exchange information "regarding Euro-anarchists, militant left extremists and left-wing terrorists," according to Ziercke.

High-level British authorities "ordered and took responsibility for Kennedy's operations in Berlin," according to a letter penned by two members of the German Bundestag, Andrej Hunko and Hans-Christian Stroebele in December.

The German officials said that they had received

evidence that German citizens were targeted illegally by British intelligence.

Kennedy was also active in Ireland. One of those demanding inquiries into the NPOIU in Scotland is Sarah Hampton, who met Kennedy at a radical environmental event in Ireland, where she started a romantic relationship with him.

"By the time I was in Scotland we were having a full-on romance. We both helped set up the demonstration eco-village during the Gleneagles anti-G8 demonstrations," Hampton said.

Harry Halpin, a core participant in the Pitchford inquiry, told the *Herald* he believes he was put on a "domestic extremist watch list" owing to information passed on by Kennedy.

The British spy stayed with Halpin in Edinburgh in 2009 before both travelled to a United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Referring to his interrogation and beating by police, Halpin, a computer scientist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said: "It was terrifying. I could hardly see or walk by the time they had finished with me. I was never given an explanation by the Danish police on why I was targeted, but I think it was because of information passed to them by Mark Kennedy."

There is every reason to believe that similar police operations have been developed in Scotland, despite official disavowals.

A Labour member of the Scottish parliament, Neil Findlay, recently submitted a cross-party motion to Holyrood which noted that "Kennedy was authorised to work in Scotland by senior Scottish officers."

Last week, Scottish Justice Minister Michael Matheson called on the UK Home Office to investigate "activity in Scotland conducted by English and Welsh forces."

Former police spy and spy organiser, Bob Lambert has been forced to resign his lectureship at St Andrew's university following a public outcry.



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