

**CONFIDENTIAL**



**HOME OFFICE  
POLICE ACT 1964**

# **THE YORKSHIRE RIPPER CASE**

**REVIEW OF THE  
POLICE INVESTIGATION OF THE CASE  
BY LAWRENCE BYFORD, Esq., CBE., QPM.,  
HER MAJESTY'S  
INSPECTOR OF CONSTABULARY**

*Presented to the Secretary of State for the Home Department*

*DECEMBER 1981*



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**Report to the Right Honourable William Whitelaw, C.H., M.C., M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the Review of the Police Investigation of the Yorkshire Ripper Case**

**PART I — INTRODUCTION**

**The Scope of the Review**

1. On 26th May 1981 I was appointed by you, pursuant to Section 38 (3) of the Police Act 1964, to review the police investigation into the Yorkshire Ripper Case. In particular, I was asked to report any lessons which might be learned from my review of the case and which should be made known to police forces generally. I now submit my report.

2. In conducting this review I have had the invaluable assistance of the special team of senior officers which was appointed to advise on the investigation in November 1980. The team comprised:—

- (i) L E Emment, Esq., Deputy Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police.
- (ii) A K Sloan, Esq., National Co-ordinator of Regional Crime Squads in England and Wales. (Latterly Deputy Chief Constable of Lincolnshire)
- (iii) D H Gerty, Esq., Assistant Chief Constable, West Midlands Police.
- (iv) R Harvey, Esq., Commander, Metropolitan Police and Assistant (Crime and Kindred Matters) to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary.
- (v) S S Kind, Esq., Director of the Home Office Central Research Establishment, Aldermaston.

3. The first phase of my review related to the actual police investigation into the case. This necessitated visits and interviews in several police districts including West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, Humberside, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Durham and Northumbria. At the outset it was essential to identify the many criticisms levelled at the police in what was undoubtedly the largest-scale police investigation ever conducted in this country. Some of these criticisms were of apparent weaknesses in the police investigation and were voiced during the trial of the man convicted of the Ripper murders and attempted murders, Peter William Sutcliffe. Other criticisms came from newspapers and television programmes, Members of Parliament, local Councillors and members of the general public. Some of the immediate relatives of murder victims, especially those killed towards the end of this series of callous crimes, together with some surviving victims, were also critical of the police. I have endeavoured to take all of these criticisms into account both whilst conducting the review and equally when framing that part of the report relating to the lessons to be learned.

4. I was especially mindful of the need to allow any person with a legitimate interest in the case to contact me, or a senior member of my team, to comment personally about any aspect of the case giving rise to criticism. In particular I made contact with all the immediate relatives of murder victims and interviewed personally all those who wished to see me. All surviving victims of the attempted murders have also been similarly contacted. In addition, in answering Parliamentary Questions on 5th June and 9th July this year, you pointed out that I would be willing to receive evidence from interested parties and my official address was quoted in Hansard for that purpose. The opportunity has been given, therefore, to enable any person to contact me since the start of this inquiry and I have given full consideration to the views they have expressed. Without exception, those interviewed have been appreciative of the opportunity it gave for voicing their misgivings about the conduct of the case and this was especially true of the relatives of the murder victims.

5. During the course of the inquiry we have examined a wide variety of original documents completed in connection with Sutcliffe's crimes and have interviewed police officers of all ranks who were involved in the investigations in the several police areas. I also thought fit to issue an invitation, through the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police Force Orders, to any police officer who wished to comment about the investigation of the crimes to come and see me. I have had access to a comprehensive file of press cuttings covering the many aspects of the case and have also

been able to view the recordings of all programmes broadcast by the British television service in connection with the range of Ripper crimes.

6. In producing my report I have, therefore, been able to take account of virtually all the range of opinion, both within and without the Police Service and of public and private documents and records produced in connection with these crimes. As you will see, later in the report, the critical analysis of the case has revealed some major errors of judgement, especially at senior management level. Mistakes were also made from time to time by officers of lower rank. In fairness these errors must be viewed against a backcloth of professional pressures which were unprecedented in the annals of crime investigation in this country in modern times. For over five years many police officers, of all ranks, were dedicated to detecting the crimes in the Ripper series and there is little doubt that the incessant demands arising from the investigation made serious inroads into family life and often the general health of the officers concerned. The analysis of the case has also revealed, very clearly, the lessons to be learned for the future by the police in this country. Hopefully these lessons will be promulgated throughout the Service as soon as possible and will then be included in the guide-lines to be followed in future especially in the series type of serious crime investigation.

### **Peter William Sutcliffe**

7. During 1969 an otherwise unremarkable young man named Peter William Sutcliffe came to the notice of the police on two occasions in connection with incidents involving prostitutes. Sutcliffe, who at that time was 23 years of age, was a native of Shipley, West Yorkshire and lived there with his parents. He was not notably abnormal, although he had gained a reputation for a rather macabre sense of humour whilst employed as a grave digger at Bingley. During his late teens he developed an unhealthy interest in prostitutes and spent a great deal of time, often in the company of his friend Trevor Birdsall, watching them soliciting on the streets of Leeds and Bradford. There is no evidence that he used the services of prostitutes at that stage although it is clear that he was fascinated by them and spent a considerable amount of time acting as a kind of voyeur. It is apparent that at some point during 1969, Sutcliffe's interest in prostitutes attained a new dimension with a desire on his part to inflict physical injury upon them. Although the police files on two incidents involving Sutcliffe during that year were destroyed some time ago as part of a perfectly legitimate "weeding" process there is no doubt that on one occasion Sutcliffe attacked a prostitute in Bradford with a cosh consisting of a large stone inside a man's sock. He had left Birdsall in his car before the incident and told him about what had happened when he returned. Surprisingly he was not charged with any offence. During the same year Sutcliffe was arrested in a prostitute area in Bradford whilst in possession of a hammer. He was not suspected by the police of having the hammer for the purpose of inflicting violence to the person and the meagre police records remaining show that he was subsequently charged with "going equipped for stealing". At the time of these attacks Sutcliffe was courting Sonia Szurma whom he was to marry in 1974.

8. Between 1969 and the start of the known Ripper crimes in 1975, there is a curious and unexplained lull in Sutcliffe's criminal activities and there is the possibility that he carried out other attacks on prostitutes and unaccompanied women during that period. I should perhaps say here that I have given considerable thought to the extent of my responsibility in this review of the Ripper Case having regard to the opportunity it has given to interview Sutcliffe and his associates and in particular, Birdsall. I came to the conclusion that consideration of any other crimes which might have been committed by Sutcliffe and any of his associates was a matter for the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police and the other police forces where such crimes might have been committed. I believe that it is sufficient for me to add that, in the light of the evidence adduced during the review, we feel it is highly improbable that the crimes in respect of which Sutcliffe has been charged and convicted are the only ones attributable to him. This feeling is reinforced by examining the details of a number of assaults on women since 1969 which, in some ways, clearly fall into the established pattern of Sutcliffe's overall modus-operandi. I hasten to add that I feel sure that the senior police officers in the areas concerned are also mindful of this possibility but, in order to ensure full account is taken of all the information available, I have arranged for an effective liaison to take place.

9. Whatever activity Sutcliffe did or did not engage in between 1969 and 1975, in the latter year he is known to have embarked on a campaign of murderous attacks on prostitutes and unaccompanied women in the West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester Police areas which was to

gain him the title "The Yorkshire Ripper". It was also to bring into international focus the unprecedented police activity, press and other news media interest which arose from our most remarkable crime investigation this century. To the female population in Northern cities, especially in West Yorkshire, the successive murders and serious assaults, over a period of five years, obviously prompted great fear and apprehension which were not to be alleviated until Sutcliffe was arrested in Sheffield on 2nd January, 1981.

10. Part II of my report, which follows, covers the principal events in the protracted Ripper Case, and is not intended to highlight any of the criticisms or limitations in the police investigation. These are dealt with under Part III and to some extent serve as a backcloth to the "Lessons for the Future" as detailed in Part IV.

## PART II — CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

11. Sutcliffe was born at Shipley, West Yorkshire, on 2nd June 1946. After leaving school at the age of 15, he had a variety of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in the Bradford area. During the period in which his admitted crimes were committed he was employed as a tyre fitter, and subsequently, following qualification as a heavy goods vehicle driver, as a lorry driver for the Bradford engineering and transport company, T. & W.H. Clark (Holdings) Ltd. On the 10th April 1974 he married Sonia Szurma with whom he then lived, first at her parents house in Clayton and later, from the 26th September 1977, in a detached house which he bought in the Heaton district of Bradford. At the time of his marriage Sutcliffe owned a lime green Ford Capri car with the registered number EUA 831K.

12. The first of the crimes for which Sutcliffe was convicted was the attempted murder of Anna Rogulskij in Keighley on the 5th July 1975. Sutcliffe attacked his victim with a hammer in an alleyway in Keighley and left her lying on the ground suffering from very severe head injuries and from a number of superficial slash wounds to the body. The crime was investigated by Detective Superintendent Perry of West Yorkshire's Western Crime Area and an incident room was established in the Keighley Division for the purpose of the inquiry. The crime was not linked with any others neither was it linked with the Ripper series until June 1978 when the West Yorkshire Police issued a "Special Notice" to all police forces about the murders which had, by then, been committed.

13. On the 15th August 1975, just over a month after the Rogulskij incident, Sutcliffe, after leaving his friend Trevor Birdsall in his car, attacked Olive Smelt with a hammer in Boothtown, Halifax, inflicting serious head injuries. Using a knife he also inflicted two slash wounds to her back after first disarranging her clothing. Although the nature of the crime was very similar to the attempted murder of Anna Rogulskij it was not specifically linked with it in police crime circulations, neither was it linked with the Ripper series until June 1978. Detective Superintendent Holland of the Western Crime Area established an incident room at Halifax for the purpose of the inquiry. In neither of these two crimes was any substantial evidence available about either the assailants or about any vehicle which might have been used.

14. The first murder in the series occurred on the 30th October 1975 when Sutcliffe killed Wilma McCann, a known prostitute, on the Prince Philip playing fields in Leeds. Once again, the victim was hit on the head with a hammer, one of the blows penetrating the full thickness of the skull. On this occasion, however, unlike the tentative slashings of the bodies of Rogulskij and Smelt, McCann was stabbed once in the neck and 14 times in the chest and abdomen. In what was to become a standard Ripper trademark, McCann's clothing had been disturbed so that before the stab wounds were inflicted the whole of her torso was displayed. The opinion of the pathologist was that the victim had been struck with the hammer whilst in a standing position and that the subsequent injuries were inflicted as she lay disabled and unconscious on the ground. This too was to become part of Sutcliffe's standard method of operation. This crime was investigated by Detective Chief Superintendent Hoban of West Yorkshire's Eastern Crime Area and an incident room was established at the former Leeds City Police Headquarters in Brotherton House. It was initially treated as an independent murder and was not linked with the attacks on Smelt and Rogulskij. Police inquiries revealed that a red Hillman Avenger motor car, driven by a coloured person, probably a West Indian of about 35 years of age with a moustache rounded to the corners of his mouth, had been seen in the area at the time the crime was committed. The driver and vehicle were circulated as wanted for elimination but were not traced.

15. On the 23rd November 1975, less than a month after the murder of Wilma McCann, the body of a woman called Joan Harrison was found in Preston. Harrison, a known prostitute and an alcoholic, had died as a result of shock and haemorrhage due to multiple injuries, mainly caused by violent kicking to the head and body. In this case, unlike the three previous cases in the West Yorkshire area, sexual intercourse and buggery had occurred immediately before the victim's death. The murder was investigated by Detective Chief Superintendent Brooks of the Lancashire Constabulary whose main line of inquiry was to trace a suspect of the 'B' secretor blood group which was indicated by analysis of semen from the body. Although the investigating officers on

both sides of the Pennines considered a connection between this murder and the Yorkshire series, no specific link was accepted until June 1978 when the crime was included in a police circulation listing the "prostitute" murders which had, by that time, occurred in the West Yorkshire area. It is pertinent to mention that the writer of the first two "Sunderland" letters, posted in March 1978, and referred to later, claimed the Harrison murder as one of those which he had committed. Following his arrest Sutcliffe did not admit this murder and senior officers of the Lancashire Constabulary are now satisfied that it is not attributable to him. It did, however, prove very significant in the investigation of Sutcliffe's crimes especially in regard to senior police management decisions and therefore merits mention here.

16. The next Ripper murder occurred in the West Yorkshire area on the 20th January 1976 when Emily Jackson, a known prostitute, was killed in a factory yard in Leeds. As in previous cases Sutcliffe struck down his victim by a violent blow with a hammer after which he disarranged her clothing to expose her torso and inflicted multiple stab wounds to her lower neck, upper chest and lower abdomen. An additional series of stab wounds were inflicted to her back by a cross shaped instrument thought to be a "Philips" screwdriver. As in the McCann case this particular murder was investigated by Detective Chief Superintendent Hoban, who established an incident room in the newly opened Millgarth Police Station, not far from the murder scene. The two murders were linked together in a crime intelligence bulletin issued to all police forces by the West Yorkshire Police on the 19th February 1976. Police inquiries in the case established that at about 7 pm on the 20th January the victim, Jackson, had been seen to get into a Landrover near to the Gaiety public house in Leeds where she had gone to solicit for prostitution. The driver of the Landrover was described as being about 50 years of age, of fattish build with mousey coloured ear-length hair, a full beard and bushy ginger/blonde sideburns. He was also described as having a distinctive scar extending from the knuckles to the wrist of his left hand. This description was included in the "Special Notice" to all forces.

17. On the 9th May 1976 Sutcliffe attacked Marcella Claxton in the Roundhay area of Leeds. Claxton sustained severe head injuries as a result of hammer blows. This crime, which was investigated by Detective Chief Inspector Bradley, was regarded as an independent case of serious assault and was not linked with the murders of McCann and Jackson. It was not included in "Special Notices" about the Ripper crimes issued to other forces and although some senior detectives thought that it might be part of the series it was not officially linked until Sutcliffe admitted it following his arrest. Claxton described her attacker as being about 30 years of age with black hair, a beard and a moustache.

18. A little over a week before his attack on Claxton, Sutcliffe disposed of his Ford Capri and during May acquired a white Ford Corsair saloon registered number KWT 721D.

19. On the 5th February 1977 Irene Richardson, who was believed to be an active prostitute, was killed by Sutcliffe on a playing field in Roundhay, Leeds. The manner of her death immediately linked it with the killings of McCann and Jackson. She had been struck down by three hammer blows after which her body had been exposed and slashed with a knife. The slash injuries to her abdomen were particularly severe. One apparently coincidental similarity between this crime and the murder of Joan Harrison in Preston was the way in which the dead woman's boots had been neatly placed over her thighs. Detective Chief Superintendent Hobson, who had replaced Chief Superintendent Hoban in the Eastern Crime Area, investigated the crime and established the incident room at Millgarth Police Station, Leeds. Not everyone was convinced that Richardson's murder was linked with that of Jackson and McCann and a "Special Notice" to all forces including this case with other similar cases was not issued until the 9th May 1977. Police inquiries produced very little evidence although plaster casts were taken of clear tyre impressions found near the scene of crime and thought to have been made by the assailant's vehicle. The make, size and distribution of the tyres were quickly established but greater difficulty was experienced in attempting to identify the type of vehicle to which they were fitted.

20. On the 6th February 1977 an exercise, known subsequently as the "Tracking Inquiry" was mounted to identify the vehicle which had left the marks at the murder scene. In the preliminary stage it was thought that any one of 100 different types of vehicle could have been involved. This number was determined on the basis of the "track width" indicated by the distance between

the tyre marks at the scene. As a preliminary step towards a formal inquiry intended to identify the vehicle, night duty officers in West Yorkshire were asked to examine vehicles during the course of routine patrol. Each time an officer examined a car he recorded the registered number and tyre details and a card was subsequently completed showing that that car had been eliminated from the inquiry. As a result of the application of a more refined selection system the list of 100 possible vehicles was reduced to 51. Because "back record conversion" at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre and the Police National Computer was at that time incomplete, inquiries to trace registered owners of relevant vehicles had to be undertaken in local Vehicle Licensing Offices as well as with the Police National Computer. This exercise produced a list of 53,000 registered owners of the 51 different vehicle models living in the West Yorkshire Metropolitan area and the Harrogate area of North Yorkshire. Sutcliffe and his white Ford Corsair were amongst the 53,000. When the vehicle owners list became available, the cards completed in connection with the "night-duty check" were checked against it to eliminate all vehicles which had already been examined by the police. Index cards were then completed for the remaining vehicles to be checked by direct house visits but the exercise was aborted after the attack on Maureen Long in July 1977, when 20,000 vehicle owners remained to be seen. Sutcliffe was one of the 20,000 owners who were not seen.

21. On the 23rd April 1977 Sutcliffe killed Patricia Atkinson in the flat which she used for prostitution in Bradford. Although the indoor location of the attack differed from previous crimes in the series the injuries and general method of operation linked it fairly conclusively with them. Patricia Atkinson was killed by four blows to her head with a hammer after which her body was exposed and stabbed repeatedly with a knife or chisel. Detective Chief Superintendent Domaille of the Western Crime Area led the investigation into the crime and established an incident room at the area headquarters at Bradford. Very little evidence was forthcoming in this case apart from a footprint on a bedsheet apparently made by a wellington boot and similar to a print left on the thigh of the earlier victim, Emily Jackson. Because the dead woman made a habit of travelling by taxi an inquiry was mounted to interview all taxi drivers working in the Bradford area. Approximately 1,200 were seen but no useful information was obtained. The murder of Patricia Atkinson was linked with other crimes in the series in "Special Notices" issued on the 9th and 30th May 1977 and in which, for the first time, reference was made to an attack on Barbara Miller in March 1975. This relatively minor attack on a prostitute, of which the police were previously unaware, is not one which Sutcliffe has admitted but was included in the "Special Notice" because Miller, who came forward in response to publicity about the Atkinson murder, identified her attacker as a 35 to 40 year old bearded man with a scarred left hand, driving a Landrover. The description was consistent in many respects with that given by a witness in relation to the Emily Jackson murder when a bearded man with a scar on the back of his left hand was regarded as a fairly strong suspect. It is now thought that the bearded driver of the Landrover was not Sutcliffe, but an older man who has not been traced. Sutcliffe's criminal record descriptive form completed in 1965 shows that he had scars on the fingers of his left hand, but the scars are not now visible and did not in any case accord with the scar described in the Jackson and Miller cases.

22. On the 26th June 1977 Sutcliffe killed Jayne MacDonald, a 16 year old shop assistant on spare ground in a prostitute area of Leeds near where she lived with her family and once again the method of operation fitted the standard pattern. She had been incapacitated by three severe blows to the head and, after exposure, her body had been repeatedly stabbed through the same chest wound. She had also been stabbed in the back. This crime was immediately linked with the series in a West Yorkshire circulation issued to all police forces on the 27th June 1977 when it was listed together with the murders of McCann, Jackson, Atkinson and Richardson. Such a serious view was taken of the series at this time that Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield took over personal direction of the inquiry and set up an incident room at Millgarth Police Station where incident rooms dealing with the Jackson and Richardson murders were already operating. A description was obtained of a man seen talking to Jayne MacDonald shortly before the time of her death. The description had much in common with that of the man thought to be responsible for the subsequent attack on Maureen Long but enquiries to trace this person were unsuccessful.

23. A Leeds taxi-driver, \_\_\_\_\_ of whom the police had been suspicious for some time was interviewed at length but could not be connected with the murders.

24. Bearing in mind the probability of future attacks on females, static observations were

commenced on vehicles moving in the Chapeltown "red light" area of Leeds during the evenings. Registered numbers were recorded on lists which were intended to be examined after any future murder in the area so that drivers and occupants could be interviewed.

25. Less than a fortnight after the killing of Jayne MacDonald the next crime in the series occurred in Bradford when, on the 10th July 1977, Sutcliffe attacked Maureen Long on spare ground a short distance from her estranged husband's home. Long, who admitted that she had acted as a prostitute, received serious injuries to her head from hammer blows and stab wounds to her abdomen and back, but fortunately recovered. Long's ability to describe her attacker was rendered more difficult because she was under the influence of drink at the time of the incident. She thought she had obtained a lift in a car from a large man of about 35 years of age who had light brown shoulder length hair. She was not able to give a description of the car which was involved although a nightwatchman saw a car draw away from the scene and described it as a white Mark II Ford Cortina.

