

The [Undercover Research Project](#) aims to create an one-stop resource on political policing and undercover surveillance. This blog discusses the undermining of protest and dissent, to support others holding those responsible to account. The actual profiles can be found at the [Undercover Research Portal](#).

Posted in [How we work](#)

---

## Breaking - Andy Coles resigns as Deputy Police Commissioner for Cambridgeshire

Posted on [May 15, 2017](#)



— ex Met #spycop  
Andy Coles resigns  
as DPCCC.

Andy Coles has announced his resignation, effective immediately, following a weekend of press scrutiny over his past activities as an undercover police officer, in which the woman he deceived into a relationship called for him to step down.

- [Statement of Jessica](#) , 12 May 2017
- [Our profile on Andy Coles' undercover work](#)
- [Finding Andy](#) - our blog, 12 May 2017

### [Statement from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner](#)

May 15th, 2017

#### **Statement from Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Andy Coles**

There have been news reports over the weekend about which I am unable to comment.

This coverage is significantly impacting on my ability to carry out my duties as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

I have therefore today tendered my resignation with immediate effect, which Police and Crime Commissioner, Jason Ablewhite has accepted.

I am aware that the allegations have been referred directly to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

#### **Statement from the Police and Crime Panel**

There have been news reports over the weekend regarding Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Andy Coles.

A referral has today been made by the Police and Crime Panel to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC).

As a result of the referral, we are unable to make any further comment at this stage.

#### **Statement from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Jason Ablewhite**

Following news reports over the weekend, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Andy Coles has taken the decision to resign from his post with immediate effect.

I have accepted his resignation.

The matter has been referred directly to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) for their consideration, therefore I will not make any further comment.

ENDS

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

---

## Finding Andy - ex #spycop now Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

Posted on [May 12, 2017](#)



*Dónal O'Driscoll and Eveline Lubbers, Undercover Research Group, 12 May 2017*

Today we expose [Andy Davey](#) who was undercover in the animal rights movement in the early 1990s. His real name is [Andy Coles](#), and he is currently a Tory councillor and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

Simon Israel at Channel4 News at 7pm has an interview with '[Jessica](#)', the woman Coles groomed into a relationship when she was just 19, and in *the Guardian* Rob Evans has [Jessica calling for Coles to resign](#).

---

### Update

**Breaking - Andy Coles resigns as Deputy Police Commissioner for Cambridgeshire**, our blog, 15 May 2017.  
Rob Evans, [Cambridgeshire deputy police commissioner resigns over spy claims](#), *The Guardian*, 15 May 2017

---

### Finding Andy

Each discovery of a new undercover police officer in protest movement comes with its own unique twists and turns. For Andy Coles, it began with a small paragraph in the autobiography of his more famous brother, the former popstar ([The Communards](#)!) Rev. Richard Coles. From there we were able to track not only what he got up to undercover, but also where he is now. These days, he is a Tory councillor and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The painstakingly unravelling of a hidden identity and documenting the activities of spycops is a process that usually takes months and months. More often than not, what you are left with after excruciating amounts of sifting out false positives is only [95% certainty](#) that someone had indeed been a spycop.

Finding Andy Coles was a very different story: it moved much faster. His undercover persona *Andy Davey*, also known as *Andy 'Van'*, was [first outed](#) by his former animal rights comrade Paul Gravett online in 2014. At the time, little was known other than that Andy fitted [the pattern of spycops](#) discovered to date. However, the investigation began in earnest when in January 2017 we got a little help from some friends. Someone reading *Fathomless Riches, Or How I Went From Pop to Pulpit*, the [autobiography](#) of the pop star, broadcaster and Anglican priest Richard Coles, spotted the following intriguing paragraph:

*My older brother, Andy, brought his own drama with him. He looked like he had just walked out of the woods, his hair long and shaggy, with a straggly beard, his ears rattling with piercings; but his disarray was not like mine, an outward sign of internal distress, but suffered in the line of duty. He had joined Special Branch and was undercover, living a double life, infiltrated into some sinister organisation while his wife and baby daughter made do with unpredictable visits.*

[Continue reading →](#)

Posted in [Pitchford Inquiry, Profiles, Relationships, Undercover exposed](#) | [3 Replies](#)

---

# How activists dealt with Stasi Tactics before the fall of the Berlin wall

Posted on [April 20, 2017](#)



Repost of [Max Hertzberg's](#) blog *Stories from the edge of utopia*, 22 November 2016. Pics by [Carrie/1000 blackbirds](#).

N.B. In general, we are careful not to compare the UK #spycops saga with a totalitarian state systematically spying on its citizens. Max however has studied Stasi files and spoke to people spied upon.

Taking a look at the experiences of political activists in East Germany (GDR) who had to deal with Stasi informants and infiltration before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, this post is based on interviews with people who were politically active in East German times, and reflects their experiences. Those familiar with how police spies have been used for example in Britain may recognise the tactics used by both secret police and GDR activists.

