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EXCLUSIVE

By **Stephen Wright**
Associate News Editor

THE police watchdogs who cleared five 'Nick' scandal detectives are savaged by a former High Court judge today.

Richard Henriques says 'no effective interrogations' were carried out during the 'flawed' inquiry by the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

Calling on Home Secretary Priti Patel to take action, he expresses alarm at the watchdog's 'lack of knowledge of criminal procedure'.

In an article in today's Daily Mail, Sir Richard accuses the agency of 'gross and inexcusable delays' in a 'lamentable and inadequate' inquiry.

His bombshell comments come as the IOPC prepares to publish a report explaining why it exonerated the officers involved in a disastrous VIP child sex abuse probe.

Sources familiar with the dossier call it a 'disgraceful whitewash' - 'sloppy, partial and full of errors'.

Sir Richard, who spent several

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JUDGE BLASTS 'NICK' POLICE WHITEWASH

Fury at watchdogs who cleared officers of misconduct in sex abuse fantasist case

WHERE'S CRESSIDA?

Pressure grows on Yard Commissioner after her failure to publicly face music over VIP sex abuse scandal fallout

By **Stephen Wright**
Associate News Editor

DAME Cressida Dick is under mounting pressure to make a full statement about her role in the bungled VIP child abuse inquiry after ex-High Court judge Sir Richard Henriques said watchdogs should have interviewed her about it.

In today's damning Mail commentary, Sir Richard insists the Scotland Yard chief should have been quizzed about her knowledge of the case.

His remarks came as criticism intensified over Dame Cressida's role following Sir Richard's scathing report into her force's handling of the VIP sex ring allegations.

Yesterday the Sunday Telegraph quoted a senior Government source as saying: 'It's clear that the report raises serious questions about leadership, yet the public have heard very little from Cressida Dick on this, which has worried people in senior levels of the Government.'

'There are concerns that she has washed her hands of this.' The criticism was fuelled when the full humili-



Pressure: Dame Cressida Dick

ating details of Sir Richard's 2016 report on Operation Midland were released on Friday and it was Dame Cressida's deputy, Sir Stephen House, who made a Press statement about the case and fielded questions.

The Metropolitan Commissioner was at an annual memorial service for a murdered police officer elsewhere in London but sources pointed out that it was her force's decision to release the report on Friday morning.

Dame Cressida was an Assistant Commissioner in charge of specialist crime and operations in the Met in October 2014 when 'Nick' - real name Carl Beech - was interviewed at length about outlandish allegations he made.

He claimed the heads of MI5 and MI6 used him as a human dartboard and that D-Day hero Lord Bramall fraternised with Jimmy Savile and ordered him to eat his own vomit.

He also falsely alleged former prime minister Ted Heath and ex-Home Secretary Leon Brittan were in a gang that murdered three boys.

Dame Cressida oversaw the setting up of Operation Midland under Deputy Assistant Commissioner Steve Rodhouse in November 2014, and was

10 questions this officer must answer

EX-YARD Deputy Assistant Commissioner Steve Rodhouse was in charge of the disastrous sex abuse probe sparked by fantasist Carl Beech, also known as 'Nick'. Today he has a top job at the National

Crime Agency after he was cleared in four months by police watchdogs without even being interviewed. Here are the questions ex-judge Sir Richard Henriques says he SHOULD have been asked...

- 1** Why did you not read either Carl Beech's police interviews or his blogs, and how was it possible to accurately assess his credibility without considering them?
- 2** Why did you agree with Det Supt Kenny McDonald in saying that 'if asked we will say that we do believe Nick (Beech)' when neither of you had met Beech or read his interviews and blogs?
- 3** Why on that same day did you write in a log that a full investigation was required to establish Beech's credibility?
- 4** Having concluded that it was inappropriate for Mr McDonald to have used the words 'credible and true' to publicly describe Beech's allegations, what steps did you take either immediately or thereafter to correct his error?
- 5** Did you consult or communicate with your immediate superior at the time, Assistant Commissioner Cressida Dick, concerning Mr McDonald's error and possible means of correcting it?
- 6** Why did the error remain uncorrected and in the public domain from December 18, 2014, until corrected on September 21, 2015?
- 7** Was it appropriate for you to authorise the applications for search warrants for the homes of Lord Bramall, Harvey Proctor and the late Lord Brittan having not read any police interview with Beech or his blogs?
- 8** Why did you not review the applications before they were presented to court?
- 9** The district judge relied on the fact that the applications had been considered at deputy assistant commissioner level. Having read no interview, no blog and no application, was your oversight sufficient and responsible?
- 10** Why, when Operation Midland ended, did you state 'we have found no evidence of Nick (Beech) wilfully misleading the investigation team or perverting the course of justice'? This is singularly inaccurate as Beech's subsequent convictions demonstrate.

also in post a month later when a senior detective described Nick as giving a 'credible and true' account.

