

Sutcliffe's Arrest and Subsequent Events

620. Sutcliffe's eventual arrest for his heinous crimes resulted from basic patrol policing by uniformed officers as happened similarly in the "Black Panther" case previously. He was arrested for suspected theft on 2nd January 1981 in Sheffield with a prostitute named Olivia St. Elmo Reivers. There were false number plates on his car and it transpired these had been stolen from a scrap yard at Brighouse, West Yorkshire. The arresting officers were Sergeant Ring and Constable Hydes but it was additional good work by Sergeant Armitage and Sergeant Bennett (of the West Yorkshire Police) that resulted in Sutcliffe being kept in custody first at Sheffield, then at Dewsbury as a possible Ripper suspect. (paras 410 to 418)

621. The night following the arrest Sergeant Ring went back to the scene of the arrest and recovered a ball-pein hammer and a knife which Sutcliffe had been able to secrete under some leaves. With the discovery of such damning evidence, coupled with the information on record about Sutcliffe in the Major Incident Room, he had a lengthy interrogation on Sunday, 4th January, 1981 and eventually admitted all the murders and assaults for which he was subsequently convicted. (para 419)

622. Four days later at Sergeant Ring's initiative a further knife was found which Sutcliffe had been able to hide in a lavatory water cistern whilst in custody at Sheffield. (para 420)

623. There were limitations in the actual police action at the time of Sutcliffe's arrest because he was allowed to hide from the officers the ball-pein hammer and the knife. He was also able to conceal the further knife in the water cistern at the police station. But it is to Sergeant Ring's credit that on his own initiative, he found the hammer and the knife at the scene later and was also instrumental in discovering the second knife in the water cistern. Both he and Constable Hydes were commended by the trial judge, Mr Justice Boreham, and also by both the South Yorkshire and the West Yorkshire Police Authorities, respectively. (paras 421 to 422 and 443 to 444)

624. Following Sutcliffe's admission of the offences whilst in custody at Dewsbury the conduct of both the police and the media, in relation to the publicity that was to follow, left a great deal to be desired. In particular there was the notorious Press Conference at Dewsbury and to a lesser extent the later one at Sheffield. As described, both police officers and journalists clearly contravened the contempt laws and recognised sub judice practice. (paras 423 to 439 and 441)

626. During the review I have identified many instances of malpractice by journalists but as the Press Council is already conducting an inquiry into the press coverage of the Ripper case I have concluded that one prominent example would suffice. (para 442 and Fig 22)

Lessons for the future (Part IV)

627. It is easy to be wise with hindsight and I have been mindful of this when identifying the limitations of the police investigation and have reached my conclusions following a carefully balanced and professional consideration of all the factors involved. The lessons for the future come as a natural follow-up. (paras 445 to 446)

Major Incident Rooms

628. The single most important lesson for Major Incident Rooms is that standardisation of the procedures must be achieved so that compatible systems, capable of being interfaced in appropriate cases, are introduced in all police forces. (para 447)

629. Standardisation is even more important when the use of computers in Major Incident Rooms is contemplated. Unless methods of indexing, recording and filing are common to all police forces, the computerisation of multi-force records in a series type investigation is likely to prove impossible to mount. (para 448)

630. I recommend that the Association of Chief Officers of Police (through the Computer Development Committee) be asked to consider the standardisation of Major Incident Room documents and procedures as soon as possible and to report within a reasonable time limit. (para 449).

631. It is imperative that adequate staff are employed in a Major Incident Room especially in a difficult and protracted inquiry. Policy decisions on major lines of inquiry likely to lead to a consequential flow of information from the public on a large scale should include a forecast of the staff required. (paras 450 to 451)

632. There were occasions during the life of the Ripper Major Incident Room when untrained staff were deployed to crucial tasks with disastrous consequences, for example, when the list of 241 people to whom the Jordan £5 note might have been paid was searched against the records. The operational efficiency of an Incident Room will greatly depend on the extent to which staff allocated to it are specially trained. (para 452)

633. A Major Incident Room index system, particularly in a large scale investigation, should be subjected to a continuous process of audit. The crucial consideration is that the misplacing of a single card in a nominal index system can jeopardise a whole inquiry and with this in mind, systems management should ensure errors are kept to a minimum. ((para 453).

