

Police Blogging



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PC blog and the web of hypocrisy

08:36am 23rd February 2007

A few weeks ago, I brought you the story of PC Mick Leighfield, Salisbury's Race and Community Relations Officer, and his exciting plans to break down barriers with members of the 'G& T Community' - which earned him an early nomination for this year's Mind How You Go Awards.

The abbreviation G&T, some of you may recall, stands for the Gypsy and Traveller Community, who have been driving uninsured, unlicensed vehicles on the roads of Wiltshire and parking them illegally on other people's land.

PC Leighfield's solution to this problem was not to feel their collars but to set up a literacy scheme to help them pass their driving tests and become 'road legal'.

It caused much hilarity and a certain amount of disbelief, especially among front-line coppers who thought their job was catching villains, not teaching members of the G&T Community how to read and write, in the vain hope that they might take the trouble to learn the Highway Code and fill in insurance forms and driving licence applications.

I got the story from the website coppersblog, where the boys and girls in blue go to air their frustrations. But PC Leighfield, rather than basking in his new-found celebrity, went ballistic.

His superiors embarked on a cyberspace manhunt to track down the police officer who posted this crackpot scheme on the worldwide web. And when they found the culprit, he was disciplined and warned about his future conduct.

Police Coppersblog sites of everyday policing chiefs have become increasingly concerned about and other similar which expose the reality in Britain.

Last weekend, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) warned all its officers: "Staff should refrain from posting comments to the internet about any matter related to the MPS."

While recognising an individual's right to free speech, it said blogging should not "interfere with work commitments" or contain any views which "may bring the organisation into disrepute".

Officers must not accept payment for anything they write on the net, nor disclose any information which is "defamatory, offensive... or otherwise inappropriate in any way. Any staff found posting inappropriate material... may be subject to disciplinary proceedings".

I can only assume that [Chief Superintendent Ali Dizaei](#) was on a day off when that unequivocal warning was posted on the Met's intranet system.

And that his bosses haven't yet stumbled across the page on [amazon.co.uk](#) where [Dizaei](#) appears in a promotional video for his forthcoming book, slagging off the Met in robust terms.

Much of the material in the book could be considered 'defamatory, offensive' and 'inappropriate' - especially by

his colleagues.

There's no doubt Dizaei brings the organisation into 'disrepute', nor that he is being paid. I've no idea whether writing it managed to interfere with his work commitments.

But having just finished a book of my own (Littlejohn's Britain, published by Hutchinson, May 3, thanks for asking), I can tell you that it takes over your life. And I don't have a busy police division to run, either.

But if they couldn't convict Dizaei of corruption and misconduct, they're hardly going to discipline him over the small matter of contravening internet publishing guidelines.

Far from it. Incredibly, Dizaei is up for promotion to Commander, in spite of being exposed as a thug, a liar, a cheat and a chancer.



Richard Littlejohn (right) and his book!

Even though he was twice acquitted of serious charges, the police watchdog said a number of the allegations were 'capable of proof'. Dizaei's conduct would have been sufficient to get any ordinary copper kicked out of the force.

But he's no ordinary copper. Iranian-born Dizaei is the legal adviser to the Black Police Association - despite being about as black as I am.

The case against him eventually collapsed after his defence claimed he was a victim of racial discrimination.

He's still playing the race card for all it's worth, and the Met is stuck between a rock and a hard place. Either Dizaei gets the promotion or he trots off down the nearest industrial tribunal, claiming a fat payout for 'racism'.

Meanwhile, back at the Yard, another controversial copper is said to be beavering away on his memoirs - although in the case of Brian Paddick, the Met's most senior homosexual officer, 'beavering' is perhaps not the most apposite description.

Paddick first came to prominence after he popped up on a Wolfie Smith website boasting of his attraction to anarchy. He also survived charges of misconduct and went on to preside over the disastrous policy of turning the streets of South London into an open-air drugs den.

No doubt his book will be a best-seller, serialised in the Guardian. But why have both Paddick and Dizaei been allowed to write books about the Met while still serving policemen?

After all, the beat officer behind coppersblog had to use the pseudonym 'PC David Copperfield' when he published his book, Wasting Police Time - serialised in the Mail last year - for fear of disciplinary action.

It certainly would appear, as far as the police force is concerned, that when it comes to freedom of speech and bringing the game into disrepute, there is one rule for the poor bloody infantry and another for prominent members of the other G&T (Gay and Troublemaking) Community.

