

## NICK: POLICE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

# HORRIFYING

Son of vilified war hero condemns police after Mail exposé... and says Met MUST come clean

By Stephen Wright, Glen Keogh and Gemma Buckley

LORD Bramall's son last night called on the head of Scotland Yard to order an independent criminal probe into alleged misconduct in the Met's bungled VIP child sex abuse inquiry.

Urging Met Commissioner Cressida Dick to call in an outside force, he said her officers had shown a 'staggering level of incompetence' in Operation Midland and also appeared to have 'acted illegally'.

Nick Bramall spoke out a day after details emerged of a damning document that showed police should never have raided the home of his 95-year-old father - a former

**'We want an honest conclusion'**

head of the Armed Forces. The raid was over false paedophile allegations made by the fantasist known as 'Nick', whose real name is Carl Beech.

A Mail investigation revealed that an application seeking permission to search Lord Bramall's home was riddled with falsehoods. Last night, Mr Bramall was scathing of the Met, saying: 'Their having listened to and believed the uncorroborated ramblings of Carl Beech was bad enough.'

'Now we discover that the injustices served on those falsely accused has been compounded by contempt for the law. The latest

## 'NICK': THE DAMNING DOCUMENT

The Mail yesterday

developments about the misleading evidence given in order to secure a search warrant is horrifying. They must come clean.'

His comments come a week after retired judge Sir Richard Henriques - who in 2016 wrote a scathing report on Operation Midland - said officers gave the judge false evidence to obtain the search warrants to raid the homes of Lord Bramall and two other VIPs and should face a criminal investigation.

Met Deputy Commissioner Sir Stephen House said last night: 'The Met has already published a redacted version of Sir Richard's report pending the investigation of Carl Beech. We will publish as full a version of the report as possible, as soon as we can now proceedings are complete.'

But Mr Bramall, 67, a successful landscape gardener in Dorset, added: 'Sir Richard's report must be published in full. He went to the trouble to write a very thorough report into Operation Midland and yet much of it has been withheld.'

'This whole sorry business continues with four years of my father's life ruined. He is not a well man and we want an honest con-



Family togetherness: Nick Bramall with his mother and father pictured in 2000

clusion before it's too late. To that end Commissioner Dick should order a criminal enquiry, carried out by an independent force otherwise much of the respect for the Met will be lost.'

Speaking in the wake of the latest revelations, former Director of Public Prosecutions Lord Macdonald QC said: 'This scandal is growing by the day. Police officers are under an absolute duty to be frank, open and truthful when they are applying for a search warrant.'

'But the document uncovered by the Mail... omitted crucial information that completely undermined their own case. Misleading

a court in this way is not only a disgrace, it is probably criminal. 'Public confidence demands an independent inquiry into the handling of Operation Midland.'

Tory MP Nigel Evans joined the demands for a fully independent inquiry. He said: 'Quite frankly, huge errors were made. I think it would be very wise of Cressida Dick to ensure this is independently looked at by an outside force.'

Daniel Janner QC, whose father Lord Janner was falsely accused of abuse by Beech, said: 'An outside police force should be brought in immediately. Cressida Dick needs to act decisively if faith in the

police is to be restored.' Yesterday the Mail revealed how detectives claimed in a secret search warrant application that they had no reason to doubt claims made by Beech. The document was presented to a judge who approved the raid on Lord Bramall's home in March 2015.

But an investigation by this newspaper has established that police were aware of at least eight factors that raised serious questions about the claims made by Beech, a 51-year-old former nurse.

The revelations about the warrants for raids on Lord Bramall, former home secretary Lord Brit-

tan and ex Tory MP Harvey Proctor piled pressure on Home Secretary Priti Patel to order a fresh inquiry.

Last week she demanded a full explanation of the police watchdog's decision to clear three Operation Midland officers. Two more senior officers were exonerated two years ago.

Last month vicar's son Beech was jailed for 18 years for telling lies about alleged VIP child abuse and murder.

The Met Police gave nearly £1million to another force while investigating Beech. A Freedom of Information request showed they reimbursed Northumbria Police £951,982 for probing his fabrications.

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## Now bitter blame game breaks out at Yard

THE police chief who led the bungled inquiry was under mounting pressure last night after his former Scotland Yard boss distanced herself from the decision to raid the homes of high-profile figures including Lord Bramall.

