



Report of the Security Commission

May 2004

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*Presented to Parliament by the Prime Minister
by Command of Her Majesty
May 2004*

REPORT OF THE SECURITY COMMISSION, MAY 2004

The report of the Security Commission as originally submitted included certain details which in this published summary are omitted in the interests of national security.

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PRIME MINISTER

SUMMARY OF INQUIRY

Introduction

1. On 19 November 2003, press reporting in *The Mirror* revealed that a reporter had obtained a job as a footman at Buckingham Palace. During a statement to the House of Commons that day, the Home Secretary noted that, with your agreement, he had invited the Security Commission to conduct an inquiry into the events.

2. Our terms of reference are set out at Annex A. As requested, we also carried out a preliminary examination of these issues as they affect the Palace of Westminster and have offered some preliminary thoughts which may need to be developed further by those currently undertaking the separate review there.

Conduct of the inquiry

3. The Commission met formally on ten occasions. We sought information and advice from a wide range of organisations, listed at Annex B(1). We also took formal evidence from those listed at Annex B(2), whom we also asked to provide suggestions for improving the current recruitment and personnel management arrangements in the Royal Households. We are grateful for the full and constructive responses they provided.

Approach and main findings

4. The most likely sources of insider threat to the Royal Family are from the Press and individuals seeking to 'test' security measures or to cause embarrassment. But any weakness which can be exploited by these groups can also be exploited by terrorists. The security of the Royal Family is a matter of national security. There needs to be a more coherent personnel security approach covering all Royal Households and not only permanent household staff, but also guests, visitors and especially contracted staff. Our main findings are as follows:

- (i) With the benefit of hindsight, the handling of Ryan Parry's job application can be criticised in several minor respects. But the case did not reveal basic deficiencies in how the Royal Household followed the established recruitment procedures. Nevertheless, there are important lessons to be learnt.
- (ii) The main significance of the case is that it showed that existing procedures were not sufficient to expose a fraudulent and dishonest job application. This weakness could be exploited by terrorists or others to endanger The Queen, her family and official guests and thus to endanger national security.
- (iii) Our review has, as we were asked, ranged well beyond the issues raised by this case. We have considered carefully what checks and procedures should apply in today's much more challenging security context for both recruitment and personnel management not only in the Royal Households but more widely in other bodies where national security is at stake.

Recommendations

5. We have made a number of recommendations, of which three are central:

- (i) There should be a wider menu of checks on the identity and suitability of applicants for such jobs, drawing on data available to government, the security authorities, the private sector and on the internet. The mix of checks should vary according to the nature of the job. It would not be right to reveal the scope of these checks, since that would make it easier for those with bad intentions to evade them. But it is important that information made available about applicants is subject to their prior consent and rigorously safeguarded as required by the laws on data protection and human rights.
- (ii) Responsibility for the security of the Royal Family cannot sensibly be entrusted to a single person or body. It is rightly shared. Responsibility for policy and funding rests with the Home Secretary. Operational responsibility lies with the Police. The Households themselves have responsibility for

personnel security and for procedures within the royal residences. These responsibilities need to be co-ordinated more effectively through an annual security plan for Royal security, agreed and implemented jointly by all the bodies concerned. The plan should cover personnel security as well as protection and physical security. It should be subject to annual internal review and sporadic external testing.

- (iii) A Director of Security should be appointed with responsibility for those tasks which fall to the Royal Households. This would not be a 'security czar', since the Police and Home Office would retain their existing responsibilities. Rather it would ensure a better focus on security issues across all the Royal residences. The Security Director would also be able, within the annual plan and in liaison with the Police, to develop better means of controlling access to the Royal residences, by guests, visitors, staff and contractors - on which we have made other recommendations.

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IAIN VALLANCE
(Sir Iain Vallance)

May 2004

ANNEX A

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. By his letter of 12 December 2003, the Prime Minister asked the Security Commission to investigate and report on the case with the following terms of reference:

“To review all aspects of the arrangements for vetting those who join or belong to the Royal Households, and those working closely with them or who otherwise gain access to Royal residences; to make recommendations for change (including the application to other public bodies, if appropriate) and to report urgently to the Home Secretary.”

2. As guidance to the Commission, the Prime Minister also suggested that the Commission might wish:

to consider whether the processes and procedures for carrying out employment checks and security vetting are adequate;

to consider whether staff responsible for operating these arrangements have appropriate training;

to consider whether there is a consistent approach, not only across the Royal Households, but also in relation to other public bodies;

to consider whether there should be a single focal point for dealing with these issues on behalf of all the Households; and

to consider whether the security measures for visitors to Buckingham Palace and other relevant locations are adequate.

3. The Prime Minister also noted that the security authorities at the Palace of Westminster were being invited to participate in this review.

