

**Integrity is non-negotiable.**  
**Scotland Yard's strategic response to the dangers of corruption.**

**Deputy Commissioner John Stevens**

I would like to start my presentation by showing you part of a video. It shows three men committing an aggravated burglary in order to steal 80 kilos of cannabis that are stored in the premises. The external shots of the premises are pictures only but the internal shots have limited audio as well.

**\*\*\*Video\*\*\***

What you have just seen is organised criminals going about their unlawful business, in the same way that they do the world over. However, the greatest cause for concern from this clip of film is that two of the three individuals were ex-Metropolitan Police Service Detectives, who had just retired on ill-health grounds, and the third was a serving Detective who at the time was working nights at a local police station.

What you have just seen was a targeted integrity test organised by CIB3, the Anti-Corruption Squad of the Metropolitan Police. This is part of a success story for the Metropolitan Police and is part of the Corruption and Dishonesty Prevention Strategy that we launched last December. The strategy is now acknowledged as the best in the world. It impacts on all aspects of our work, and enables us to ensure that we can deliver a high quality policing service to the people of London.

But first a bit of history. Between 1960 and today, there have been several high profile corruption scandals within the Metropolitan Police which have attracted wide publicity and dented public confidence in the MPS. The infrequent re-occurrence of these episodes had led us to believe that our corruption was cyclical in nature. As a result, we deployed substantial resources to 'cure' each outbreak in the belief that the problem would then be solved.

Concerns were again raised about 5 years ago when our criminal intelligence branch noted that several of our major crime operations had been compromised and intelligence suggested that corruption had been a major factor in this. This gave an uncomfortable indication that organised crime had effectively infiltrated our ranks. Our approach to internal affairs at that time was to reactively investigate allegations, with a limited capability to develop intelligence.

We now realise that whilst we did tackle the 'rotten apples' about which everyone spoke, the approach did not tackle the tree from which they were picked. This meant that a new batch of rotten apples could grow in another season.

It was decided that a change in approach was necessary and a secret unit was created to produce a strategic intelligence picture on corruption in the Met. This unit functioned for several years; its existence was only known to a handful of senior officers. It produced persuasive intelligence that we had a comparatively small number of police officers who were thoroughly corrupt.

The worrying outcome of this intelligence was the realisation that those officers had forged

partnerships with major criminals with whom they engaged in the most serious of offences; armed robbery, drugs supply and importation at the macro level, as well as major thefts and a willingness to undermine the foundations of the criminal justice system. So, whilst their numbers were small, the impact they had was significant.

This discovery showed that while corruption is less prevalent than it was in early decades, that which is present today is much more pernicious with much higher financial rewards that the escalation in organised crime and the drug trade can now offer.

The intelligence collected indicated that the corrupt had a similar profile - well respected career detectives who all had substantial experience. They were generally extremely effective as detectives most of the time and so had many supporters which meant that they were rarely treated with suspicion. The type of corrupt activity that they were engaged in does not attract any complaints. The armed robber who is relieved of £100k proceeds of a robbery would not complain nor would the drug dealer who had his heroin stolen. A new approach was thus essential.

Following on from the intelligence gathering operation, we injected significant resources into a new command called the Anti-Corruption squad. We recognised that high quality investigators were necessary as nobody doubted the difficulty of the task ahead. Their number now exceeds 200 but much progress has been made. Our operational approach to the problem is dynamic and innovative, using all the traditional methods, with some new ideas, that are used against organised crime. This includes electronic surveillance and intelligence gathering, use of informants, conventional surveillance, observations and persuading criminals to give evidence against their criminal police accomplices.

Through improvements in our intelligence system, we have developed integrity testing as a further investigative tool to be used against targeted officers and the video showed exactly how effective an integrity test can be. Sadly however, a British jury found one of the men in the video not guilty of the charges. The jury accepted his defence that he was having a panic attack at the time and did not know what he was doing!

Fundamental to our approach is innovation to keep one step ahead of these sophisticated corrupt detectives. Our overriding objective is to secure evidence to place the corrupt before the criminal courts. If we fail to meet this threshold, we will pursue discipline charges to seek dismissal from the service. There are occasions where the intelligence that an officer is dishonest is overwhelming but the high standards of evidence required for criminal or discipline charges in the United Kingdom prevent action. In these cases, we seek to disrupt their activity. We will leave no stone unturned in our determination to remove such officers from the service which is our key objective.

As from 1st April this year, the standard of proof for discipline proceedings was reduced from the standard of beyond reasonable doubt, fast track discipline is now available and the rules covering 'double jeopardy' have been relaxed. All of these changes will go some way to assist in tackling the problem. It is also relevant and pleasing to say that our innovative measures quite regularly establish innocence when malicious allegations are made.

