


DAILY EXPRESS

 WE'RE BACKING BRITAIN



express.co.uk

TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2019 **65p**



STRICTLY'S SISTER ACT

NEW JUDGE IS REVEALED: SEE PAGE 7



Hottest July day ever on the way

SEE PAGE 9

FANTASIST WHO MADE A MOCKERY OF JUSTICE

Police blasted over £2million inquiry into VIP sex abuse lies



By **John Twomey** and **Paul Jeeves**

POLICE chiefs were in the dock last night after a self-confessed paedophile was found guilty of falsely accusing VIPs of child murder and abuse.

Former children's nurse Carl Beech was on suicide

TURN TO PAGE 4



Cool dude Rod wears it well

SEE PAGE 3



READY FOR THE BIGGEST GAME OF THE SEASON?

COMING SOON

FROM PAGE ONE

watch as he faced a lengthy prison sentence for tricking the Yard into believing bizarre lies about a non-existent Westminster child sex ring.

In one of the most controversial inquiries in the history of the Metropolitan Police, a team of experienced Yard detectives took the pervert at his word.

Describing his claims as "credible and true," they launched Operation Midland - a £2million investigation which resulted in no arrests.

But many legal experts were astounded that Beech - who served as a school governor and NSPCC volunteer - was taken seriously.

One commented: "His statements about the VIPs sex ring were not only bizarre, they were simply incredible and untrue. They were transparently false."

Despite the debacle and waste of



Det Supt Kenny McDonald led hunt

taxpayers' money, no police officer has been disciplined over Operation Midland.

There were calls for them to be investigated last night led by the son of the late Lord Janner.

Daniel Janner QC, whose father Lord Janner of Braunstone QC faced allegations before he died, said police must be held accountable.

He said: "The policemen who put out that Carl Beech's lies were 'credible and true' in 2014 should be prosecuted for the crime of misfeasance in a public office."

Beech - then known only as Nick - told a stream of malicious lies leading to heavy-handed police raids on the homes of Second World War hero Lord Bramall, now 95, the late Lord Brittan and former Conservative MP Harvey Proctor.

The three men, and a series of others named by Beech including

His vile sex ring lies smeared innocent men. How did police ever believe him?



Lord Janner faced accusations



Sir Edward Heath was named



Lord Brittan was investigated



Harvey Proctor is suing police

Sir Edward Heath, were completely innocent. But their reputations were dragged through the mire.

Mr Proctor lost his job and his home after he was falsely identified by Beech as being one of the sadistic murder gang.

The former MP blasted the Met describing Operation Midland as a "truly disgraceful chapter in the history of British policing". He is suing the force for £1million.

Lord Bramall and others have already received substantial payouts from the public purse.

Beech, 51, initially made his bizarre allegations through the now

defunct Exaro news agency and won support from Labour's deputy leader Tom Watson, then an influential backbencher, the BBC and other news outlets.

He repeated the outrageous lies in a series of interviews with the Yard between 2012 and 2015.

Over hours of tearful interviews, Beech claimed that his late stepfather, an Army major, raped him, then passed him on to other officers including generals.

At a now notorious Scotland Yard press conference, Detective Superintendent Kenny McDonald described Beech's allegations as

"credible and true" even though there was no corroboration.

He alleged he had been tortured at military bases and subjected to savage sex abuse by other establishment figures in the 1970s and 1980s. Beech named Sir Edward, Mr Proctor and Jimmy Savile as well as former heads of the security and intelligence services and other VIPs figures as members of the fictitious sex ring.

The fantasist claimed to have witnessed the rape and murder of a boy who could have been a missing teenager called Martin Allen.

Beech said another youth was

beaten to death by the gang and a third was deliberately mowed down by a car and killed.

After Operation Midland collapsed, retired judge Sir Richard Henriques was brought in to investigate the way the Yard carried out Operation Midland.

Damningly, Sir Richard said Beech's claims should have been probed "without any of the men named by Nick ever knowing about it".

Stung by the collapse of the operation, the Met's then Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe called in Northumbria Police to investigate

SEVEN MAJOR FABRICATIONS

THE CPS was able to show seven key claims which Beech had fabricated or lied about.

● Lie: He had a fear of swimming after being tortured at pools by his abusers.

Reality: He enjoyed swimming and did so all over the world, from theme parks to snorkelling on honeymoon.

● Lie: He suffered electric shock treatment, fractures and puncture wounds.

Reality: His ex-wife never noticed any marks and his only injury on file was a skiing accident aged 15.