Mind how you go.



ON THE BEAT



John Child from London graduated from KIAD Rochester in 2001 now working as a graphic designer

Yard braced for race row over Met officer's book revelations

- Chief superintendent details five-year ordeal
- Officers involved in inquiry warned of content

Hugh Muir
Saturday February 3, 2007
[The Guardian](#)

Scotland Yard is bracing itself for racial controversy as one of its senior officers prepares to publish a no-holds-barred account of how fellow officers, including the Metropolitan police commissioner, Sir Ian Blair, dealt with unfounded corruption allegations against him.

Urgent talks are being conducted between Chief Superintendent Ali Dizaei, a borough commander in Hounslow, west London, and senior officials at Scotland Yard over his autobiography *Not One Of Us*, which is scheduled for publication, newspaper serialisation and prominence as BBC Radio 4's *Book of the Week*.

It is rare for an officer, even such a high profile one, to be allowed to air controversial views while still in post. Chief Supt Dizaei has been asked to give advance warning to some officers about the content of his book.

The book tells how Chief Supt Dizaei was targeted by Operation Helios, the ill-fated £7m investigation into claims that he criminally abused his position. Despite being investigated for almost five years, the 20 serious allegations involving criminal or disciplinary offences came to nothing. He was acquitted of two relatively minor charges at the Old Bailey in 2003. He did admit to making an abusive phone call to a former girlfriend. After the collapse of the criminal inquiry he is reported to have received £80,000 compensation.

Chief Supt Dizaei was legal adviser to the National Black Police Association at the time

of the investigation. The wide scope of the inquiry prompted claims that the NBPA and black officers in general were being pursued.

Against a backdrop of improved race relations within the Met, there is concern at the highest level about the effect the autobiography may have on the force. The officer makes few specific criticisms of Sir Ian - who supervised the inquiry while deputy commissioner - but there are uncomfortable references to others involved, including Chief Supt Barry Norman who had day-to-day control of Operation Helios. He is now borough commander in Islington, north London.

Two months ago an investigatory powers tribunal headed by a high court judge found the Met guilty of illegally tapping Chief Supt Dizaei's phone.

The tactics used by detectives during Helios are being internally reviewed. Some friends of Chief Supt Dizaei are suing the Met over the way they were treated during the investigation.

A friend of Chief Supt Dizaei said: "He feels it is important that the right lessons are learned. Helios and the issues it raised are still impacting on people's lives."

John Azah, speaking for Scotland Yard's independent advisory group, said: "We feel the Met has made great advances. That said, we see issues that, like Helios, continue to challenge the organisation." He added: "Our advances must not be compromised by individuals pursuing their own private projects."

A Met spokeswoman said the book was "a personal matter between employer and employee".

*Hugh Muir
Saturday February 3, 2007
The Guardian*



Ooh la la: blogger sacked from Paris job signs six-figure deal

By Cahal Milmo

Published: 20 February 2007

When Catherine Sanderson's life as a single mother and Paris-based secretary was turned upside down by a few sentences on her blog, she mused that writing a book about the ordeal would be the "silver lining to a cloud".

Yesterday, the 34-year-old who shot to internet-based fame last year as La Petite Anglaise was putting the finishing touches to her first manuscript for a six-figure book deal and

discussing a film of her life as a hassled ex-patriate with a colourful love life.

It is a remarkable turnaround in the fortunes of Ms Sanderson, who 10 months ago found herself unemployed with a young daughter and a hobby which resulted in her being sacked for "gross misconduct".

When the La Petite Anglaise website began in 2004, it was described by its author as a "whim", offering a Bridget Jones-style look at life as a highly qualified personal assistant and mother of a bilingual toddler in France.

But her employer, the Anglo-French accountancy firm Dixon Wilson, saw things differently, despite not being named on the blog by Ms Sanderson, who also withheld her identity. The City company, which offers a "personal service to wealthy individuals and their businesses" claimed it had been brought into disrepute by Ms Sanderson's online postings, in which she revealed it had a portrait of the Queen in its entrance hall and served Tetley tea.

As news of her dismissal last April spread online, daily visits to the petiteanglaise.com blog rose from 3,000 to 30,000. Amid a welter of publicity on both sides of the Channel, an auction resulted in Penguin signing a two-book deal for a "mid-six-figure sum". The first book, based on how she met "Mr Frog", her former French partner and the father of "Tadpole", her four-year-old daughter, is due to be published in January.

