

**IN THE MATTER OF THE INQUIRY ARISING FROM THE DEATH OF JALAL UDDIN
BEFORE HIS HONOUR JUDGE THOMAS TEAGUE KC**

WITNESS STATEMENT OF FRANK MORRIS

I, Frank Morris, say as follows:

1. I provide this witness statement at the request of the Chair of the Jalal Uddin Inquiry. As I explain below, the focus of this statement is on my role as the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) within an investigation in 2014 known as Operation Prideling. Prior to January 2021 I was police officer serving with Greater Manchester Police (GMP). In January 2021 I retired from GMP and took up a position as a lecturer at the University of Central Lancashire.

Professional background and career

2. In July 1996 I joined GMP as a uniformed Police Constable based on the Wigan Division. I initially undertook uniform response duties before joining the Divisional Drug Unit.
3. In January 2001 I was temporarily promoted to uniform Sergeant on the Wigan Division. In April 2003 I was promoted substantively to that rank and transferred to the Trafford Division. In the temporary and substantive Sergeant rank I undertook the role of both uniformed Response Sergeant and Custody Sergeant.
4. In 2004 I joined the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) as a Detective Sergeant. In that role I undertook investigations into a wide range of serious criminal offences.
5. In February 2007 I was temporarily promoted to the rank of Detective Inspector within the Volume Crime Unit at Trafford and was substantively promoted to that rank in October 2007. Once again my duties included the investigation of serious crime and suspicious deaths. Throughout my time as a Detective Inspector I was responsible for leading those investigations and headed up a team of detectives.

6. In April 2014 I joined the North West Counter Terrorism Unit (NWCTU), now known as Counter Terrorism Policing North West (CTPNW), based in the Investigations Department. Throughout my time in Counter Terrorism (CT) Policing I was based in the Investigations Department and was either the SIO or deputy SIO in relation to numerous terrorist investigations. I have attended various courses throughout my policing career. The courses of particular relevance to my roles at the relevant times include:

- a. Initial Management of Serious Crime – Detective Sergeant Course (2005)
- b. SIO Development – Detective Inspector Course (2009)
- c. Counter Terrorism Senior Investigating Officer Course (2015)

7. Although I did not undertake the Counter Terrorism Senior Investigating Officer Course until 2015, my understanding is that it was not mandatory before being able to perform the substantive role of CTSIO (that remained the case until at least my retirement in 2021). Prior to April 2014, I had regularly carried out the role of SIO on non-CT matters. Throughout my time within NWCTU I was able to draw upon the experience and expertise of CTSIO colleagues. Prior to working on Operation Prideling, I had acted as CTSIO on other matters. I had also acted as deputy SIO to DCI Will Chatterton. DCI Chatterton would subsequently become Detective Superintendent, the Head of CTPNW Investigations.

8. The role of an SIO is to manage the investigative response and all resources associated with an investigation. The SIO develops and implements strategies, procedures and systems that underpin the investigation and ensures the management and assessment of threat, risk and harm. As an SIO I was accountable to chief officers for the conduct of my investigations. I had responsibility for allocating staff and the overall management of the office. As SIO I would be asking the operational team whether there was anything more that could be done overtly. At the end of an operation, the SIO would be responsible for signing-off a closure report which in the case of an operation would normally be sent to the Operations Intelligence Management Unit (OIMU). In the case of a Lead, a closure report would normally be

sent to the Fixed Intelligence Management Unit (FIMU). The report may also be sent to other key partners.