634. In a long-running inquiry due consideration should be given to the welfare of Major Incident Room staff. (para 454)

Computerisation of records

635. Computers should be able to offer a senior investigating officer in a major crime inquiry a more simple and effective means of handling the information flow generated. One project, code-name M I R I A M, is to be given a full-scale trial by PSDB in Essex shortly but there is a pressing need to have a shorter-term solution to the many problems experienced in the Ripper case and which might arise in future. This might be provided by a system code-named M O S E S which is a total package provided by a private sector computer bureau. (paras 456 to 460)

636. Having regard to the urgency of a computer requirement and the need to have compatibility of any new systems one force with another, I have ensured that ACPO Computer Development Committee know of my conclusions with regard to the use of computers in Major Incident Rooms. Essentially, a force should not embark upon an individual project at this stage but should support the common system being developed under the M I R I A M project and the much shorter-term micro-computer based solution that is currently being evaluated. In future Chief Constables should consult Home Office, through the Inspectorate, for guidance in the use of a computer in a crime investigation. (para 461)

637. The part played by the Police National Computer Unit in the Ripper case has more than amply demonstrated the need to give the Unit full consideration in future plans especially when looking to a national system in the years ahead. (paras 462 and 463)

638. When contemplating the use of computers in the Police Service, there are privacy considerations in addition to technical considerations. In a protracted and emotive case such as the Ripper investigation there would be likely to be considerable support for the concept of collating information by the latest technological means but the requirement still needs to be put over to the public effectively and sensitively. (para 464)

639. Similar considerations should apply when proposed legislation in this difficult area is being debated and reassurances on privacy rights might be satisfied by a monitoring service provided by the Inspectorate. (para 465)

Management of Series Crimes

640. I have reluctantly concluded that there is a dearth of senior detectives with the overall management skills to meet the demands of an inquiry on the Ripper Scale. It will be important in

future for the Service, and in particular Chief Constables, to remedy this deficiency by improving the arrangements for career development, training and selection of people to fill these positions. They will need to be not only skilfull detectives but also good managers in the widest possible sense. The training I have prescribed should greatly assist. (para 466 and 474)

641. The senior investigating officer in a series type investigation should not have any other responsibilities. (para 467)

642. Major policy decisions should always be recorded and then be disseminated as considered appropriate. A large scale inquiry such as the Ripper case calls for corporate management in the manner described. A particular line of inquiry of any magnitude should be clearly identified and resources allocated to it appropriately and should not be abandoned prematurely without good reason. (paras 468 to 469)

643. An intelligence unit (as described) should prove invaluable to the senior investigating team. (paras 470 to 471)

644. A major series crime investigation needs a central administration through which all resources deployed to the inquiry are controlled and monitored. It should not involve a heavy manpower commitment and is there to provide a disciplined approach to management resources. (paras 472 to 473)

645. To maintain the motivation and morale of outside inquiry officers due regard must be paid to welfare arrangements (as referred to earlier in relation to Major Incident Room staff). Perspiration is more likely to clear up a difficult investigation than inspiration and regular boosts need to be given to junior officers engaged on repetitive mundane duties over a lengthy period. (para 473)

Senior Investigating Officer in Series Crimes

646. A lesson which the Police Service has clearly failed to learn from the notorious "Black Panther" crimes of the mid-1970s is that where crimes within a connected series occur and especially in different force areas, special arrangements need to be made for the command of the co-ordinated inquiry. For example, in the Ripper case, the West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester Forces did not fully co-ordinate the murder investigations in the two areas by appointing one "Supremo" investigating officer and this caused certain limitations. This concept of parochial superiority must be overcome if some principal lessons from the series cases in the past are to be effectively digested within the Service. (paras 475 to 480)

647. I am firmly of the view that in the series serious crime situation there needs to be one officer in overall command with the authority to direct the course of the investigation in all the police areas affected. His rank should be either Assistant Chief Constable or Detective Chief Superintendent depending on the size of the operation and he should have no other responsibilities. In the case of a multi-force investigation he should be appointed following mutual agreement of the Chief Constables concerned. (para 481)

648. In the Ripper investigation there were misplaced loyalties to certain senior officers and also jealousies which served to undermine overall efficiency. The choice of senior investigating officer in such a large scale inquiry in future will be of vital importance. The temptation to appoint a "senior man" on age or service grounds should be resisted. What is needed is an officer of sound professional competence who will inspire confidence and loyalty in those who work for him. (para 482)

649. This recommendation in relation to the appointment of a senior investigating officer together with the recommendation outlining the appointment of an Advisory Team (which follows), if adopted, should avoid in any future investigation the frailty exposed in both the Ripper and "Black Panther" cases (para 483).