Scotland Yard confirmed Dame Cressida was not interviewed by Sir Richard as part of his 2016 investigation into Operation Midland.

He was not made aware of her crucial role overseeing the early stages of the investigation, as she had left to join the Foreign Office by the time he was commissioned to write his report. She rejoined the Met later.

Her name did not feature in his report and her involvement overseeing Operation Midland was not widely known until last month when the Daily Mail revealed it. Commenting on the police

watchdog's inquiry into Operation Midland officers, Sir Richard writes today: 'Emails between officers should have been examined. DAC Rodhouse's immediate superiors - Assistant Commissioner Cressida Dick and her successor Patricia Gallan - should have been interviewed about their roles in the investigation, the briefings they received and their responses.'

A Met spokesman confirmed she had received briefings on the operation. Former Tory MP Harvey Proctor, who was falsely accused of serial murder by Beech, 51, has alleged Dame Cressida neglected her duty. MPs on the home affairs committee have indicated they want to question her.



HOW IS THIS MAN STILL IN A JOB?

He drove the botched 'Nick' inquiry - and was damned in the judge's scathing report. His punishment? To be promoted to run Britain's 'FBI'... on £245,000 a year

Cleared in months: Former DAC Steve Rodhouse

Picture: BRADLEY PAGE

THE tardy publication of the Independent Office for Police Conduct report exonerating all five officers involved in the application for search warrants at the homes of Lord Bramall, Lady Brittan and Harvey Proctor should give rise to the most serious public disquiet.

Whilst all five, absent any proper investigation, must be presumed innocent, the responsibility of the IOPC was to carry out a high quality investigation in a timely manner. The delay in reaching their findings of almost three years is gross and inexcusable and goes some way to inhibiting any further investigation.

The investigative process itself was minimal, unprofessional and the decision-making was flawed. The complaint was referred by the then Met commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, at my request, to the police watchdog, then named the IPCC, in November 2016. I had concluded the search warrants had been obtained unlawfully and I called for a vigorous investigation into the decision to apply for them.

No such vigorous investigation has taken place. Neither Deputy Assistant Commissioner Steve Rodhouse nor Detective Superintendent Kenny McDonald have been asked a single question in interview as 'subjects' (potential suspects) - written answers having been accepted without questioning.

Both were exonerated within four months and were later interviewed as potential witnesses against the more junior officers.

A decision was taken to investigate all five officers for misconduct as opposed to gross misconduct or criminal conduct, notwithstanding the fact that false documentation had been placed before a district judge on oath, in order to obtain the warrants. Their source, Carl Beech, was described as having remained consistent 'and he is felt to be a credible witness who is telling the truth'.

But he had not remained consistent and officers failed to disclose seven factors that undermined his credibility.

The investigation of the three more junior officers proceeded so slowly that all of them had retired by the time any decision was reached. Had disciplinary measures been ordered they could no longer have been imposed. Both Detective Inspector Alison Hepworth and Detective Sergeant Eric Sword submitted written answers to questions which were accepted with no cross examination.

The only officer to be questioned face to face was Detective Chief Inspector Diane Tudway who by reason of the passage of time 'was unable to recollect what information was available at what time'. No

attempt was made to establish what material was available to each officer. This could have been simply achieved by reference to available logs and other documentation. It follows that no effective interrogation of any officer was carried out.

HAVING agreed with Sir Bernard on October 31, 2016, that this matter should be investigated by the IPCC, I anticipated contact from a senior watchdog official in the early stages of its inquiry, to question me in detail about my concerns over the officers' conduct.

I was not contacted until July 2018 - 20 months later - when the 'lead investigator' asked me to make a statement by telephone.

She informed me she had no legal training, was not fully aware of the process for obtaining warrants and initial attempts to create a statement failed. I agreed to write my own statement and submitted it electronically.

I was shocked to learn that the two most senior officers in Operation Midland - DAC Rodhouse and DSU McDonald - had been exonerated more than a year earlier and that 'mere misconduct' was being investigated in preference to gross misconduct or criminal misconduct.

