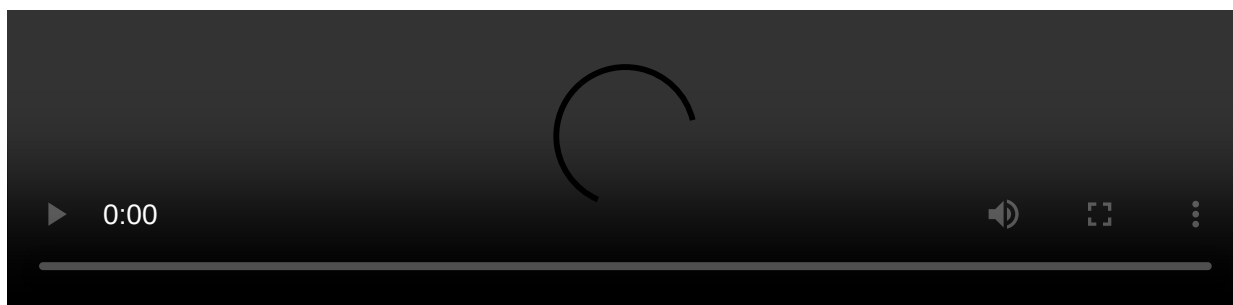


# Caught on film and stored on database: how police keep tabs on activists

Police footage obtained by the Guardian has revealed the crude monitoring methods deployed across the country against protesters, thousands of whom have their personal details stored on criminal intelligence systems for up to seven years

**Paul Lewis and Marc Vallée**

Fri 6 Mar 2009 19.30 GMT



■ Shocking footage shot by police, accompanied by their own critical commentary, shows how their officers monitored campaigners and the media – and demanded personal information – at last August's climate camp demonstration in Kent [guardian.co.uk/Jason N. Parkinson](http://guardian.co.uk/Jason N. Parkinson)

At 11:37am on August 8 last year, two police surveillance officers sat in a patrol car in Kent and switched on their Sony digital video camera.

When the tape started to roll, they stated they were "evidence gatherer" surveillance officers and explained the purpose of the operation. A lead surveillance officer and his assistant, they were on duty to help police the Climate Camp demonstration, an environmental protest against the nearby Kingsnorth coal-fired power station.

What the pair did not know when, 20 minutes later, they stood on a grass verge at the entrance to the camp and started work, was that their surveillance footage would be obtained by the Guardian. It would provide evidence of the crude monitoring methods used to glean information about campaigners and would prove that journalists are being targeted by police surveillance units.

This was no rogue operation. An investigation by the Guardian has established that surveillance footage such as that shot by the Kent officers is routinely uploaded onto a police database. In fact it seems that thousands of activists – from campaigners against Heathrow's third runway to anti-racism marchers – have their personal details stored on criminal intelligence systems for as long as seven years.