

Police spy who married activist suspended from duty

Jim Boyling had two children while working undercover with environmental group Reclaim the Streets



Jim Boyling, who worked undercover as Jim Sutton, has been suspended by the Metropolitan police pending an investigation

Jo Adetunji

Fri 21 Jan 2011 21.08 GMT

One of three police officers revealed by the Guardian to have infiltrated the green protest movement has been restricted from duty pending an investigation into his professional conduct.

Jim Boyling, who carried out covert surveillance for five years while undercover as eco-activist Jim Sutton, was accused of engaging in sexual relationships with targets. It emerged this week that Boyling **had married an activist** and had gone on to have two children with her before divorcing two years ago.

Details emerged of a complicated double life, in which he persuaded his ex-wife to change her name by deed poll so as not to raise the suspicions of senior officers.

Laura (not her real name) told the Guardian she met Boyling, 28, after he infiltrated Reclaim the Streets, an environmental group known for bringing busy streets to a standstill in protests against cars. After embarking on a relationship, which she described as **"the deepest love I thought I'd ever known"**, Laura said Boyling disappeared for a year before he revealed his true identity after a chance meeting. She described the effect of the surveillance operation as one that "wrecks lives".

In a statement, the Metropolitan police said: "A serving specialist operations detective constable has been restricted from duty as part of an investigation following allegations reported in a national newspaper."

Boyling is said to have become a key organiser in Reclaim during an operation that ran from 1995 to 2000. Under the false identity of Sutton, a 34-year-old fitness fanatic, Boyling gained the trust of the group, helping out with a van.

The revelations have sparked a crisis in undercover operations and led to the Association of Chief **Police** Officers (Acpo), responsible for some sensitive police operations, to be stripped of three teams involved in tackling so-called "domestic extremism".

Three of the four police officers at the centre of the crisis - all male - are all believed to have conducted sexual relationships while undercover. Mark Kennedy, the first policeman to be revealed as an undercover operative, and who is no longer an officer, had several sexual relationships while posing as

an activist. His naming as an undercover officer by eco-activists led to the collapse of the trial of six people accused of planning to break into a power station in Nottinghamshire.

Jon Murphy, chief constable of Merseyside and the senior police officer managing the crisis, **said it was "never acceptable"** for undercover officers to have sexual relationships with their targets.

"Something has gone badly wrong here. We would not be where we are if it had not," Murphy said.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) is investigating Acpo's decade-long covert operations into the protest movement.

More on this story



Protest at Met HQ over police officers' undercover sex with activists

24 Jan 2011



Undercover police cleared 'to have sex with activists'

22 Jan 2011



Clean-up of covert policing ordered after Mark Kennedy revelations

18 Jan 2011 | ...



Most viewed