In the final paragraph of my report on Operation Midland I

In July this judge made the bombshell claim that detectives broke the law while probing false claims of VIP sex abuse. Today, he blasts the police watchdog who ruled not ONE officer should be punished over the scandal



**Lamentable.
Inadequate.
Inexcusable.**

by Sir Richard Henriques

RETIRED HIGH COURT JUDGE

wrote: 'At the conclusion of my interview with the officers on 16/17 August 2016, I formed the view that notwithstanding the many mistakes I have enumerated above (43), the officers had conducted the investigation in a conscientious manner and with propriety and honesty.'

It appears that the IOPC used these words to justify their findings exculpating all five officers.

In the preceding paragraphs I had called for a vigorous investigation to be conducted by those with appropriate investigative powers. Prior to any such investigation the officers were presumed to be innocent. Such presumption may or may not have survived a full and proper investigation.

No 'subject' is to be tried for misconduct or criminal conduct without proper investigation. My concluding observation should not have been used as a basis for failing to carry out a high quality

and timely investigation. I did not have the authority to carry out any disciplinary investigation myself. Written responses from four of the officers should have been tested by cross examination. All five officers should have been interviewed and cross examined. Junior officers should have been interviewed before the senior officers were exonerated.

There is no justification for the officer in charge of Operation Midland, DAC Rodhouse, to have been exonerated after four months, more than two years before the junior officers were cleared.

Other Midland officers should have been interviewed. Emails between officers should have been examined. DAC Rodhouse's immediate superiors, then Assistant Commissioner Cressida Dick and her successor Patricia Galan, should have been interviewed about their roles in the investigation, the briefings they received

and their responses. DAC Rodhouse and DCI Tudway in particular had numerous difficult questions to answer. In the context of these facts it is crucial to observe the presumption of innocence.

It is possible that senior officers delegated the drafting, reviewing and presentation of the search warrant applications to fully informed junior officers who were responsible for the errors.

It is also possible the senior officers knew full well that no judge would grant the applications if they were accurately drafted setting out the undermining factors - and that junior officers with incomplete knowledge of the operation were deployed to make the applications.

CLOSE examination of logs, minutes from office meetings, policy files, weekly briefings, 'Gold Group' minutes, and emails would have resolved such issues and still could. I readily conclude that one or more of the five officers may not have committed misconduct in the application for warrants.

However I find it difficult to conceive that no misconduct or criminality was involved by at least one officer. Beech was not consistent. There were numerous undermining facts omitted from the applications. A rigorous and timely inves-

tigation - headed by a serving or retired chief constable from an outside force - would have detected the misconduct or criminality.

This has been my first contact with either the IPCC or the IOPC.

Whilst I have been treated with the utmost courtesy, I have been alarmed by the lack of knowledge of relevant criminal procedure. The 'lead investigator' readily conceded her lack of relevant education, training and experience. She should not have been tasked with this highly-sensitive case.

She must not be made a scapegoat for failings in the IOPC under its director-general Michael Lockwood, an accountant with many years in local government.

It is a matter of profound regret that one of the most unsatisfactory and error-ridden criminal operations in history should be followed by such a lamentably slow and inadequate process.

Maintenance of law and order depends upon the effective oversight of those invested with power. Who guards the guards themselves? A malfunctioning police force has not received the necessary oversight. Those acting for people shamefully and adversely affected by this chain of events need no assistance from me. The Home Secretary will wish to address these shocking failures.

Sir Richard Henriques neither sought nor received payment for this article.

Daily Mail

COMMENT

Is anyone policing the police in Britain?

THE Roman poet Juvenal once asked the rhetorical question: 'Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?', or 'Who guards the guards?'

That is pertinent indeed as the stench from one of the most disgraceful chapters in the Metropolitan Police's history lingers and spreads. Today, it is posed by Sir Richard Henriques in a damning condemnation of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

After the eminent retired High Court judge wrote a damning 2016 report exposing the abysmal failings in Scotland Yard's bungled VIP child-sex ring investigation, the watchdog was tasked with scrutinising the conduct of five officers.

Not only had detectives declared the deranged allegations 'credible and true', they duped a judge to secure illegal search warrants. By giving myopic credence to a paedophile's preposterous fantasies, the Met destroyed innocent lives and cost taxpayers £4.5million.