● Lie: Former MP Harvey Proctor threatened to cut his genitals with a penknife.

Reality: His wife said the knife was stored in Beech's "happy memories" box.

● Lie: He was regularly taken

out of school and abused.

Reality: School reports showed good attendance and he received an award for 100 per cent punctuality.

● Lie: Beech sketched abuse locations based on memories "flashing up in his head".

Reality: He researched the sites on the internet.

● Lie: He saw the murder of three children including "Scott" and another allegedly killed by Harvey Proctor.

Reality: Scott did not exist and Beech manufactured all claims about Mr Proctor.

● Lie: Witness "Fred" was in email contact with Beech and contacted police to express fears over co-operating with the investigation.

Reality: "Fred" never existed and Beech sent the emails.



'Swimming fear'...Beech takes dip

'CASE SHOWS WHAT CAN GO WRONG'

THIS shocking case illustrates the serious problems that can occur when the police assume that someone who claims to be a victim of crime actually is one.

Officers have a duty to investigate allegations of criminality dispassionately by pursuing lines of inquiry that may support or undermine what they have been told. This case shows what can go wrong when they initially accept false claims as fact.

In my view the problems begin with the practice, widespread in the criminal justice system, of using the word "victim" to describe anyone making a complaint. From this uncritical start, police too often proceed on the assumption that a suspect is guilty, rather than innocent until proven guilty.

We should all be grateful that the

COMMENT JENNY WILTSHIRE

Head of general crime at Hickman & Rose solicitors

police and CPS eventually treated Beech as a suspect rather than a victim.

However, this was not before irreparable damage was done to the reputations of those he named as perpetrators, some of whom were no longer alive to defend themselves.

In my view the problems this case highlights are now so endemic in the criminal justice system that new legislation is needed to maintain suspects' anonymity until they are charged.



Carl Beech during his tearful interviews where he invented the allegations and at the time of his arrest, top, and court sketch of him in the dock yesterday

Beech. He was due to go on trial for downloading vile images of child sex abuse but fled to Sweden.

He was later extradited and charged with 12 counts of perverting the course of justice. He was further accused of defrauding taxpayers out of £22,000 in a false criminal compensation payout after saying Savile had raped him.

Yesterday, a jury at Newcastle found him guilty of all 12 counts of perverting the course of justice and of fraud.

He is due to be sentenced on Friday.

Beech, of Quedgeley, Glos, denied all the charges against him.

After the verdicts, the Met's Deputy Commissioner Sir Stephen House admitted the force "did not get everything right".

Yesterday, the Independent Office for Police Conduct cleared three officers who were investigated over misconduct allegations relating to applications for search warrants.

Sir Stephen said in a statement: "It must be remembered also that the work of Operation Midland was carried out against a backdrop of intense scrutiny and allegations that in the past the Met had covered up sensitive allegations about prominent people.

"It remains true that investigating allegations of sexual offences is a very complex and challenging area of police work. Those complexities are compounded where those allegations stretch back many decades."

OPINION: PAGE 12

Boy who enjoyed a privileged childhood in leafy suburbia



Beech as a schoolboy

WHILE fraud Carl Beech told the world he had seen unimaginable horrors in his childhood, the truth is he had a very privileged upbringing.

As an only child living in leafy Kingston-upon-Thames in south-west London, he was given his own horse and a dog.

There were summer holidays in Malta and Tunisia, a ski trip to Austria when he was 15, and he and his mother Charmian, an ex-nurse who became a vicar, formed a tight bond.

He claimed the abuse began after her brief marriage to his stepfather, the late Major Ray Beech. They parted after four months in 1976 due to his drunken domestic violence.

Beech, 51, claimed in adulthood his stepfather, who retired from the Army on health grounds, raped him and passed him on to his superiors to be exploited by paedophiles at the top of British society.

Many observers now doubt that accusation of abuse by his stepfather, given the way he subsequently changed his story in blogs.

Beech told police the alleged VIP paedophiles "The Ring" punished him when he broke their instruction not to have school friends by murdering a boy at his school. But

A CLASSIC CAR OBSESSION

CARL Beech used a criminal injuries payout to buy a £34,000 "muscle car".

The fraudster was obsessed with the Ford Mustang Drophead convertible, which he drove on a US trip in 2012.

Back home, he ordered a brochure to gaze at the white convertible model.

In August 2013 he made a special trip to see one and told police he needed cash to pay his counselling fees.