26. The "Tracking Inquiry" started in connection with the Richardson murder was discontinued and details of 5,000 owners of Mark II Ford Cortinas living in West Yorkshire were then obtained from the Police National Computer. 3,000 owners were interviewed by police officers, but no positive evidence was obtained. Sutcliffe did not own a car of this type although, as has been mentioned previously, he owned a white Ford Corsair which did have the correct track width to fit the marks left at the Richardson scene and was probably the vehicle involved in both crimes. The attempted murder of Maureen Long, which was investigated by Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield from an incident room established in Bradford, was immediately linked with the series in a West Yorkshire Police crime circulation issued on the 11th July 1977. After this attack special inquiry teams were assigned to the surveillance of two suspects, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Both men were subsequently interviewed and eliminated from the inquiry.

27. Immediately after the attack on Long the observations being kept on vehicles using the Chapeltown area of Leeds were extended to include the Manningham area of Bradford.

28. On the 11th July 1977 the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, Mr. Gregory, wrote to the Director of the Police Scientific Development Branch asking whether the Branch was able to offer any assistance in connection with the inquiry. Mr. Holt, a senior scientist with the Branch, visited the force and, after looking at the way in which the investigation was being conducted, reported to the Chief Constable that computerisation of various incident room records was feasible. Mr. Holt discovered that spare computer capacity was available at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell and that the conversion of existing records could be undertaken by the Joint Automated Data Processing Unit at a cost of £25,000. Once operational the system could have been maintained at an annual cost of £156,000. This offer was not taken up by the Chief Constable.

29. Although the records show that Sutcliffe sold his white Corsair KWT 721D on 3rd September 1977 it is now known that he retained possession of it for several weeks after that date. On the 26th September he bought a red Corsair with the registered number PHE 355G. He later sold the white Corsair as scrap.

30. Whilst, with the doubtful exception of the murder of Joan Harrison at Preston, all the established crimes in the series had occurred in West Yorkshire, the next attack occurred in the Greater Manchester Police area on the 1st October 1977. The body of the victim, Jean Jordan, a known prostitute, was found on a disused allotment site in Chorlton-cum-Hardy on the 10th October, nine days after her death. She had been killed by hammer blows to the head after which she had been stabbed in the body. An unusual and curious feature of this case was that there was evidence that the killer had returned to the scene some eight days after the murder, stripped the body and inflicted further injuries including an attempt to decapitate it. On the 15th October, Jordan's handbag was found 189 ft away from the body. It contained a new £5 Bank of England note which was thought to have been paid to the victim by the murderer. The recovery of this note some two weeks after the death marked a significant new stage in the series inquiry. Detective

Chief Superintendent Ridgway of the Greater Manchester Police took charge of the investigation and recognised immediately the possibility of a link with the crimes in West Yorkshire. Weight was added to this initial suspicion when it was discovered that the £5 note recovered from Jordan's handbag was probably from a consignment of £25,000 (i.e. 5,000 £5 notes) delivered to the Manningham, Shipley or Bingley branches of the Midland Bank on 29th September 1977. A team of detectives from Greater Manchester moved to the West Yorkshire area and, accompanied by West Yorkshire officers, undertook extensive inquiries to trace the person to whom the recovered £5 note had been paid. The murder of Jordan had occurred within three days of the banknote being delivered to the bank and attention was concentrated on firms in the Manningham and Shipley areas which had collected new notes from the bank to pay their employees that weekend.

31. On the 2nd November 1977 Detective Constable Howard of the Greater Manchester Police together with a Detective Constable of the West Yorkshire Police interviewed Peter William Sutcliffe at his home. Sutcliffe's employers had collected money from the Shipley branch of the Midland Bank to pay their employees. Sutcliffe, who was one of nearly 8,000 people listed for interview during the inquiry, denied ever having visited Manchester except during the course of his employment and said that his last visit had been some twelve months previously when he had delivered goods to an unknown address. Asked to account for his movements on the evening of the 1st October (the date of the Jordan murder) he said that he had been at home all evening and had gone to bed at 11.30 p.m. He was also asked about his movements on the evening of the 9th October when the murderer was known to have revisited the scene. He said that he and his wife had been at a house-warming party at their new home. Sonia Sutcliffe supported her husband's account of his movements on both these dates.

32. After a number of new £5 notes from the Bank of England consignment were identified in the possession of people who could be eliminated from the inquiry it was possible to eliminate some firms as recipients of the "Jordan" note and thus to limit the scope of the inquiry. T. & W.H. Clark was not one of the firms which could be eliminated and on 8th November 1977 Sutcliffe was re-interviewed by Detective Constable Leslie Smith of West Yorkshire and Detective Constable Rayne of the Greater Manchester Police. He again satisfied the inquiry officers, who obtained further alibi evidence from his mother in connection with the house-warming party mentioned previously. They were at that time preoccupied with the £5 note aspect and did not examine Sutcliffe's car or its tyres, although they did examine some footwear and household tools which they felt were relevant to the Ripper crimes.

33. On the 14th December 1977 the next incident in the series occurred in Leeds, when Marilyn Moore, a convicted prostitute, was assaulted by Sutcliffe on spare ground in Scott Hall Street. The inquiry established that Moore was picked up for prostitution purposes by the driver of a car which, by a process of elimination, was subsequently thought to be of the BMC "Farina" type, driven by a man who said he was called "Dave" who appeared to know several prostitutes working in Leeds by name. The driver parked his car on spare ground and having suggested that intercourse should take place in the back of his vehicle, he hit Moore over the head with a hammer as she was getting into the rear seat. She sustained seven or eight lacerations to the head together with a depressed fracture of the skull measuring  $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1$ ". She also received injuries to her hands which she had used to try to protect herself from the hammer blows to her head. Moore was eventually found and taken to Leeds General Infirmary for treatment. The attack was investigated by Detective Chief Superintendent Hobson from the Eastern Crime area but it was not linked with the series crimes until the 12th May 1978 when it was circulated to other forces in a West Yorkshire Police circulation. Tyre tracks found at the scene of the crime were similar to impressions which were found at the scene of the earlier murder of Irene Richardson. Marilyn Moore described her assailant as a white man about 28 years of age, 5'7 - 8" tall, of stocky build with dark wavy hair, a medium length neatly trimmed beard and a "Jason King" moustache. Over 1,000 men called "Dave" or "David" were identified in the nominal indexes of the series crimes. All were interviewed but none of them could be implicated with the crimes. Unfortunately, although Moore's description of the car in which she had been picked up was accepted, the police placed less reliance on her description of her assailant. In retrospect it can be said that her identification of the car was wrong whilst her description of her attacker matched that of Peter Sutcliffe fairly accurately.

34. On the 21st January 1978 Yvonne Pearson, a convicted prostitute, was murdered by Sutcliffe



in Bradford. Her body was not discovered until the 26th March 1978 when it was found under an overturned settee on wasteland in an area used by prostitutes. In some ways this crime was dissimilar from those in the series so that, in a circulation to police forces on the 29th March 1978, it was referred to as an independent case of murder not connected with those circulated earlier. The main reason for excluding the case was that the head injuries appeared to have been caused by a large stone rather than a hammer and that, additionally, death had been due to injuries to the chest area, probably caused by her assailant jumping on her. Although her body was exposed, no stab wounds were inflicted. One unexplained factor was that a copy of the "Daily Mirror" dated 21st February 1978 (exactly one month after she was last seen alive) was found under the right side of her body. This newspaper must have been intentionally placed under the body and could not have been in that position accidentally. The crime was investigated by Detective Chief Superintendent Lapish of the Western Crime Area and another incident room was established at Bradford. Little evidence was forthcoming in connection with this crime, largely because of the long time lapse between the murder and the discovery of the body. There was, however, a different conclusion about the case when in May 1978 a West Yorkshire Police circulation linked it with other crimes in the Ripper series.

35. On the 31st January 1978, Helen Rytka, an active prostitute, was murdered by Sutcliffe in Huddersfield in what by then had become the standard Ripper pattern. The body was discovered in a timber yard by a police search on the 3rd February and the subsequent post-mortem examination revealed that she had died from hammer blows to the head together with a number of stab wounds to the body which had previously been exposed. Sutcliffe has since claimed that during this attack he had intercourse with Rytka because he was sexually aroused and because he was being watched by some taxi-drivers. There is no conclusive forensic evidence to support his claim which in any case was not consistent with his standard modus operandi. Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield took charge to this particular inquiry and established an incident room at Huddersfield. Police inquiries were fairly productive and although a number of people were traced and eliminated from the inquiry, details of three motor vehicles were circulated as being wanted for elimination purposes. These were a Morris Oxford saloon, a Ford Cortina Mark I and a white coloured Datsun 160/180B. The Ford Cortina and the Datsun were subsequently eliminated and attention was focussed on the Morris Oxford and the BMC "Farina" range of similar cars. Because some of the vehicles in the range did not fit the tyre track of the Richardson murder a new vehicle inquiry, referred to as the "Farina Index" was started. This was a considerable commitment which was still running when Sutcliffe was arrested.

36. After the murder of Rytka the nominal indexes and vehicle indexes from the McCann, Jackson, Richardson, Atkinson, MacDonald and Long cases were centralised at Millgarth Police Station and subsequently amalgamated into an integrated index. This incident room continued to monitor the series inquiry until Sutcliffe's arrest.

37. Early in March 1978, that is after the murder of both Pearson and Rytka, but before the discovery of Pearson's body, a letter postmarked "Sunderland 1.45 pm 8th March 1978" and addressed to Mr. Oldfield was received by the West Yorkshire Police. The letter, written by a person signing himself "Jack the Ripper", claimed that the writer was responsible for the series of crimes. A few days later a similar letter was received by the Chief Editor of the "Daily Mirror" newspaper in Manchester. This letter was also postmarked "Sunderland" and was franked at 10 am on 13th March 1978. No immediate action was taken following the receipt of these letters although there was a suspicion that the writer's familiarity with the crimes was more than that which could have been gleaned from a study of newspapers and television programmes about the Ripper series.

38. On the 15th March 1978 Detective Chief Superintendent Hoban, the investigating officer in the McCann and Jackson murders who had subsequently been appointed Deputy Head of the force CID, died unexpectedly. He was 52 years of age, and many of his friends and associates attributed his death to the strain and overwork brought about by the Ripper Investigation.

39. During the same month the West Yorkshire Police Authority offered a reward of £10,000 for information leading to the arrest of the person responsible for the crimes.

40. On the 25th April 1978 following increasing concern within the West Yorkshire force that the

administration of the series inquiry was being overwhelmed by the amount of information being recorded and the number of actions required to clear it, a special inquiry team under Detective Chief Superintendent Domaille was appointed to conduct an internal review of the investigation. The team was asked to establish the lines of inquiry that had been undertaken in connection with each case in the series and to report whether each inquiry had been completed as far as possible and if not to give the current position. At the time 9 murders and 4 attempted murders were regarded as being connected in the series but before the team was able to report a further three murders had occurred. The team, first under the command of Chief Superintendent Domaille and later under Detective Superintendent Slater, comprised two detective inspectors, four detective sergeants and four detective constables. Their report, which was submitted to the Chief Constable in December 1979, was more in the nature of an index of what had and had not been done in the past than a suggested blueprint for further action.

41. On the 26th April 1978 Detective Chief Superintendent Domaille contacted the Police Scientific Development Branch and asked for assistance. Members of the Branch and the Police Research Services Unit visited the force on the 4th, 22nd and 25th May and as a result agreed to arrange for the results of the vehicle observations in "red light" areas to be processed on the Police National Computer. Observations on vehicles in notable "red light" areas had by this time been commenced in other Northern cities within and outside West Yorkshire so that possible leads might be available to investigating officers in the event of a further Ripper crime.

42. On the 16th May 1978, Vera Millward, a convicted prostitute, was murdered by Sutcliffe in Manchester. Her body was discovered in a compound in the Brunswick area of the city the following day and an examination disclosed the traditional pattern of Ripper injuries. Following three severe blows to the head with a hammer, her body had been exposed before being stabbed and slashed with a knife. This crime immediately came under the control of Detective Chief Superintendent Ridgway, still hunting for the murderer of Jean Jordan, and an incident room was established in Manchester to service the police investigation. In this case tyre tracks and footprints were found at the scene. The make and distribution of the tyres on the vehicle which left the tracks were very similar to those found at the scenes of the murder of Irene Richardson and the attempted murder of Marilyn Moore and the crime was immediately regarded as being part of the Ripper series. As a result of their investigations into the tyre tracks at the scene of the Millward murder the Greater Manchester Police were satisfied that they were not made by a car from the "Farina" range. They subsequently discontinued their participation in the "Farina" inquiry. The West Yorkshire Police were not as convinced as their Manchester colleagues on this point and continued their inquiry with regard to "Farina" cars until Sutcliffe's arrest. Sutcliffe never owned a "Farina" car and the tyre marks at the scene of the Richardson murder were probably left by his white Corsair, whilst those at the Moore and Millward scenes were probably from the red Corsair which he acquired in September 1977.

43. By this time the staff of the Police National Computer and Police Scientific Development Branch had completed their arrangements for the computerisation of information from the "red light" observations. Initially, vehicle registration numbers recorded at a number of fixed observation posts and fed into the computer at Hendon from visual display units in Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield and Hull, were to be printed out for inquiries if the same vehicle was identified as having been seen in two of the separate areas where observations were in progress. This exercise was begun on the 19th June 1978 and as early as the 13th August 1978, Peter William Sutcliffe was interviewed as a result of his red Ford Corsair car having been seen in the Chapeltown area of Leeds and the Manningham area of Bradford. Detective Constable Peter Smith of the West Yorkshire Police, who knew that Sutcliffe had been seen during the £5 note inquiry, visited him at his home in Garden Lane, Heaton, Bradford. Detective Constable Smith knew that Sutcliffe worked as a lorry driver from a Bradford base and assumed that the sightings of his car in Bradford could be explained by journeys to and from work. Sutcliffe denied having visited Leeds or other West Yorkshire towns during evenings in the relevant period. He also emphatically denied using the services of prostitutes.

44. By the time this interview took place Sutcliffe had disposed of his red Corsair and obtained a black Sunbeam Rapier, registered number NKU 888H. He bought the Rapier on the 14th May 1978 and sold the Corsair on the 7th August 1978 so that for a 3 month period he had the use of two vehicles.

45. On the 23rd November 1978 he was seen again by Detective Constable Smith who obtained details of his Building Society account in connection with the £5 inquiry and also visited the new owners of the red Corsair and obtained a description of the tyres, which were new, having apparently been fitted after the vehicle had changed hands.

46. On the 28th November 1978 the West Yorkshire Police Authority increased the reward being offered for information leading to the killer to £20,000.

47. A little earlier, in September 1978, following a discovery that a number of detectives had not been completing some of the undoubtedly monotonous inquiries allocated to them correctly, an internal audit team of seven officers was appointed to determine the extent of the problem. Team members checked a sample covering about 10% of completed inquiries but found no other evidence of such misconduct. Two detectives resigned from the force and 13 were subjected to internal disciplinary action as a result of the initial cases of making false statements.

48. On the 23rd March 1979 a further letter addressed to Mr. Oldfield was dispatched from Sunderland. The suspicion that the writer might indeed be the perpetrator of the crimes began to grow and was reinforced by two factors. First, the author of the letters went to an unusually high degree of trouble to ensure that no fingerprints were left on either the paper or the envelopes, and second, analysis of the saliva on the third envelope revealed that whoever had licked it was a secretor of blood group "B". The last factor was considered to be especially significant because analysis of semen recovered from the body of Jean Harrison in Preston showed that the person responsible for that crime was also group "B" and a secretor and was thus within 6% of the total male population. This unhappy coincidence had two effects. First, it tended to confirm that the Harrison murder was part of the series and second, if Harrison was in the series, the blood grouping pointed to the authenticity of the letters. The two propositions were however mutually dependent and, as events were to prove, both wrong.

49. Police inquiries were put in hand in the North East of England to try and trace the author of the letters.

50. On the 5th April 1979 Josephine Whitaker, a Building Society clerk, was murdered by Sutcliffe in Savile Park, Halifax. The murder was in the established Ripper pattern in that the victim was struck down by two hammer blows to the head and was then stabbed 25 times in the abdomen, breasts and thighs and vagina. Exposure of the body followed the usual Ripper modus operandi. The new element in this case was that whereas most of the earlier victims had been prostitutes or women of loose morals and the attacks had occurred in or near to prostitute areas, Josephine Whitaker was a perfectly respectable young woman who was walking home in a residential area of Halifax not frequented by prostitutes. Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield set up an incident room in Halifax to deal with this crime whilst the integrated incident room at Millgarth Police Station continued to operate over the full series of crimes. Such was the demand for manpower to staff the Whitaker inquiry, however, that the complete inquiry team attached to the Millgarth incident room in connection with the series crimes was allocated to the Halifax incident. Subsequently, the processing of all outstanding actions from Millgarth ground to a halt. Police inquiries in Halifax and an exceptional public response following the murder of a respectable local girl produced masses of indirect evidence of which the most significant appeared to be the description of a man seen near the scene of the crime in a dark coloured Ford Escort motor car. Sutcliffe is now known to have had access to such a vehicle, the property of his mother-in-law. A Sunbeam Rapier motor car was also seen in the vicinity but was not traced. The suspect was described as having dirty blonde collar length hair, an unshaven appearance and a "Jason King" moustache. Other evidence recorded from the scene showed that the assailant had been wearing size 7 industrial boots with a moulded rubber sole. Based on the modus operandi, the killing of Josephine Whitaker was linked with the previous series of murders and circulated to other forces by West Yorkshire. On the 1st May an entry in the murder log approved the practice of eliminating suspects on the basis of the handwriting from the three "Sunderland" letters.

51. On the 4th June 1979 Sutcliffe disposed of his Sunbeam Rapier car and acquired a brown Rover 3.5 saloon registered number FHY 400K.

52. On the 18th June 1979 a further envelope addressed to Mr. Oldfield was posted in Sunderland.

When opened it was found to contain a cassette tape, recorded by a man with an accent which a voice expert said belonged to a man who had lived within 5 miles of Sunderland for much of his life. On the tape there was a personal message to Mr. Oldfield about his failure to detect the series of crimes. The saliva on the envelope flap was quickly found to indicate a "B" secretor blood-group so linking it with the third letter and, as a result, with the Harrison murder. Senior officers in West Yorkshire now appeared to be fully convinced that the author of the letters and the tape recording was indeed the man responsible for the crimes which they were investigating and they decided to attach top priority to this aspect which, they felt, would be bound to lead to the detection of the Ripper crimes. In addition to the major internal police effort it was decided to seek increasing assistance from members of the public in West Yorkshire and the North East of England in an attempt to identify the voice on the tape and the writing on the letters. Accordingly, a press conference was arranged, although the impact of it was slightly dulled by the publication earlier of some relevant aspects in the "Yorkshire Evening Post". Details of the letters and tape were given at the press conference, which was held on the 26th June 1979, and police inquiries thereafter concentrated on identifying a suspect who still lived in the North East of England or a suspect with origins in the North East who had subsequently moved to the West Yorkshire area. From this stage, existing lines of inquiry, some of which had already been suspended because of the demands of the Whitaker investigation, began to attract even lower priority.

53. Because of the very high number of vehicles printed out by the Police National Computer as having been seen in two separate "red light" observation areas, this particular line of inquiry also began to suffer from a lack of manpower needed to conduct the follow-up action. Of the 21,231 vehicles printed out, 15,195 were not pursued by further checks. As a result of this overloading, compounded by the effects of the Whitaker inquiry, a decision was then taken to print out only those vehicles which had been observed in at least three separate observation areas, subsequently referred to as "Triple Area Sightings".

54. On the 29th July 1979 Sutcliffe was again interviewed after his black Sunbeam Rapier had been printed out, first as a "Double Area Sighting" and later as a "Triple Area Sighting", having been seen in the "red light" areas of Leeds, Bradford and Manchester. Detective Constables Laptew and Greenwood visited him at his home. It is unfortunate that they were not aware that Sutcliffe had already been interviewed in connection with the £5 note inquiry and also because of the "Double Sighting" of his earlier vehicle. Sutcliffe gave explanations for having been in Leeds and Bradford but denied that he had been to Manchester in his own vehicle. Because of the police decision to keep the "red light" area observations secret, investigating officers were advised not to challenge those whom they interviewed in respect of any individual sighting but were required to approach the subject obliquely. Sutcliffe again denied making use of prostitutes' services and was again loosely alibied by his wife. The detectives obtained samples of his handwriting and searched his car and garage, finding nothing to connect him with the murders. They were, however, not satisfied with Sutcliffe and reported their disquiet to the Major Incident Room. Unfortunately the report was not linked with previous papers and Sutcliffe was eliminated because his handwriting did not match that of the Sunderland letter writer.

55. On the 6th August 1979 Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield, who had been showing increasing signs of strain, developed what was officially described as a chest infection but is generally regarded as having been a series of heart attacks. He remained off-duty on sick leave until the 6th January 1980.

