

Police knew about plans for Ratcliffe-on-Soar break-in before most activists

Leaked report reveals Mark Kennedy tipped off police about potential occupation of power station at early planning stage



📷 A protester sleeps as police officers form a line during a climate change demonstration at Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station in 2009. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

Rob Evans and Paul Lewis

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Police launched a covert snooping operation on the plot to break into Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station before many of the activists had even thought of taking part.

In October 2008, a handful of activists began discussing a proposal to occupy a power station. In their sights at the time were two of the country's biggest power stations: Ratcliffe-on-Soar, near Nottingham, or Kingsnorth in Kent. No choice had been made at the time.

A police report leaked to the Guardian shows how [Mark Kennedy](#), the Metropolitan police officer sent to spy on the environmental movement, immediately tipped off his handlers about the idea. "This initial intelligence was nonspecific," the report records.

By the end of the month, the police had debriefed their spy twice on the fuzzy plans. By 5 November, they had applied for legal clearance to deploy Kennedy to gather intelligence on the proposals.

Activists say that the decision to target Ratcliffe was made in January 2009, when organisers were taken to the power station.

As it happens, their driver on that occasion was Kennedy.

Over the next few months, Kennedy continued to help organise and fund the planned break-in. He is known, for example, to have given advice on the best way to break into the plant.

All the time, he was feeding inside information back to his handlers at the National Public Order Intelligence Unit, a secretive unit which monitors protesters and is known to have run a series of undercover police officers in campaign groups.

On 7 April 2009, "as intelligence from the undercover officer increased", a senior Nottingham police officer authorised Kennedy to use "audio recording equipment" to record meetings of the protesters, according to the report.

Within a week, more than 100 environmentalists gathered at a primary school near Nottingham to discuss plans to invade the power station.

They were not to know that their plot had been rumbled months ago at its genesis by police officers.

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