A payment of £22,000 was approved in March 2015 and Beech ordered the car the same day. He used £10,000 as the deposit - and the fees were never paid.

Northumbria Police found two friends from the Tudor School in Kingston who recalled happily spending time in the library with him.

Steven White said under oath: "I think we bonded. We were all probably socially awkward, spending time in the library and talking."

Jonathon Budd remembered him as "a good kid" who his parents liked. Beech became a paediatric nurse, working at children's hospitals in Birmingham and London, before becoming an NHS manager and a Care Quality Commission inspector.

He married now ex-wife Dawn, a

nurse, and they had a son. Beech began writing online about child sex abuse he claimed to have suffered. He had 57 blogs and wrote a fictitious memoir, full of horrifying detail, which left observers convinced he was actually inspired by his own perverted desires.

Police found he had downloaded indecent material. He also set up a camera to film a boy using a toilet and took covert photos of boys. After he was charged with making indecent images, voyeurism and perverting justice he went on the run to Sweden where police found him.

He married now ex-wife Dawn, a

Swimming pool videos of children

By Paul Jeeves

TWISTED Beech toured swimming pools across Europe recording videos of young boys using an underwater camera, it was revealed yesterday.

He took 59 videos using a waterproof GoPro camera strapped to his head as he swam beneath the surface.

Of 59 video clips, 53 were stored on a MacBook, one of several electronic devices which were seized from his home.

The images were not part of the collection which Beech amassed.

However, the fact he kept them showed he had "a fascination for filming boys underwater," claimed prosecutors during legal argument not seen by the jury. They wanted to play the footage to show Beech had no problem putting his head under water.

He told the trial that he could not submerge his head without a mask or nose clips because of a particular form of abuse.

He claimed Jimmy Savile and Lord Brittan had raped him as his head was held underwater.

Police acted maliciously, says ex-MP

By Henry Clare

FORMER Conservative MP Harvey Proctor, falsely accused of murder and child rape by fantasist Beech, has described the investigation as "a truly disgraceful chapter in the history of British policing".

Mr Proctor, who is gay, said Metropolitan Police's Operation Midland was "rogue, malicious and apparently homophobic".

He said his reputation had been ruined and he had had to leave his job as secretary to the Duke and Duchess of Rutland.

Mr Proctor also criticised Labour deputy leader Tom Watson who he said "gave oxygen" to the claims by holding talks with Beech.

He said: "It is time for an apology from him to me and everyone named or implicated in this truly disgraceful chapter in the history of British policing."

The 72-year-old, who was MP for Basildon and Billericay, has launched a civil action against the force and has called for an independent investigation.

A Met Police spokesman said the force would not "comment outside of the legal process".



DAILY EXPRESS

One Canada Square, London E14 5AP
Tel: 020 8612 7000 (outside UK: +44 20 8612 7000)

Case that proves police must learn lessons now

THE ABC rule is supposed to be a founding police principle: "Assume nothing. Believe no one. Challenge everything." Tragically, the case of Carl Beech proves that it can easily be overridden by a convincing liar.

Claiming to have news about a VIP paedophile ring at the heart of Westminster, Beech led officers a merry dance.

Known by the alias "Nick", his grisly claims were that several Establishment figures had been involved in historic sexual abuse, including late prime minister Edward Heath, as well as ex-MPs Harvey Proctor, Greville Janner, Leon Brittan and elderly military figures.

There were raids on the homes of the blameless. The police – no doubt chastened by the Jimmy Savile case, and trigger-happy after Operation Yewtree that investigated him and others – started Operation Midland, wasting £2million following up Beech's false allegations.

The farrago resulted in no arrests – apart from that of Beech himself, now convicted of perverting the course of justice and fraud.

An inevitable twist found Beech to be a paedophile, and latterly he evaded British law in Sweden. No doubt, "lessons will be learned". But they need to be learned and implemented quickly.

Time to stay and fight on

AS Boris Johnson prepares to take power, some colleagues are trying to scupper his premiership by making pre-emptive exits. Yesterday the Foreign Office minister and Remainer Alan Duncan resigned – not exactly out of principle, but more that he could table a no-confidence motion in our likely new prime minister.

His initiative follows noises off from Chancellor Philip Hammond and Justice Secretary David Gauke, who both intend to quit a Johnson-led government.

They may consider their intentions to be noble. But much of the reason for Mr Johnson's appointment is to bring forward the democratic mandate to leave the EU.

