



Police chief leading Operation Herne 'unfit' for role

Billy Briggs · May 30, 2016

The policeman leading an internal investigation into the undercover policing scandal at the Met Police is “unfit” for the role because he once oversaw disgraced police spies who abused their powers, according to a research group.

Mick Creedon, Chief Constable of Derbyshire Police, was appointed to lead Operation Herne in 2013 by Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner.

At the time, Home Secretary Theresa May welcomed the appointment saying there must be independent scrutiny of the review at the Met.

Operation Herne was launched in 2011 after revelations by The Guardian that undercover Met officers operating with a unit called the Special Demonstration Squad used the identities of dead babies.

The review was initially supervised by the Independent Police Complaints Commission and led by a senior Met officer, but May told MPs that a police chief from an outside force would lead the inquiry.

Chief Constable Creedon was chosen because of his lengthy experience as a detective, having joined the police in 1980 at the age of 22 years old. He's been in his present role at Derbyshire Police since 2007.

However, campaigners seeking the truth about the undercover Met Police scandal say he should not have been appointed to lead Operation Herne because of his past links to the disgraced units currently under investigation.

Undercover Research Group (URG) – a project formed to enhance the public's understanding of the scandal while exposing police spies in the public interest – said Creedon is an “insider” and “unfit” to lead Operation Herne.

URG added that it has lost trust in the internal Met investigation.

Donal O'Driscoll of URG, said: “Piecing together the timeline of his career, showed us that Creedon has been overseeing operations of undercover officers targeting protest groups at various points in time.”

Moreover, it completely undermines the trust in the investigation – or what was left of that.”

The abuse of powers by some undercover officers with the Met Police led to the establishment of Operation Herne and

also the Pitchford Inquiry, a public inquiry set up last year to investigate undercover policing in England and Wales since 1968.

Dubbed 'spycops', Met officers infiltrated hundreds of political groups including animal rights organisations, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and environmentalists.

Some undercover police officers tricked women into sexual relationships during covert operations including Mark Kennedy who became the most notorious police spy.

Another called Bob Lambert fathered a child with a woman he was spying on and the Met issued an apology after being sued by several women who said their lives were shattered after being duped.

The Pitchford Inquiry will investigate the policing of domestic extremism and also alleged miscarriages of justice linked to police spies in England and Wales.

But revelations that undercover officers – including Kennedy – also worked north of the border have led to calls for Pitchford to cover Scotland too.


URG's concerns over Chief Constable Creedon and his suitability to lead Operation Herne, an on-going internal Met Police inquiry, centre on his role at Derbyshire Police as a senior officer who was responsible for undercover operations.

In tandem with The Ferret, URG have today published extensive details of Chief Constable Creedon's police career

to date, revealing that he would have been responsible for Met undercover officers, including Mark Kennedy, who operated in Derbyshire.

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Mick Creedon



UNDERCOVER

RESEARCH GROUP

This article is part of the [Undercover Research Portal](#) at PowerBase - investigating corporate and police spying activists.

Part of a series on
 Police Officers
Mick Creedon



Police Units: n/a

Police Forces: [Derbyshire Police](#), [Leicestershire Police](#)

Issues: Undercover Policing: [Operation Herne](#). Child Sex Abuse investigations: Frank Beck

Dates Active: 1980 to present

Michael "Mick" Creedon is the Chief Constable of [Derbyshire Police](#), where he spent a significant proportion of his police career. He performs a number of national roles for the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) (as he did for its predecessor organisation, the [Association of Chief Police Officers](#)). He is most noted for being the nominal head of [Operation Herne](#), the [Metropolitan Police](#) investigation into its Special Branch undercover unit, the [Special](#)

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URG said: “Derbyshire has been the site of numerous campaigns and protests, which as a senior officer Creedon

would have had a role in overseeing. His name is mentioned in media reports about these protests, indicating he had active knowledge of the operations.”

“More importantly, under the Regulation of Investigatory Power Act 2000 (RIPA), responsibility for the management and authorisation of undercover police officers and informants would have fallen to Creedon, who was Assistant Chief Constable Operations for Derbyshire at the time.”

“Many of the protests in Derbyshire and associated campaign groups were infiltrated by undercover police officer Mark Kennedy, based in Nottingham, and to a lesser degree Lynn Watson (based in West Yorkshire).”

In 2006, for example, Kennedy is said to have acted as an agent provocateur at a climate camp, suggesting to activists during discussions on tactics that people should riot.

According to URG, Chief Constable Creedon may have approved and authorised such actions.

URG said: “The idea (rioting) was considered unusual as it was not the sort of protest the individuals present, mostly from the Earth First! network, were engaged in organising. Likewise, it was obvious to them that riots were not events that could be created to order, let alone at short notice, but happened spontaneously due to mass dissatisfaction.”

