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# Judge considers his verdict in women's legal action over undercover officers

Judge is considering whether the case of the women who say they were duped into forming long-lasting sexual relationships with undercover officers should be heard in High Court

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**Rob Evans**

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The first round of the women's legal action against police chiefs drew to a close on Friday morning.

The judge hearing the case, [Mr Justice Tugendhat](#), said he would go away and consider his judgment. It is not known how long he will take.

He is deciding whether to approve an application by [the police to have the women's legal action](#) struck out of the High Court and shunted over to a little-known, secretive tribunal that usually hears complaints about MI5 (see [this for some](#) background).

Ten women and one man have launched a legal action claiming they were tricked into forming deeply personal relationships with the police spies. The women say [they were duped into forming](#) long-term, sexual relationships lasting years with undercover officers.

See [here](#) and [here](#) for some coverage of last week's proceedings. For a long account of the hearings, [read this](#) from researcher and author, Eveline Lubbers.

The hearings, spread over two and a bit days, were very dry, and full of pretty tedious legal argument. The barristers spent hours arguing over the meaning of specific words and clauses in an act - the [regulation of investigatory](#) powers act 2000 - which in itself is complicated and obtuse.

However the hearings are of crucial, tactical importance in the legal action as a whole.

Clearly it would be a significant defeat for the police chiefs if they lose their attempt to have it all moved over to the secretive [Investigatory Powers Tribunal](#).

But what might happen if the judge decided that it should be heard in the High Court?

There is a strong chance, you would have thought, that the police chiefs would settle out of court before it was due to be heard in the High Court.

As we noted [here previously](#), the question is - do the police chiefs really want to endure the bad publicity of a High Court case in which the heart-breaking stories of the women are recounted day after day? Probably not.

After all, this case is about, as the women say, "[one of the most intrusive invasions of privacy imaginable](#)", not turgid arguments about obscure clauses in an obscure act.

The women have received support from as far away as Berlin - see [this report](#) of a demonstration there.

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