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Police spies - recent disclosures

There has been a sudden flurry of disclosures and allegations about police spies in protest groups. Here's a quick round-up of what has been going on

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Quite a lot has been happening since we last posted a blog here, so we thought that it would be useful to have a quick round-up.

Firstly there has been the story of Bob Lambert, the former undercover officer who controlled a network of police spies in political groups.

He was unmasked by activists from [London Greenpeace](#). They challenged him at a conference and afterwards [published a statement](#) on Indymedia.

The Guardian then published a [story which described](#) how Lambert had been unmasked, his career as an undercover officer and his current work as an academic and supporter of the campaign against Islamophobia.

A week later came a second story [reporting how Lambert had confessed](#) to being a police spy and to [tricking an innocent woman into having](#) a long-term relationship with him, as part of an elaborate attempt to lend "credibility" to his alter ego.

Lambert also made [a statement to the](#) Spinwatch transparency campaign, which [had challenged him](#) about his undercover work. He has also written [a comment piece](#).

The Guardian also [published a letter](#) from London Greenpeace who argued that "repressive tactics will ultimately fail to prevent people seeking change".

Secondly the Guardian and BBC Newsnight published evidence [alleging that police chiefs had authorised undercover](#) officers embedded in protest groups to give false evidence in court in order to protect their secret identities.

This centred on the case of Jim Boyling who infiltrated the environmental group Reclaim the Streets in the 1990s.

[He concealed his true identity](#) from a court when he was prosecuted alongside a group of Reclaim the Streets activists, according to a set of documents.

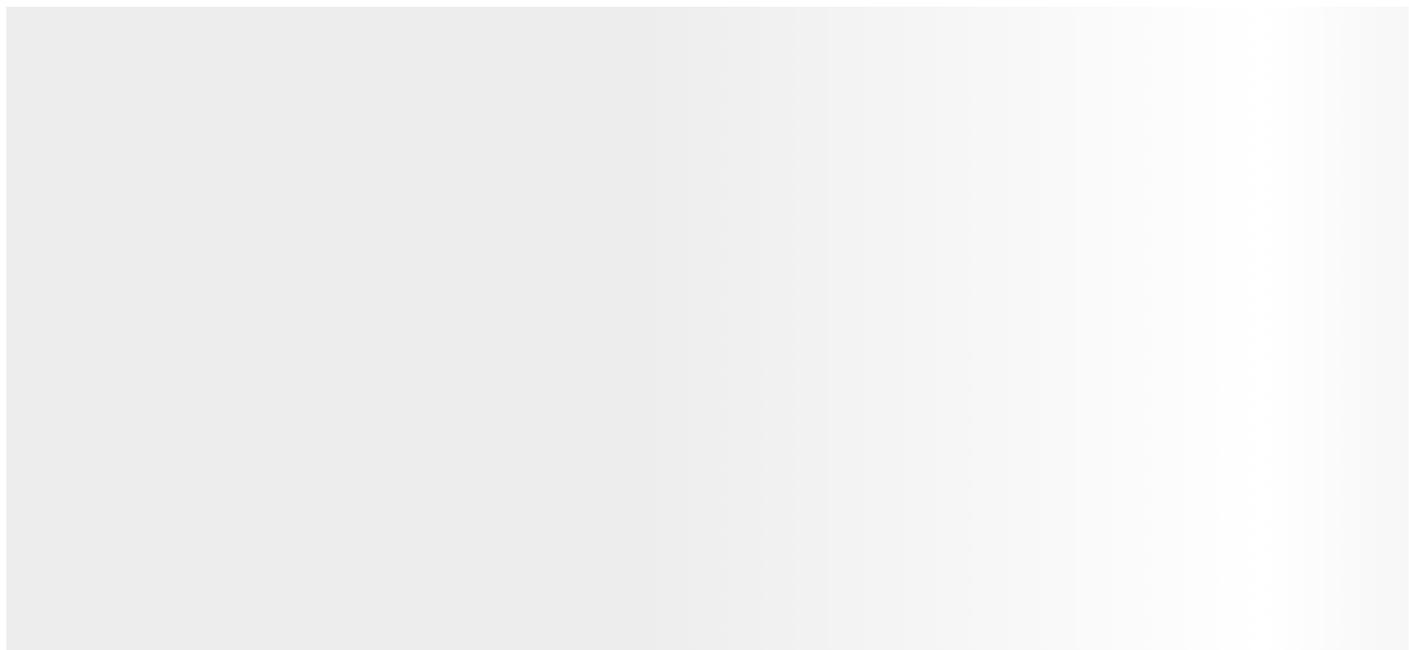
The story last week about Boyling had been pieced together by activists and their lawyer, Mike Schwarz of the Bindmans law firm.

The disclosure of these documents forced police chiefs to cancel a major report into undercover policing, hours before it was due to be published. Ken Macdonald, the former director of public prosecutions, said police chiefs had made a "monumental misjudgment" that could result in a host of miscarriages of justice.

A day later, the Scotland Yard said it was "reviewing" allegations that a second undercover officer, Bob Lambert, had also used a false identity in a criminal trial.

Yesterday, Britain's most senior police officer, Bernard Hogan-Howe, defended the practice of undercover officers using fake identities in court, claiming there was no specific law forbidding it.

There have been a lot of allegations and disclosures about police spies in the protest movement since Mark Kennedy, the policeman who infiltrated the environment movement for seven years, was unmasked about a year ago. Here's what we think (and hope) is a useful recap of what has come out.



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