Operation Prideling

9. I was the SIO for Operation Prideling. I cannot now recall how I was appointed the SIO, however it would either have been a result of me being the on-call SIO on a rota which was then maintained or as a result of a decision by Detective Superintendent Simon Barraclough (Head of Investigations, North West Counter Terrorism Unit) or Detective Chief Superintendent Dominic Scally (Head of North West Counter Terrorism Unit). At an early stage, I commenced a 'Senior Investigating Officer's Policy Book'. I exhibit my Policy Book at **FM/1**.
10. Operation Prideling, despite the name, was not a National Security operation: it was and to my knowledge remained a Lead. A 'Lead' is defined by the Intelligence Handling Model as being intelligence or information that is not linked to an ongoing investigation that, following initial assessment suggests activities of National Security or Domestic Extremism concern. Leads can be recommended for further investigation if it is proportionate to allocate significant covert resource.
11. Operation Prideling would have been one of a number of matters I was involved with in mid-2014. I would have been SIO for at least 10 operations at that time. In addition to those operations I would have been responsible for or have involvement with a number of Leads.
12. At this time, NWCTU was experiencing a very heavy workload. There were multiple CT investigations, many of which were connected to the emergence of ISIS and the civil war in Syria. In June 2014, ISIS took control of the Iraqi cities of Mosul and Tikrit, and at the end of that month announced the establishment of a caliphate, describing itself as 'the Islamic State'. At this time there was a significant increase in workload due to the declaration of the caliphate and the number of people suspected of wanting to travel to Syria. I was also the Single Point of Contact within the NWCTU for right wing extremism which was also increasing at this time.
13. Upon being appointed as the SIO, I would have been provided with some background information and in particular with regard to Mohammed Syadul Hussain. I believe such

a briefing would have been provided by a member of NWCTU. Operation Prideling was focused on intelligence received that a male, Hussain, had spoken to his 8-year old nephew about the Taliban. The nephew, who lived in Hull, was reported to have said that he wished to join the Taliban. I understand that this intelligence was reported in February 2014.

14. It was my practice to conduct research myself when asked to be an SIO. I believe I made the notes which appear on the second and third pages of my Policy Book whilst researching Hussain. As it was possible that this investigation may result in seeking and executing a warrant under terrorism legislation, I would have conducted this research myself as I would have wanted to be personally satisfied of the information.
15. I was aware, as is reflected in my notes on the second page of my Policy Book, that Hussain had previously been investigated [Irrelevant & Sensitive] This was an SO15 Internet Referral Unit report investigation relating to the Facebook activities of Mohammed Syadul HUSSAIN Born [DPA] I had no involvement in that particular [Investigation] Research conducted in 2014 showed that Hussain had reactivated his Facebook account (he had reported closing it in 2012) and was posting material of concern.
16. During the course of the investigation various officers worked with me as part of Operation Prideling. These included DS Darren Mangan who was the case officer. As the case officer he would have had day to day running of the investigation. He would have allocated roles within the investigation team. If a file needed to be prepared for submission to the CPS, DS Mangan would have completed this.
17. DC Tony Worrall, who was a member of my team, prepared a briefing document (exhibit FM/2). This sets out the background to the investigation and the then intention to execute a search warrant. The objectives for Operation Prideling were as follows:
 - a. To establish the extent to which Hussain (as the subject of interest) held an extremist mindset.
 - b. To evidence whether Hussain aspired to travel for extremist and not humanitarian purposes.
 - c. To identify any associates who he was or had been in communication with who may hold a similar mindset.

- d. To manage any associates who could be vulnerable to radicalisation.
- e. To identify any terrorist and / or other criminality Hussain is involved in to sure a prosecution.
- f. To protect any covert investigations / assets.

18. I decided that a search warrant should be sought. I considered the information we had, including from Hussain's Facebook profile, and I concluded that a warrant was the most appropriate course of action. I did not believe arresting Hussain was proportionate. The warrant would potentially provide us with any evidence of criminality.

Search warrant

19. On 31 July 2014 DC Worrall applied to the Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court for a search warrant under section 8 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. I exhibit as **FM/3** the application. Within the application DC Worrall explained that the offences being investigated were under sections 1 and 2 of the Terrorism Act 2006, i.e. encouragement of terrorism and dissemination of terrorist publications. Within the application a summary of the investigation was set out. Various electronic items were sought, including mobile telephones, SIM cards, computers and digital storage media. This material was likely to be of substantial value to the investigation (and also was believed to be likely to be relevant evidence):

"This investigation has two main strands to it. Firstly there is the Section 1 offence of encouragement of terrorism. This relates to the information relating to the subject speaking with his 8 year old nephew about the Taliban and subsequently showing him footage on YouTube. Recovery of the electronic devices detailed may contain footage/recordings of these conversations and the YouTube footage shown to the nephew may also be recovered. It is possible that HUSSAIN has expressed these views further afield. Without further examination of the electronic devices detailed this cannot be confirmed.