Now, as the IOPC's report is - finally - published today, Sir Richard dismisses it as an 'alarming' whitewash. In a crushing verdict, he brands its inquiry late and lamentably inadequate, hampering further criminal investigations into the outrage.

Incredibly, despite his unrivalled knowledge of the case, he wasn't interviewed for nearly two years - and then only on the phone by someone barely out of short trousers. That not a single officer has been punished for this entire cavalier and calamitous scandal truly beggars belief.

Certainly not the then Met chief Bernard Hogan-Howe, who was rewarded with a place in the Lords. Nor Deputy Assistant Commissioner Steve Rodhouse, promoted to a gold-plated post at Britain's 'FBI'.

And definitely not Operation Midland's original leader, Cressida Dick, now Met Commissioner. Cravenly, she's vanished, leaving her unimpressive No 2 Sir Stephen House to read out churlish statements.

Preservation of law and order is contingent on effective oversight of those handed power. Here we have a dysfunctional force supervised by a dysfunctional watchdog.

Who guards the guards indeed? Home Secretary Priti Patel must reflect upon this 2,000-year-old question urgently.

Grow up, Brussels

AFTER legislating to block a No Deal Brexit, smug Remain MPs patted themselves heartily on their backs.

But with supreme irony, their plot to make a clean break from the EU impossible has made this outcome much more likely.

To sort out the Irish backstop, Boris Johnson submitted sensible plans based on difficult and generous concessions, winning cross-Commons support. But Eurocrats, with no imperative to negotiate, just sneer contemptuously. They want capitulation.

They're gambling on pro-Remain parties winning a general election - and revoking Article 50. But that's a dangerous assumption - one poll puts the Tories 15 points ahead.

If Boris won a majority, it's unlikely such a benevolent offer would stay on the table. Therefore, to avoid a No Deal Brexit that would cause everyone economic pain, compromise is essential. Now's the time for the EU's posturing juveniles to grow up.

Tackle this unfair tax

IT'S wholly conceivable that Britain will soon be asked to vote in a general election.

If so, the Mail respectfully suggests the Tories find room in their manifesto for a promise to reform iniquitous inheritance tax. Rising house prices and a threshold freeze mean what was intended as a levy on the rich now wallops the middle classes.

Yesterday, the Housing Secretary conceded it's 'unfair'. Actually, it's more than unfair. Re-taxing the same money after someone's death verges on immoral.

Addressing this unpopular tithe would help millions... and help Hoover up countless precious votes.

Why a horseshoe bat in Kent exposes the sheer folly of today's mass eco-protests

AND now for some good news. One of Britain's and Northern Europe's rarest and most elusive mammals has been discovered living in the East of England for the first time in 115 years.

Revealing this happy development, the Guardian said: 'The return to Kent of the greater horseshoe bat has delighted and astounded conservationists.'

But what is the reason for the unexpected return of this creature with its 'distinctive, alien-like ultrasonic warbling signals'? According to a spokesman for the Bat Conservation Trust, it seems possible that 'the species is now able to expand its range into Kent due to climate changes'.

But isn't climate change meant to be an ecological disaster for every living thing on the planet? That's the Guardian's usual line, and it is definitely the view of the eco-protest group known as Extinction Rebellion, which from today is launching 'mass-disruption' in our capital city as part of its attempt to bully politicians to make the UK 'net carbon zero by 2025'.

Furnace

Actually, I wonder why they bother, since the co-founder and leader of Extinction Rebellion, Roger Hallam, told the Sunday Times: 'We're all going to be dead soon, so there's nothing else to do.'

In like spirit, the 16-year-old Swedish schoolgirl Greta Thunberg declares that unless we immediately switch to a form of existence not seen since before the Industrial Revolution, she and others of her age will not grow up to have children of their own because Earth will very soon be an uninhabitable furnace.

The same approach is championed in America by the no less charismatic 29-year-old Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who declaims: 'The world is going to end in 12 years' - not 11 or 13 years, she's most precise - 'if we don't address climate change.'

The only problem with this is that it isn't true. Not remotely so. What is true is that if, in line with Hallam's demands, we revert to what he enthusiastically describes as 'a peasant orientation which obviously has been completely lost in Western society', we will indeed witness a shortening of life expectancy and even the



THE DOMINIC LAWSON COLUMN

prospect of mass starvation (we might have to beg for food aid from rapidly industrialising China).

But what about our friends in the animal kingdom? Are they truly at imminent threat of global wipe-out as a result of the CO2 we emit?

