

# Spy Mark Kennedy feels remorse and is in 'genuine fear for my life'

Undercover police officer breaks silence to talk of 'nightmare' and regret over two sexual relationships



📷 Former undercover police officer Mark Kennedy. Photograph: Guardian

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**Peter Walker and Rajeev Syal**

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Mark Stone's physical transformation back to **Mark Kennedy** is striking: the sunglasses, earrings and scruffy beard are gone and the ponytail has been shorn into a neat parting; long sleeves on a sensible jumper cover densely-inked forearm tattoos.

But three months after the 41-year-old admitted tearfully to fellow green activists that they had spent seven years living and protesting with an undercover police officer, it is clear from his interview with the Mail on Sunday that the psychological reversal will take considerably longer.

After a week of front-page stories and increasingly troubling revelations about his time under cover, Kennedy, 41, finally broke his silence today for the first time since going into hiding to detail what he calls his "living nightmare" in which he stands accused of betrayal by both his former employers and the activists he duped for so long.

In the interview - for which he received a rumoured six-figure payment brokered by Max Clifford - Kennedy explained why he had decided to give his own version of events. "Both sides have been waiting for my statement - the police and the activists. This interview is my statement."

The collapse of his double life has taken a heavy toll, he said, leaving him feeling persecuted and mentally vulnerable: "I can't sleep. I have lost weight and am constantly on edge. I barricade the door with chairs at night. I am in genuine fear for my life. I have been told that my former bosses from the force are out here in America looking for me. I have been told by activists to watch my back as people are out to get me."

He added: "I went to see a psychiatrist recently and told her I was having thoughts of suicide. I don't have any confidence. My world has been destroyed. I don't have any friends, they were all in the activist movement."

Kennedy said he felt most remorse for having sexual relationships with two fellow activists while undercover, one of whom he "fell deeply in love" with. He said: "I am the first one to hold up my hands and say, yes, that was wrong. I crossed the line." It was the second woman who discovered a passport in Kennedy's real name in July last year as the pair holidayed in Europe, nine months after his undercover work officially ended, he recounted.

While he occasionally saw his estranged wife and two children, a girl aged 10 and a boy of 12, throughout his period undercover, Kennedy said it been an enormous struggle to combine spying with a growing and genuine affection for the activists with whom he lived in Nottingham and joined on numerous protests around the UK and Europe.

"They became my friends. They supported me and they loved me. All I can do now is tell the truth. I don't think the police are the good guys and the activists are bad or vice versa. Both sides did good things and bad things. I am speaking out as I hope the police can learn from the mistakes they made," he said.

"As the years went on, I did get a sort of Stockholm syndrome. But I never lost sight of my work. I texted and informed on a daily basis. But I began to like the people I was with. I formed lasting friendships."

There was little acknowledgement from his superiors about the potential strain of such a double life, Kennedy said. While they were "greedy for intelligence" they appeared less interested in his welfare: "I was supposed to get psychological counselling every three months. I would go two years without seeing the shrink."

Kennedy's life as Mark Stone began in 2003 when he agreed to go undercover for the National Public Order Intelligence Unit. The man who began turning up at environmental and anarchist meetings in Nottingham described himself as an avid rock climber and former drugs smuggler who now wanted to do something more constructive. He explained away his occasional absences and readily available cash by saying he worked occasionally as an industrial climber.

Kennedy won people's trust and took part in dozens of protests, he told the Mail on Sunday: "I began to live the life and enjoy it. People have this image of hairy tree huggers and, yes, there is an element of that ... But there are also a lot of educated, passionate people with degrees who really believe in what they are doing."

He added: "I had no other friends. I was estranged from my wife. My life was undercover. Of course I cared about them. But I didn't go rogue. I was immersing myself in the culture to do my job, to be credible."

Such was Kennedy's eventual emotional stake in this new world that even when his undercover work was halted he continue to live as Mark Stone, only now without the fake ID, withdrawn by superiors. **Police** halted the mission in October 2009, six months after he was among dozens of activists arrested near the Ratcliffe-on-Soar coal power station in Nottinghamshire, as they were concerned about what might happen when it emerged that Kennedy would be the only one to escape criminal charges.

Kennedy said he then resigned from the police and, after agreeing a job with a private security company, returned to Nottingham early last year to live on a houseboat and seek a proper "exit strategy" from the past seven years. This included a holiday around Europe with his girlfriend, during which she discovered his real passport in the glove compartment of their Transit van.

While he was able to persuade her that he held several identities as a former drug smuggler - part of his faked background story - it became clear that other activists suspected the truth.

Nonetheless, Kennedy said, he agreed to meet them at a communal house in Nottingham last October.

He said: "I was absolutely shitting myself. But I had to know what they knew ... I knew everyone there from previous actions. They sat in a semi-circle around me. It was hugely menacing. I told them nothing to start with. They just kept saying they knew I was a cop, that I was married with kids, they knew my mum. They knew my home address.

"I danced around in circles for four hours. It was exhausting. I cried a lot. It was the end of my tether. They broke me. An hour into it they brought my girlfriend in and the look of devastation on her face destroyed me. It was more than I could take."

He added: "They said they wanted me to make a statement admitting what I had done, which they could make public. I said I would think about it. I fled. I ran away."

# 'I got jumped on by five officers who beat me'

Mark Kennedy told the Mail on Sunday that the low point of his undercover career came in 2006. During a demonstration at the Drax coal-fired power station in North Yorkshire, he was on the receiving end of a beating from police officers who, he says, were only on the scene because he tipped them off.

"A young petite woman I knew as Cathleen began to crawl through a hole in the fence," Kennedy said. "Then I saw a uniformed officer start to strike her very hard on her legs and lower back with his baton.

"I tried to stand between her and him. I didn't do anything aggressive. That's when I got jumped on by five officers who kicked and beat me. They had batons and pummelled my head. They punched me. One officer repeatedly stamped on my back."

According to Kennedy, he was treated in hospital for a head wound, a broken finger and a prolapsed disc. But when he tried to claim compensation from police for injuries sustained while on duty, he was turned down on the basis that it could jeopardise his cover. "That pissed me off," he said.

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