Ex Met assistant commissioner Patricia Gallan said Operation Midland gold commander Steve Rodhouse had 'operational control' and 'oversaw' the investigation into an alleged Establishment paedophile ring. She added: 'I did not approve the raids nor was my permission or advice sought before the execution of the Section 8 warrants.'

Her intervention placed former Met deputy assistant commissioner Mr Rodhouse - now the £175,000-a-year director general (operations) at the National Crime Agency - firmly at the centre of the Operation Midland search warrants scandal.

Miss Gallan's comment came in response to a series of questions from the Daily Mail that she answered before sex abuse fantasist 'Nick', real name Carl Beech, was convicted of perverting the course of justice and



By Stephen Wright  
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

fraud last month. As an assistant commissioner in the Met - the third most senior rank in the force - she had oversight of Operation Midland and received regular briefings from Mr Rodhouse.

She also updated former Scotland Yard boss Lord Hogan-Howe on the progress of the 16-month inquiry which ended without any arrests or charges in March 2016.

Miss Gallan told the Mail that upon taking her post as assistant commissioner in February 2015 and being briefed on Operation Midland 'by the gold commander', she 'ordered an immediate review of what was by that stage a long-running investigation'.

She said she raised concerns about the use of the phrase 'credible and true' by a senior Met officer to describe key witness 'Nick' at

the start of Operation Midland. She added: 'I cannot speak for the views of the investigators in this case.'

'My view then and now is that it is for the courts, not the police to decide on the truth or otherwise of a witness. It is the role of the police to investigate and then to present the evidence to the CPS who must decide whether there should be a prosecution.'

Asked how often Lord Hogan-Howe was updated on Operation Midland, Miss Gallan

**'Not for the police to decide on the truth'**

said the chief 'would have been briefed as and when appropriate as per any other significant investigation'.

Miss Gallan's willingness to answer questions was in sharp contrast to Mr Rodhouse, who declined to answer any of ten questions put to him by the Daily Mail last month.

These included whether he approved the use of the phrase 'credible and true' by Det

Supt Kenny McDonald in December 2014 and whether he approved the raids on the homes of Lord Bramall, Lord Brittan and ex-Tory MP Harvey Proctor in March 2015.

Yesterday the Mail revealed how the emergence of the search warrant application for the raid on the home of former Armed Forces chief Lord Bramall put Mr Rodhouse at the centre of the Operation Midland row.

The document revealed that a district judge approved the police request after being assured its implications had been 'considered at DAC level' - deputy assistant commissioner, Mr Rodhouse's rank at the time.

Following the scathing report into Operation Midland by ex-High Court judge Sir Richard Henriques in November 2016, which cleared Miss Gallan of any blame, Mr Rodhouse was referred to the police watchdog for potential breaches of 'duties and responsibilities' in the investigation.

Along with Mr McDonald he was cleared in March 2017. The watchdog said there was no evidence to indicate 'bad faith, malice or dishonesty' by the officers and Operation Midland was 'carried out diligently'.



Accusations: Steve Rodhouse was a leading figure in the VIP probe

THE Metropolitan Police, in the way it conducted its investigation into Establishment figures accused of terrible sex abuse, has made appalling mistakes.

We now realise how grossly mishandled the case was from start to finish - from the first unsubstantiated claims by the paedophile fantasist Carl Beech, known to police as 'Nick', up to the continued refusal of the Met to admit their dreadful errors and apologise.

You might expect me, as a former Home Secretary, to rant and rave about this deplorable perversion of the mechanics of justice. And believe me, I do deplore it. There is no exaggeration in saying that the whole integrity of the criminal justice process has been called into question.

But my chief feeling is one of sorrow, not anger. I'm a great admirer of Britain's police and it saddens me to see the Met in such a mess. In no way do I condone or minimise any of the mistakes, but I understand how they came about. I should do: I am a politician, and I've committed mistakes of my own.

The most important rule whenever errors are made, however, is to acknowledge them. Own up. Come clean. Unless you admit to the mistakes, you cannot learn from them. And it is imperative that the Met learn from their mistakes with 'Nick', because if they don't then the same dire situation might arise again.

In cases of alleged abuse, our understandable inclination as a society is now to tend to believe the alleged victims. This was not always so. In the past, sexual horror stories were too easily dismissed, and some very well known figures were able to get away with awful crimes.

Because of the cases over the past 20 years or so, the pendulum of public opinion has swung the other way. Our instinct is now to side with the apparent victim. But justice is not a pendulum, and the police must not veer wildly from side to side. That's how catastrophes occur.