ANNEX B

ADVICE AND EVIDENCE

1. Information and advice was supplied by the following organisations:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Department for Work and Pensions

Inland Revenue

Office of the Information Commissioner

Treasury Counsel

2. Formal evidence was taken from staff in the following organisations:

Royal Households

Metropolitan Police Service

Home Office

Security Service

Cabinet Office

Palace of Westminster

ANNEX C

THE PARRY CASE

1. Our terms of reference rightly required us to cast our review and its recommendations well beyond the issues raised by the Ryan Parry case. With the assistance of the Royal Households we set out here, for the record, how Parry was recruited and the steps taken to obtain appropriate references.

2. Ryan Parry graduated from Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds, in June 1999 with a 2:2 BA honours degree in Sociology and Media. After graduating he worked at the Parciau Arms in Anglesey until January 2000. From then he claimed to have been employed in his father's painting company as an office manager, until May 2003 (although his CV stated May 2002). He had in fact been employed by the Trinity Mirror Group at Chester between January 2002 and February 2003, and had written articles about security at Wimbledon which appeared in *The Mirror* in June 2003.

3. Parry applied for the post of 'footman (or other suitable position)' having seen an advertisement on the recruitment page of the Royal Household website. He sent an application form, together with his CV, to the Recruitment Co-ordinator on 28 July 2003. In his application form Parry stated that he had a BA Honours in Management and Sociology. In listing his employment, he claimed to have worked for his father from January 2000 until May 2003 and that his reason for leaving was 'relocation'. The application form for the Royal Households states that references will be sought from "your last two employers" and "a personal referee (not a member of your family)". Parry supplied the name of a Senior Lecturer at Trinity and All Saints College as a personal referee. The fraudulent application form and his CV, which included false particulars, were passed to the manager of the footmen. On 31 July, the Buckingham Palace Pass Office, manned by the Metropolitan Police, were passed Ryan Parry's details for a criminal check to be undertaken. No trace of a record was found. He was invited to interview on 1 August, having pre-completed the temporary pass application form which required him to provide full name (including name at birth if different and any other names used), permanent and temporary addresses, nationality, place and date

of birth and height. On the day of his interview he was asked for two forms of identity and proof of address, one of which had to be his passport, driving license or birth certificate, before he was given a temporary day pass and access to the Palace. He was considered primarily (because of lack of experience) for the position of Under Butler, but also for a Footman's position. Three separate interviews were carried out on that day by members of the Royal Household.

4. Parry completed and signed a security questionnaire on 8 August. Such questionnaires are standard for anyone who requires a Government security clearance. The requirement for the post Parry had applied for was a Counter-Terrorist Check (CTC): this involves checks against criminal and Security Service records.

5. The decision was made by the Household to offer Parry a position on 12 August and a notification of employment form was completed and sent to Personnel, together with the application form and CV to authorise the formal offer letter and start the pre-employment checking process. A member of staff was nominated by the Personnel Manager, who manages the workload of recruitment administration, as the "Case Officer". The following day, the Case Officer sent the completed security questionnaire to the Buckingham Palace Pass Office for them to submit to the Security Service for checks against their records.

6. On 14 August the "offer letter" was prepared by the Case Officer, cross checked by another Case Officer, signed by a senior member of the Household and sent, together with a recruitment pack, to Ryan Parry. The letter said:

"On behalf of the Master of the Household, I am pleased to offer you the position of Footman in the Royal Household, commencing on 23 September 2003. This offer is conditional on security clearance ... and on references satisfactory to the Royal Household being obtained. Please note that should your full security clearance or references not be obtained prior to your start date, your continued employment will be subject to them being obtained. The Royal Household's decision as to whether the references received meet its requirements is final."

Also included in the recruitment pack was a declaration relating to the terms and conditions of the appointment and a “Deed of Agreement” outlining the employee’s duty of confidentiality. Parry signed both of these documents and returned them, together with other details relating to his proposed employment, on 25 August.

7. Also on 14 August, the Case Officer began the process of contacting referees to check that they were *bona fide*, prior to sending out reference request forms. The Case Officer telephoned the Parciau Arms. The manager Parry had worked for had left with no forwarding address. The Case Officer asked for details of those who had worked there with Parry and was given the name of a former colleague. She spoke to him and he agreed to provide a reference and gave his home address. He signed and returned a character reference dated 18 August in which he stated he had known Parry (allegedly a friend of his son) for 20 years.

8. The Case Officer tried to speak to the Senior Lecturer on 14 August and left a message on his voicemail. She telephoned again, was given his email address by the switchboard, and sent him an email. No reply had been received by 1 September, so the Case Officer contacted Ryan Parry to ask for another referee who would have taught him at the College. Parry supplied the name of another Senior Lecturer.