56. On the 2nd September 1979 Barbara Leach, a 20 year old student, was murdered by Sutcliffe in the University area of Bradford. A post-mortem examination revealed that she had been struck a single blow to the head with a hammer after which she was stabbed in the abdomen and shoulder blade a total of eight times. From examination of the injuries it was possible to say that the weapon used to cause them was, in all likelihood, the one used in the murder of Josephine Whitaker five months previously. Detective Chief Superintendent Gilrain led this inquiry and established his incident room in Bradford. The crime was immediately linked with others in the series and Detective Superintendent Holland who, on hearing of the murder, had immediately returned to West Yorkshire from leave in Scotland, continued to supervise the overall inquiry from the main incident room at Millgarth. This incident room, due to the shortage of manpower, together with the rapidly increasing response from the general public and the demands of the

North Eastern inquiry, was being inundated by a very large backlog of uncompleted actions. The position was exacerbated by the fact that almost no follow-up actions had been processed after the Whitaker murder in April that year.

57. Police inquiries into the murder of Barbara Leach produced one suspect described as being a white male in his early thirties and of athletic build. He had short dark hair and a thin dark moustache, and was seen to put a "bundle" into what was thought to be a green Hillman Avenger estate car parked near to the murder scene. In addition to this vehicle a blue Datsun 160/180B saloon was seen in the area and was sought for elimination purposes.

58. In the absence of Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield on sick leave his Deputy, Detective Chief Superintendent Hobson, assumed responsibility for all crime matters in the West Yorkshire area but at the same time continued to act as the senior detective in the Eastern Crime area of the force. No arrangements were made for him to assume the rank of Acting Assistant Chief Constable. Although Chief Superintendent Hobson thus had command of the overall Ripper inquiry, day to day decisions in connection with the investigation of crimes in the series were taken by Detective Superintendent Holland. Detective Chief Superintendent Gilrain, formerly in charge of CID Administration at force headquarters, was put in command of the Barbara Leach investigation, this being the latest crime in the series.

59. On the 13th September 1979 a "Special Notice" was issued by the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police to all forces in the country giving details of 16 murders and attempted murders then linked together in the series together with details of the tyre tracks from the Richardson, Moore and Millward incidents and also details of the "Sunderland" letters and tape. None of the descriptions or photofit impressions provided by surviving victims was included and a crucial section of the notice said that:

"A person can be eliminated from these inquiries if:—

- (a) Not born between 1924 and 1959
- (b) He is an obvious coloured person
- (c) His shoe size is size 9 or above
- (d) His blood group is other than B
- (e) His accent is dissimilar to a North Eastern (Geordie) accent."

60. On the 17th September 1979 Mr R E Stockdale, a Principal Scientific Officer from the Wetherby Forensic Science Laboratory was attached to the West Yorkshire Police as a resident scientific officer for the Ripper series of crimes. On the 24th September he was joined by Mr R A Outteridge, the Director of the Nottingham Forensic Science Laboratory. The two scientists were provided with accommodation in the Western Area headquarters at Bradford. During a meeting with the Chief Constable it was agreed that their specific role was one of "liaison and co-ordination" (of scientific services) and that they should be available to the Ripper inquiry team as consultants on a day to day basis. During their period of attachment the two scientists reviewed the forensic evidence which was available in connection with all previous Ripper cases and also suggested to the inquiry officers a number of new lines of inquiry in connection with existing and possible future cases. The attachment of the two resident scientists ended in January 1980.

61. On the 2nd October 1979 a massive publicity campaign aimed at detecting the series of crimes by identifying the author of the "Sunderland" tape and letters was launched throughout the North and the North East of England. The cost of this campaign (estimated at around £1 million) was met by contributions from local industry and commerce with a relatively modest contribution by the Police Authority.

62. On the 23rd October 1979 Sutcliffe was interviewed again, on this occasion by Detective Constables Vickerman and Eland who were investigating the murder of Barbara Leach. This interview resulted from a resurrection of the inquiries made by Detective Constable Smith who had seen Sutcliffe in August and November 1978 in connection with the sighting of the red Corsair motor car in the prostitute areas of Leeds and Bradford. The officers were told that Sutcliffe's

alibi for the Jordan murder was inadequate and they were asked to check his movements in relation to the murder of Barbara Leach. Unfortunately, they were unaware of the previous interview of Sutcliffe by Detective Constables Laptew and Greenwood and of their reservations about him. When the officers spoke to him, Sutcliffe quickly volunteered the information that he had been interviewed before but he also said that on the night of Barbara Leach's murder he had been at home working on improvements to the house. This was confirmed by his wife as in previous interviews. A further handwriting sample was obtained and this was subsequently used to eliminate him from the inquiry again.

63. On the 7th November 1979 Mr I Evett and Mr C Brown of the Home Office Central Research Establishment visited Leeds and Bradford at the instigation of the two resident scientists. They examined the operation of the computerised "red light" area observations and discussed a number of problems with the senior inquiry officers but were unable to suggest significant changes in the established system.

64. On the 21st November 1979 Commander Nevill and Detective Superintendent Bolton of the Metropolitan Police visited West Yorkshire at the invitation of the Chief Constable to examine and report on the overall Ripper investigation up to that time. The two Metropolitan officers had discussions with investigating officers from all forces involved and also examined the incident room systems and records then in use. In a report to the Chief Constable on the 8th January 1980 Commander Nevill stated, inter alia:

"The following lines of inquiries were agreed as viable and could be completed in a reasonably short period:

- (a) Persons born and/or educated in Wearside to be located and interviewed.
- (b) An inquiry throughout England to trace all owners of Avenger estate cars and Datsun 160/180 saloon cars. Positive sightings of vehicles of these descriptions were seen near the venue of the Leach murder.
- (c) To trace the history of a £5 note issued at or near Bingley and found in possession of the murdered prostitute at Manchester.
- (d) Inquiries at speech therapists. (Prompted by the suggestion by a linguistic expert that the author of the letters and tape suffered from a stammer for which he had probably received speech therapy).
- (e) Inquiries at all banks to attempt to identify handwriting through counter staff."

It will be seen, therefore, that Commander Nevill accepted the letters and tape connection, although in fairness, he introduced a caveat later in his report when he said:—

"During the years of the inquiries many persons were eliminated only on the facts known at the time. It may well be prudent to re-evaluate these in the light of all the facts known today. For instance, many have been cleared purely on dialect or handwriting. Whilst it is agreed that the author of the letters and tape is probably the murderer it is not a complete certainty".

Commander Nevill made recommendations for streamlining the major incident room system with a view to the accurate monitoring of outstanding and completed actions, and to the filtering of information reaching incident officers. He commented on the absence of forensic evidence and the lack of dialogue between scientists and investigating officers and finally warned that other assaults on women in West Yorkshire might well prove to be part of the series of crimes.

65. Unfortunately, we have been unable to trace evidence that Commander Nevill's more important recommendations were implemented thereafter by the West Yorkshire Police.

66. On the 31st December 1979 the "Triple Area Sighting" exercise using fixed observation points (which had by that time, to quote a West Yorkshire officer, been "decaying into misuse") was stopped and replaced by a less manpower-expensive system of mobile observations.

67. During the autumn of 1979 senior detectives of the Greater Manchester Police decided to re-activate the £5 note inquiry in an attempt to detect the Jordan and Millward murders. With the full

co-operation of the Bank of England and the Midland Bank they were able, by experiment, to eliminate several firms as possible recipients of the £5 note. There had, of course, always been the possibility that the £5 note had been paid to a customer cashing a cheque at a bank but, on the balance of probabilities, it seemed most likely that the note had been included in money drawn for wages by one of only a few firms in the area. The total number of employees to be seen in this resurrected inquiry was a readily manageable 241. Sutcliffe was number 76 on the list, being 44th of 49 employees from the firm of T. & W.H. Clark Ltd.

68. Before the people shown on the list were seen their names were searched against the nominal index in the Millgarth incident room to see whether they had been previously involved, other than in connection with the original £5 note inquiry. For some reason, which we have not been able to discover, Sutcliffe's name was marked "N/T", meaning "no trace".

69. On the 13th January 1980 Sutcliffe was seen by Detective Sergeant Boot of West Yorkshire Police and Detective Constable Bell of the Greater Manchester Police who were unaware of the previous "Double" and "Triple Area Sighting" interviews. Sutcliffe told the officers that when he was not working as a lorry driver he spent all his spare time with his wife working in their house and that he did not go out in the evenings without her. This story was verified by his wife. Sutcliffe also told the officers that he had already been seen in connection with sightings of his motor cars. On learning this the officers returned to their office to check this information. The papers relating to the red Corsair sighting were located but those in respect of the black Sunbeam Rapier (which referred to the Manchester sighting) were not because they were attached to documents which were waiting to be returned to Sutcliffe's employers. Sutcliffe's car, which by that time was the Rover saloon in which he was eventually arrested, was searched, as was his garage. His footwear and the tools he kept in his house were also examined but nothing of interest was found. Unfortunately the search was not thorough enough to discover a pair of wellington boots in a wardrobe. These boots could have linked Sutcliffe with the murder of Emily Jackson some 4 years previously. The two detectives knew that Sutcliffe had been eliminated on handwriting but, being suspicious about him, they recommended that another inquiry team should interview him to see whether they too might share similar reservations.

70. On 30th January 1980 Detective Sergeant McAlister of Manchester and Detective Constable McCrone of West Yorkshire interviewed Sutcliffe at Kirkstall Forge Engineering works whilst he was loading his lorry. Sutcliffe again satisfied the inquiry officers who were going over past history in connection with sightings of his red Ford Corsair and the £5 note inquiry.

71. He was interviewed again on 7th February 1980 when Detective Constable Jackson of Manchester and Detective Constable Harrison of West Yorkshire visited the Shipley Depot of T. & W.H. Clark Ltd. They too were unaware of the sightings of Sutcliffe's black Sunbeam Rapier in Bradford, Leeds and Manchester and also of the report submitted by Detective Constables Laptew and Greenwood after their interview with him. Detective Constable Jackson decided he was unable to eliminate Sutcliffe but, following a discussion with his senior officers, it was concluded that as he had been alibied by his wife and mother for the night of the 9/10th October 1977, when Jordan's body had been moved and mutilated, he could be eliminated from the inquiry.

72. On the 23rd March 1980 Sutcliffe bought a red Mini saloon 372 SRR which he used occasionally although he did not dispose of his other car, the brown Rover saloon.

73. On the 25th June 1980 Sutcliffe was arrested in connection with a drinking and driving offence. The officers, Constables Doran and Melia, who detected the offence whilst keeping mobile observations on the Manningham "red light" area, passed details about him to the Millgarth incident room as a matter of routine. They were informed that Sutcliffe had been eliminated from the inquiry.

74. On the 20th August 1980 Marguerite Walls, a 47 year old civil servant, was murdered by Sutcliffe as she walked home in Leeds. She was struck on the head, knocked down and then strangled with a piece of cord. Her body was stripped, indecently assaulted and hidden under a pile of grass cuttings in the grounds of a large house. When this crime was discovered it was not linked with the Ripper series because death by strangulation was an entirely new feature in relation

to all the previously connected crimes. Detective Chief Superintendent Hobson assumed responsibility for the inquiry and set up an incident room at Pudsey Police Station from which he directed police operations. Descriptions were obtained of people who had been in the vicinity at the time of the murder but none of these was very useful and attention was focussed on a number of men living in the area who had previous convictions for serious sexual offences.

75. On the 26th August 1980 in recognition of the fact that the killer was now operating outside prostitute areas, the vehicle observations in "red light" areas were discontinued. By that time a total of 1,223 vehicles had been printed out as "Triple Area Sightings".

76. On the 24th September 1980 Uphadya Bandara, a 35 year old doctor from Singapore, was attacked with a hammer in Leeds after which an attempt was made to strangle her with a piece of cord. For some unknown reason this attack was not completed and the victim was taken to hospital where she recovered from her injuries. She was unable to offer any precise information about her attacker, except to say that he had a close-cropped beard. Detective Superintendent Newton took charge of the investigation which was supervised from a major incident room in Pudsey Police Station. Although this crime was not officially linked with the Ripper series it was linked with the murder of Marguerite Walls in which strangulation had been the cause of death.

77. On the 5th November 1980 Teresa Sykes was attacked on a footpath in Huddersfield by Sutcliffe who hit her over the head with a hammer. Fortunately for her, the attack was interrupted by the man with whom she was living who had heard her screams. Although she suffered severe head injuries she survived the assault. This crime was investigated by Detective Superintendent Hickley from an incident room at Huddersfield and was not publicly linked with the Ripper series. Many detectives involved in the case had by now reached private conclusions about which were and which were not Ripper cases and there was a strong body of professional opinion that Sykes was in the series. Information gathered about the assailant in this case included the fact that he was alleged to have had a gingery coloured beard and moustache.

78. On the 17th November 1980 the final murder in the series was committed when Jacqueline Hill was killed by Sutcliffe near the Arndale Centre in Leeds. After being disabled by a number of violent hammer blows to the head she was dragged onto waste ground and her exposed body was stabbed. Detective Superintendent Findlay took charge of the inquiry and established an incident room at Belle Vue, Leeds. The murder was linked with the Ripper series and circulated to all forces in an edition of "Police Reports" published on 19th November. A number of suspects had been sighted in the area and inquiries were also made to trace a squarish looking car which had been seen being driven in the wrong direction of Alma Road, a one way street, near to the crime scene, at about the time when Jacqueline Hill was killed.

79. In response to this latest crime a number of newspaper offices in the area agreed to add £30,000 to the reward being offered by the Police Authority for information, bringing the total amount to £50,000.

80 On 25th November 1980 amid increasing criticism of the West Yorkshire Police for having failed to detect this series of horrific crimes, a number of changes were made in the control of the inquiry. Detective Chief Superintendent Hobson was appointed temporary Assistant Chief Constable and put in charge of the series inquiry in place of Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield. At the same time an Advisory Team of four senior officers from other police forces with no previous connection with the Ripper investigation, together with a senior forensic scientist, were asked to review the case and to report their findings to the Chief Constable. The following month their report was submitted and, significantly, included the points itemised below:—

- (a) "The aim of the inquiry should now be to foster an opinion both within and outside the Police Service that the killer does not necessarily originate from the North East of England".
- (b) "We have indicated a number of facts which could point to the wanted man living in/working in the Bradford area".

81. On the 26th November 1980 an anonymous letter was received at the Millgarth incident room. The letter, which was one of many being received at the time, suggested that a man called Peter

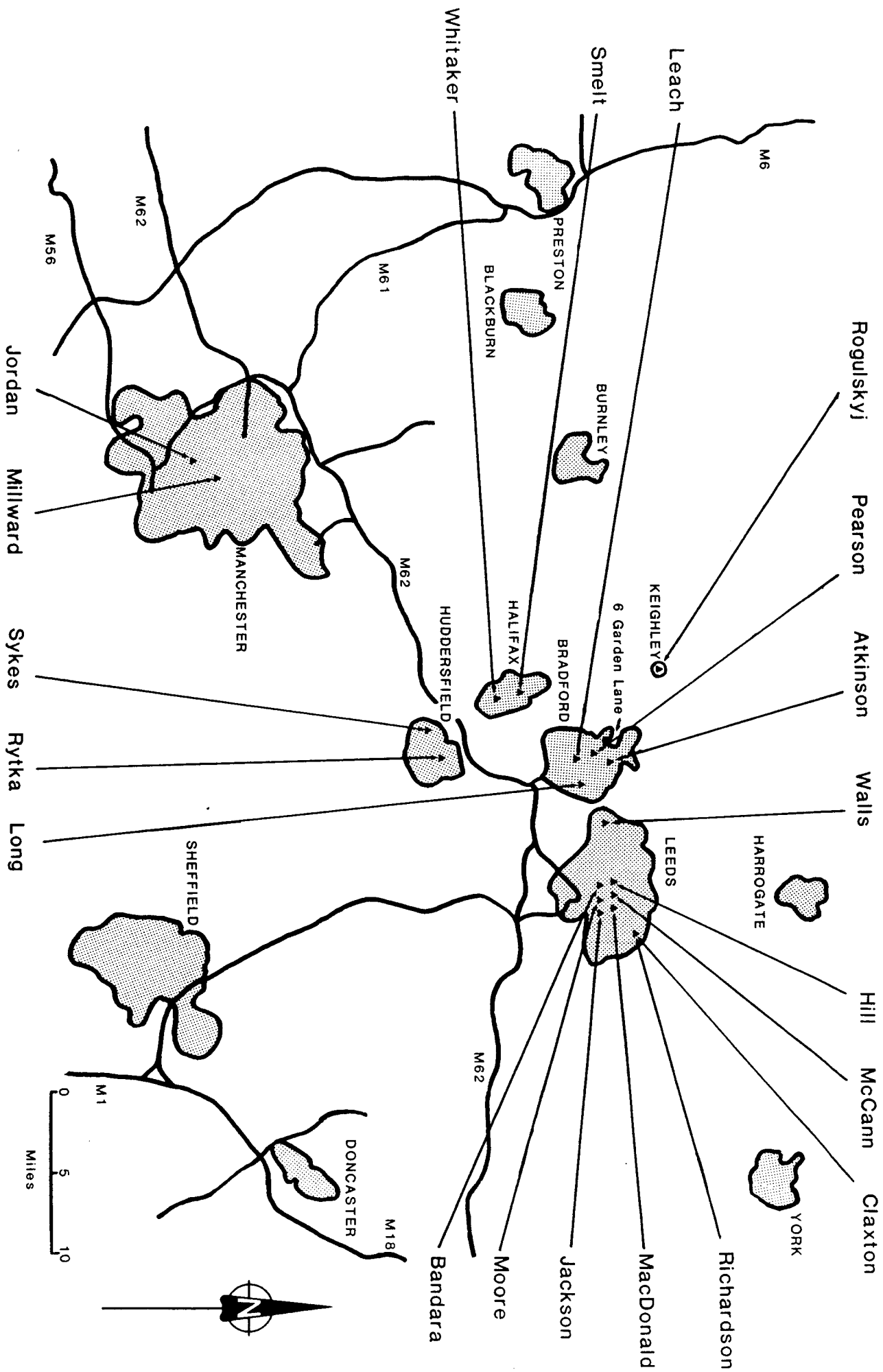


Sutcliffe was the "Ripper". The claim was supported by a number of minor points about Sutcliffe's employment and character, but particular mention was made of an incident which had occurred within the previous five years of which the author of the letter could not give details because they might lead to him being identified. The author of this letter has since been identified as Trevor Birdsall a close friend of Peter Sutcliffe. Birdsall's girl friend, who had urged him to write the letter, later advised him that its contents were insufficient to enable the police to act and persuaded him to report to the police personally. Birdsall accepted this advice and visited Bradford Police Station late on 26th November 1980. He repeated the suspicions which he had voiced in his letter to Constable Butler and added that he had been to Halifax with Sutcliffe in August 1975 and suspected that Sutcliffe had assaulted a woman on that occasion. Constable Butler submitted a report on Birdsall's visit to the Millgarth incident room. By this time the incident room was suffering a progressive collapse because of the weight of information being put into the system and because the number of actions which were generated by new and existing information could not be accommodated by the officers who were available to deal with them. There is little doubt from the inquiries we have made that Constable Butler's report was received in the incident room but we have been unable to trace it despite detailed questioning of the officers concerned.

82. On the 1st December 1980 following a recommendation of the external Advisory Team an internal re-appraisal team of ten officers including Superintendent Charlesworth and Superintendent Bass was appointed to review the "Letters and Tape Inquiry", the operation of the major incident room, police circulations about the series and several other issues.