The fundamental basis of policing is to follow the evidence. The facts must always be tested and interrogated, as investigating officers examine in detail whether the allegations stack up. It is methodical, painstaking work, and it can be wrecked if there is a prior assumption by police about a suspect's guilt.

In this case, some officers had clearly decided to believe Beech's claims, no matter how outlandish and despite a catalogue of blatant lies that should have exposed him at once as dishonest. This led to severe consequences for several people who should never have been serious suspects - including my fellow former Home Secretary, Leon Brittan, who died before his name could be cleared.

He and others were bundled on to a rollercoaster of events from which they could not escape, treated as figures of public shame.

The shoddiness of the evidence which enabled police to get a search warrant and raid the home of Field Marshal Lord Bramall, regarded as our greatest living soldier, defies belief.

The police application put before Judge Howard Riddle now appears to be filled with contradictions and falsehoods.

At the top of the form, Beech was described as 'a credible witness who is telling the truth' and whose 'account has remained consistent'. In fact, as the Mail has revealed, his stories were riddled with holes that police were purposefully ignoring - such as unsubstantiated claims that one of Beech's schoolmates disappeared (supposedly strangled by a prominent MP) and that Beech himself missed many days of school because of sexually inflicted injuries. Both these lies were easily disproved, yet there was no mention of them in the request for a warrant.

The officer making that request was a detective sergeant. It would be wrong to scapegoat that man. The problem lies not in individuals or 'bad apples'. When the application for a warrant was filed, it was considered by very senior officers - and Deputy Assistant Commissioner Steve Rodhouse was gold commander in charge of the investigation.

Why haven't he and other high-ranking figures in the force come forward? I'm deeply concerned that the Met appears to be trying to cover up its mistakes, rather than acknowledging them.

# I admire our police, but I fear the Met's trying to cover up its mistakes, not admit to them



By Lord Blunkett

FORMER HOME SECRETARY

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By now, these officers should have taken responsibility and apologised profusely for the enormous hurt and damage caused. We shouldn't still be waiting for their contrition - we should already be seeing mechanisms put in place to ensure nothing of the like can ever happen again.

Instead, there is a surly evasiveness from all concerned in the force. Lord Bramall and his family have not received anything like the apology they deserve, and nor have the other victims. As Home Secretary, I was faced with systemic problems in some parts of police forces. In 2001, I had to ask Chief Constable Paul Whitehouse to resign over his failure to ensure murders in Sussex were being properly investigated.

When the country was rocked in 2002 by the murder of two ten-year-old girls in Soham, I was

confronted by desperate failures of record-keeping and communication between police in Humberside and Cambridgeshire.

Sorting these issues out wasn't easily done. When challenged, the police force has a tendency to become overly defensive. But that helps nobody. I'll say it again: when mistakes are made, the important thing is to learn from them, not to try and hide them.

That's why it is essential the report into the Carl Beech case by retired High Court judge Sir Richard Henriques is published without redactions - and, if it really is impossible for some information to be made public, we have to be told the underlying reasons. It is no longer acceptable for passages in this report to be blacked out without explanation.

I'd suggest it is more appropriate to hand the investigation to the National Crime Agency - except that Steve Rodhouse, the former Deputy Assistant Commissioner was gold commander in charge of this investigation and is now No 2 at the NCA. Ironically, for the past 18 months they have been investigating the failings of the South Yorkshire police in respect of historic child abuse cases.

Clearly an alternative independent outside body is needed in this case. That all goes to show how hard it's going to be to unravel this mess.

But one thing shouldn't be hard. An unequivocal apology has to be offered, sincere and unreserved, to all the people whose lives were turned upside-down and whose reputations were smeared because of Carl Beech's lies.

Let's hear that apology right now. Until we do, there can be no lessons drawn from these terrible events.

simply continue to behave as though it's someone else's responsibility. And the same goes for Priti Patel, the new Home Secretary, whose silence is anything but golden.

I do not believe it is appropriate to launch a wholesale investigation into the Met. This scandal is not on the scale, for example, of corruption in the West Midlands fraud squad during the Seventies, when wrong-doing infected the force root and branch.