9. The Case Officer contacted Slip’s Deli in Leeds, where Parry had been casually employed between January 1998 and June 1999, by telephone on 19 August. The referee was traced to another branch: he did not recall Parry, but explained that many students were employed as casuals. A reference form was sent, but returned with the notification that records of Parry’s employment had not been found.

10. The second Senior Lecturer was spoken to on 1 September and faxed a standard reference form which contained the following question:

“How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity?”

Ryan Parry was a student at Trinity and All Saints College, University of Leeds, from 1996-1999 taking a degree in Sociology and Media. He was awarded a 2.2 in July 1999. I was both an academic and personal tutor to Ryan for the whole of the three years.”

The inconsistency between this reference and Parry's application form, in which he claimed to have a degree in Management and Sociology (rather than 'Sociology and Media') was not spotted. On the same day, having been away on holiday, the first Senior Lecturer faxed back a positive reference letter on Ryan Parry. He had been emailed the standard reference pro forma, but chose to respond using headed note paper which is an option offered to referees.

11. The Case Officer notified the line manager that two good character references had been received from Ryan Parry's college. It was noted that it was "a bit bizarre" to ask a father to give a work reference on his son, but that this was his only declared employment over the preceding three years. Several telephone calls were made to his father's company and messages left on an answerphone. In the absence of a response a letter had been written to Ryan Parry's father with a view to seeking a reference. Despite further follow-up calls no response was received over the next few weeks and the Case Officer contacted Ryan Parry on 15 September: he explained that his father did not support his application since he did not want him to leave the family firm. The Case Officer asked for another referee and notified him on 19 September that he would not be able to take up employment on 23 September without the necessary references. Later that day, Parry telephoned the Case Officer and said that his father had agreed that the company foreman could provide the reference and provided the relevant contact details. The Case Officer spoke to the foreman and asked him to complete the reference form urgently. He did this and returned it by fax together with a note on the company's headed notepaper.

12. In the meantime, on 5 September the Security Service responded to the vetting request which had been submitted to them on 13 August. Their response was "No security objection".

13. On 22 September, the reference from the company foreman was checked by the Case Officer and she informed Ryan Parry that he could start work the following day, as previously arranged. Parry's personal details were notified to Payroll, together with his P46 and bank details. The recruitment checklist was completed when his personal details were entered into the personnel database.

14. On 23 September Ryan Parry began his employment in the Royal Household, starting his initial induction which he completed on 9 October. He had already been CTC cleared and therefore was issued with a Household security pass by the Buckingham Palace Pass Office, who checked his identity and address against two forms of ID.

15. We have explored the procedures used by the Royal Household for the recruitment of staff both in general terms, and in the specific case of Ryan Parry. We have seen all the documentation available to support the recruitment process. With the benefit of hindsight, the process in respect of Parry can be criticised in the following respects:

- (a) Notes made at the time of Parry's interview could not be located, but were written from memory when the story broke in the press.
- (b) The discrepancy in the dates of employment provided by Parry was not noticed.
- (c) The fact that the reference from the company foreman was a fabrication was not detected although the references from the College lecturers were genuine and it is not known whether the former colleague at the Parciau Arms was a family friend.
- (d) A search on the internet would have revealed that Parry had written articles in *The Mirror* about security at Wimbledon in June 2003, although the internet cannot be relied upon to verify identity in every case.
- (e) The fact that the second Senior Lecturer had noted that Parry had read Sociology and Media rather than "Management and Sociology" as stated on his application form was not noted. Sight of certificates confirming qualifications was not requested.
- (f) Parry's P45 would have identified that his pay and employer records were not consistent with the details which he had provided. He submitted that he did not have a P45 and completed a P46, which is intended to be used for new employees who do not have a P45 or who were previously paid below the PAYE threshold. We understand that this is not unusual, but there was no follow up with him to check on his previous payroll record.

16. We found the established procedures for recruitment to be comprehensive and well documented. There were no glaring omissions in relation to Parry. With the benefit of hindsight, the points which might have been checked more carefully were the inconsistency between Parry noting on his form that he had a degree in Management and Sociology, whereas in fact he had studied Sociology and Media, and the discrepancy between his claimed and actual employment history. It might have registered some concerns: but it might not have.

17. We were interested to test with the Royal Households whether it was unusual or noteworthy that a graduate might apply for such a position, where the salary was in the region of some £12,000 per year. We were told that it was not: the job offered the opportunity for presentable young people to come to London and benefit from valuable training, with accommodation provided: it was not unusual for such people to move on from the Royal Households to take up employment in embassies or private households.

18. This was a dishonest application and a carefully planned deception. Nevertheless, there are important lessons to be learnt. We understand that the Home Office are investigating the possibility of making trespass on Royal and certain other properties a criminal offence. There would be nothing remarkable in doing so. It is already a criminal offence to trespass on diplomatic missions (see section 9 of the Criminal Law Act 1977).



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