The appointment of an Advisory Team

650. Had the Ripper series investigation occurred within any of the shire counties rather than in the metropolitan areas of West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester there is no possibility that the

inquiry could have been sustained from internal resources. External assistance by way of mutual aid would have been essential. (para 484)

651. I consider that ACPO would now accept procedural changes which encompassed not only the appointment of a "Supremo" investigating officer in appropriate cases but also the appointment of an external Advisory Team. The appointment of the Advisory Team to the Ripper investigation in November 1980 clearly shows the merits of such a policy. (paras 485 to 488)

652. There must be a means of harnessing the best detective and scientific talent in the country by having the ad hoc Advisory Team earmarked centrally by H.M. Chief Inspector of Constabulary, in consultation with ACPO Crime Committee, as described. It will need to be changed regularly to ensure the best operational talent is maintained within it. (para 489)

653. There are many benefits which accrue from a decentralised policing system such as we have in Britain but there are also inherent weaknesses as starkly illustrated in both the "Black Panther" and Ripper cases. Whilst I believe that Chief Constables will be ready to co-operate fully to prevent such limitations in future it will be for the Inspectorate to ensure this is done on grounds of efficiency. (para 490)

654. The external Advisory Team would be employed on a regular consultancy basis, as required. (para 491)

Specialist and Scientific Support Services

655. The Police Service in England and Wales is covered by a network of Forensic Science Laboratories. The services of the scientists are obtained by submitting samples to the regional laboratory or by a visit by the scientist to the scene of the crime (usually in the more serious or difficult crimes). The scientist's prime responsibility is to provide the Court with scientific evidence so as to help it reach a conclusion. (paras 492 to 494)

656. The Forensic Science Service was extensively involved in the Ripper investigation, the laboratories at Wetherby and Chorley having the greatest individual commitment. The Wetherby laboratory alone dealt with 2,652 items of evidence during the series. Even so there were few evidential avenues which could have been greatly helped by forensic science techniques. Whilst my review has revealed certain limitations in the scientific investigation of the case, none of them was as significant as the principal limitations involving the police. (para 495)

657. There were too many individual scientists involved in the case. The resultant lack of co-ordination in the scientific support was recognised in September, 1979 by the Controller, Dr. Curry, who arranged for two senior scientists to be seconded to the case as resident advisers. They did some valuable work before returning to their respective laboratories. (paras 496 to 497)

658. In the series type of murder investigation a senior scientist should be appointed to act as adviser to the senior investigating officer throughout the investigation. This should prevent police forces involved from pursuing separate lines of specialist inquiry into quasi-scientific matters (as happened with the Richardson murder tyre tracks). The concept of the scientific adviser to a complex investigation is that he should be a "laboratory on two feet" and not merely a liaison officer between the senior investigating officer and the laboratory. (paras 498 to 499)

659. The tyre marks found at three of the Ripper murders were never compared one with the other which is a further indication of the need for a co-ordinating scientist where an investigation covers different laboratory areas. (para 500)

660. The wide variety of specialist departments serving the police need to be co-ordinated better in any serious crime inquiry. Over-specialisation within the Forensic Science Service can also create difficulties in that scientists can tend to view all problems from the perspective of their own specialisation and so disregard possibilities based on alternative lines. Attachment of forensic scientists to busy police forces for short periods and an interchange of scientists between those with predominantly bench functions and those normally in the field, should prove valuable in this regard. I so recommend. (paras 501 to 503)

661. In addition to the scientific adviser seconded to any series murder investigation in future, there should also be appointed a senior police scenes of crime officer so as to ensure that each scene of crime in the series is examined by the same personnel. (para 503)

662. In the light of other limitations identified in the Ripper case, scientists should always ensure that scientific conclusions are committed to a written report so as to assist the investigating officer. The report should not be part of a bureaucratic practice but, wherever possible, should lead to an interchange of information which might indicate other useful areas of inquiry. (paras 504 to 505)

663. A major lesson to be learned (as evidenced in relation to the so-called Harrison connection) is that the use of categoric eliminators, scientific or otherwise, is fraught with danger unless absolutely conclusive. (para 506)

The Police and the Media

664. The Police need to understand their positive duty to assist the media to provide the public with accurate information about serious crime and reporters in turn must understand their duty to act responsibly and not to publish or broadcast information which is fabricated, contrived, or which is known to be inaccurate or speculative. (paras 507 to 508)

665. The appointment of permanent liaison officers within all police forces is clearly justified. In a protracted major crime investigation it is essential to have in post a police/media relations officer of sufficient rank to deal adequately with journalists. He should be capable of putting across the police point of view, especially on television. Where such an officer of senior rank is already in post he will need to be divorced from his normal day to day commitments when involved in a complex major homicide investigation. He should then be able to acquit himself effectively as the regular police spokesman and also foster and maintain an efficient liaison with all the journalists involved. (paras 509 to 511)