The invasive spying and disorientation tactics used by the East German secret police (**Stasi**) meant there were significantly fewer possibilities for civil disobedience and direct action than political grassroots activists have today in countries places such as Western Europe and North America. Nevertheless political activists in East Germany managed to start a grassroots revolution in 1989.

## East German opposition and activism

Because non-state organisations were prohibited in the GDR, networking and co-ordination between activists was informal: independent groups and networks stayed in contact through newsletters and the exchange of campaign materials, and there was a mix of local and regionally co-ordinated covert and open actions.

Activists in the GDR also campaigned on issues that will feel familiar to many campaigners today: anti-nuclear and peace issues, challenging economic paradigms of growth and consumption at any cost; resistance to an undemocratic state and its activities; propagating and practising sustainable choices versus exploitation of environment and animals. There was a strong emphasis on DIY culture with egalitarian, equitable principles – politically most activists in the GDR in the 1980s self-defined as socialist or anarchist. [Continue reading →](#)

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

---

## Why did Operation Herne publish obviously wrong dates on #spycop Roger Pearce' career?

Posted on [April 11, 2017](#)



*Peter Salmon and Eveline Lubbers, Undercover Research Group, 11 April 2017*

Recently the [Pitchford Inquiry](#) confirmed Roger Pearce as a former undercover police officer (as 'Roger Thorley'); the Undercover Research Group had already [exposed him last year](#). We had managed to identify him based on details released the first report from Operation Herne, the police's own investigation into the abuses by notorious spycop unit, the Special Demonstration Squad. And as our [profile of Pearce](#) demonstrates, he did not shy away from talking about undercover policing publicly – coming forward to justify relationships and the theft of identities of dead children.

We have since learned there are some anomalies in the information the police released, apparent mistakes with dates that are difficult to explain... According to [Operation Herne](#), N85 – as Pearce was referred to – was an undercover from 1978 to 1980, and subsequently Director of Intelligence from 2000 to 2004, in which role he was also head of Special Branch.

However, Rob Evans over at *The Guardian* has understood that Pearce's [tour of duty as a spycop](#) lasted from 1979 to 1984. Additionally, the Metropolitan Police recently [confirmed to us](#) that Pearce was Director of Intelligence from November 1998 to March 2003.

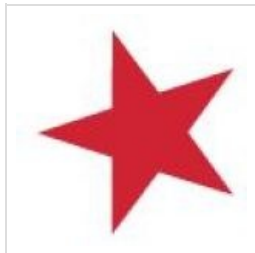
These anomalies raise several issues. [Continue reading →](#)

Posted in [Pitchford Inquiry](#), [Police reviews](#), [Released & FoI](#), [Superiors](#), [Undercover exposed](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

---

## Top Officers 'Blocking' Spycops Inquiry's Work – Morning Star

Posted on [April 7, 2017](#)



From the [Morning Star](#) by [Conrad Landin](#), 6 April 2017.

Pitchford participant blasts undercover police for 'preventing disclosure'

Police chiefs are using "blocking tactics" to "prevent disclosure," a preliminary hearing of the undercover policing inquiry heard yesterday.

Christopher Pitchford, who is leading the inquiry into the conduct of officers deployed to spy on political groups, convened the session to hear arguments over whether the coppers should be allowed more time to prepare requests for anonymity.

The Metropolitan Police has said assessing the risk of disclosing officers' real names and cover names has taken longer than anticipated, and a March 1 deadline was missed. It has also asked for the inquiry to be narrowed.

But in a powerful address to the hearing, inquiry core participant Kate Wilson said the police were "obstructing the goals" the probe was aiming for.

Ms Wilson is one of eight women deceived into relationships with undercover officers who won legal cases against the Met.

"We're not strangers to the blocking tactics used by the Metropolitan Police to prevent disclosure," she said.

Read on in the [Morning Star](#) – [and support them!](#) –

More:

Victims of political policing demand accountability at Undercover Policing Inquiry, in London – [Real News video report](#), 6 April 2017.

Pitchford Inquiry [transcripts of the hearings](#) on 5 and 6 April 2017

Posted in [Pitchford Inquiry](#), [Repost](#), [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

---

# Roger Pearce confirmed as spycop

Posted on **March 29, 2017**



— Roger Pearce, #spycop, head of the Special Demonstration Squad and of Special Branch, and now an author.

*Dónal O'Driscoll, Undercover Research Group, 29 March 2017.*

Today, the Pitchford Inquiry into undercover policing confirmed that former Special Branch commander **Roger Pearce had been a spycop**. This was something that the Undercover Research Group had **first publicly identified** in October 2016, having stitched together material from various sources.

It was the police's own Operation Herne which led the way, giving us the nugget of information that N85, a Special Branch commander had previously been an undercover officer and leading us to the identification. However, when we delved into Pearce's public appearances, there were plenty of other clues, not least in the way he publicly spoke about spycops.