But the specific circumstances of this case have to be examined impartially. It is not enough to put the probe in the hands of an inexperienced investigator just a few years out of university, which has been the response of the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

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# Daily Mail

## COMMENT

### Met's honour on trial over VIP sex fiasco

BUNKER mentality has set in at Scotland Yard as the Metropolitan Police seeks to play down its disastrous mishandling of Operation Midland – the inquiry into a non-existent VIP sex abuse ring that resulted in the homes of totally innocent people being raided by officers using search warrants obtained by deceiving a judge.

As former home secretary David Blunkett states in this newspaper today, the Midland fiasco is an appalling stain on the Met, and will remain so until it does the decent thing and admits its culpability. Yet, Commissioner Cressida Dick remains silent, refusing to commit to an independent inquiry into misconduct bordering on criminality.

Stonewalling is a common tactic of modern officialdom. But be assured: the Mail will be unrelenting in its pursuit of the truth about this disgraceful affair.

Not only in the cause of rooting out wrongdoing by the powerful – a vital ingredient of democracy – but in deference to those who have suffered.

One of them is Field Marshal Lord Bramall, now 95 years of age. This D-Day veteran has suffered not only terrible 'indignity' but also 'injustice', says his son.

The police deserve our support and respect in normal circumstances. But this is conditional upon them observing the highest standards of behaviour – and admitting their failings.

Edwin Bramall is holder of the Military Cross, an honourable man. The Met should learn from him how honourable men and women behave.

### Battle of the Doms

TORY arch Remainer Dominic Grieve warns that the Queen may have to sack Boris Johnson if he refuses to quit Number 10 following a no confidence vote designed to sabotage Brexit.

The proposed replacement: a figurehead prime minister leading an unholy rainbow alliance of Labour, the Lib Dems, Tory rebels and the SNP – which is being bought off with the promise of a second independence referendum.

Febrile speculation is to be expected in the summer months, as MPs plot away on their Provencal patios. But does the country need a lash-up administration concocted over the phone to frustrate the result of the 2016 EU referendum?

Equally unsettling are the comments of Dominic Cummings, Mr Johnson's chief (unelected) adviser, a man who delights in upsetting apple carts. He claims that, even if the Government falls in early September, it can cling on until after Brexit has been achieved on October 31.

This 'Battle of the Doms' threatens to drag us into a constitutional quagmire that will simply exacerbate ill-feeling in the country. Cooler counsel should prevail.

The Prime Minister is pursuing a policy of seeking a deal with the EU while planning in detail for the opposite eventuality. This is to convince our European partners – who will also suffer in a No Deal world – of his seriousness of purpose. He should be allowed to get on with it.

Mr Johnson's best hope of political survival lies in pursuing this policy sincerely. If this country is to quit the EU with No Deal, it should not be due to any unwillingness on his part to negotiate. The stakes are too high for testosterone politics.

IN a fine example of upbeat 'boosterism', new Transport Secretary Grant Shapps promises to reverse seven successive years of worsening punctuality on the railways – while ignoring the little matter of his party's responsibility for them since 2010. Still, we wish Mr Shapps well in making the trains run on time. Certainly, he can do no worse than his ill-starred predecessor Chris Grayling – who was no Il Duce. Promises like this can come back to haunt politicians. But we take Mr Shapps at his word – and hope he can indeed make life a little easier for the long-suffering travelling public.

# Why I fear the future of Britain (and Boris) is now in the hands of an unelected Svengali



by Peter Osborne

**D**OMINIC Cummings, who is today installed in Downing Street as arguably the second most powerful man in Britain, first came to public attention when played by Benedict Cumberbatch in Channel 4's *Brexit: The Uncivil War*.

The drama told the behind-the-scenes story of Vote Leave's successful campaign in the 2016 EU referendum.

Cumberbatch interpreted Cummings, the campaign director, as a sinister anti-hero and *eminence grise* controlling events.

Boris Johnson, officially the leader of Vote Leave, was given little more than a walk-on role, portrayed as a slightly bumbling idiot figure who travelled the country to address public meetings according to a script written for him by the much more committed Cummings.

Johnson the monkey. Cummings the organ grinder.

### Contemptuous

Three years later, and life is copying art. With one crucial difference. Cummings is no longer in the shadows, operating behind the scenes – this Svengali is out in the open.

Indeed, he seems to relish being seen in public, striding ostentatiously into Downing Street every morning.

Now, we are all familiar with his shaven head, scruffy T-shirts, crumpled appearance and contemptuous and appraising eyes, his newspapers and bundles of documents carried in a Vote Leave bag.

According to some papers, and many ministers and civil servants I have spoken to recently, this is the man who is truly running Britain. It's Cummings who oversees the No 10 grid which controls the timing of announcements and public events.

