

🕒 This article is more than **13 years old**

# Undercover policeman's identity 'kept secret' as he prepared to appear in court

Documents suggest Jim Boyling gave witness statement in support of animal rights campaigners to protect his covert status



📷 Jim Boyling, an undercover police officer operating under the alias of Jim Sutton, infiltrated an environmental movement during a five-year deployment.

---

---

## **Rob Evans and Paul Lewis**

Wed 7 Dec 2011 14.54 GMT

Prosecutors and police have been accused of keeping secret the identity of a police spy in a 1996 criminal trial of political campaigners.

The claims about the undercover police officer, Jim Boyling, follow an [inquiry into Mark Kennedy](#), an officer who spent seven years under cover.

Boyling said he would be "delighted" to give evidence in support of four animal rights campaigners who were being tried for public order offences, according to new documents.

But Boyling planned to give evidence under his alias, it is claimed. He drew up a witness statement in which he said that police officers had been "aggressive" when they arrested the campaigners.

However the activists were not told that he was an undercover officer sent to infiltrate their group, who was pretending to be a committed campaigner.

The latest documents follow claims that police chiefs have allowed embedded undercover officers to give false evidence in court to protect their covert status.

It is alleged that prosecutions of undercover officers for offences arising from their deployment are allowed to go ahead as it helps to build their credibility with the campaigners they are infiltrating.

Boyling, who infiltrated the environmental movement during a five-year deployment, has previously been [accused of giving false evidence in court in another case](#).

In 1997, he allegedly [concealed his true identity](#) from a court when he was prosecuted alongside green protesters for occupying a government office during a demonstration. The Independent Police Complaints Commission [is investigating that allegation](#).

Scotland Yard has also been reviewing an allegation that another undercover officer used a false identity in a criminal trial.

That officer, [Bob Lambert](#), is suspected of having been prosecuted for distributing animal rights leaflets in the 1980s while posing as an activist.

The first major inquiry into [Mark Kennedy](#), a policeman who infiltrated the environmental movement for seven years, was published on Tuesday.

The inquiry [ruled that both senior prosecutors and police officers](#) were responsible for failing to disclose crucial evidence to campaigners who were wrongly convicted of plotting to occupy a power station.

The latest claims surrounding Boyling concern the 1996 prosecution of four activists who were stopped on their way to protest against a foxhunt.

Boyling, then operating under the alias of Jim Sutton, was in a van with the activists but was not prosecuted, according to Mike Schwarz, a lawyer representing the campaigners.

Schwarz said Boyling, using the alias of Sutton, was not needed as a witness in court.

At the trial, prosecutors asked to keep secret "certain documents" from the court. Their contents are unknown.

In an ironic touch, the barrister representing the activists at the three-day trial was [Keir Starmer](#), now the director of public prosecutions but then building his reputation as a human rights lawyer at Doughty Street Chambers in London.

The activists were acquitted and some later won money in a civil action against the police for wrongful arrest, assault and malicious prosecution.

Police made no mention of Boyling's true identity in a list of documents relevant to the legal action, according to Schwarz.

[Boyling's undercover role remained secret until it was revealed this year by the Guardian.](#)

The Crown Prosecution Service declined to comment but said it would look at the allegations.

Twelve inquiries into the police infiltration of the protest movement over the last four decades have been launched this year following revelations surrounding Kennedy.

---

---

---

---

---

**Most viewed**