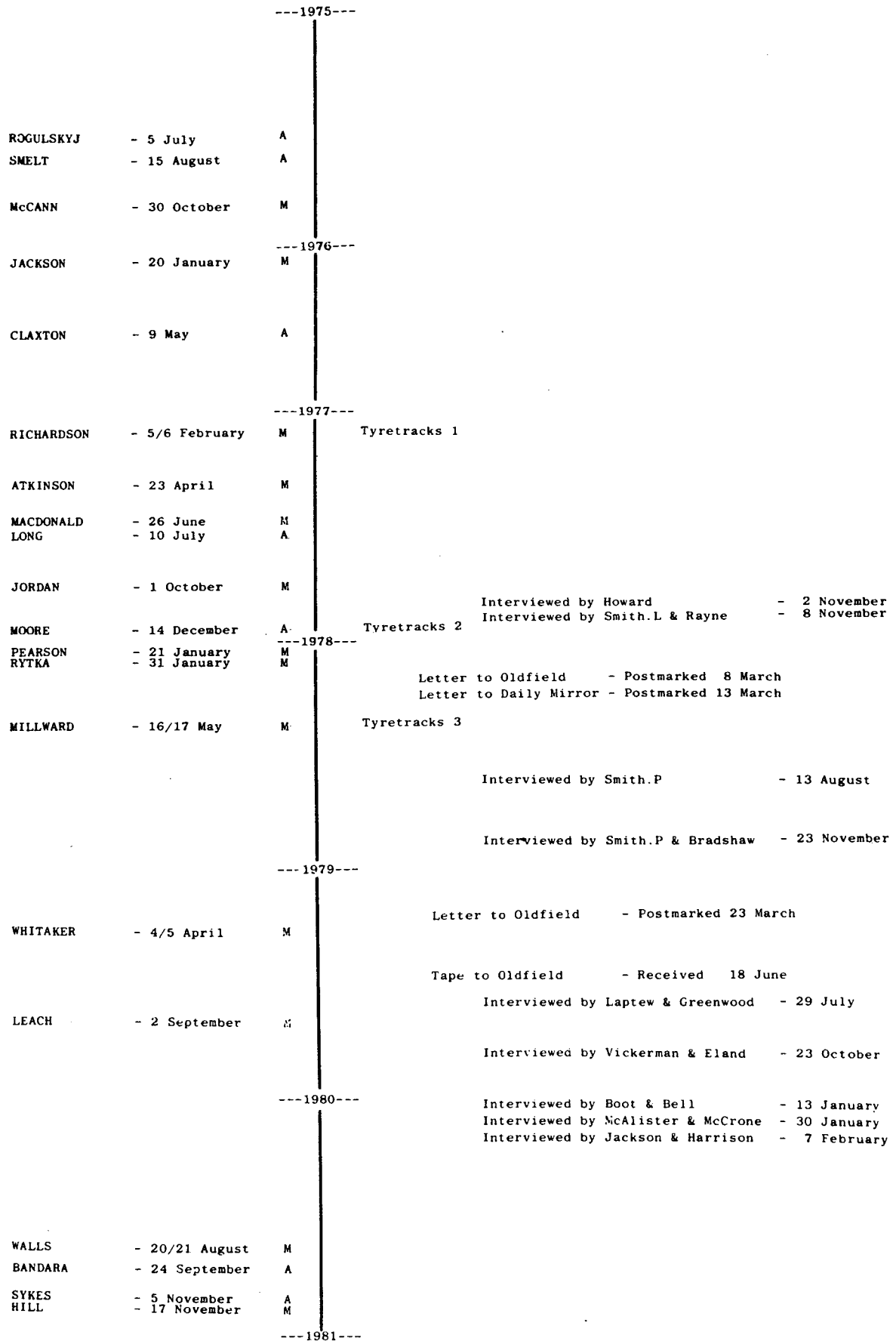
83. On 2nd January 1981 Sutcliffe was seen by the police whilst in the company of a prostitute in the "red light" area of Sheffield. He was arrested for an offence of theft of car number plates, detected because a check with the Police National Computer indicated that his vehicle did not match the vehicle to which the number plates displayed on it were allocated. Some 24 hours after his arrest the arresting officer, having been advised to consider the possibility that Sutcliffe might have connections with the Ripper crimes, returned to the scene of the arrest and there recovered a hammer and knife which Sutcliffe had disposed of whilst allegedly urinating nearby. An additional knife was later recovered from the cistern of a toilet in Hammerton Road Police Station where Sutcliffe had hidden it following his arrest. From that point onwards, although on the basis of his record card in the Millgarth incident room it might still have been possible for him to have been eliminated on accent and handwriting grounds, the finding of the hammer and the two knives prompted members of the West Yorkshire inquiry team into thinking that Sutcliffe was the man they were looking for. Thereafter he soon began to admit the crimes with which he was subsequently charged and gave a detailed statement to the interviewing officers.

84. On Friday, 22nd May 1981, Peter William Sutcliffe was convicted at the Central Criminal Court of 13 cases of murder and 7 cases of attempted murder and sentenced to 20 concurrent terms of life imprisonment, with a recommendation that he should serve a minimum of 30 years.



## FIGURE 2

### SEQUENCE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE RIPPER SERIES



Arrest of Sutcliffe — 2 January

Key: A - Assault  
M - Murder

### **PART III — THE POLICE INVESTIGATION**

85. My review of the case has substantiated some of the criticisms which have already been levelled against the police for having failed to arrest Sutcliffe earlier. Other important limitations in the various aspects of the police investigation have also been identified during the review. I will now deal with these in turn before commenting on two well-known personalities in the case, namely Trevor Birdsall, Sutcliffe's friend and Sonia Sutcliffe, his wife. Finally, within this part of the report I will deal with the events immediately preceding and following Sutcliffe's arrest which also led to a great deal of criticism especially in relation to possible offences of contempt by both the police and the media.

#### **(a) LIMITATIONS**

##### **(i) The Major Incident Room**

86. As will be seen in various parts of my report many of the limitations in the Ripper Investigation stemmed from the failings of the Major Incident Room and therefore I consider it advisable to give a brief background to homicide investigations and how they are undertaken with the co-ordinated assistance of the Incident Room, before I deal with the actual limitations found.

87. The average police detection rate for crimes of homicide is in excess of 90%. In 1979, for instance, of the 629 cases which occurred in England and Wales, 587 (93%) were detected by the police. In contrast of 252,288 cases of burglary in a dwelling which occurred during the same year only 74,256 were detected, equal to 29%. Whilst it is the case that two-thirds of all homicides are committed within a domestic or social situation which allows the person responsible to be identified with relative ease, murder is not intrinsically a much easier crime to detect than many others, including burglary in dwellings. The difference in the overall detection rate reflects not only the likely public response to the crime but also the disproportionate scale to which senior police officers are prepared to allocate resources to homicide cases in comparison with other crimes. Homicide, and murder in particular, is regarded as the gravest of anti-social crimes so that the allocation of a very high level of police resource to its detection is seen both inside and outside the Police Service as fully justified. Within the Police Service there is also the factor that undetected homicides clearly touch the reputation of a particular force and of its senior detectives in a unique way so that detection of murder is a very important matter of local prestige.

88. The realities of the world we live in preclude the deployment of manpower to minor crimes on the same scale as is currently deployed to murder inquiries. There are simply far too many crimes to be dealt with. In 1979, for instance, more than 2¼ million crimes were recorded by the police of which a mere 629 (.026%) were in the homicide category.

89. The purpose of this comparison of homicides with other crimes is to show that, because of the scale of resources applied to them, they can overload the ordinary arrangements for the gathering, collating, evaluating, indexing and filing of evidence. In a routine case of house burglary a single detective may have responsibility for the complete inquiry. In the earliest stage of the inquiry he will probably have the assistance of a Scenes of Crime Officer, and may, subsequently, gain help from Fingerprint and Forensic specialists. He will usually be responsible for all his own inquiries, for the interrogation of any suspects and, if he is successful, for collating the available evidence and presenting it to his senior officers for consideration and eventual disposal. In a homicide inquiry where 100 officers might be deployed at an early stage it would clearly be impossible for any senior investigating officer to keep control over such a widespread and diverse operation as part of his own mental process. There is an immediately recognisable requirement for an effective administrative support system capable of monitoring the work of the inquiry as a whole and, more particularly, of pointing the investigating officer to significant elements of the evidence, or conclusions which could be drawn from it, of which he might not otherwise be aware.

90. This need is catered for by what is now commonly referred to as a Major Incident Room, a facility which was pioneered in the Metropolitan Police area which, until the second World War, was the only police force in the country to have very wide and continuing experience of homicide inquiries. Although other major cities had their share of homicides, the police forces associated with them were relatively small by comparison and certainly did not acquire the expertise common to the Metropolitan Police. When a provincial force called for assistance a detective superintendent and a detective sergeant were sent, the superintendent to take charge of the

investigation in liaison with a local officer and the detective sergeant to set up a Major Incident Room to service the inquiry. Because of the relative proximity of Scotland Yard this service was used more frequently by forces in the Home Counties and the South East of England and not surprisingly therefore, the greatest degree of standardisation of Major Incident Room procedure is to be found in the South East where Metropolitan influence was the strongest.

91. Following the amalgamation and re-organisation of police forces in England and Wales in 1967 and 1974 each of the 41 provincial forces which subsequently remained had sufficient resources and experience to meet the needs of any ordinary murder inquiry so that dependence upon the assistance of Scotland Yard became a thing of the past. Even in the isolated examples which have occurred where local resources appeared unlikely to satisfy the needs of an individual inquiry, the prestige of individual police forces has, more often than not, made Chief Constables reluctant to ask for the assistance of the Metropolitan Police. On the rare occasions when assistance has been provided (as it was in the "Black Panther" case) arrangements for command and control of the multi-force inquiry have been far from satisfactory.

92. One of the unfortunate results of locally controlled murder inquiries has been that the common Major Incident Room system which resulted from the participation of Scotland Yard in local force investigations has been lost. There now exist a number of different systems in England and Wales, few of which are capable of being interfaced. This factor had a considerable adverse influence on the Ripper Inquiry and I will refer to it again later.

93. A Major Incident Room may be defined as, "Those administrative procedures used to handle all information coming to notice in a major police investigation." The purpose of the "Room" is to provide the senior investigating officer with an accurate record of all police inquiries made in connection with the crime and the results obtained from them. The records are intended to show the state of the inquiry and how much work in the form of outstanding actions remains to be done at any time. They are also required to enable any police officer making an inquiry to establish whether any person, vehicle or other factor has previously come to notice in the investigation and to provide investigating officers with a ready means of acquiring all the knowledge which the system contains about his inquiry subjects. A Major Incident Room is also intended to serve a much more positive purpose in that its records are kept so as to highlight people, vehicles or other facts which have become subject to inquiry as a result of different lines of investigation so that such records are capable of pinpointing suspects to whom the investigating officer can direct special attention. Finally, the "Room" should act as a point of historical reference so that, in a long running inquiry, officers joining the investigation team can have easy reference to major policy decisions taken at earlier stages of the inquiry.

94. To meet these varied requirements a number of facilities are required. The Major Incident Room is a unit of police organisation which can in fact be established anywhere. If suitable police accommodation is not available forces frequently make use of rented accommodation near to the murder scene. All that is required is a room with desks, chairs, telephones, and the administrative facilities of an ordinary busy office. Within this basic framework the following functions have to be provided:

- (a) *Senior investigating officer.* This is the officer in charge of the inquiry who is responsible for the control of the operation, the direction of the inquiry and the maintenance of the Incident Room service.
- (b) *Action allocators.* This is a middle management position usually filled by detective inspectors whose task is to initiate inquiries under the general direction of the senior investigating officer. The action allocator is responsible for the preparation of action forms or documents serving a similar purpose which are issued to members of outside inquiry teams.
- (c) *Outside inquiry teams.* These are detectives undertaking actual inquiries. Usually in the rank of detective sergeant and detective constable, they receive action forms from the action allocator and visit action subjects at their homes or places of work. Their results are shown on completed action forms and in statements of evidence both of which are returned to the Major Incident Room. Completed action sheets are returned to the action allocator who either accepts that the action is complete or issues

further actions for additional inquiries to be made. Statements of evidence go to statement readers.

- (d) *Statement readers* are a group of middle management detectives whose task is to read all incoming statements of evidence and to identify the important information contained in them. Such information is brought to the notice of the senior investigating officer.
- (e) *Telephone operators*. Policewomen are frequently used for this work which involves the acceptance of telephone information from the general public in response to police appeals. The information is recorded and passed to the action allocator for a decision about further action which may be required.
- (f) *Indexing clerks*. All action sheets, statements, telephone messages and other information received at the Major Incident Room are indexed under a variety of separate reference systems and papers are filed under these references. The most important indexes are normally those in which the names of people and the registered numbers and descriptions of vehicles are recorded.

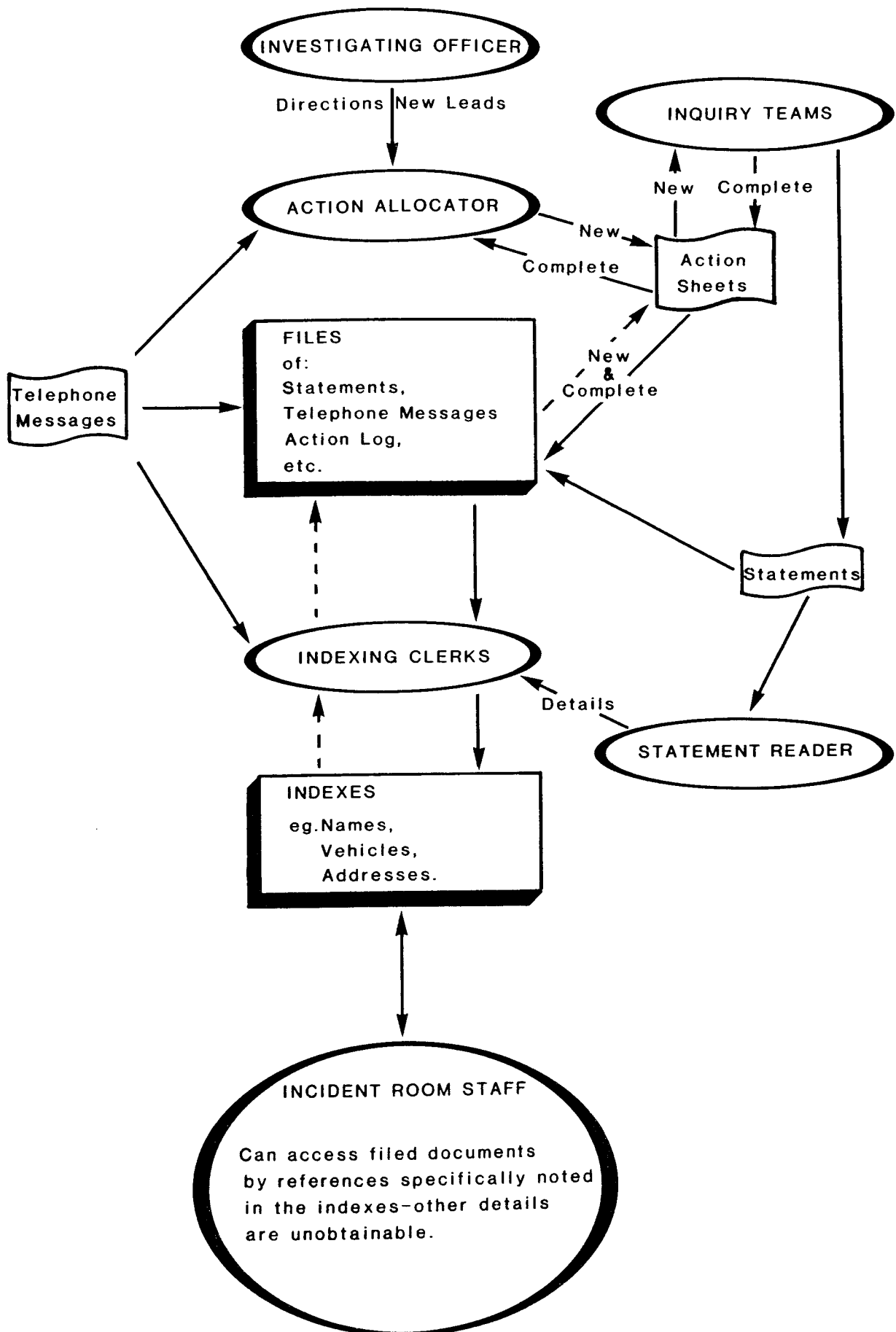
This basic organisational structure is illustrated in diagrammatic form at fig. 3.

95. The operation of the system is perhaps best explained by the use of a short practical example: "Early yesterday morning the body of Valerie Brown, a 20 year old student nurse, was found on the sports field of a leisure centre in an urban area. She had been sexually assaulted and subsequently strangled." (A sexually motivated murder is used as an example because such crimes are usually difficult to investigate). In this particular type of case, following or perhaps concurrently with the examination of the scene of crime and the subsequent removal of the body for examination, several lines of inquiry would immediately be put in hand. A Major Incident Room would be set up and the first actions would usually involve the dead girl's parents, friends and associates. Her mother, for example, would be interviewed and a statement would be taken from her so as to provide the investigating officer with as broad a picture of the deceased's background as is possible. When this statement arrives at the Major Incident Room a nominal index card would be completed giving details of the girl's mother and cross-referenced with the statement index. The statement would then be read and would almost inevitably produce a number of actions. For instance, if the dead girl had, over the years, had several boy friends who were named in her mother's statement actions would be raised for each one of them to be seen separately to see whether they could give useful information.

96. Before the actions were issued they would be checked against the nominal index to see whether the subjects had previously been recorded. If not, new nominal index cards would be completed. On the return of the completed actions, the accompanying statements would be read, undoubtedly raising further actions for the inquiry team. The statement reference would be recorded on the nominal index card in each case. At the same time as these elementary background inquiries were being made, separate teams of officers would be conducting house to house inquiries which might generate information about vehicles or people seen in the area at the time of the murder. If the information gained was sufficiently positive to allow identification of some person or some vehicle, actions would be raised to have the person seen or vehicle traced and either implicated in or eliminated from the inquiry. Where the available information did not provide an identification, for instance, where there was only a description of a person seen in the area, an action would be raised for the description to be circulated within the Police Service and possibly through the media as being that of a person wanted for elimination. Many other lines of inquiry would be running simultaneously, for instance, inquiries amongst taxi-drivers, at dry cleaners or laundries in respect of unusual or unidentified patrons. The results of all these inquiries would be channelled through the Major Incident Room where relevant information would be indexed so that investigating officers might have easy access to it thereafter. Officers completing the nominal index cards would be responsible for bringing to the investigating officer's attention any individual who was recorded for more than one reason.

97. Accordingly, a person who had been seen near to the scene of the crime but had, on interview, been able to satisfy the officers about his presence in the vicinity might also come into the system on the separate route that he was a former associate of the dead girl or that his description fitted

**FIGURE 3**  
**BASIC ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF INCIDENT ROOM**



that of a person seen with the girl before her death or that he was the owner of a vehicle seen elsewhere in suspicious circumstances or that he had a previous criminal conviction which was relevant to the inquiry.

98. It goes without saying that in a protracted murder inquiry the number of names in the nominal index, the number of completed, pending and unallocated actions, the number of statements of evidence, of letters from members of the public, of reports of telephone conversations with members of the public or of visits of members of the public to police stations is very high indeed.

99. One problem for senior investigating officers is that in many murder inquiries (two thirds of which, as I have already described, are of domestic origin) the services of a Major Incident Room are not required because the murderer is detected very quickly. If, however, a senior investigating officer decided not to establish a Major Incident Room and the investigation failed to live up to its earlier expectations and became protracted, a very difficult problem would then arise since there would already be a backlog of information to be dealt with at the same time as the developing inquiry might be producing extensive additional information. The difficulties of resolving this problem are such that the majority of senior investigators set up a Major Incident Room immediately in every case of murder in the knowledge that the operation can quickly be stopped should it prove unnecessary.

100. The conventional Major Incident Room systems of all 43 police forces in England and Wales currently depend upon manual card indexes. Computer based experimental systems are in the course of development and will be referred to elsewhere in this report. (An example of a computerised system is shown in fig. 4). At the time when the Yorkshire Ripper inquiry opened in 1975, however, no one in this country had any experience of a computer based Major Incident system and although computerisation of Major Incident Room indexes was offered to the Chief Constable of the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police by the Police Scientific Development Branch in 1977 his decision to reject that offer is now believed to have been correct in the light of the untested system available at the time.