Despite Extinction Rebellion's message, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - the UN body guided by the scientists in the field - says nothing of the kind. Its most recent report declares: 'Overall, there is very low confidence that observed species extinctions can be attributed to recent climate warming, owing to the very low fraction of global extinctions that have been ascribed to climate change and the tenuous nature of most [such] attributions.'

Greener

In terms of the future, having modelled the effect of anticipated global increases in CO2 emissions from rapidly growing economies of the most populous nations, the IPCC states: 'There is low agreement concerning the fraction of species at increased risk... and the timeframe over which extinctions could occur.'

But what's the story to date? What you won't hear so much about is that a certain amount of warming is, on balance, a good thing for species, including humans.

As a result partly of man-made CO2 emissions, Earth has actually become greener. Dr Ranga Myneni of Boston University has demonstrated by analysing data from satellite images of the planet,

that 31 per cent of the global vegetated surface of the Earth has become greener over the past three decades, and only 3 per cent has become less green. It's not called the 'greenhouse effect' for nothing.

But what about Africa, said to be the biggest likely victim of climate change?

While increased temperatures might save tens of thousands of lives a year in Northern Europe, where cold bears off so many mostly elderly people in winter, they are less likely to be a boon nearer the Equator. Yet it turns out those satellite images have also shown a marked greening in dry areas such as the Sahel in Africa.

As best-selling science writer Dr Matt Ridley observed: 'The decline of famines in the Sahel in recent years is partly due to more rainfall caused by moderate warming and partly due to more carbon dioxide itself: more greenery for goats to eat means more greenery left over for gazelles, so entire ecosystems have benefited.'

Perverse

The key fact to bear in mind is that CO2 is not, in itself, a pollutant; nor detrimental to the air we breathe. The problem for us is the sooty particulates that come out of the exhaust of vehicles powered by internal combustion engines. They really do kill.

Diesel engines produce far more of these dangerous emissions than petrol ones - yet because of the fixation with 'man-made climate change', the British government massively incentivised, through the tax system, a switch to diesel from petrol because the latter produced more CO2 per unit of energy.

What a perverse, self-annihilating strategy. I'm glad I've got an 11-year-old hybrid petrol-electric car, though I don't delude myself that it will 'help save the planet'.

Of course, the Extinction Rebellion demonstrators are against all forms of motorised transport; indeed, every modern form of travel. As even a reasonably supportive article in the New Internationalist explained, under the policies of Extinction Rebellion: 'Energy would be strictly rationed, dedicated to survival... expect massive disruption in the way food is grown, processed and distributed... there would be virtually no private car use, aviation, haulage or shipping.'

We would be living in an eco-fascist dystopia. In short: completely bats.

HERE'S A THOUGHT: LET'S BIN RADIO 4'S 'GOD SLOT'

COMPETITIONS have been run to find the most dispiriting regularly heard words in the English language. 'Unexpected item in the bagging area' would win, for many. Others might nominate 'See it. Say it. Sorted.'

But for my part, 'And now it's time for Thought for the Day with Indarjit Singh' can hardly be bettered (or rather, worsened). That has always had me lurching with unwonted energy for the radio off-switch.

So it was not with the deepest regret that I read

Lord Singh has quit Radio Four's Thought For The Day.

He does so in protest at what he sees as censorship by the 'politically correct thought police' of the BBC: they stopped him devoting his radio sermon last November to the 'martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur', apparently because they thought it would offend Muslims.

To think we had been denied such a thrilling episode of Thought For The Day!

In fact the so-called 'God Slot' is reliably soporific, no matter which of the regular

speakers is called upon. And that is not just because the BBC, as we now learn from Lord Singh, is determined to block anything that might cause a little religious controversy.

The trouble is that all the sermonisers read from a prepared script. These are trite lectures, delivered with not a scintilla of spontaneity.

Perhaps the only Thought For The Day preacher who managed to sound as if he was talking to us, rather than at us, was Rabbi Lionel Blue.

Alas, ill-health took him off

the airwaves in 2012 (he sounded painfully out-of-breath in his final broadcast, and died in 2016).

It was no accident that Rabbi Blue, with his wonderfully conversational and intimate style, was the only Thought For The Day speaker whom even the most secular listeners engaged with - and missed.

So it's not just the absence of Lord Singh's sermons I suspect the nation can endure without going into a state of mourning - but the whole lot of the current Thought For The Day crew.