The second strand of the investigation relates to the Section 2 offence of disseminating terrorist publications. The Facebook account of the subject HUSSAIN contains material that raises concerns about his mindset. His continued support for proscribed organisations through Facebook highlights these concerns. The electronic equipment to be searched for will be subjected to a thorough forensic media recovery process. This process may well reveal further items/material, from within phones, laptops, computers and ipads recovered, that highlights these concerns further. This additional material will be subjected to further assessment to ascertain if the content encourages people to engage in terrorism or provides information that could be useful to a terrorist and if it can be shown that this material is being disseminated further afield via the internet."

20. This reflected the purposes of the search which is documented within my policy book (FM/1) as follows:

"PURPOSE OF THE SEARCH

To develop + evidence whether

I) The extent to which the subject holds an extreme mindset

II) Whether he aspires to travel for extremist + not humanitarian purposes

III) To identify any associates who is/has been in communication with who may hold a similar mind set

IV) To manage any associates who could be vulnerable to radicalisation

V) Identify any terrorist and/or criminality the subject is involved with to secure a prosecution

VI) Protect any covert investigations/assets"

21. These objectives were fairly typical in an investigation of this kind.

22. DC Worrall presented the application to the Magistrates' Court, where the warrant was granted. The warrant was to have been executed on 7 August 2014, however it was subsequently delayed until 14 August 2014.

23. In the following days various meetings and briefings took place in advance of the warrant being executed.

24. On 11 August 2014 I attended a Gold Group meeting at which I provided an update on the investigation, including a summary of the reason why a search was to take place. As with any overt executive action, consideration was given to how the search was to be conducted, who would be present and the management of the potential consequences of the search (including considering the community impact).

25. At or around 07.00 on 14 August 2014 the warrant was executed at Hussain's home address at Oswald Street in Rochdale. I was not present at the premises myself, however I was being briefed during the course of the search.

26. There were five occupants within the property: Hussain, his father, mother, sister and nephew. No arrests were made. The occupants of the property were reported to have been calm and compliant. Hussain surrendered his mobile telephone and provided written permission to examine his Facebook, WhatsApp and email accounts. Various items were seized including: Hussain's Samsung Galaxy mobile telephone (exhibited as ICW/1), a laptop (ICW/2), the nephew's mobile telephone (ICW/3) and an iPod (ICW/5).

The exhibits seized

27. Following the search the seized exhibits were brought back to police premises. I would have chaired a meeting at which I decided the strategy for analysing the items seized. We would have tried to get the items reviewed and back to the family members as quickly as possible.

28. Operation Prideling was managed using a spreadsheet, which I exhibit as **FM/4**. This was sometimes described as a 'one-action' investigation because within HOLMES the particular investigation was allocated to one Action. This was a practice used within CTPNW for smaller investigations: larger investigations were run on HOLMES. I understand the reason why smaller investigations were not fully run on HOLMES was due to the system's capacity: at the time there was a limit on the number of investigations that could be run on HOLMES and so smaller investigations or Leads (as in this case) were managed using a spreadsheet. At the end of the investigation,

everything should be scanned onto HOLMES and associated to the one Action. Ultimately it was up to the SIO and the Major Incident Room (MIR) whether a particular job would be run on HOLMES or by using a spreadsheet. Which option depended significantly on the volume of exhibits and other documents the investigation was anticipated to generate. A job the size of Operation Prideling would at the time have always been run using a spreadsheet rather than HOLMES.