666. As indicated in my report there were "moles" within the West Yorkshire Police who transmitted confidential information to the press about the Ripper investigation. In the light of experience in this case there are very strong reasons for investigating as rigorously as possible any "leak" of confidential information. (para 512)

667. Since the Sutcliffe press conferences the Contempt of Court Act, 1981 has become law.

668. Neither the police nor the media can escape the blame for the limitations clearly exposed in the Ripper case and both agencies should recognise their duty to act in furtherance of the public weal (paras 518 and 519)

Training requirement

669. My review has indicated a number of areas where police performance was below the level required and this was often due to inadequate training. In senior officers it manifested itself in the lack of management concepts akin to a protracted large scale inquiry. At lower levels it showed itself at times in the poor performance by members of outside inquiry teams and by the staff of the Major Incident Room. (paras 520 and 523)

670. In so far as Major Incident Room staff are concerned I anticipate that ACPO will soon be in a position to give guidance on such training programmes. (para 521)

671. There is a need to nominate primary and reserve Major Incident Room teams in all forces with an appropriate training commitment. When records are computerised it will be essential to ensure that staff are well trained in the use of visual display units and printer terminals. The input of information to a computer is just as prone to error as any other form of information recording. (para 522)

672. Following discussions I have had with the Commandant of the Police Staff College I recommend that the training of senior investigating officers in the rank of Assistant Chief Constable or Commander (Metropolitan Police) should be on the lines described. (para 525)

673. Following similar discussions I have had with the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police he has kindly offered to take on a training commitment at Hendon for officers of chief superintendent or superintendent rank. I recommend that such training on the lines described be implemented. (para 526).

674. Whilst training at the Police Staff College and the Metropolitan Police Training School ought to satisfy the immediate training requirement for senior officers, it would prove helpful if Chief Constables who organise training for senior officers on a local or regional basis were to include in the course programmes the management of serious crime inquiries on the lines indicated in this report. (para 527)

675. The techniques of interviewing is a topic deserving of greater attention within police training programmes and should be dealt with very thoroughly during detective training courses. (para 528)

676. The training requirements stemming from this review of the Ripper case should be included in future training programmes not merely in the short term but as a continuing process. The training of Major Incident Room personnel is already being examined by ACPO Computer Development Committee and I recommend that the other training programmes be discussed in the first instance with ACPO Crime and Training Committees respectively, with appropriate liaison thereafter with the Police Staff College, the Metropolitan Police and those Chief Constables with the facilities for the other training needs. (paras 529 to 530)

The Way Ahead

677. In line with your Parliamentary Statement at the time of my appointment my team have been mindful of looking at the Ripper case, sometimes with the benefit of hindsight, so that lessons which might be learned from it can be made known to police forces generally. (paras 531 to 534)

678. Regretfully some of these lessons were previously identified at the conclusion of the "Black Panther" case in 1975 but in the light of the Ripper case, quite clearly the Police Service has not learned from them, particularly those relating to the management and control of a multi-force murder investigation. (paras 535 to 538)

679. Fortunately, there is one tremendous advantage in the aftermath of the Ripper case when compared to the post-trial period of the "Black Panther" case. There is now to hand the findings of an independent professional review team and the lessons for the future have been identified. There is also a clear indication that the Service is anxious to take full note of these lessons for the future. (para 539)

680. I recommend that the procedure as outlined should be followed hereafter and that details be included in your Parliamentary Statement so as to afford a clear indication of the prompt, constructive action that is being taken following the review. I also recommend that a Home Office Circular, on the lines described, be issued to the Service, as soon as appropriate. (paras 540 to 541)

Acknowledgements

681. I should like to express my appreciation for all the assistance I have been given during the course of the review. The members of my immediate team, referred to in paragraph 2 of the report, have been dedicated in their tasks and necessarily have had to work long hours especially having regard to their other important responsibilities elsewhere. They have been ably supported

by their assistants namely Chief Superintendent Collingwood, Superintendent Hedges, Chief Inspector Ainsworth and Chief Inspector Pemberton who also have my immense gratitude for their painstaking work throughout the review. The secretariat manned by my two staff officers, Chief Superintendent Vessey and Chief Inspector Povey together with Sergeant Kendall, serviced the review admirably. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Vessey for his astuteness in gleaning the important aspects of the review from a mass of documentation and also for his ready and unremitting assistance in the compilation of the report. Finally, I should like to pay tribute to the three typists for their work during the period of the review and to the staff of the Lincolnshire County Council Printing Department who did so much to ensure the quality of the finished product.

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