Whilst we target and pursue the corrupt officers, another important part of our strategy is to target the corrupters. We have had significant success in this area and have succeeded in jailing prominent criminals for lengthy custodial sentences who involve themselves in corruption. It is

hoped that whilst deterring officers from behaving corruptly, we are also discouraging criminals from seeking to corrupt members of the service.

The job is far from complete. However, the current round of enquiries have led to 65 persons being charged. This includes 27 police officers, 12 ex-police officers and 26 other persons, ranging from customs officials, lawyers, members of the Crown Prosecution service to members of the criminal fraternity. Another 30 are on bail pending decisions by the Crown Prosecution Service to charge. There are more to come.

We are effectively engaged in a major stable clearing exercise and are determined that this is not seen as a quick 'cure'. The tree from which the poisonous fruit grows must be tackled and to this end we have now created a dynamic corruption and dishonesty prevention strategy which leads the way. The aim of the strategy is to engender pride and trust in the integrity of the Metropolitan Police Service by preventing and detecting corruption, dishonesty and unethical behaviour.

At the bedrock of this strategy is a permanent pro-active Anti-Corruption Squad and a wide ranging programme of work which is without time limit. It can be argued that corruption itself is not cyclical, only the police response to it. We have learnt that we must never let our guard down again

The Corruption and Dishonesty Prevention Strategy has 6 major strands:-

- **Strand 1 - Inclusion** - where we seek to involve leaders in the organisation in identifying and managing the problem. We had historically been secretive when engaged in corruption enquiries for obvious reasons. This excluded managers, and thus, as they were unaware of the problem, they were unable to manage it.
- **Strand 2 - Security screening and vetting** - We are seeking to improve our systems to ensure that we only recruit staff of the highest integrity into the service. We are also putting systems in place to ensure that only individuals of proven integrity are employed within the most sensitive positions. The MPS Policy Board agreed last month to implement a management vetting system which is leading edge work. It seeks to identify vulnerable staff and those in whom our service does not have full confidence. This will help to ensure the safety of our colleagues and the reputation of the Metropolitan Police.
- **Strand 3 - Prevention and detection** - to increase the certainty of detection by ensuring that there is always an intelligence led and capable response to corruption.

As I showed earlier, one of the highly effective tools that we have developed is targeted integrity tests. Based on an intelligence picture, we create situations in which corrupt officers, who wish to act unlawfully, can do so and as a result give us the best possible evidence to present to the courts.

However, it was also recognised that a programme of random integrity tests would be of great value to the organisation. Such tests would have two benefits: -

Firstly, they deter those officers who are contemplating acting improperly or corruptly and the fear of being caught is greatly increased: and Secondly, the tests provide an ethical audit of the Metropolitan Police and give a true picture of the type of service that we provide to the public.

The programme of such tests commenced in February and extends to racism as well as dishonesty. An oversight committee has been set up to ensure that the tests are relevant, objective and properly conducted. This committee comprises of elected London Borough Councillors, members of the Metropolitan Police Committee (to whom the MPS is accountable), a respected academic and the various staff associations. The recent HMI inspection on integrity rightly pointed out 'it is quite right to make people frightened to be corrupt, but we should not be frightened to come to work'

- **Strand 4 - Supervision and leadership** - Many of the problems identified were as a result of a failure of leadership. We have developed a substantial leadership programme to support leaders in order that they can identify, challenge and deal with corruption. This included a system of supervision which is more intrusive and prescriptive. The MPS has developed a set of leadership principles and rank specific leadership and supervision guidance. This guidance is currently being cascaded to all staff by their Divisional Commanders, their presence being to stress the importance of these areas. Our staff appraisal and promotion selection system is being re-focused to ensure that only those staff who can evidence the leadership and supervision skills that we require are promoted.
- **Strand 5 - Focus and accountability** - to gain acceptance for the strategy and engender a willingness to be accountable for it's success at all levels.

Following on from the launch last year and the briefing that I gave to all officers of Chief Superintendent and above, we are now undertaking a series of seminars where the work of CIB3 is discussed with our front line officers. The feedback from these sessions is outstanding, with the front line officers expressing their total support for the action that we have taken to rid ourselves of corrupt officers.

- **Strand 6 - Corruption and dishonesty proofing** - to monitor policies, practices and procedures to ensure they reduce opportunities for corruption and dishonesty.

These 6 strands will dramatically reduce the ever present threat of corruption in the future.

The Metropolitan Police is a proud and historic organisation and our drive against corruption is essentially good news - we found it and we are dealing with it ruthlessly.

Our response to corruption has cost us tens of millions of pounds, exposed us to substantial litigation, dented morale and stands the risk of reducing our public reputation. But what price can you put on our integrity. Integrity is non-negotiable. Public complaints are a crude barometer for the health of an organisation. Had we not invested in intelligence, we would still be none the wiser. I have no doubts about the wisdom of the path we have taken. The public we police have every right to expect a police service of the highest integrity. We have a duty to deliver that integrity and to be accountable for it!