29. Ordinarily the Detective Sergeant would manage the spreadsheet. I believe that in this particular operation, DS Mangan delegated this task to DC Reid. Although a more junior officer, DC Reid was a very experienced CT officer and it was for that reason I assume he was asked to take on this responsibility.
30. The spreadsheet contains various tabs and I can see that within the 'EXHIBITS' tab, various exhibits are listed. DC Reid would have completed the 'ACTIONS' tab. I can see that on 15 August 2014 (i.e. the day after the warrant was executed), twelve actions were raised including completing forensic downloads of ICW/1, ICW/2 and ICW/3.
31. In respect of ICW/1, I can see that the forensic download was completed on 18 August 2014. The 'Result' for this Action (A7) was recorded as: "DVD containing Comms Data Exhibited as ICW/1/MS/1. This is the phone belonging to the SOI, HUSSAIN."
32. Linked to A7 was A19: "Conduct Media Review of ICW/1/MS/1 - DVD containing Comms Data from Samsung S3 and associated Sim card". This Action was raised on 18 August 2014 and was allocated to DC Reid.
33. I am shown an extract from DC Reid's case book (which I exhibit as **FM/5**). On 18 August 2014, it appears that:
 - a. At 07.30 DC Reid received disc ICW/1/MS/1 from DC White.
 - b. At 13.45 DC Reid received disc ICW/7/PM/1 from DC White.
 - c. At 14.30 DC Reid handed discs ICW/1/MS/1 and ICW/7/PM/1 to an analyst, Linda Sharples.
34. I am also shown an 'Officer's Report' dated 21 August 2014 written by DC Reid (which I exhibit as **FM/6**). The report is entitled "Action 19 - Evid' Review - ICW/1/MS/1" and

appears to have been sent to DS Mangan. I do not recall being sent the report or seeing it at the time of the operation, however it is likely that I would have been given or sent a copy.

35. Within the report DC Reid explained that he conducted a review of the media material on ICW/1/MS/1. He recorded:

"There are contained within the graphics/images on the phone a number appertaining to 'Mindset' material. There are a number of images showing well known deceased Islamic extremist/terror leaders, including Osama Bin LADEN, Anwar Al-AWLAKI, Omar BAGHDADI. Also shows extremist fighters with weapons and ammunition in combat type scenes.

Graphics/Images include: AK47 weapons, Al-Baghdadi, ISIS flags, Support for Jihad, Support for Gaza/Palestinians, Anjem Choudhary, Jihadi fighters. Anti semetic/anti-Western/Pro Palestine/Gaza/Syria/ISIS images. 'Join the Jihad graphics.

Although there is no evidence of any TACT offences (Section 2 and section 58) there is plenty of material which gives cause for concern. The material should be classified as mindset material. When this is combined with the known and reported intelligence that he has been influencing his 8 year old cousin in Hull previously. Together with the material uncovered from a nephew's mobile phone [DPA] [DPA] who lives with HUSSAIN at [DPA] Oswald Street, Rochdale. HUSSAIN clearly poses a significant risk to himself and others in potentially radicalising them.

It would appear that HUSSAIN uses his mobile phone as his main means of accessing the internet and social media applications. Above is a list of the active social media applications that he has access to. A DSA has been obtained and a full download of his Facebook account has been obtained and reported on separately.

No Data Assessment log has been completed. The material was reviewed using the retina media system.

Analyst Linda SHARPLES has been provided a copy of the aforementioned Comms data disc and will report separately her findings in relation to the mobile phone call data."

36. I can see that on 27 August 2014 the spreadsheet was updated with the following

'Result':

"Review of Media completed on the mobile phone belonging to Syadul HUSSAIN. This phone contained a large amount of images relating to family and friends. There were also a lot of images appertaining to support of Gaza and Palestine. There were also numerous images of the Syrian/Iraq ongoing conflict. Images were of a violent extreme and Islamist in nature. Also numerous images of martyrs, executions/executed males/beheaded males. (Nothing seen crosses the threshold for section 1 or 2 TACT 2006)."

37. I can see from the spreadsheet that other exhibits were examined at and around this time.

38. On 1 October 2014 I met with members of the team including DS Mangan and DC Reid. I made an entry within my policy book as an aide memoire. I cannot now recall why this meeting was called, although note it followed a letter dated 25 September 2014 which was sent to me and others in which suggested that a discussion take place about the review of Hussain's digital media. I cannot now recall what was discussed during this meeting, however I believe I would have asked for an update on the reviews which had been or were being conducted.