Katy Follain, who signed the deal, said the fact that Ms Sanderson had been discovered through her blog was incidental. "We need to look at the writing itself. Her writing is so strong we signed her for two books," she said. There have also been talks with production companies about a film version of the book, in which she has floated the idea of being played by Kate Winslet.

Ms Sanderson said: "I never dreamed that this would turn into a book deal. This time last year I was in a job and spent some of my spare time writing about my life in Paris and myself. Now all this has happened, and hopefully it is working out for the best. I don't regret the blog."

Although partly inspired by Belle de Jour, the sexually explicit blog of a London call girl, the musings of La Blogeuse Anglaise are significantly less racy.

A French and German graduate, Ms Sanderson does not know how knowledge of her blog, which she kept secret from colleagues, reached her employers. She is claiming £50,000 for wrongful dismissal in a case to be heard next month which has international implications. It will be the first in France to decide if an employee can be dismissed for alleged infractions on a blog.

Ms Sanderson said: "There is a principle at stake. You should be free to discuss your life in a public forum." Dixon Wilson declined to comment.

Reflections of La Petite Anglaise

THE WORKPLACE

"It is an oasis of Britishness in Paris ... you have to set your watch to GMT. There is a framed picture of Her Majesty QE2 in the entrance hall. We have Tetley tea and fresh milk in the

kitchen."

ONE OF HER EMPLOYERS

"He wears braces and sock suspenders, stays in gentleman's clubs in London, and calls secretaries 'typists'. When I speak to him, I can't prevent myself mirroring his plummy accent."

ON BEING SACKED

"Old School Boss motions for me to close the door behind me. 'I am afraid I have called you here to tell you that I am obliged to terminate your employment with the firm.' My mouth forms a perfect 'O' of astonishment. 'This is because of your internet site.' Somehow he manages to make internet sound like an unspeakably filthy word."



What on earth is this page doing on national-PCSOs?



what's it doing here? yeah good question

It has nothing to do with PCSOs!



OK but it has everything to do with members of this site participating without fear of being threatened with discipline

Discipline?



Since this site was launched several members of national-PCSOs have been hauled in for investigation

Investigation?



Absolutely, myself included

You're a pretty tough guy you can take it



And the other members of this site who have been tracked down and challenged?

They should not bring the Police into disrepute



Or earn money from publishing material relating to work issues?

Correct!



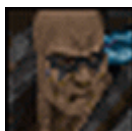
But that is exactly what Chief Superintendent Ali Dizaei is doing!

Yeah but he is a senior officer



Oh I forgot that, true!

What else have you got to say for yourself?



According to Richard Littlejohn Brian Paddick is ALSO publishing a book on material relating to work issues

He is a very senior officer though



Yes I think I get the picture, front line troops are NOT allowed to say their piece but senior officers ARE?

Now you understand



And THAT is why this page is here

[view the thread on this](#)

Paddick lands huge deal to reveal all on the Met

By Oliver Duff

Published: 18 June 2007

Bad news for the crisis-prone Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Ian Blair: Brian Paddick, the Yard's recently retired "camp commander", has signed a six-figure deal to write his memoirs, to be published in spring 2008. Paddick is sure to pan his former boss, with whom he clashed explosively over the killing in Stockwell of Jean Charles de Menezes.

Paddick met the editorial director of Simon & Schuster, Andrew Gordon, in September last year. Gordon has bought the rights and arranged for Paddick to pen the book with the crime writer Kris Hollington. "Brian has left the force and has no restraint on what he can say apart from the libel laws," Gordon tells me. "He'll say exactly what he thinks about how the Met is run and how it might be better run in the future." (Were Sir Ian not such an honest copper, he might consider assigning a snoop squad to check on Paddick's work-in-progress.)

Paddick, our most senior openly gay police officer, last month resigned early from his £131,000 post as Deputy Assistant Commissioner, after falling out with Blair over the Menezes killing. (Paddick challenged his old boss's statement not to have known for 24 hours that an innocent man had been shot.) As commander of Lambeth, Paddick was pilloried and praised for his liberal approach to cannabis possession, becoming a right-wing hate figure. One Sunday tabloid even bought up a former boyfriend.

One of Paddick's acquaintances laughs: "He's so indiscreet that I'm not sure how much will be left for the book." Should be a cracker.

DRIVING ME MAD



