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Mark Kennedy in the twilight zone

Corporate spies operate in extreme secrecy, but what was police spy Mark Kennedy doing in this furtive world?

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We are planning to devote one of the chapters in the book to the subject of corporate spies. Of course, it is a business which loves the shadows, so it is difficult to know exactly how many of them are out there or what they are doing.

Occasionally however some of them are dragged into the sunlight. We know for example about the activities of [Toby Kendall](#) who attempted to infiltrate the environmental group, Plane Stupid. Another was [Martin Hogbin](#) who was alleged to have penetrated the Campaign Against the Arms Trade for six years.

We plan to look at how corporations have for decades hired spies to infiltrate campaigns which they fear threaten their business.

One of the most intriguing stories is much more recent - and it involves Mark Kennedy, [the police spy who went undercover in protest groups for seven years](#).

Not unusually, perhaps, he has given conflicting accounts of his involvement in the world of corporate espionage.

Earlier this year, Kennedy sold his story to the Mail on Sunday. According to this account, Kennedy resigned from the police in March last year and then [worked as a consultant for a firm](#) known as Global Open, one of the more prominent private security firms which monitors activists. In this version, he worked for Global Open as a consultant, although he "says he did not operate undercover for the company".

This is damaging to Kennedy as he continued to be active in protest groups for more than six months after he quit the police until he was unmasked by activists in October last year.

However in a more recent interview with the media (with a colleague at the Guardian), he denied any involvement in corporate spying. The version on that occasion was that [he was asked to advise a company on trends in activism, but he says he declined](#).

We are pursuing leads on this, but as ever any inside information would be grateful received.

One revealing part of his Mail on Sunday account concerns [Rod Leeming](#), who left Special Branch about a decade ago to set up [Global Open](#).

According to this account, Kennedy was approached to work for [Global Open](#) before he had even quit the police. In December 2009, he says he had an interview with the Metropolitan police's personnel department and was told he was not qualified to do much else other than drive a panda car.

By the following month Leeming had heard that there was a disillusioned undercover officer who could potentially be recruited.

Concerns have been raised about the [regular flow of coppers](#) who quit the police and go to work for private security firms. Information is alleged to pass back and forth between the police and the security firms in this twilight zone - and that appears to have been a small but telling example of how it happens.

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