Closing report

39. On 8 October 2014 DC Reid prepared a closing report entitled "OPERATION CLOSURE FORM; OPERATION PRIDELING – 08/10/2014" (which I exhibit as **FM/7**). By way of summary, the report concluded that the operational objectives had been met. In respect of ICW/1, DC Reid wrote:

"ICW/1 - There are contained within the graphics/images on the phone a significant number appertaining to 'Mindset' material. There are a number of images showing well known deceased Islamic extremist/terror leaders, including **Osama Bin LADEN, Anwar Al-AWLAKI, Omar AL BAGHDADI**. Also shows extremist fighters with weapons and ammunition in combat type scenes. Graphics/Images include: AK47 weapons, **AL-BAGHDADI**, ISIS flags, Support for Jihad, Support for

Gaza/Palestinians, Anjem CHOUDHARY, Jihadi fighters. Anti semetic/anti-Western/Pro Palestine/Gaza/Syria/ISiS images. 'Join the Jihad graphics.

A number of private email and social media account login details have also been recovered. There is nothing relevant recovered from the"

40. I infer the final word should read 'them'.
41. I have reviewed the three appendices to the closure report. They contain images found on, respectively, ICW/1, ICW/2 and ICW/3. I agree with DC Reid that whilst the images found on the devices are concerning, unpleasant and offensive they amount to mindset material and would not have crossed the threshold for charging and prosecution. Without wishing to minimise this material, it was not unusual to find imagery of this kind on devices seized at this time. I do not believe I or my colleagues were blasé about material of this kind, but it reflects the high threshold applied by the Crown Prosecution Service before a charge could be authorised. I note that DC Reid used the Retina system for the purposes of his media review.
42. Operation Prideling recommended that Hussain and his nephew be engaged by Channel officers with a view to turning them away from an extremist interpretation of Islam. I agreed with that recommendation. I am asked whether I think this recommendation was satisfactory bearing in mind Hussain's previous failure to engage with the Channel programme. As to that, I would say that although his engagement was far from complete, he had deleted his Facebook account although this was temporary. Ultimately, however, we assessed that Hussain had not done anything criminal and had complied with officers' requests when the warrant was executed: in that situation our options were severely limited. In terms of disruption or other overt action, there was not a lot else we could do.
43. I am told that there is no evidence that the analyst, Linda Sharples, produced a report of any analysis she may have conducted in respect of the communications data on ICW/1. I would have expected her to have at least provided a verbal briefing in which she would have outlined anything of note within the exhibit. She may have undertaken to follow up this verbal briefing with a written report at a later date. I am aware that at

- around this time Ms Sharples was off work for periods of time, so it is possible that she did provide a verbal briefing, but then did not follow this up with a written report.
44. That said, had a review been conducted and nothing of significance been found, that fact should have been documented. I accept that the communications data from Hussain's mobile telephone should have been reviewed and Operation Prideling should not have been closed before that review had taken place. If the communications data from ICW/1 had not been reviewed, I was not aware of that at the time.
45. Although DC Reid had noted within his report of 21 August 2014 (FM/6) that Ms Sharples was to conduct a review, this appears to have been overlooked when he was preparing the closing report some weeks later. The write up in respect of ICW/1 does not mention the communications data. At the time this clearly did not occur to me and I would have assumed that was because there was nothing of concern, however in hindsight I now would have expected to have seen something to the effect that there was nothing of concern.
46. I infer the lack of a review of the communications data from ICW/1 was because action A19 within the spreadsheet combined the review of the media and communications data: normally this would be separated as the two were usually conducted by different people using different methods. Had the two elements been separated out, I do not believe they would have been closed unless both reviews had been done. As it was, this was missed.
47. My attention is drawn to column K which is titled 'Checked by SIO Y/N'. I do not recall using this column and it was not my practice to complete this field. I had confidence in my team to complete these actions without the need for me to personally check each and every action.
48. I cannot now recall seeing the closing report before it was finalised, however I accept that in all likelihood I would have done. As SIO it bears my name and so I accept ultimate responsibility for it.
49. I explain below, I accept that there was material relevant to Hussain and Mohammed Kadir which was not properly or fully assessed. To that extent, the objectives of Operation Prideling were not fully met.