## Defending the indefensible

When the undercover scandal broke, he was vocal in defending the indefensible – theft of dead children's identities and sexual relations with activists. We now know the horrendous activities that the undercovers got up to on their deployments. Yet, he went on television to state:

*The people I know and knew, the people who were selected for Special Branch and above all those who were selected for SDS, with very, very few exceptions who were known about, were people of integrity and honour and fired up by a sense of mission, to protect the country actually.*

[Continue reading →](#)

Posted in **Pitchford Inquiry, Relationships, Undercover exposed** | Tagged **pitchford inquiry, Roger Pearce, Special Branch, Special Demonstration Squad, spycop, undercover police** | **1 Reply**

---

## Spycops Inquiry: Children & Young Adults Group

Posted on **February 10, 2017**



*10 February 2017*

One of the untold aspects of the spycops saga has been the effect of undercover police on children and young adults.

People have been affected in different ways. For some it is betrayed friendship with people they trusted, for others it is the

affect on their family life. Others will have been directly targeted as young activists. We are aware that there has been a considerable impact to a number of people as a result. In some cases vulnerable people were placed in inappropriate situations, having been deceived by undercover police lying about who they were.

We feel this story is best told by those affected. As a group we wish to bring together and support those in this situation. There is strength in a collective approach, we can be more effective, stronger and we can also ensure that the fullest support is given to those in the group.

What we are looking to achieve is: [Continue reading →](#)

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

---

## #Spycops and Strikers: Grunwick to now

Posted on [January 28, 2017](#)



**Spycops and Strikers** is a public event in London on Wednesday 15th February, part part of a series of [Grunwick 40](#) memorial events.

*7-9pm, Malet Suite, Student Central, 2nd Floor, Malet Street London WC1E 7HY [Reserve a seat in advance.](#)*

Should Grunwick strikers and their supporters be involved [the Pitchford Inquiry](#) to find out more about undercover policing? How to deal with the policing of strikes today?

In 1976, six workers walked out of Grunwick Film Processing Laboratory in Willesden and ignited an historic two-year dispute which united thousands to demand better rights for poorly treated workers. The workforce had a significant number of Asian women who were at the forefront of the struggle.

The events of 1976-78 are still remembered as an important moment not just in local history, but in the fight for equal rights for women and ethnic minorities. They brought people of different races and backgrounds together in support of the rights of migrant women workers, shattered stereotypes about Asian women in Britain, and changed the face of trade unionism. Grunwick 40 was set up to commemorate this vital moment.

Such a large, diverse and unified movement attracted serious attention from the Metropolitan Police. [Continue reading →](#)

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

---

## Simon Wellings - profile of #spycop now up

Posted on [January 23, 2017](#)



— Simon Wellings, spycop with the Special Demonstration Squad (2001-2004)

Today we've put up our [profile of undercover officer Simon Wellings](#), our 13th such profile of the spycops who targeted protest groups. Though not the most high-profile spycop, there are a number of things that make his story important nevertheless.

Wellings infiltrated anti-globalisation group Globalise Resistance from 2001 to 2004. He was part of the group's steering committee and in a position to gain information on the activities of other groups as well. These included the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Campaign Against Climate Change, Campaign Against the Arms Trade and Disarm DSEi, as well as the Socialist Workers Party and trade unionists. With Globalise Resistance he travelled abroad a number of times, taking part in protests at international summits in New York, Seville and Evian.

### Being found out

Wellings is notable for the method by which he was discovered – while being debriefed about his spying, he accidentally caused his phone to ring an activist friend. That friend was out, so a copy of the conversation he was having was captured on their answering machine. [Continue reading →](#)

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [G8](#), [pitchford inquiry](#), [spycop](#), [undercover police](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

---

## Counter-terrorism money to sort out police chaotic record keeping

Posted on [January 13, 2017](#)



*Eveline Lubbers, Undercover Research Group, 13 January 2017*

Last week, [the Police Oracle](#) revealed that nearly £750,000 from the counter-terrorism budget is being spent on an IT system to analyse police documents submitted to the Pitchford Undercover Policing Inquiry. Ian Weinfass of the weekly police outlet obtained documents under the Freedom of Information Act confirming that the Home Office approved the spending.

We had a good look at the article, found some nuggets and we have some questions about how this extra funding will be spent.

### Sorting out police chaos record keeping

The IT contract will only handle documents from the [National Public Order Intelligence Unit \(NPOIU\)](#) to see if they need redacting before being released to the Pitchford Inquiry and subsequently to the public. The NPOIU [existed from 1999](#) to 2011 and focused on activist groups outside of London for much of its history.

It is not clear why a second IT system is needed. An existing IT contract is covering documents relating to the Metropolitan Police's Special Demonstration Squad. This contract has already been paid for through contributions from all regional forces – although the costs for that are not known yet. [Continue reading →](#)

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [Leave a reply](#)

---