It's in this capacity that he dispatches the PM up and down Britain, photographed in hospitals, sharing selfies with nurses, and on construction sites wearing a hard hat. It is also Cummings, not Johnson,

who determines political strategy – hence the huge public spending announcements on health, extra police and other issues.

Indeed, it looks very much as if Johnson has become the public face of Cummings.

And this, I am afraid, is profoundly disturbing. No one ever voted for Cummings, he has little experience of life outside politicking yet he has been given unprecedented power at a moment of immense crisis in the national fortunes.

Within hours of Johnson becoming Tory leader two weeks ago, newly anointed special adviser Cummings called 'his' staff together in the magnificent Downing Street first-floor state room.

He told them that he plans to deliver Brexit 'by any means necessary'.

It is a phrase that could not be more chilling, given that it was coined in the Sixties by extremist black rights activist Malcolm X when he rejected the peaceful approach of civil rights leader Martin Luther King.

Cummings's use of this dangerous and inflammatory language was, in my view, not accidental. He used the term no fewer than six times in his speech that day.

Unlike Malcolm X, Cummings was not advocating violence, but there's certainly a touch of gangsterism about his reported threat to advisers who talk to journalists.

At a 7.55am meeting on Monday, he apparently told them they would be sacked without any right of appeal if they leaked information that damages the Government's Brexit policy.

He would, he said, be able to persuade journalists to reveal their sources. 'My worth to journalists is far greater than yours... they will rat you out. You have no rights,' he added.

And Cummings is certainly advocating ripping up the metaphorical rule book of the British state as it has existed

for centuries. This became crystal clear over the weekend in the wake of a No 10 briefing in which Cummings told colleagues Johnson plans to stay in office even if he is voted out and defeated in a Commons confidence motion.

A Prime Minister would normally quit within minutes of such a humiliation. It goes without saying that such conduct would be a two-fingered salute to our entire system of government.

Experts say it could at once drag the Queen into politics because ultimately it would be her constitutional duty to order Johnson to step down.

But smashing the status quo is what Cummings is all about. He is, in truth, a far more revolutionary figure even than Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

This is a man who is utterly disdainful of the conventions of British public life.

He despises our tried and tested system of representative democracy, so much so that he was found in contempt of Parliament after refusing to appear in front of MPs on the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport committee who were investigating fake news during the Referendum campaign. (He said he offered to appear, but was rebuffed.)

### Shame

Cummings is known for his loathing of the Civil Service. He has also been accused of telling lies to advance his political project. For example, the now infamous '£350 million for the NHS' slogan on the side of the Vote Leave bus is believed by many to have been his handiwork.

Those who support him say this revolutionary approach is justified because Brexit cannot be delivered in any other way. Conventional means were tried and failed during Theresa May's three-year premiership.

I disagree. Margaret Thatcher, the most radical

Tory leader of the past century, was always respectful of Parliament, the Civil Service and the Monarchy.

Certainly, she used advisers. But she never became their creature, or as dependent on them as Johnson, to his shame, appears to be on Cummings.

The same applies to Winston Churchill, upon whom Johnson appears to model himself. Churchill was his own man. He had no need of an adviser to dictate to him what he thought and did.

There is no constitutional outrage in Johnson doing and saying what he is told to do by Cummings. That's a matter for him, even if it is embarrassing and undignified.

### Arrogance

But what a bitter irony that Brexit – which was supposed to 'take back control' – has ended up with Government policy so much in thrall to an unelected official.

By the way, don't believe the fawning comments and profiles of Cummings by some journalists who kowtow to him because they need access and rely on his information.

Yes, he's got lots of clever theories and has run successful political campaigns, but has little experience of real life.

He's the supreme example of the type of nerdy political obsessives who have done so much damage to British politics over the past 25 years.

Indeed, one factor worries me more than anything else. There is a precedent for the Cummings/Johnson partnership that governs Britain as Brexit looms.

Tony Blair was also a creature of his powerful adviser, Alastair Campbell. They showed equal arrogance and contempt for Parliament.

They, too, were indifferent to truth. They, too, had little integrity. The Blair/Campbell double act ended in the tragedy of the Iraq war, the unnecessary deaths of countless Iraqis, 179 brave British service personnel and ultimately the rise of Islamic State.

We can only hope that the double act of Boris Johnson and Dominic Cummings has a happier outcome.