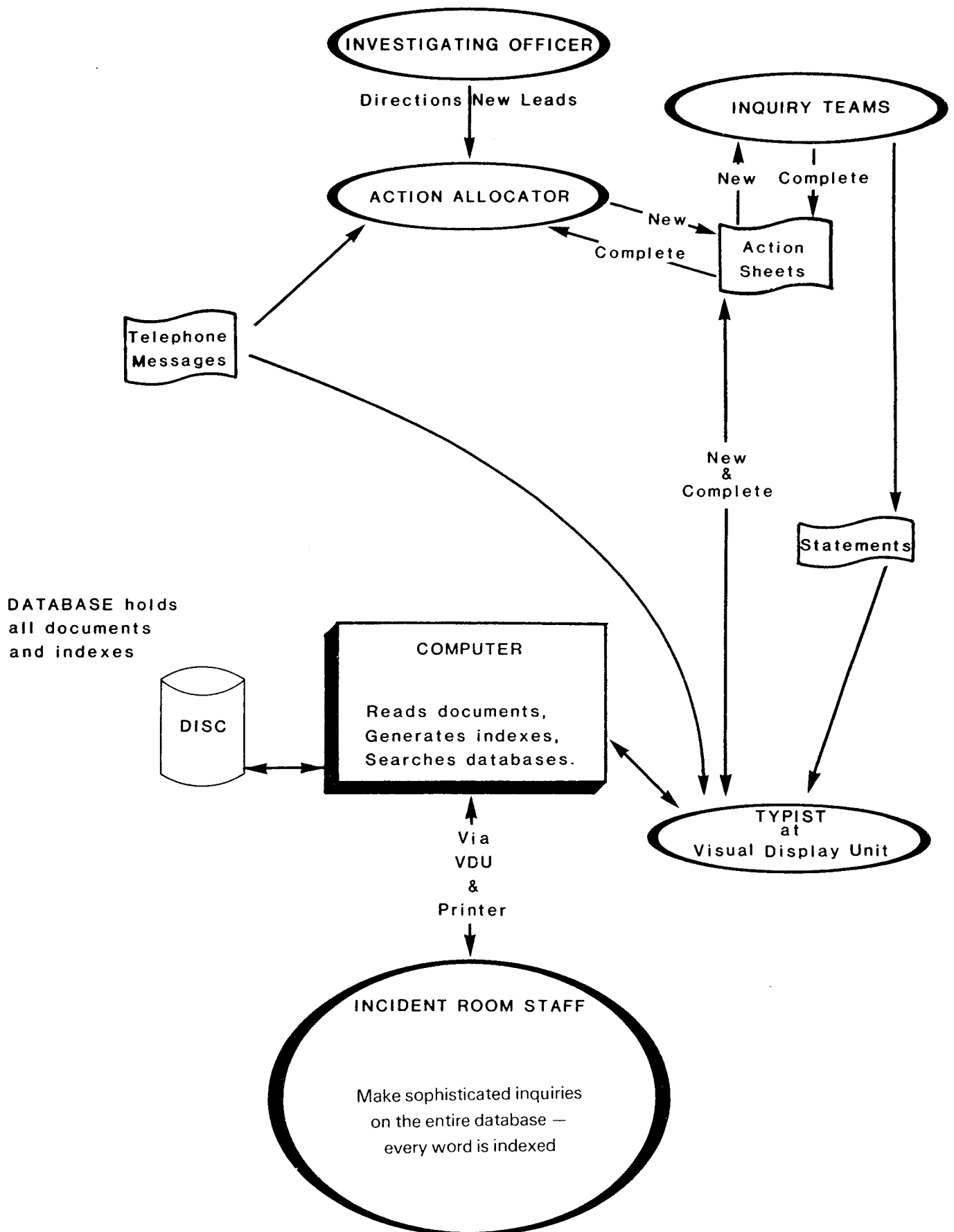
101. The West Yorkshire Police Major Incident Room procedure is well documented and has been used successfully in connection with the many murders which have occurred within the force area since it was drawn up in 1974. The system is, however, an amalgam of the independent systems previously used in the West Riding of Yorkshire and the cities of Leeds and Bradford before these three forces were incorporated into the present force. It was thus almost inevitable that the investigation of murders which occurred in the formerly independent parts of the force area after 1974 would be dealt with largely in accordance with the policies and methods of the former forces. For example, the first two murders in the Ripper series (McCann and Jackson) occurred in Leeds within the area formerly policed by the Leeds City Force. The senior investigating officer was the former head of the Leeds City C.I.D., and the majority of his detectives were accustomed to the city method of operation. It is now clear that the investigation of these early murders was conducted on the basis of a Leeds City dominated system so that when offences occurred later in other parts of the force area problems of compatibility arose.

102. The Major Incident Room system which was applied to the majority of crimes in the Ripper series is a complex one which, in comparison with the systems in use elsewhere, is fairly sophisticated. It consists of:

- (a) A daily log in which is recorded in chronological sequence all significant events, information and decisions which are taken in connection with the inquiry.
- (b) An action system in which all information coming in to the Major Incident Room from whatever source is examined to see whether any additional action is required. If such action is required, an initial or further action is written on an action form by the action allocator or a clerk working for him. The action form (see example at fig. 5) has a number of different coloured copies, one of which goes to the master file, one to the outside inquiry team leader and one to the officer who is actually going to undertake the inquiry. Before the action form goes to the inquiry officer it is searched against the nominal and, if necessary, vehicle indexes to see whether there are any previous references to the person who is to be seen in the action. Previous references are endorsed on the action form which then goes to the previous papers clerk who extracts the



**FIGURE 4**  
**COMPUTERISED INCIDENT ROOM**



**FIGURE 5**  
**MAJOR INCIDENT ACTION FORM**

64.

WEST YORKSHIRE METROPOLITAN POLICE

**MAJOR CRIME INVESTIGATION—ACTION FORM**

(This pad must not be separated until allocated an Action Number by the Major Incident Room staff)

11/1538/2  
ACTION No.:

PASSED TO:

ORIGIN OF INFORMATION: (Name, address and telephone number, where applicable)

FOR USE IN THE INCIDENT ROOM ONLY.

ANON LETTER

SUBJECT MATTER: Suggests:

Peter SUTCLIFFE  
5, Garden Lane  
Heaton, B'fd.

11/18/4029/2

3/10  
see 7/5/128

7/1/3377  
- h/w neg.  
but officer interviewing NOT  
329 case  
PP/9

OFFICER RECEIVING: KAB 5760 Date: 27<sup>th</sup>/80 Time:

RESULT OF ENQUIRY: (Continue overleaf if necessary)

Date: INQUIRING OFFICER:

REMARKS / INSTRUCTIONS FROM TEAM LEADER:

REMARKS / INSTRUCTIONS FROM OFFICER i/c INVESTIGATION:

papers to which the references on the form refer, photocopies them and staples the copies to the form before returning the originals to the filing system. The action then goes, via an outside inquiry team leader, to the officer or officers who are to deal with it. Once the action has been completed the results are endorsed on the action form which is returned to the Incident Room together with any statements or other evidence required by the action. After the completion of an action, the form is checked against the nominal index and new index cards are made out for people and vehicles where necessary.

- (c) An index and filing system which is intended to allow previous papers to be identified and recovered with ease. The principal system of reference is as follows:
- (i) An 'A' reference is allocated to every statement of evidence taken in connection with the inquiry. Consecutive numbers are used so that the nominal index card of the person who makes the 50th statement to be recorded during the course of the inquiry will bear the reference 'A'50.
  - (ii) A 'B' reference is allocated to each action where a person is to be seen by the police. Once again consecutive numbers are used so that the 81st person seen by the police during an inquiry would have 'B'81 recorded on his nominal index card. A person who, having been interviewed and accorded a 'B' reference, subsequently makes a statement of evidence is then recorded additionally as an 'A' reference with the appropriate consecutive number.
  - (iii) Motor vehicles which come to notice during the inquiry are, in addition to identification by index number, allocated a 'C' reference and consecutive number. Following experience during the Ripper inquiry (which will be referred to later) this system has been abandoned in the force.
  - (iv) The 'D' reference system is intended to accommodate a variety of independent lines of inquiry involving groups of people or subjects who are to be seen in connection with actions based on occupation or some other factor. In West Yorkshire, for example, anonymous letters and inquiries in connection with them are consecutively numbered under 'D'10 whilst inquiries amongst taxi-drivers are numbered under the reference 'D'63. A long list of standard 'D' references is contained in West Yorkshire's major crime investigation handbook and this system is used to ensure continuity in that a 'D'63 reference will always refer to a taxi-driver whatever murder investigation is involved.
  - (v) The final reference used in the West Yorkshire system is the 'E' reference which is used for the filing of questionnaire forms which may be issued to officers conducting a particular line of inquiry where the accent is on the rapid gathering of information which can be stated briefly. Completed questionnaire forms are given an 'E' reference with a consecutive number and an index card bearing this reference is completed for the person who supplies the information.

103. This was the basic system which was available to the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police when they commenced to investigate the crimes in the Ripper series. Before going on to describe the problems which were experienced in the use of the system it is fair to say that, despite the extensive use of Incident Room procedures in very many major crime inquiries, the Police Service had, until the beginning of the Ripper series, no experience of dealing with a linked series of 13 murders and 7 attempted murders over a six year time span. Such experience as was available, including that gained during the "Black Panther" series which will be referred to later, indicated that a system which worked well in the investigation of a single crime could not be guaranteed to be similarly effective when applied to a long series of similar crimes.

104. Indeed, when the West Yorkshire Major Incident Room system was applied to the Ripper series the following problems were encountered:

- (a) Although in the earlier murders in the series the 'C' reference system was used for motor vehicles, it was abandoned when the records of the first six cases were amalgamated and resulted in the system becoming far too complicated to search. After the seventh murder, namely Rytka in 1978, vehicles were indexed and filed only under their registration numbers. The result was that there was a combined vehicle index

125. The ultimate conclusion is that far from maintaining its place as the nerve centre of the most important detective effort in history the Millgarth Major Incident Room became sadly inefficient and had the direct effect of frustrating the work of senior investigating officers and junior detectives alike.

#### FIGURE 7

Total number of persons in the nominal index (B ref)	267,962
House to House inquiries (E ref)	33,719
Total number of actions	115,297
Statement total (A ref)	30,926
Total vehicle sightings in "red light areas"	5,468,514
Cross area sightings	21,231
Triple area sightings	1,223
Total vehicle inquiries	158,206

Additionally, Incident Rooms in Sunderland and Durham were involved in a further 37,799 actions.

#### (ii) The Cross Area Sighting Inquiry

126. Prior to the murder of Whitaker (4/5 April 1979) Sutcliffe's victims were predominantly, but not entirely, prostitutes. It was reasonably believed, by the investigating officers, that prostitute victims were picked up in "red-light" districts by the murderer who was a "punter" (a prostitute's client) who regularly frequented known prostitute areas in a vehicle.

127. Following the murder of Jordan, in Manchester, an intelligence operation was mounted in the police areas of West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Humberside to gather information about prostitutes and their associates, the areas where they solicited and the places to which they took their customers. Efforts were also made to identify regular punters by recording their vehicle registration numbers. The scale of the problem was far larger than had been imagined and this was met, in West Yorkshire, by the issue of pocket tape recorders, the tape recordings from which were stored against the eventuality of another murder, when a list of vehicle registration numbers would be available for checking. Other difficulties encountered included the presence of large numbers of motorists who drove through "red-light" districts en route to other destinations. This problem was particularly evident in Bradford.

128. Consequent to an approach to the Police Scientific Development Branch (PSDB) by the West Yorkshire Police, a study was undertaken by PSDB, the Police Research Services Unit (PRSU) and the Police National Computer Unit (PNCU). Resulting from this study was the decision to store the vehicle surveillance data on the Police National Computer (PNC). No change was recommended in respect of the nominal index which was established in the main Ripper Incident Room in Leeds. The scheme adopted was for the computer to print out a record of any vehicle which was sighted in two different prostitute areas and, from this, the system was called "The Cross Area Sighting Inquiry." It was also possible to retrieve data relating to particular vehicles in particular areas and to search the records by make and description of vehicle. All these facilities, which were available from the computer, became known as the "Punters' Index."

129. The system consisted of

1. The recording of vehicle registration numbers on to tape with date and time interjected at regular intervals.
2. The transcription of this to a handwritten list which was then
3. Entered in the computer store via a terminal keyboard. Although the date and approximate time of sightings were transcribed on to the handwritten list, these were not entered into the computer store but the time of input via the terminal keyboard was automatically entered. Whilst the significance of this recorded time was well understood by the system supervisors, it must have created some confusion in the minds of operational detectives carrying out inquiries.



4. Once a vehicle had been input into the computer as having been sighted in two different areas it was automatically printed out as a "Cross Area Sighting". Subsequent appearances of the same vehicle in the same areas did not result in additional print-outs.

130. The system achieved the objective of producing details of vehicles seen in prostitute areas but a lack of detailed understanding of the system and its capabilities, particularly in relation to descriptive searches, was a serious limitation. Since a joint study by PSDB, PNCU, and PRSU, had recommended the appointment of a senior police officer with computer experience, to the investigation team, it is regrettable that this recommendation was not taken up. Had it been so perhaps the computer system might have been used to the full extent of its capabilities.

131. Initially the computer print-out was in the form of a list of vehicle registration numbers from which a separate computer search was made for owners' names. This need for a separate search for vehicle owners' names produced a bottleneck in the system. Thereafter although owners' names were automatically printed out with registration numbers, the facility was never developed to search the "Punters' Index" by vehicle owners' names. ie the computer could not answer the question "What car(s) owned by Peter William Sutcliffe have been sighted?".

132. The system began operation on the 19th June 1978. Observations were kept from 26 points in the "red-light" districts of Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield. The first print out of "Cross Area Sightings" was made on 26 June 1978 and lists were issued weekly thereafter.

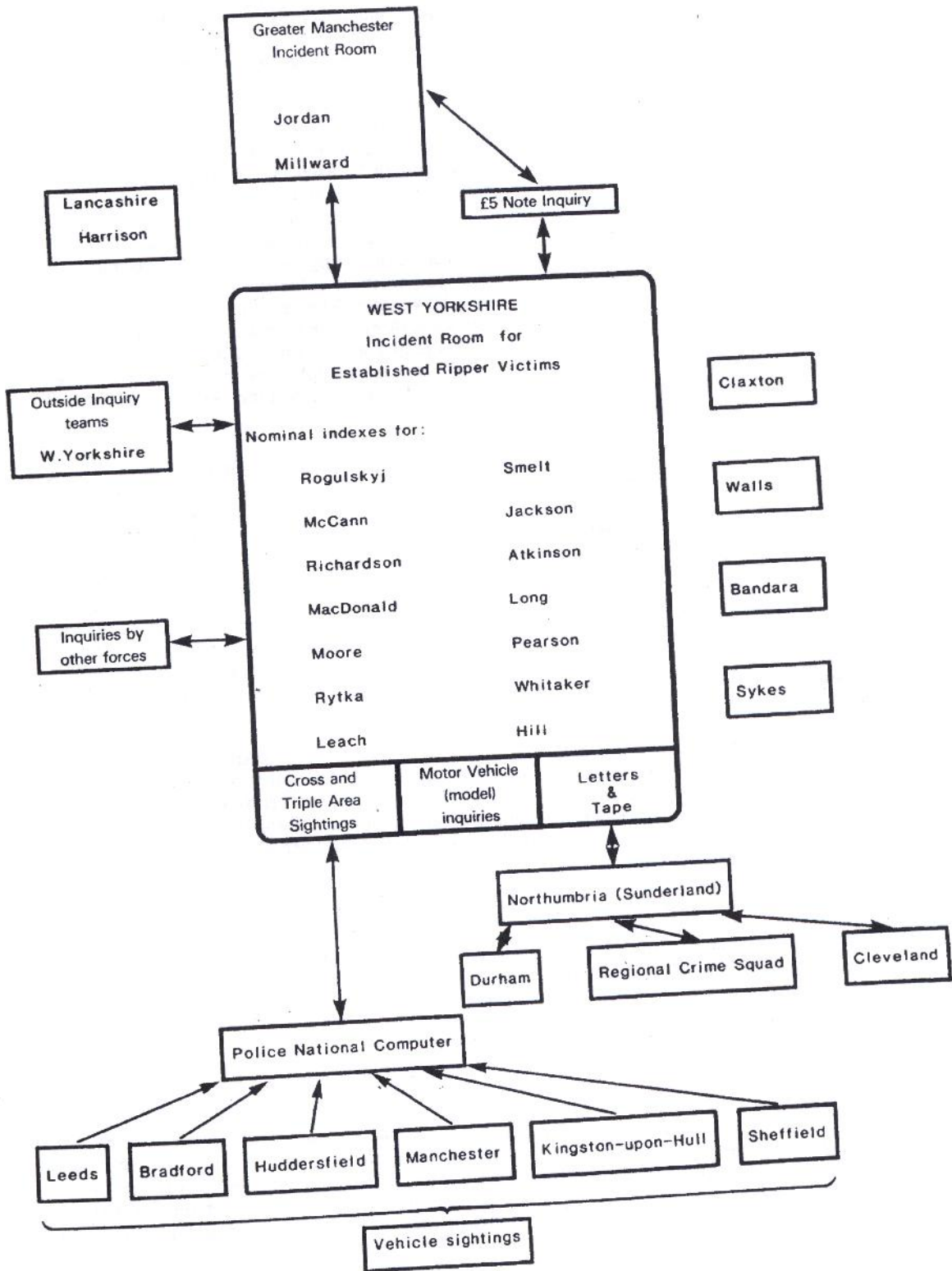
133. Greater Manchester Police joined the system in July 1978 with observations from 13 points in the Moss Side area. South Yorkshire Police followed in October 1978 with four observation points in Sheffield and finally Humberside Police in November 1978 with three observation points in Kingston upon Hull. The interfaces amongst these operations is described elsewhere and included in figure 8.

134. It was agreed that inquiries about the "Cross Area Sightings" from all the four police forces would be initiated by the Ripper Incident Room in Leeds. Contrary to expectations, the number of vehicles visiting more than one "red-light" district proved to be too many to handle. By March 1979 over 20,000 "Cross Area Sightings" had been recorded but only one quarter of the vehicle owners had been interviewed. The selection of vehicle owners for interview depended primarily on their home address. Owners living in West Yorkshire or Greater Manchester would almost certainly be interviewed whilst those living in distant parts of the country were regarded as having lower priority. At this stage the decision was made that only owners of vehicles recorded in "red-light" districts in three separate cities would be interviewed. Thus the "Cross Area Sightings" became the "Triple Area Sightings" project.

135. Humberside withdrew from the computer operation in August 1979 followed by Manchester and South Yorkshire in December 1979. Thereafter, whilst West Yorkshire Police maintained the system until the time of Sutcliffe's arrest on 2 January 1981, it was on a severely reduced scale and much more selective criteria were employed for the inclusion of vehicle numbers in the system. Throughout this aspect of the inquiry four police forces co-operated in producing 5.4 million vehicle sightings from which 20,000 "Cross Area Sightings" and 1,200 "Triple Area Sightings" were recorded. All the owners of the cars recorded in "Triple Area Sightings" were interviewed.

136. It is now known that Sutcliffe's red Ford Corsair (PHE 355G) was recorded on a "Cross Area Sighting" on the second weekly list produced by the system and consequent to this he was interviewed. Sutcliffe was later printed out, first as a "Cross" and then on the 23rd February 1979 as a "Triple Area Sighting" in another vehicle (Black Sunbeam Rapier registration number: NKU 888H) with the result that he was interviewed yet again. At the time of Sutcliffe's arrest the computer system was being little used but, despite this, his last car (Brown Rover 3500, registration number: FHY 400K), which he had acquired on 16 June 1979, had been recorded on seven separate occasions in the "red-light" districts of Bradford.

137. The "Cross Area Sighting" exercise was a mammoth task with substantial strategic and tactical problems. The early concept of recording the registrations of all vehicles which passed a given point may well have been effective in the event of another prostitute murder but it led to the swamping of the information processing system when used as a basis for a continuing series of





investigations. This was particularly a problem in the Manningham area of Bradford where the "red-light" district is crossed by a number of main thoroughfares. Faced with these problems the West Yorkshire Police changed their system and observation points a number of times whilst taking into account the tendency of the prostitutes and "punters" to change their ground in the face of intense police activity. Parallel with this ran changes in methods of recording vehicle numbers including manuscript, tape recordings, radio and telephone. In December 1979 the emphasis was shifted to only those vehicles containing a single white male with or without a female. Finally in May 1980, static observations were withdrawn and vehicle numbers were only recorded by a small team of Task Force officers operating mobile patrols.

138. The decision to conduct this operation covertly entailed keeping it from the knowledge of the general public and subsequently required interviewing officers to keep from vehicle owners the knowledge that their vehicles had been seen in "red-light" districts. A major consideration affecting this policy was computer privacy and the storage of non-criminal information on a police computer. (This topic is dealt with in more detail later in the report.) The former constraint was impractical in that police activity of this kind, night and day, for weeks on end was bound to be noticed. The latter constraint caused police officers, conducting inquiries on the ground, to be inhibited in their investigations. The consequences of these inhibitions can be seen in the interviews conducted with Sutcliffe which I will refer to later. The fact that the computer print-outs and the interview action sheets prepared from them showed the time the vehicle numbers were input into the computer rather than the time of sighting also hampered inquiry officers. In Sutcliffe's case officers would have been less likely to have accepted his excuse that he passed through the Bradford observation area on his way to and from work had they known that many of the sightings were between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m.

139. The Incident Room procedures in support of the "Cross Area Sightings" inquiry were substantial and complex. They involved the allocation of inquiries to detectives, the linking of their inquiries to others being conducted at the same time and the result of all these being collated, in all their aspects, with the nominal index. A separate index existed of motor vehicle registrations which originated from the computer out-put of, initially, "Cross Area Sightings" and, subsequently, "Triple Area Sightings". There also existed a vehicle index for the first six Ripper incidents. Thus, although the names of persons coming to notice through this part of the inquiry were properly carded and inserted into the main nominal index, separate vehicle indexes existed. Further complications arose in the course of inquiries related to subsequent murders where nominal indexes were eventually integrated into the main nominal index but where the vehicle indexes were kept separately. Finally 14 different vehicle indexes were maintained in the Incident Room.