“At the time, it was put down to naïveté or wishful thinking on Kennedy’s part.”

“Given its unusualness, it was thought by some in hindsight, that Kennedy was acting as an agent provocateur and that he may have been specifically instructed to have the conversation.”

“If this was the situation, it would have needed authorisation from an officer of the appropriate rank, including from Derbyshire police – in this case likely to have been Creedon.”

“In any case, the presence of Kennedy at the private house of a protestor would itself have needed some form of approval from Derbyshire police, if not formally authorised under RIPA.”

URG pointed to further links that Chief Constable Creedon had with undercover units and said his defence of the Met’s policy of *neither confirm nor deny* with regards to questions about undercover officers further compromised his independence.

According to the research group, in a letter of 2013, he stated that in his role as national lead for serious and organised crime, he, along with Jon Murphy and Commander Richard Martin, were, “in effect the policing leads for setting the policy and direction of undercover policing”.

URG’s document says that under Chief Constable Creedon, Operation Herne has so far published three public reports and a confidential one – Covert Identities (July, 2013), Allegations of Peter Francis (March 2014) and Mentions of Sensitive Campaigns (July 2014). The restricted report is called Operation Herne Update (February 2015).

According to URG, Chief Constable Creedon's credibility was questioned after the publication of his 2014 report on Sensitive Campaigns, which was published on the same day as a related review by QC Mark Ellison called the Stephen Lawrence Independent Review.

URG said in its document: "Creedon flatly denied that the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) or the Metropolitan Police had a tactic to infiltrate or report on campaigns for justice, stating: 'In that report I make clear that to date we have found no evidence that any SDS officer targeted or infiltrated any family member of any Justice Campaign, nor the Justice Campaign itself, and we can find no trace of any personal information about family members having been recorded by them'."

"However, Mark Ellison saw things differently and highlighted a number of highly significant issues which Operation Herne had brushed over. Based on the same evidence and interviews with largely the same police staff involved, he concluded that black justice campaigns had been spied upon."

"This included the family of Stephen Lawrence during the MacPherson Inquiry into the Metropolitan Police's failed murder investigation. These findings led to Home Secretary Theresa May establishing the Undercover Policing Public Inquiry under Christopher Pitchford, something that effectively discredited the efforts of Herne and led it to being accused of being a whitewash."

Donal O'Driscoll of URG, said: "His personal involvement and responsibility for the deployment of Mark Kennedy and

others show that he is far from independent.”

“His reputation was tainted when he denied the Lawrences were spied upon, and further weakened when he kept defending NCND (Neither Confirm Nor Deny).”

“This is all the more important because the Pitchford Inquiry is starting from and building on the evidence uncovered by Operation Herne.”

“During the Conference in April 2016 organised by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, a delegation from the Inquiry’s legal team was present to answer questions from the audience.”

“When asked how they thought to prevent the shredding of files, it appeared that there was no protocol in place to secure this evidence.”

However, in response, the Met Police defended Chief Constable Creedon and said: “Chief Constable Mick Creedon is a highly experienced police officer who has conducted many sensitive external reviews and investigations.”

“He is the national policing lead for serious and organised crime and has an excellent understanding of the complexities of undercover policing, gained over decades serving within policing.”

“As a result of his experience and impartiality he was asked by the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to independently oversee Operation Herne, the

MPS investigation into potential criminality and misconduct by SDS officers.”

“He has to date published three public reviews of the working of the SDS and has not shied away from criticism of the MPS, of Special Branch and of the management, leadership and some staff of the SDS.”

Jason Kirkpatrick, a former activist and key witness at the Pitchford Inquiry who knew Mark Kennedy from his involvement in protests at the 2005 G8 Summit at Gleneagles, Scotland, said: “I was stunned about a few things Creedon did, like pressuring Ch. 4 trying to ‘character assassinate’ Peter Francis, doing the whitewash OpHerne reports, etc.”

“I also want to know what he did exactly at the dodgy private for-profit ACPO, what role he played in the undercover activities they managed, as well as what happened to those ACPO undercover operation files and if the Pitchford Inquiry will be able to access them.”

“On a personal level, I wonder if Creedon was Mark Kennedy’s handler during the time I stayed at Kennedy’s Nottingham home. I wonder if Creedon was the one who directed Kennedy to act as an agent provocateur, as when Kennedy asked me in Berlin if I wanted to go with him to violently attack neo-nazis.”

“I wonder why UK taxpayer money was spent trying ridiculous tactics to imprison anti-racist activists like me in Germany.”

“Unfortunately all activities occurring outside England and Wales are excluded from the Pitchford Inquiry so until Theresa May changes the inquiry remit to include Scotland, Ireland and Germany, I will never be able to find out the truth about this.”

Both Chief Constable Creedon and the Home Office declined to comment.

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