Evidence relating to Mohammed Kadir

50. I am asked to consider the communications sequence of events [INQ000007] ('the SOE') and an analysis report of 16 November 2016 [INQ000220]. I am advised that a large number of entries within the SOE are derived from exhibit ICW/1. I understand the SOE and analysis report were prepared by officers / staff within CTPNW following the murder of Mr Uddin. I think it is important to note that the SOE was produced in the context of a murder investigation and with a then suspected criminal link between Hussain and Kadir.
51. I agree that intelligence relating to Hussain and Kadir was available to NWCTU in 2014 and it was not fully examined. However, I do question whether that this intelligence was 'important': whilst there is some indication of a possibility of online radicalisation, nothing that I have seen suggests that either Hussain or Kadir, or anyone else, was engaged in attack planning. There was nothing to suggest that they were planning to travel to Syria or elsewhere.
52. I note the reference to Tony Blair which appears as lines 244-248 of the SOE, however this does not stand out as being unusual from what we had been reading at around that time. Superficially, this is a concerning comment however I do not consider the threat to have been significant. It appears to have been an off-the-cuff comment. There is nothing within or around the comment that suggests Hussain or Kadir would have acted on what they had written.
53. I am now aware that the communications data from ICW/1 shows that Kadir was Hussain's second most frequent contact. This in itself would not have been particularly concerning in 2014: I am now aware – but I do not think I was aware at the time – that Hussain had previously identified a 'Mohammed Kadir' as his brother on his Facebook profile (see, for example, within the subject profile dated 4 June 2014, exhibited as FM/8). I understand there is nothing to suggest Hussain and Kadir were in fact brothers, but they may have been close friends as indicated by the use of the term and frequency of their contact. In that context, the fact that Hussain and Kadir were in contact with each other was as at 2014 of limited intelligence value.

54. I am asked what I would have done if I had been aware of the exchanges between Hussain and Kadir. Based on my experience at the time and since, I think it unlikely any overt action would have been taken in respect of Hussain or Kadir. However, I do think an intelligence report may have been prepared which documented the fact of contact between Hussain and Kadir, that some of their communications were concerning and they appeared to have a similar mindset. It would then have been for others within the FIMU or partner organisations to determine what if any action should be taken. It is possible that Kadir may have been recommended for a Prevent referral. It would have been for those others to determine whether a Prevent referral would have been appropriate and therefore taken forward.

Conclusion and reflections

55. I accept that Operation Prideling should not have been closed until Hussain's communications data had been analysed. In that respect, I do not think all the operational objectives could be said to have been met: we did not know the extent of communications between Hussain and others.

56. In terms of reflections, I acknowledge that the investigation team should have chased up the communications data. I know from my experience before my retirement, investigations such as Operation Prideling would now be run on dedicated HOLMES accounts. This means that all individual actions are split out providing a much more robust audit process: if an action has not been completed this is flagged prominently. As SIO I would be provided with a list of outstanding actions, meaning the chances of overlooking incomplete actions has reduced.

57. In 2014 the CT policing network was undergoing significant change. In the subsequent years until my retirement, the way of working changed considerably. I would highlight the following:

- a. The IT systems used have been significantly improved and upgraded: operations and investigations are now run using HOLMES (irrespective of size) and NSBIS replaced NCIA.
- b. The processes between the police and our key partners have improved.

- c. Overt SIOs are now briefed in covert from the beginning to look for evidential opportunities and to discuss when overt action should be taken.
- d. At the point of closure, meetings now routinely take place.
- e. The role of Detective Constables and analysts are more defined.
- f. Media viewing is generally now carried out by specialist media viewers meaning operations are less reliant on Detective Constables.

58. I did not have any role in the investigation of Jalal Uddin's death: this investigation was led by DCI Andrew Meeks.

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Signed:

Signature

Dated:

16/8/2024