140. Attempts to deal with the deluge of paper generated by the "Cross Area Sighting" inquiry led to the increase of staff from a small team of dedicated and competent men and women to a large anonymous and poorly structured group where motivation and enthusiasm suffered as a result. The system of recording vehicle numbers once and then transcribing them twice, resulted in large error rates. These errors, coupled with false registrations and vehicle transfers resulted in a large index of unidentified vehicles.

141. The list of registered owners produced by the computer was checked against the nominal index. Where a person was already on record in the Incident Room the new reference would be passed to a senior investigating officer, together with a photocopy of all previous papers, for action if required. Although the system identified Sutcliffe in both the "Cross" and "Triple Area Sightings", and he was interviewed on both counts, it failed in that interviewing officers were inadequately briefed. This was a consequence of poor index searching and failure to locate previous papers.

142. Probably as a consequence of the gradual realisation that the system could not cope, a high proportion of "Cross Area Sightings" were filed without the vehicle owners being interviewed. The murder of Whitaker caused the re-deployment of personnel and the "Cross Area Sighting" inquiry was left with no outside inquiry team. Consequently filing and inquiries were left pending. Eventually all uncompleted "Cross Area Sighting" inquiries were withdrawn from outside officers and given a rating of importance on a three-point scale with the intention of, possibly, resurrecting the inquiry later.



143. The change over from "Cross Area Sightings" to "Triple Area Sightings" generated problems of data handling on a large scale and these were solved in a way which, whilst effective from the data handling standpoint were, perhaps, less desirable operationally. Despite the fact that this was another aspect that operational officers did not fully understand, the backlog of "Triple Area Sightings" became manageable and Sutcliffe was once again identified for interview. (See para 261)

144. In spite of the fact that the capabilities of the computerised "Punters' Index" were not fully understood by operational officers, one particular search on vehicle type was conducted which could have led to Sutcliffe's arrest in March 1979. On the 2 March 1979, [REDACTED] was attacked in the College grounds by a man who hit her on the head with a hammer. She survived the attack and described her assailant as a man in his twenties, 5'10" tall, of broad build with dark curly hair and a drooping moustache. More importantly she was convinced that immediately before the attack she had seen the man sitting in a dark coloured Sunbeam Rapier saloon. Detective Inspector Sidebottom asked for, and obtained, a computer print-out of all Sunbeam Rapier and Alpine saloons which had been input on the "Punters' Index" since its commencement. The print-out listed 850 vehicles, including the Rapier NKU 888H, owned by Sutcliffe. This vehicle was shown to have been sighted on 46 occasions and whilst there were a few other vehicles which had been sighted more frequently, only three, including Sutcliffe's, had also been printed out as "Triple Area Sightings". Only 21 other vehicles had been printed out as "Cross Area Sightings". There is, unfortunately, no evidence that any police inquiries were made on the basis of this computer print-out which established Sutcliffe as one of three prime suspects for the attack on [REDACTED] although she was not at that time regarded as a Ripper victim. This was entirely due to a lack of appreciation of the information which the print-out contained, arising from the limitation to which I have previously referred at paragraph 130 and to which I shall also refer in paragraph 147.

145. The early decision to record the index numbers of motor vehicles seen in the "red-light" areas of Northern cities was a sensible insurance against the possibility of further attacks on prostitutes. The subsequent decision to store this information on the PNC was a wise one and had the direct consequence of bringing Sutcliffe to the attention of the police in connection with the movements of his vehicles. Unfortunately, as was the case with the vehicle "Tracking Inquiry", the proposal was not thought through so that its natural consequences could be provided for. Although the West Yorkshire Police cannot be blamed for under-estimating the extent of prostitution and the use of motor vehicles by people seeking the services of prostitutes, they could be faulted for not anticipating a significant response to the "Cross Area Sighting" inquiry and for failing to provide an adequate group of detectives to conduct the follow-up inquiries. The need for additional administrative and clerical staff in the Major Incident Room should also have been foreseen since it was inevitable that the inquiry would result in a considerable increase in the amount of actioning and indexing which would be required. The failure to anticipate the need for and to provide the manpower necessary to handle this new line of inquiry had serious consequences. For example although Sutcliffe bought his Sunbeam Rapier in May 1978 and had before the end of the year been printed out as a "Cross Area Sighting" and before March of the following year been printed out as a "Triple Area Sighting" (as already referred to in connection with the attack on Rooney) he was not interviewed about these sightings until the 29 July 1979. By this time he had disposed of the Rapier and acquired the Rover in which he was to be arrested. How much easier it would have been if the officers had been able to talk to Sutcliffe within days or at the most weeks of the visit to Manchester on the 22nd February 1979 which resulted in him being printed out as a "Triple Area Sighting".

146. I have already referred to the problems which resulted from the decision to keep the vehicle observations secret and the printing out of the computer lists with the time the index number was input into the computer rather than the time it was actually sighted. These two aspects added to the difficulties of inquiry officers and resulted in less positive use of the information which the computer made available than might otherwise have been the case. I recognise that the need for computer privacy must always be balanced against the need for expediency in a short-term crime inquiry but believe that in a difficult series case involving considerable loss of life the need for effective police action must over-ride other considerations. It was reasonable for inquiry officers to conclude that a majority of those printed out as "Cross" and more particularly "Triple Area Sightings" were "punters" or people who had an interest in prostitutes. The inquiries which had



to be conducted at the homes of vehicle owners were thus sensitive but nevertheless still demanded the adoption of a more positive line than officers were briefed to take in West Yorkshire. It is a matter of incidental interest that on the evidence adduced in the Ripper investigation, the extent of prostitution in this country is apparently much greater than has been supposed.

147. The most significant failure of all in relation to the "Cross Area Sighting" inquiry was that of failing to accept the advice given to the force by PSDB and PRSU that a senior officer experienced in handling computer information should be appointed to monitor the computer application and to ensure that the computer's scope for searching on a wide number of factors was understood. The result of this failure was that the computer was used solely to print out vehicles for "Cross" and "Triple Area Sightings" and was rarely used for searches on individual types of vehicle. For instance, although the murder of Rytka took place before the computer operation started, the system could have been used subsequently to print out sightings of vehicles in the "Farina" range, bearing in mind that West Yorkshire continued to operate the "Farina" inquiry until Sutcliffe's arrest. It would appear that the Rooney print-out was not used as the basis for an inquiry because the officers who received it did not know how to interpret the information which it contained, and were thus unable to grasp that of the 850 vehicles listed, only three had also been printed out as "Triple Area Sightings". It is now possible for anyone who understands the codes which were applied to the different "red light" areas to analyse this print-out in terms of "Cross" and "Triple Area Sightings" in less than half an hour. No other specialist skill is required and the information is not affected by hindsight. It is also apparent that had a senior officer with computer experience been appointed in West Yorkshire to act as a link between the computer and the force much more positive use might have been made of the information which was available. The emergence of Sutcliffe as a prime suspect for the [redacted] case, if not for the whole series, would have been inevitable.

### (iii) The Tyre Marks and Vehicle Tracking Inquiry

148. Tyre marks found at the scenes of three of the crimes were a prominent feature of the investigation.

These were:

Richardson	—Leeds	5/6 February 1977
Moore	—Leeds	14 December 1977
Millward	—Manchester	16/17 May 1978

149. The tyre marks were measured at the scenes (to yield "tracking data") to gain some indication of the type of vehicle used. The tread patterns of the tyres causing the marks were recorded by casting in plaster of paris (Richardson, Millward) or resin (Moore). The information recovered in this way is illustrated in figure 9.

150. In the Richardson murder (5/6 February 1977) the tracking data was limited to a knowledge of the wheel-to-wheel distance on the same axle. No decision was made whether the front or rear axle was involved. Using this limited information together with that derived from the tyre patterns, a list of 100 vehicle types was prepared and used as a basis for a night-time check on all parked vehicles in the Chapeltown Division of Leeds. A similar check was carried out in scrap yards, vehicle breakers and auctioneers and of vehicles removed under the Civic Amenities Act. This procedure terminated on the 21st March 1977, six weeks after Richardson's murder. The list of 100 motor vehicle types was subsequently reduced to 51 types by the application of a more refined selection system.

151. This list of 51 vehicles was then used as a basis for a decision that all vehicles of these types in the West Yorkshire Police area and in the Harrogate area of North Yorkshire, should be examined. From a manual search at Vehicle-Licensing Offices and a search of computer records by the PNCU, a list of 53,000 vehicles and registered owners was produced. This list was compared with the record of cars eliminated as a result of the night-time check, and the amended list was used as the basis for inquiries at the homes of registered owners. Vehicles recorded in the Leeds Vehicle Licensing Office were examined first but beyond this, no strategy is apparent in the choice of vehicles for examination. On the 10th July 1977, following the attempted murder of Long at Bradford, this line of inquiry was suspended with about 20,000 vehicles remaining to be examined. Sutcliffe's vehicle, a Ford Corsair registration number: KWT 721D, was one of these.

## FIGURE 9 VEHICLE TRACKING DATA

Incident	Tyre type and distribution	Details issued in special notices dated:
<p>1: Murder of Irene Richardson at Leeds on 5/6 February 1977</p>		<p>17 February 1977 9 May 1977 30 May 1977 June 1978 13 September 1979</p>
<p>2: Assault on Marilyn Moore at Leeds on 14 December 1977</p>		<p>June 1978 13 September 1979</p>
<p>3: Murder of Vera Evelyn Millward at Manchester on 16/17 May 1978</p>		<p>June 1978 13 September 1979</p>



152. The index cards made out during this inquiry were filed in registration number order and bore owners' names. No index cards were made out for names. Had such a nominal index existed this would have been the first reference to Sutcliffe by name and the information would have been available to officers who subsequently interviewed him on other lines of inquiry.

153. Following the abandonment of the first "Tracking Inquiry" as a result of the suggestion of the Mark II Ford Cortina in the Long case, a new inquiry was mounted in which the 5,000 owners of Mark II Ford Cortinas living in West Yorkshire were to be interviewed. 3,000 vehicle owners were interviewed by the police after which this line of inquiry was abandoned without conclusion.

154. In the assault on Marilyn Moore vehicle tyre impressions were again found at the scene of crime and the view was subsequently formed that the same vehicle as that used in the Richardson case was involved. The information from these impressions, together with the victim's description of the assailant's vehicle, led to the reduction of the list of possible vehicles to five models in the BMC "Farina" range. One of these five models was the Austin A55 Cambridge which had figured in the list of 51 vehicles from the Richardson inquiry. Furthermore, this model of car had figured in another murder inquiry (Wilkinson — Pudsey, 10th December 1977 at that time undetected but subsequently proved to be unrelated to the series) two months previously.

155. In the murder of Helen Rytka at Huddersfield on 31st January 1978 a "Farina" type of vehicle was described as being near to the scene at the material time. All four witnesses to this fact maintained their identification of the vehicle as a Morris Oxford, series 6. Since this vehicle did not fit the tracking data in either the Richardson or Moore cases, and neither did it figure in the list of suspect vehicles in the Wilkinson case, the problem was resolved by widening the scope of the Rytka inquiry to include all BMC "Farina" vehicles, some of which fitted the tracking data. Since Rytka was firmly established as a Ripper victim the "Farina" inquiry was seen as relevant to the whole Ripper series. Once again records were searched in Motor Vehicle Licensing Offices; lists of possible vehicles were prepared and the "Farina" link was circulated nationally.

156. When the scene of the Millward murder in Manchester was examined the last set of tyre impressions to be recovered at any of the crimes in the Ripper series, was found. Although the make of tyres leaving the impressions differed in part from those in the Richardson and Moore cases, the evidence suggested that the same car was involved in all three incidents. At this time the Greater Manchester Police accepted the findings of the West Yorkshire Police so far as the identification of the vehicle which might have been used in the crimes was concerned. They initially participated in the "Farina" inquiry but subsequently, following the submission of a report by Detective Inspector Fletcher of the Greater Manchester Police, took no further part in it. In his report, dated 21 September 1978, Inspector Fletcher pointed out that Esso and Pneumant tyres were not available for the 14" wheels with which many vehicles in the "Farina" range were fitted. To fit both the tracking data and the tyre type in the Richardson, Moore and Millward cases a BMC "Farina" car would have had to be fitted with rogue wheels. In addition to discounting the "Farina" theory, Inspector Fletcher, by applying the description of the door handle supplied by the surviving victim Moore, showed that only two vehicles matched the available criteria. These were the Ford Cortina Mk I and Ford Corsair models from 1964 onwards.

157. Once satisfied of the validity of Detective Inspector Fletcher's work, Detective Chief Superintendent Ridgway of the Greater Manchester Police visited West Yorkshire and discussed the vehicle inquiry with senior investigating officers. He was unable to persuade them that Fletcher's work was valid and they continued to pursue the "Farina" inquiry until Sutcliffe's arrest. Prompted by the Greater Manchester inquiry, Detective Inspector Sidebottom of the West Yorkshire Police applied the physical data from the scene of the assault on Marilyn Moore to the full list of vehicles (not constrained by the door handle theory) which the Greater Manchester Police felt might have been responsible for leaving the marks at the Millward scene. As a result of this analysis Inspector Sidebottom felt that the marks of both scenes could only have been left by one of five vehicles including the Ford Cortina and Corsair models. This information appears to have been discounted and West Yorkshire's "Farina" inquiry was allowed to continue. The "Farina" line of inquiry featured prominently in the "Special Notice" issued by the West Yorkshire Police on the 13 September 1979. A total of 26 vehicle models including the Ford Corsair was listed in the "Special Notice" but special emphasis was given to the "Farina" range. In Greater Manchester, Detective Chief Superintendent Ridgway had decided that little reliance



could be placed on the vehicle evidence from West Yorkshire's inquiry into the assault on Marilyn Moore, and Manchester officers began to abstract information from the Ripper Vehicle Index at Millgarth in respect of the full Manchester list of suspect vehicles. Unfortunately this inquiry was soon aborted.

158. During the period starting with the murder of Richardson and finishing with the murder of Millward, Sutcliffe is known to have possessed two vehicles. These were:—

- (a) White Ford Corsair 1600  
Registration number: KWT 721D.  
Purchased May 1976 — Scrapped September 1977.
- (b) Red Ford Corsair 1600.  
Registration number: PHE 355G.  
Purchased September 1977 — Sold August 1978.

159. It can be seen that the first vehicle was scrapped prior to the Moore assault and it is possible that Sutcliffe transferred its wheels and tyres to the red Corsair soon after buying it. This is a reasonable conclusion since it would be logical for Sutcliffe to retain the tyres from the white Corsair if they were better than those fitted to the newer vehicle, although he denies having done so.

160. Bearing these dates in mind, it is also noted that Sutcliffe was interviewed on the 2 November 1977 and on the 8 November 1977 during the course of the Jordan £5 note inquiry. At this time Sutcliffe was in possession of the red Corsair which may have been bearing wheels and tyres which would have associated him with the Richardson murder on the 5/6 February 1977. It is clear that the interviewing officers did not examine the vehicle. Had they done so it is highly likely that the inquiry at that stage would have taken a very different course since two entirely different lines of inquiry (Richardson tyre tracks, Jordan £5 note) would have led to Sutcliffe. This then, was a vital error in the Ripper inquiry, coming as it did after six murders and four assaults in the admitted Ripper series. Seven further murders and three assaults since admitted by Sutcliffe were to occur before his arrest on 2 January 1981.

161. The earliest evidence we have been able to establish of collaboration between the West Yorkshire Police and the Greater Manchester Police in the tyre inquiry occurred in September 1978. This was four months after the Millward murder and by that time the West Yorkshire Police were well committed to the "Farina" inquiry based on Detective Inspector Sidebottom's finding in the Richardson and Moore cases. To have accepted Greater Manchester's different findings at that stage would have been to admit that much of the effort of the previous two years had been wasted.

162. A final factor which tends to further complicate this line of inquiry is the uncertainty surrounding the inclusion of Moore in the Ripper series. Although it has been possible to locate various references to the Moore case in the Ripper documentation dating from the occurrence of the offence there are indications that it was not formally included in the series until six months later. A West Yorkshire Police report dated 13 January 1978 deals solely with vehicles which might have left the tyre tracks at the scene of the attack on Moore and makes no reference to marks found at the murder scene of Richardson. It was not until 14 March 1979 that a further report covering the whole "Tracking Inquiry" linked the Moore case with the preceding case of Richardson and the succeeding case of Millward. These omissions, for whatever reason, were an important contributory factor in the failure to detect Sutcliffe as the murderer at an earlier stage.

163. The vehicle tracks found at the Richardson, Moore and Millward scenes provided investigating officers with some hard factual evidence which, whilst difficult and time consuming to process, might have led them to Sutcliffe as a strong suspect. It failed to do so for several reasons.

164. The first failure was that of not identifying the model of car involved more accurately. Ideally this is a service which the Forensic Science Laboratory should provide or at least co-ordinate. Following the Richardson case, scientists were able to tell the West Yorkshire Police the track width of the suspect vehicle and the make, type, section and distribution of the tyres. They also supplied a list of 100 vehicles which had the correct track width. Detective Inspector



Sidebottom then consulted a technologist from a leading tyre company and, on the basis of the information which he supplied, prepared the list of 51 possible vehicles. This list led to the 53,000 owners who were to be interviewed by police officers in a demanding and repetitive inquiry. When, following the Millward murder Detective Inspector Fletcher, with the help of other experts, analysed the marks from the three separate crime scenes he found that the Esso E110 and the Pneumant Tyres from the Richardson scene had never been manufactured in 14" wheel size. Had this information been available to Inspector Sidebottom the list of 51 vehicles could have been reduced to 33 and produced a very much more manageable line of inquiry.

165. The second failure of the "Tracking Inquiry" was to allow one inquiry to be superseded by another before the first had been concluded. This happened several times during the series inquiry. When, for instance, 33,000 of the 53,000 vehicles in the original inquiry had been seen, it was discontinued because the demand for detectives to work on the investigation of the assault on Long drew all available manpower, including the officers who had been working on the "Tracking Inquiry." A nightwatchman witness in the Long case said that the car which drove away from the scene was a Mark II Ford Cortina. A Mark II Ford Cortina however was not one of the list of 51 vehicles in the "Tracking Inquiry" and could not, therefore, have made the Richardson tracks. In spite of this a Mark II Ford Cortina inquiry was started as a result of the nightwatchman's evidence but was also abandoned prematurely when information resulting from the Moore and Rytka cases suggested that the vehicle involved came from the BMC "Farina" range. The Ford Cortina inquiry was, itself, based on a false premise so that its abandonment to pursue an alternative inquiry also based on a false premise did not have serious repercussions, except that the importance which the West Yorkshire Police attached to the "Farina" information prevented them from accepting Inspector Fletcher's later analysis which correctly narrowed the identification of the vehicle down to two models.

166. The third significant failure in the inquiry was that, in spite of the fact that some officers believed that the marks at the Richardson, Moore and Millward scenes had all been made by the same vehicle, no scientist ever offered, or was asked, to compare the casts of the tyre impressions from all three scenes together. It is now almost certain that even if this exercise had been undertaken it would have been impossible to have established conclusively that the same vehicle was involved, although such a conclusion might have been reached had one or more of the tyres had a significant blemish or wear characteristic which might have been apparent in the impressions from two or more of the crimes.

167. The most significant failure of all, to which I have already referred was the failure of the interviewing officers to examine the tyres of Sutcliffe's vehicle when they saw him on the 2nd and 8th November 1977. This failure may well have resulted from inadequate briefing and an absence of recognition of the importance of the tyre marks in the Richardson case. It is fair to say, of course, that at the time of the interview the Richardson case was nine months old and that the white Mark II Ford Cortina in the Long case had superseded the tyre marks as the most significant vehicle information available.

168. A further administrative failure affecting the vehicle "Tracking Inquiry" was that of not including the inquiry information in the main nominal index of the individual crimes and subsequently of the series. Had the list of 53,000 owners in the original "Tracking Inquiry" been included in the nominal index, the name of Peter Sutcliffe would have been in the system before he was first interviewed during the £5 note inquiry. The inclusion of the 53,000 in the nominal index would certainly have involved a considerable staff requirement but such an investment could well have paid handsome dividends in that it ought to have ensured that the inquiry officers knew before they first saw Sutcliffe that he was the owner of a vehicle which could have left the marks at the Richardson scene.