To try and stop this process is disruptive at best, and anti-democratic at worst. It also means the Tories will be even more divided. Stay, and fight the good fight.

Motsi's Strictly sparkling

DAME Darcey Bussell was a class act on blockbuster TV show Strictly Come Dancing, now in its 17th series. So we salute Motsi Mabuse, her replacement, whose undoubted talents will step up to the judge's bench and follow Darcey with aplomb.

The elder sister of Strictly Come Dancing star Oti, Motsi is a former South African champion and since 2011, a judge on Strictly Come Dancing's German version, called Let's Dance. "I hope to add my own bit of sparkle to the show," she said.

We'll definitely tune in.

How Boris could play a political masterstroke

SINCE Neil Armstrong first set foot on the Moon 50 years ago, more people have walked on it than have entered 10 Downing Street as a new prime minister.

So when Boris Johnson walks through the door tomorrow – assuming every prediction is correct – it will be a huge and rare moment.

He hasn't yet taken office but he is already being relentlessly attacked as a British version of Donald Trump: a Right-wing populist who will say and do anything to secure power.

I'm no particular fan of Mr Johnson. But while there are sensible reasons to worry about his suitability to be PM, the idea that he is some kind of British Trump is simply ridiculous and reveals far more about those making the accusation than it does about Mr Johnson.

Both in his record as Mayor of London and throughout the leadership campaign he has behaved as a mainstream liberal Conservative – far more of a "wet" (to use the old Thatcherite terminology) than the likes of Jacob Rees-Mogg and the Right of the Tory party.

For one thing, you do not win elections as mayor in a liberal and ethnically diverse city like London if you are not seen as being a champion of diversity.

One of Boris Johnson's very first decisions as foreign secretary was to lift the ban on British embassies flying the rainbow flag of gay pride.

HE HAS repeatedly made clear that he is in favour of more, not less, immigration – with one reason for his support for Brexit apparently being his desire to see immigrants from outside the EU get a fair crack of the whip.

As he put it during his time as mayor: "I'm probably about the only politician I know of who is actually willing to stand up and say that he's pro-immigration."

It's often forgotten that when he compared women who wear the burqa to letterboxes, he was



TOP JOB: Mr Johnson is more of a mainstream Conservative than a rabble-rousing populist



Stephen Pollard
Political commentator

actually defending their (and anyone else's) right to wear what they want – although his language may have been misguided. Whatever else he may be, Mr Johnson is not an idiot. He knows there are two groups which threaten his time as prime minister, both of which he has somehow to win over.

On the one hand are the hardline Brexiteers in the Commons who see No-deal as some kind of test of ideological purity. We can argue about the problems of leaving without a deal until the cows come home (or, until October 31) but at a time when the Conservative Party had to be led by a Brexiteer, he was the effective leader of the Leave campaign. If there is one person capable of persuading those hardline colleagues to agree to some sort of deal, surely it is Boris Johnson.

Whether and for how long he remains as PM will depend on

this. Then, if he delivers Brexit he will also neutralise the Brexit Party, aiding the Tories' electoral prospects.

There is another group he needs to woo if the Conservatives are to return to election-winning support: floating Labour voters. The sort of voters, that is, who David Cameron was able to prise away from Labour in 2010 and 2015.

He has one huge asset in doing this: Jeremy Corbyn, who is anathema to such centrist voters. These are the people who voted for him in 2008 and 2012 to be Mayor of London. But if he governed as a Right-wing populist he would not stand a chance of winning their votes come the next election.

We have already seen how he will run his administration, because it's how he ran City Hall as mayor. He describes it as being a company chairman who decides overall strategy

and lets the rest of his team bring it to fruition. In this vein, he is surely likely to appoint people with particular skills and drum up two or three flagship policy ideas that will define his government beyond Brexit.

Last week, for example, he pledged to end the injustice of families having to sell their homes to pay for dementia care.

WHAT could be a better legacy than being the first prime minister to actually move towards a sustainable settlement of our social care crisis?

But as events in the Strait of Hormuz show, even the best-laid plans can be hit by events. Boris Johnson faces a difficult enough time as PM with a majority of four – which will almost certainly be just three after the Brecon and Radnor by-election on August 1.

Now there are rumours of Tory MPs defecting to the LibDems. God help us if they open up the possibility of Jeremy Corbyn as PM.

Mr Johnson may be far from perfect. But if he plays his cards well, he could grab the centre ground and appease the Brexit lobby. That really would be a political masterstroke.

'You don't win elections in London if you're not a champion of diversity'