

Second undercover officer accused of misleading court

Bob Lambert, who ran a network of police spies in the protest movement, suspected of having been prosecuted under his alias



In the 1980s Bob Lambert spent years living under a false identity as he investigated green and animal rights activists. Photograph: guardian.co.uk

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Scotland Yard says it is reviewing the case of a second undercover police officer who stands accused of using a false identity in a criminal trial after being sent to infiltrate protest groups.

Bob Lambert, who ran a network of police spies in the protest movement after living deep undercover himself, is suspected of having been prosecuted for distributing animal rights leaflets under his alias.

The Metropolitan police have referred the case of the first officer, Jim Boyling, to the Independent Police Complaints Commission, [three days after the Guardian and BBC Newsnight revealed evidence he lied under oath about his real identity](#). In a statement on Friday night, the Met said: "The referral relates to allegations that he gave evidence using a pseudonym and attended meetings with defence lawyers."

But the Met has also said it is "reviewing similar allegations about a retired officer, with a view to referring it to the IPCC".

The Guardian told the Met on Thursday it had obtained a letter, written by Lambert, in which he tells another activist he has been "backwards and forwards to Camberwell Green magistrates court for distributing 'insulting leaflets' outside a butchers shop".

Asked if this meant he had been prosecuted under his false identity, and therefore misled the court, Lambert declined to comment.

Lambert spent years living under a false identity with animal rights and environmental activists in the mid-1980s, before being promoted to a position in which he controlled a network of spies.

Among his team was Boyling, who pretended for years to be an environmental activist and was accused this week of giving false evidence under oath and concealing his real identity in court. It is alleged that he had been given permission to deceive the courts by senior officers.

The revelation threw a major inquiry into undercover policing of protest groups into disarray on Wednesday, when the publication of a report on the controversy was hurriedly cancelled.

The review, conducted by Bernard Hogan-Howe in his role at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) before he became commissioner of the Met, was expected to rule out calls for a more robust system of oversight. It is now being reconsidered.

Police chiefs have been accused of authorising undercover officers to hide their real identities when they were being prosecuted over offences arising out of their undercover roles. It is alleged that being prosecuted was "part of their cover" as it helped to boost their credibility among the campaigners they had infiltrated.

The controversy surrounding undercover policing, which began with revelations about a third officer, **Mark Kennedy**, who lived for seven years with environmental activists, has resulted in nine separate judicial and disciplinary inquiries.

Hogan-Howe will be asked on Thursday to conduct an audit of all the Met's undercover policing operations to discover whether officers "lied in court". The question, tabled by Jenny Jones, a Green member of the London assembly who sits on the **Metropolitan police** authority, is one of a number of issues expected to be raised with the commissioner. Keith Vaz, chairman of the Commons home affairs select committee, said he would be calling on the head of HMIC, Sir Denis O'Connor, to give evidence to parliament.

"I am very concerned by allegations that undercover officers have been authorised to give false evidence to courts," Vaz said. "The activities of police officers, whether undercover or on the beat, must be regulated and be held to account."

Lambert assumed the fake persona of "Bob Robinson" to penetrate animal rights and green campaigns for four years in the 1980s. The letter, written by Lambert in January 1986, has come to light since he was unmasked after being confronted last Saturday by one of the groups he had infiltrated. He had sent it to Martyn Lowe, an activist with an environmental group known as **London Greenpeace**. Lowe said Lambert had been trying to persuade him to get involved in the environmental group again, and was passing on his news.

He said that by telling him about his court appearances, Lambert "must have been hoping to bolster his image as an activist. It was not a surprise".

He added that Lambert cultivated the idea that he was involved in militant, possibly illegal, protests.

"Bob gave off the impression he was doing a lot of direct action but one could never put one's finger on it. He never talked about it directly." At the time, animal rights activists were targeting butchers.

Lambert had gone undercover as part of covert police unit known as the special demonstration squad, which monitored and disrupted political groups that it believed caused public disorder.

Asked if he had authorised Boyling to conceal his real identity from the court, Lambert declined to comment.

In the latter part of his 26 years as a special branch detective, Lambert set up a Scotland Yard unit to improve relations between police and Muslim community groups to stop Islamist terrorist attacks. In recent years, he has become an academic and spoken out against Islamophobia.

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