169. It must finally be appreciated that motor vehicle inquiries are very demanding in manpower terms and hold out a very limited prospect of success. In the Richardson "Tracking Inquiry" for instance the odds that any single vehicle examined was the killers was 53,000 to 1 against, odds not likely to instil great confidence or enthusiasm in the detectives to whom such repetitive inquiries were allocated. We should not be surprised that it was in connection with this type of inquiry during the Ripper series that the morale and discipline of a group of detectives broke down to the extent that they prepared false eliminating statements rather than continue the weary round of

interviews with vehicle owners. I will refer to this topic again under the heading "Lessons to be Learned" but for the purposes of this part of the report conclude that at the commencement of a large scale vehicle inquiry, senior officers of the West Yorkshire force did not go far enough in their attempts to limit its scope neither did they provide the scale of manpower resources which would have enabled the inquiry to be completed quickly and effectively. Failure to calculate and provide proper manpower resources was an even more significant failure by the time the ill-founded "Farina" inquiry came to be mounted.

**(v.) The Letters and Tape Inquiry**

197. Between March 1978 and June 1979, during the second half of the Yorkshire Ripper inquiry, three anonymous letters and a tape recording were received by the police in West Yorkshire from a man who claimed responsibility for the crimes and signed himself, "Jack the Ripper". The individual items were:

- (a) A letter postmarked 8th March 1978 and addressed to Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield
- (b) A letter postmarked 13th March 1978 addressed to the Editor of the "Daily Mirror" Newspaper in Manchester
- (c) A letter postmarked 23rd March 1979 addressed to Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield
- (d) An envelope believed to have been posted on 16/17th June 1979 addressed to Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield containing a cassette tape recording.

198. The consequences of the receipt of these letters and tape recording were:

- (a) Major police resources were applied in an attempt to trace the author of the letters and tape who was believed to be the killer.
- (b) The police and the public were conditioned to believe that the author of the letters and tape was the killer and was a native of Sunderland.
- (c) Information derived from the letters and tape (handwriting, accent and blood group) was used to eliminate suspects.

199. The application of significant resources to tracing the author of the letters and tape was a matter for the professional judgement of the chief investigating officer and I find no fault with his decision in this respect. The complete acceptance, however, that the author was the killer, was not justified by the evidence available at the time and should, in any case, have been tested by rigorous analysis. The decision to use factors from the letters and tape as a basis for the elimination of suspects was indefensible. As I have mentioned elsewhere in my report the elimination of a person interviewed in connection with serious crime should only be undertaken where factual information proves that it would have been impossible for the person to have been involved. e.g. a person serving a term of imprisonment in a closed prison can often be eliminated from an inquiry about a crime committed outside the prison. Elimination conducted on the basis of probability is inherently dangerous as is clearly indicated by Sutcliffe's elimination on handwriting based on the probability that the "Sunderland" letter writer was the killer.

200. Although the complete text of the three letters and transcript of the tape recording are shown in figure 12, their contents can be summarised as follows:

1. Postmarked "Sunderland" on the 8th March 1978 and addressed to Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield. The writer confessed to the killings which had occurred up to that time including the murder of Joan Harrison at Preston on the 20th November 1975.
2. Postmarked "Sunderland" on the 13th March 1978 and addressed to the Chief Editor of the "Daily Mirror" at Manchester. The writer referred to the letter to Mr. Oldfield and reiterated his claim to have murdered Joan Harrison. He also predicted that his next victim would be older and that he might choose to commit the crime in Liverpool or Manchester.

## FIGURE 12

### TRANSCRIPTS OF LETTERS AND TAPE

#### 1st Letter

*Dear Sir*

*I am sorry I cannot give my name for obvious reasons. I am the Ripper, I've been dubbed a maniac by the press but not by you, you call me clever and I am. You and your mates haven't a clue that photo in the paper gave me fits and that bit about killing myself, no chance. I've got things to do. My purpose to rid the streets of them sluts. My one regret his that young lassie McDonald, did not know cause changed routine that night (nite) Up to number 8 now you say 7 but remember Preston 75, get about you know. You were right I travel a bit. You probably look for me in Sunderland, don't bother, I am not daft, just posted letter there on one of my trips. Not a bad place compared with Chapeltown and Manningham and other places. Warn whores to keep off streets cause I feel it coming on again. Sorry about young lassie.*

*Yours respectfully*

*Jack the Ripper*

*Might write again later I not sure last one really deserved it. Whores getting younger each time. Old slut next time I hope, Huddersfield never again, too small, close call last one.*

#### 2nd Letter

*Dear Sir,*

*I have already written to Chief constable. George Oldfield a "man I respect" concerning the recent Ripper murders. I told him and I am telling you to warn them whores I'll strike again and soon when heat cools off. About the McDonald lassie I didnt know that she was decent and I am sorry I changed my routine that night. Up to number 8 now you say 7 but remember Preston 75. Easy picking them up don't even have to try, you think they re learn but they don't Most are young lassies, next time try older one I hope. Police have'nt a clue yet and I don't leave any I am very clever and don't think of looking for any fingerprints cause there arent any and don't look for me up there in Sunderland cause I not stupid just passed through the place. Not a bad place compared with Chapeltown and Manningham can't walk the streets for them whore. Dont't forget warn them I feel it coming on again if I get chance. Sorry about lassie I did nt know*

*Yours respectfully*

*Jack the Ripper*

*Might write again after another one s' gone maybe Liverpool or even Manchester again. To hit here in Yorkshire. Bye.*

*I have given advance warning so its yours and their fault.*

#### 3rd Letter

*Dear Officer*

*Sorry I havn't written, about a year to be exact, but I hav'nt been up North for quite a while. I was'nt kidding last time I wrote saying the whore would be older this time and maybe I'd strike in Manchester for a change, you should have took heed. That bit about her being in hospital, funny the lady mentioned something about being in the same hospital before I stopped her whoring ways. The lady won't worry about hospitals now will she. I bet you be wondering how come I hav'nt been to work for ages, well I would have been if it hadnt been for your cursered coppers I had the lady just where I wanted her and was about to strike when one of your cursing (cruising) police cars stopped right outside the lane, he must have been a dumb copper cause he didnt say*



*anything, he didnt know how close he was to catching me. Tell you the truth I thought I was collared, the lady said dont worry about the coppers, little did she know that bloody copper saved her neck. That was last month, so I don't know when I will get back on the job but I know it wont be Chapeltown too bloody hot there maybe Bradfords Manningham. Might write again if up North.*

*Jack the Ripper*

*PS Did you get letter I sent to Daily Mirror in Manchester.*

#### **Tape Transcript**

*I'm Jack*

*I see you are still having no luck catching me.*

*I have the greatest respect for you George, but Lord, you are no nearer catching me now than four years ago when I started. I reckon your boys are letting you down George. You (They) can't be much good can you (they)?*

*The only time they came near catching me was a few months back in Chapeltown when I was disturbed, even then it was a uniform copper, not a detective.*

*I warned you in March that I'd strike again. Sorry it wasn't Bradford. I did promise you that but I couldn't get there. I'm not quite sure when I'll strike again, but it will be definitely sometime this year, maybe September, October, even sooner if I get the chance. I am not sure where, maybe Manchester, I like it there, there's plenty of them knocking about. They never learn do they George? I bet you've warned them, but they never listen.*

*At the rate I'm going I should be in the book of records. I think it's eleven up to now isn't it? Well, I'll keep on going for quite a while yet, I can't see meself being nicked just yet. Even if you do get near I'll probably top myself first.*

*Well it's been nice chatting to you George.*

*Yours,*

*Jack the Ripper*

*No good looking for fingerprints. You should know by now it's clean as a whistle. See you soon. Bye. Hope you like the catchy tune at the end. Ha. ha.*

*... Thank you for being a friend*

3. Postmarked "Sunderland" on the 23rd March 1979 and addressed to Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield. The writer apologised for the delay since his last letter and made particular reference to the murder of Vera Millward in Manchester on the 16th May 1978. He also referred to the Manchester Hospital where Millward had previously had treatment. The writer predicted that he would strike again probably in Bradford.
4. The tape recording — believed to have been posted in Sunderland on the 16th or 17th June 1979 and received by the West Yorkshire Police on the 18th June. The envelope containing the tape recording was addressed to Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield and the tape itself was also addressed to Mr Oldfield personally and chided him for his failure to detect the crimes. The person who recorded the message on the tape had a distinctive North Eastern accent. He apologised for the killing of Josephine Whitaker in Halifax and not in Bradford as promised and predicted that he would kill again in September or October 1979 probably in Manchester.

201. Although the first two letters aroused interest amongst investigating officers in West Yorkshire they were not thought to be particularly significant and the inquiries which were set in motion to trace the author were regarded as having comparatively low priority. After the receipt of the third letter, however, an analysis of the saliva on the flap on the envelope showed that the person who had licked it was of the 'B' secretor blood group. This fact was considered to be particularly significant since the author of the letters claimed that he had murdered Joan Harrison in Preston and it was already known that the person responsible for that crime was also a 'B' secretor and thus within 6% of the adult male population. Once the blood group evidence became available the three letters which had by then been received were examined more carefully and a number of factors were identified which led the West Yorkshire Police to believe that some of the information in the letters could only be known to the murderer. The principal factors were:

- (a) The writer's claim to the murder of Joan Harrison at Preston. Until this time the murder had not been considered to be part of the series and there had been no known press reference to any link between the crimes in Preston and West Yorkshire.
- (b) The reference in the second letter to the writer's intention to strike in Manchester and to kill "an old slut next time" appeared to have been borne out when Vera Millward a 41 year old prostitute was murdered in Manchester.
- (c) In the third letter the writer referred to Millward having been a patient at the hospital near to where she was killed. It was believed in West Yorkshire that this information had not been published in the press nor broadcast by radio or television.
- (d) The murder of Josephine Whitaker on the 4th/5th April 1979 shortly after the receipt of the third letter appeared to confirm the prediction that the writer would strike again although he had said that he would commit his next crime in Bradford. There was a suggestion that a possible bite mark on one of Josephine Whitaker's breasts was similar to a mark found on the body of Joan Harrison at Preston. In the tape recording the author apologised for killing Whitaker in Halifax and not in Bradford as he had promised.

202. Of the evidence which tended to support the writer's claim to be the author of the crimes his reference to the murder of Joan Harrison at Preston was probably the most significant. Although the murder of Joan Harrison did not match the standard modus operandi of the crimes in West Yorkshire there were significant similarities in that she was a prostitute, she suffered serious head injuries, her clothing was disarranged in the distinctive Ripper style, and her boots had been placed over her legs in the same way as those of Irene Richardson, following her murder in Leeds. Above all, the murderer of Harrison was of the 'B' secretor blood group as was the person who licked the stamp and the envelope flap on the third letter and the envelope containing the tape recording.

203. The combined weight of these factors was sufficient to influence the senior investigating officers to attach the maximum priority to the detection of the crimes through the identification of the letter writer.

204. The only cautionary note which was sounded at that stage was an inconsistency between the first two and the third letters so far as the murder of Yvonne Pearson was concerned. Yvonne

Pearson was reported as missing on the 21st January 1978 and it is now accepted that she was murdered on or about that date. Her body was not, however, discovered until the 26th March 1978 by which time the first two letters in the series had been written and received. The writer made no claim to the murder of Pearson about which there had, by that time, been no reference in the news media. In his third letter, however, written more than a year after the discovery of Pearson's body the writer included this crime in the total number of killings for which he alleged he was responsible.

205. At the time the decision was taken to use the letters and tape as the key factors in the inquiry there were strong psychological reasons which made the decision attractive. There had, at that time, been eleven murders (including Joan Harrison) and four serious assaults which were regarded as being linked in the series. The only certain evidence about a suspect was that he was white and wore wellington or industrial boots of size 7 (industrial boots of this size had been identified by marks at the Whitaker scene but the makers had indicated that their size 7 could be worn by a person who normally took sizes between 7 and 8½). Although some information was available about car tyres it was regarded as inconclusive and the initial £5 note inquiry had also failed to narrow the field in which investigating officers were searching. The possession of positive factual clues such as handwriting, accent and blood group were thus seen as highly desirable means of reducing the very large number of separate lines of inquiry then being undertaken and of simplifying the task of the Major Incident Room.

206. In practice, the result was almost exactly opposite to what had been intended. Whilst the main thrust of the letters and tape inquiry was centred on the North East of England and serviced from a separate Major Incident Room in Sunderland, the public response to publicity given to the letters and tape in West Yorkshire had a very significant impact on the work of the Centralised Incident Room in Leeds. In addition a whole range of subordinate inquiries became necessary with a view to tracing a person living in the North East of England who travelled to Yorkshire to work or for other reasons or was a native of the North East who had taken up residence in the Yorkshire area.

207. The main impact of the public response to publicity about the letters and tape and of the letters and tape inquiries mounted in West Yorkshire fell on the Major Incident Room and the West Yorkshire force as a whole during the inquiries into the murders of Josephine Whitaker, Barbara Leach and Jacqueline Hill. As I have mentioned elsewhere public response to the murder of Josephine Whitaker overwhelmed the available manpower so that the processing of actions from the Millgarth Major Incident Room first stopped completely and then moved only slowly during the remainder of the life of the inquiry. The impact of the public response to what were at the time thought to be the last three murders was compounded by the public response to the letters and tape inquiry. It is thus the case that although the letters and tape were seen as the means by which the inquiry might be simplified and given new impetus they were to prove an important contributory factor in the breakdown of the Major Incident Room and thus of the specific mistakes which allowed Sutcliffe to remain free.

208. However, Sutcliffe might still have been arrested in spite of the problems deriving from the failure of the Major Incident Room system had the letters and tape not been used as factors for elimination.

209. In the all-important "Special Notice" dated 13th September 1979 and circulated to police forces throughout the United Kingdom the points for elimination included, inter alia: "A person can be eliminated from these inquiries if:

(d) His blood group is other than 'B'

(e) His accent is dissimilar to a North Eastern (Geordie) accent".

210. The publication and use of these eliminating factors together with the use of handwriting samples were the main causes of Sutcliffe's elimination from the inquiry at a time when he might otherwise have been regarded as a definite suspect.

211. As early as the 10th July 1979 a handwriting expert (Dr Richard Totty) from the Home Office Forensic Science Laboratory at Birmingham was installed in an office at Wakefield where he began to check handwriting samples obtained by detectives involved in the series. The sample

of Sutcliffe's handwriting acquired by Detective Constable Laptew during his interview on the 29th July 1979 was examined and was used by Detective Superintendent Holland to eliminate Sutcliffe from the inquiry.

212. Equally important was the fact that Sutcliffe was quietly spoken and had a Yorkshire rather than a North Eastern accent, a factor which had some significance not only for police officers interviewing him but also for his friend, Trevor Birdsall, whose suspicions of Sutcliffe were allayed by the fact that he was not from the North East of England. The distinctive North Eastern accent also played a prominent part later in the inquiry in that controversy developed about whether the author of the tape had a stammer and whether he had received speech therapy. The police were already aware of these points of dispute as a result of the scientific examination of the tape and their discussions with linguistic experts but they were unable to capitalise on the information because speech therapists who were consulted refused to release information about their patients. The only consequence of press revelations about this issue was an increase in publicity and public controversy at a time when a period of quiet would have been beneficial; otherwise it had no direct bearing on the outcome of events. The only unanswered problem that this particular issue raises is the continuing conflict between medical ethics and police inquiries that arises from time to time in the investigation of serious crimes.

213. As has been mentioned earlier the West Yorkshire Police did not undertake any systematic analysis of the letters and tape in an attempt to prove or disprove the possibility that the author could have derived all of his information from media sources. The Domaille Review Team was active during the period when the letters and tape were received but was not invited, and did not consider it desirable, to widen its study to include the tape and letters. When, however, forces in the North East of England became deeply involved in the inquiry, Detective Inspector Zackrisson of the Northumbria Police conducted an independent analysis of the letters and tape in an attempt to test the validity of the inquiry. Inspector Zackrisson felt that there was a resemblance in style and content between the West Yorkshire letters and those from the original "Jack the Ripper" (the Whitechapel murders of 1888). He conducted a review of media information which was available at the time the letters were written and came to the conclusion that all of the allegedly factual information contained in the letters and in the tape would have been available to a member of the public who carried out a reasonably diligent media search. He noted particularly that press speculation had linked the murder of Joan Harrison in Preston with the murders of prostitutes in Leeds. The most telling factor in Inspector Zackrisson's view, however, was the letter writer's failure to claim the murder of Yvonne Pearson in the first and second letters but to claim it subsequently in the third letter of the series. Inspector Zackrisson reasoned that the letter writer who was clearly making a considerable effort to establish his credibility, could have had no better opportunity than to tantalise the police by referring to a crime of which only he was aware and of a corpse which they did not know existed. Senior officers of the Northumbria Police accepted Inspector Zackrisson's compelling analysis and although they continued their very considerable inquiry effort in support of the West Yorkshire Police, they did so with a view to detecting the perpetrator of a hoax rather than a murderer. The difference in attitude is reflected in posters prepared in the two forces (Figs. 13 and 14). That of West Yorkshire stated the tape was made by a person, "*believed* to be the killer", whereas that of Northumbria stated only, "*he claims* to be the killer".

214. In Lancashire too there were reservations about the letters and the tape and strict instructions were given that no information derived from them should be used as eliminating factors in the inquiry into the murder of Joan Harrison. Senior detectives in Greater Manchester apparently shared this view although their desire to conform with West Yorkshire's position led them to support the letters and tape inquiry, at any rate, in public or at any meetings involving both forces. They did not, however, dissociate themselves from the letters and tape, which undoubtedly influenced the Greater Manchester detectives who interviewed Sutcliffe during the £5 note inquiry.

215. The official policy that the tape and letters could be used as a basis for elimination of suspects was included in the "Special Notice" of 13th September 1979 which was prepared in the Millgarth Incident Room by Detective Sergeant Dodsworth under the direction of Detective Superintendent Holland. This was during the period when Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield was absent from duty as a result of illness and shortly after the murder of Barbara Leach of which Detective Chief Superintendent Gilrain was the investigating officer. Chief Superintendent

FIGURE 13

POSTER PREPARED BY WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE

# THE RIPPER WOULD LIKE YOU TO IGNORE THIS.

The last thing that the vicious, cowardly killer and mutilator of twelve defenceless women wants is for you to read this and act on it.

Because if every single one of us starts looking, listening and thinking hard, the Ripper's days are numbered.

Here's what you can do to help.

## LOOK CLOSELY AT THE HANDWRITING.

It's the writing of a sadistic killer.

And if you think you recognise it from a note, letter, envelope, signature, cheque, anything, report it to your local police.

## LISTEN TO THE KILLER'S VOICE.

By phoning LEEDS (STD 0532) 464111 you can hear probably the most important clue to the killer's identity. His voice.

It won't be a pleasant experience, but it could lead to the end of these brutal murders.

If you think you recognise the voice, tell the police.

## THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU.

Their voices (North Eastern accent?)

Their handwriting (is it like the sample?)

*I have already written concerning the recent Ripper murders. I told him and I was telling you to warn them I'll strike again and soon when he's out off.*

20-21 Jan. 1976: Leeds

5-6 Feb. 1977: Leeds

23-24 April 1977: Bradford

26-27 June 1977: Leeds

31-1 Jan/Feb 1978: Huddersfield

16-17 May 1978: Manchester

4-5 April 1979: Halifax

1-2 Sept 1979: Bradford

## A WORD OF WARNING.

It is now believed that the Ripper draws no distinction between ordinary women and prostitutes.

So, please, if you're a woman, think twice about going out alone at night.

Especially in the type of areas the Ripper favours.

## £30,000 REWARD.

Money is the last reason for putting away this monster. But if it helps you think hard and helps us stop the killing, it's yours for information leading to the arrest of the murderer.

Their travels to and from the North East.

To and from the Bradford, Leeds, Preston, Huddersfield, Manchester or Halifax areas. Or northwards

from anywhere south of any of these areas.

Their attitudes towards women, especially prostitutes.

If it adds up to reasonable grounds for suspicion,

however slight, report it to the police.

## DO THESE DATES AND PLACES MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?

Think very carefully about these dates and places.

What were you doing? What do you remember?

Anything odd or out of place. The slightest detail

could help.

30-31 Oct. 1975: Leeds

1-2 Oct. 1977: Manchester

20-21 Nov. 1975: Preston

21-22 Jan. 1978: Bradford



**WEST YORKSHIRE  
METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**

Help us put away the Ripper.

POSTER PREPARED BY NORTHUMBRIA POLICE



# NORTHUMBRIA POLICE IMPORTANT NOTICE

**Do you recognise this Handwriting?**

Below is an extract of a letter received by Mr. G. A. Oldfield, Asst. Chief Constable (Crime) of the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police, who is leading the investigation into the murders of several women in the West Yorkshire area.

The letter was posted in the Sunderland district on the 23rd March, 1979, and the writer, who signed it "Jack the Ripper," claimed to be connected with the murders.

The writer has also sent the Police a tape recorded message spoken by a male with a Wearside accent.

*Dear Officer. Sorry I haven't written, about a year to be exact, but I haven't been up North for quite a while. I was at holiday last time I wrote* March 23<sup>rd</sup> 79

*was last month, so I don't know when I will get back on the job but I know it won't be C. Capetown too bloody hot there maybe Bradford, Marningham. Might write again if up North.* That

*Jack the Ripper  
P.S. Did you get letter I sent to Daily Mirror in Manchester.*

Study the handwriting carefully and if you feel you have any information which may assist the Police in tracing this person, or, you wish to hear the tape recording, please ring Sunderland 43146, or contact any Police Officer.

Gilrain did not support the policy of elimination based solely on factors from the letters and tape and on the 25th September 1979 there was a change of policy when he decided that elimination on accent alone was insufficient and that some other factor was required. The following day the same conditions were attached to the use of the specific blood group for elimination purposes. Whilst the change of policy was no doubt promulgated to senior detectives and well known to senior officers who were actually eliminating suspects, the letters and tape continued to exert a substantial influence on the inquiry. No less important was the influence which the "Special Notice" of September 1979 and the massively sponsored publicity campaign which was initiated on the 2nd October 1979 had on ordinary detectives making inquiries amongst people brought to notice by the "Cross Area Sightings" and the £5 note inquiries previously referred to. Officers interviewing in connection with these issues were conditioned to believe that the man they were looking for had a distinctive North Eastern accent so that anyone who did not match this single criterion was regarded as relatively unimportant in the inquiry. The lack of persistence in interview and the willingness to accept unsupported stories demonstrated by some of the officers who interviewed Sutcliffe may well have stemmed from this premise.

216. Although the policy of eliminating suspects on the basis of the tape and letters became suspect, at any rate in the mind of Chief Superintendent Gilrain, the official policy remained that the letters and tape were the most important evidence pointing to the identity of the Ripper. As late as the end of 1980 (after the murder of Jacqueline Hill) senior officers of the West Yorkshire force were still saying publicly that they were 99% sure that the letters and tape were from the killer. This attitude persisted in spite of Detective Inspector Zackrisson's Northumbria analysis, the results of which were discussed with senior officers of the West Yorkshire force on several occasions. As I have mentioned earlier, the Northumbria Police and other forces in the North East of England demonstrated undivided loyalty to the West Yorkshire force in that, although they did not believe the work they were doing would help to identify the killer, they were concerned to identify the hoaxer whom they believed lived within their area, so that the existence of the hoax could be demonstrated, if for no other reason. The cost of these inquiries to the Northumbria Police Authority alone was in excess of £600,000.

217. The next opportunity which the West Yorkshire Police had to profit from independent professional advice was the visit which Commander Nevill and Detective Superintendent Bolton paid to the force in November 1979. As is mentioned in Part II of my report the two Metropolitan officers agreed with the desirability of pursuing the North Eastern inquiry although they did not go as far as approving the conclusion that the letter writer was the killer. Commander Nevill in his report to the Chief Constable also referred to the process of elimination and said that, "for instance, many have been cleared purely on dialect or handwriting. Whilst it is agreed that the author of the letters and tape is probably the murderer it is not a complete certainty". This note of caution does not appear to have had any profound effect on the thinking of West Yorkshire's senior officers.

218. The final external reference to the letters and tape inquiry came in the report to the Chief Constable by the external Advisory Team appointed in November 1980. The report said, inter alia, "having considered the factors ourselves we find some difficulty in understanding why the West Yorkshire Police have attached such weight to the letters and the tape being authentic . . . . . we recommend that the aim of the inquiry should now be to foster an opinion both within and outside the Police Service that the killer does not necessarily originate from the North East of England".

219. Following discussions between members of the external Advisory Team and senior officers of the West Yorkshire force a number of officers were seconded to the Major Incident Room from the Force Training School to undertake a series of reviews of different aspects of the inquiry. One of these was a review of the letters and tape inquiry which was conducted by Superintendent Bass and Chief Inspector Pickover. This thorough analysis, mounted during the controversy about possible speech defects of the author of the tape and about the identification of the accent, followed similar lines to the earlier analysis conducted by Inspector Zackrisson in Northumbria. The review was intended to establish whether the letters and tape contained any facts which could not have been gleaned from the media. The results of the West Yorkshire analysis as contained in a report submitted on the 7th January 1981 (after Sutcliffe's arrest) concluded that:

"(a) A substantial proportion of the contents of the communications could have been

obtained by reference to press cuttings and the media.

- (b) Reference in the letters to the Preston connection is dependent on newspaper reports published eleven and thirteen months before the posting of the letters.
- (c) The writer of the letters could have obtained information from press reports of Millward visiting Manchester Royal Infirmary as an out-patient but could not have obtained information of her having been an in-patient of the Hospital from such sources.
- (d) The writer, if the murderer, could have given positive indication of being the culprit by making specific reference to the body of Pearson who had met her death prior to the letter being received.
- (e) The combination of predictions, as fulfilled contained in the communications, when balanced against other considerations could not be ignored.
- (f) Taking into account forensic evidence in the Harrison murder and the similarity between the murders of Harrison and Pearson the possibility still exists of there being some connection between Sutcliffe and the communications.
- (g) There are sufficient factors to justify previous action taken."

220. These conclusions, though appearing perhaps for internal political reasons to support the priority which had been accorded to the letters and tape in the past could not, if viewed objectively, support an investigation in which "all of the eggs were in the same basket".

221. Since Sutcliffe's arrest inquiries have continued at relatively low level both in Northumbria and in West Yorkshire in an attempt to trace the author of the letters and tape. The West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police are currently carrying out an evaluation exercise on material already in their possession with a view to pursuing rigorous inquiries by a small dedicated team to trace the person who diverted investigating officers from their most promising lines of inquiry over a period during which three women were murdered and two severely injured. Undoubtedly, members of the public are still disturbed at the prospect that the author of the letters and tape might never be required to account publicly for his atrocious conduct.

222. The hoaxer gained credibility with certain police officers because:

- (a) His claim to responsibility for the Harrison murder and his emergence as a 'B' secretor tended to confirm the link between this crime and the letters and tape and so support the theory of a connection with the series cases.
- (b) The suspect bite mark on the breast of Whitaker (a previous murder victim) was believed to be similar to a mark on Harrison's body which indicated that the person responsible had a gap between his upper front teeth. Expert examination of the tape recording also tended to indicate that the speaker in all probability had a gap between his teeth.
- (c) The murder of 41 year old Vera Millward in Manchester appeared to confirm the prophecy in the first letter.
- (d) The failure of the letter writer initially to claim Pearson as one of his victims did not appear significant because the police at that time were not certain the murder of Pearson was within the series of crimes.

223. On a balanced consideration of all the factors involved I have concluded that the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police did not go far enough in analysing the content of the letters and tape with a view to establishing whether or not they could have been part of an elaborate hoax. Had such an analysis been done on the lines conducted by Detective Inspector Zackrisson of the Northumbria Police then it is most unlikely that they would have been utilised in the subsequent investigation as eliminating sieves based on the North East accent and the handwriting.

224. The decision to mount inquiries to identify the author of the tape and the letters was amply justified but had a more objective analysis of the contents of the tape and letters been made it might well have militated against the large scale use of resources in Northumbria and elsewhere over a prolonged period which, especially in West Yorkshire, hindered other lines of inquiry. The



principal failings arising from the incorrect decision about the author of the letters and tape are all too clear. Both the police and the public were conditioned to think that the Ripper had a Geordie accent and could be eliminated from the inquiries by a check being made of his handwriting. As will be seen in various parts of my report this decision resulted in disastrous consequences and especially insofar as it prompted the wrongful elimination of Sutcliffe as a major suspect.

225. Without wishing to minimise the error of judgement on the part of the officers concerned it should be said in fairness that once the "Special Notice" about the tape and the letters had been issued to police forces throughout the country and once the massive publicity campaign had been mounted on the same theme then the die had been well and truly cast. By the time Commander Nevill and others had advised against the positive elimination of suspects by reason of the tape and letters it would have been a mammoth task to search the records in the overloaded Incident Room with a view to rechecking all those previously eliminated from the inquiry. It would have been an even greater task for the outside inquiry teams to have followed through, and certainly could not have been done by the resources then available. It would also have meant admitting publicly, with potentially dire consequences, that the earlier decision to use the tape and letters as eliminating sieves had not been justified.

226. In my view the reluctance to follow the advice proffered by the discerning Detective Inspector Zackrisson of Northumbria, Commander Nevill of New Scotland Yard and the external Advisory Team can be attributed to this latter factor more than any other.

227. For ease of reference the principal events affecting the letters and tape inquiry are summarised in schedule form in Fig. 15.

#### **(vi.) The Police Interviews involving Sutcliffe**

228. When it was learned, following Sutcliffe's arrest, that he had been interviewed by police officers on nine separate occasions in connection with the Ripper series of crimes there was intense speculation about the failure of the interviews to lead to his earlier arrest. Naturally, therefore, this aspect became a focal point of my review of the Ripper crimes.

229. Sutcliffe was, in fact, interviewed by the police on twelve occasions between the 5th July 1975 (the date on which his admitted series of crimes commenced) and the date when he was charged with the 20 crimes for which he was subsequently convicted. Only nine of the interviews can be regarded as part of the actual police investigation of the Ripper series before Sutcliffe's arrest for them and of the remaining three, one related to a theft of car tyres from his employer and one to a drinking and driving offence. The final interview followed Sutcliffe's arrest in Sheffield and led to his admission of the various Ripper crimes. I will now deal with each of the interviews in some detail and then give my conclusions about their failure to produce a conclusive result. For ease of reference the twelve specific interviews during the inquiry are also shown in the table at Fig. 16

#### **15th October 1975 — FIRST INTERVIEW**

230. On the 15th October 1975 whilst Sutcliffe was employed as a tyre fitter at Common Road Tyres Ltd., his employers reported him to the police for the alleged theft of second hand tyres. Coincidentally, his namesake, Constable Sutcliffe of the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police was asked to deal with this crime. He arrested Sutcliffe who immediately admitted the offence and produced the stolen tyres from the boot of his car. This was a simple case of theft and on pleading guilty to it at Dewsbury Magistrates Court on the 9th February 1976 Sutcliffe was fined £25. Fifteen days after this interview Sutcliffe murdered Wilma McCann in Leeds but at the time he was arrested by Constable Sutcliffe there was no evidence to connect him with the assaults on Rogulsky and Smelt earlier in the year and this particular event is not seen as having any significance so far as the series of crimes is concerned.

#### **2nd November 1977 — SECOND INTERVIEW**

231. On the 15th October 1977 Jean Jordan's handbag was found 189 feet away from the point where her body had been discovered five days earlier. When the handbag was searched a new £5 Bank of England note No. HW51 121565 was found in a secret compartment. Detective Chief Superintendent Ridgway of the Greater Manchester Police came to the reasonable conclusion that Jordan had received the £5 note as payment for prostitution shortly before her death. Because the

principal failings arising from the incorrect decision about the author of the letters and tape are all too clear. Both the police and the public were conditioned to think that the Ripper had a Geordie accent and could be eliminated from the inquiries by a check being made of his handwriting. As will be seen in various parts of my report this decision resulted in disastrous consequences and especially insofar as it prompted the wrongful elimination of Sutcliffe as a major suspect.

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#### **15th October 1975 — FIRST INTERVIEW**

230. On the 15th October 1975 whilst Sutcliffe was employed as a tyre fitter at Common Road Tyres Ltd., his employers reported him to the police for the alleged theft of second hand tyres. Coincidentally, his namesake, Constable Sutcliffe of the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police was asked to deal with this crime. He arrested Sutcliffe who immediately admitted the offence and produced the stolen tyres from the boot of his car. This was a simple case of theft and on pleading guilty to it at Dewsbury Magistrates Court on the 9th February 1976 Sutcliffe was fined £25. Fifteen days after this interview Sutcliffe murdered Wilma McCann in Leeds but at the time he was arrested by Constable Sutcliffe there was no evidence to connect him with the assaults on Rogulsky and Smelt earlier in the year and this particular event is not seen as having any significance so far as the series of crimes is concerned.

#### **2nd November 1977 — SECOND INTERVIEW**

231. On the 15th October 1977 Jean Jordan's handbag was found 189 feet away from the point where her body had been discovered five days earlier. When the handbag was searched a new £5 Bank of England note No. HW51 121565 was found in a secret compartment. Detective Chief Superintendent Ridgway of the Greater Manchester Police came to the reasonable conclusion that Jordan had received the £5 note as payment for prostitution shortly before her death. Because the

**FIGURE 15**  
**LETTERS AND TAPE SCHEDULE**

<b>1978</b>			
	21st January	PEARSON	
	31st January	RYTKA	
1st LETTER	8th March		
2nd LETTER	13th March		
	20th March		Check in North East re 'cranks' and in hotel registers.
	26th March		Pearson's body found.
	21st April		Suspects' handwriting checked.
	16th May	MILLWARD	
	19th September		Dr Totty consulted.
<b>1979</b>			
3rd LETTER	23rd March		Saliva test shows 'B' Secretor.
	5th April	WHITAKER	
	17th April		Engineering inquiry enlarged to include North East.
	1st May		Handwriting used as eliminator.
TAPE	18th June		Saliva test shows 'B' Secretor.
	20th June		Tape indicates Sunderland accent.
	26th June		Inter-Force decision to publish letters and tape information.
	29th July		Press Release — Inquiry escalates "98% sure"
Sutcliffe's 6th interview — eliminated on			Scepticism in Northumbria re. authenticity of letters and tape.
1. Wife's alibi			
2. Handwriting			
	1st September	LEACH	
	13th September		"Special Notice" — Use of blood group and accent to eliminate.
	26th September		Caution expressed re. use of blood group and accent for elimination.
	2nd October		Publicity campaign — Huge response. Greater emphasis on tape and letters. "98% sure".
Sutcliffe's 7th interview — eliminated on	23rd October		
1. Wife's alibi			
2. Handwriting			
	6th December		Cdr. Nevill advises caution re. use of letters and tape in eliminations. Little apparent effect on attitudes.
<b>1980</b>			
	13th February		West Yorkshire Police "100% certain" letter writer is Ripper.
	21st August	WALLS	
	24th September	BANDARA	
	5th November	SYKES	
	17th November	HILL	
	25th November		External Advisory Team appointed.
	4th December		West Yorkshire Police "still 99% certain" letters from Ripper.
	16th December		External Advisory Team reports that too much dependence has been placed on authenticity of letters and tape.
<b>1981</b>			
Sutcliffe arrested	2nd January		No known connection with letters and tape.

**FIGURE 16**  
**SEQUENCE OF POLICE INTERVIEWS WITH SUTCLIFFE**

<i>Interview No. &amp; Date</i>	<i>By</i>	<i>Reason</i>	<i>Knowledge of Previous Interviews</i>	<i>Cars in Possession at Time of Interview</i>	<i>Decision of Senior Officers</i>
1. 15.10.75	P.C. SUTCLIFFE	Theft of tyres			Prosecuted
2. 2.11.77	D.C. HOWARD	1st £5 note inquiry			Further inquiries
3. 8.11.77	D.C. SMITH D.C. RAYNE	Follow up inquiry from 2nd interview	Knew of 2	Red Ford Corsair PHE 355G	<b>Filed.</b> No further action after 8.11.77
4. 13.8.78	D.C.P.D.N. SMITH	Cross area sightings Bradford/Leeds	Knew of 2 & 3	Red Ford Corsair PHE 355G	Further inquiries requested
5. 23.11.78	D.C.P.D.N. SMITH D.C. BRADSHAW	Cross area sightings — follow up from 4th interview	Knew of 2, 3 & 4	Red Ford Corsair PHE 355G	Further inquiries requested
6. 29.7.79	D.C. LAPTEW D.C. GREENWOOD	Triple area sightings Bradford/Leeds/Manchester	Did <b>not</b> know of 2, 3, 4 or 5	Rover 3.5 FHY 400K	<b>Filed.</b> No further action 23.8.79
7. 23.10.79	D.C. VICKERMAN D.C. ELAND	Follow up inquiry from Interview No. 5	Knew of 2, 3, 4 and 5	Rover 3.5 FHY 400K	<b>Filed.</b> No further action 19.11.79
8. 13.1.80	D.S. BOOT D.C. BELL	2nd £5 note inquiry	Knew of 2 & 3	Rover 3.5 FHY 400K	Further inquiries requested
9. 30.1.80	D.S. McALISTER D.C. McCRONE	Follow up to No. 8	Knew of 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 & 8	Rover 3.5 FHY 400K	Further inquiries requested
10. 7.2.80	D.C. JACKSON D.C. HARRISON	Follow up to No. 9	Knew of 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 & 9	Rover 3.5 FHY 400K	<b>Filed.</b> No further action 10.4.80
11. 25.6.80	P.C. DORAN P.C. MELIA	Drink/Driving Offence		Rover 3.5 FHY 400K	Prosecuted
12. 3.1.81	The final interview following his arrest.				

note was so new and held the possibility that its passage from the Bank of England to the person who had handed it to Jordan might be traced, it was seen as a clue of the greatest importance. Immediate inquiries were made to trace its origin. It was fairly quickly established that the note was the 64th in a batch of 69 brand new notes which had been sent from the Bank of England to a Leeds Clearing Bank. The 69 notes had then become part of a bundle of 100 notes within a consignment of £25,000 which had been released from the Clearing Bank on the 28th September 1977. Although the exact destination of these particular notes was not certainly known it was thought that there was a strong possibility that they were delivered to the Midland Bank Branch at Shipley.

232. This conclusion was accepted and inquiries at Shipley revealed that, although the particular note could have been paid across the counter of the Bank to a customer cashing a cheque or could have been part of a larger sum drawn by a local Building Society, it was more probable that the note had been part of money drawn from the Bank by one of many firms in the area to pay employees' wages. The £5 note could not have left the Midland Bank before the 28th September 1977 and since Jordan's murder occurred on the 1st October 1977 there was little likelihood that the note had passed through more than one or two hands before being given to Jordan. The most likely conclusion was that the murderer was an employee of a firm which drew money for wages from the Midland Bank at Shipley and had personally given Jordan the £5 note as advance payment for prostitution. The murder of Jordan was already clearly linked with the Ripper murders in West Yorkshire and the connection between the £5 note and Shipley provided a strong indication that the murderer was based in the Bradford area.

233. Detective Chief Superintendent Ridgway believed that with the approach of Christmas people would be likely to be saving money so that it might be possible to trace someone who still had a new £5 note bearing a serial number close to the one recovered from Jordan's handbag.

234. The matter was approached with considerable urgency and a joint operation was mounted by the Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire Police to interview all employees of firms which obtained their wages cash from the Shipley Branch of the Midland Bank. The operation, which commenced on the 26th October 1977, was to be in two phases. The first phase was intended solely to identify £5 notes which people had in their possession. The second phase was to be a more detailed inquiry dealing with crimes in the Ripper series.

235. The first phase of the inquiry failed to identify any £5 note remotely connected with the note held by the police. A number of new £5 notes were traced however and were so far removed in serial number from the Jordan note that the people who held them and their employers could be eliminated from the inquiry.

236. Before starting the second phase of the inquiry the officers involved attended a briefing at which they were given as much evidence as was available which might help them to identify the murderer. Little evidence was, in fact, available at this time particularly in the light of the fact that only the murders of McCann, Jackson, Richardson, Atkinson and MacDonald and the assault on Maureen Long were regarded as being in the series. The earlier assaults on Rogulsky, Smelt and Claxton were not linked at this stage and the evidence from them was not given to members of the Inquiry Teams.

237. The principal evidential items available at that time were:—

- (a) That the murder weapon was thought to be a hammer
- (b) That an unknown cutting/stabbing instrument was also used
- (c) The murderer had previously worn wellington or industrial boots about size 7
- (d) The vehicle used by the murderer might be fitted with two India Autoway tyres (this evidence came from the Richardson murder inquiry eight months previously and was not rated very highly because it was thought that the tyres would in all probability have been replaced).

238. These points were brought to the attention of members of the Inquiry Teams during a briefing at which visual aids were used to re-inforce the comments of the senior investigating

officers, Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield and Detective Chief Superintendent Ridgway. Mr. Oldfield also asked the Inquiry Team members to ask people being interviewed whether they had used taxis during the relevant period and paid their fare with one of the new £5 notes. A Leeds taxi driver, \_\_\_\_\_ was at this time a strong suspect and Mr. Oldfield hoped that the £5 note inquiry might lead to him. To assist inquiry officers an aide-memoire was prepared listing the points to be covered at interview including, in particular, the whereabouts of interview subjects on the night of Jordan's murder (1st October 1977) and on the night of the 9/10th October 1977 when it was believed the murderer had returned to the scene and inflicted further injuries to the body.

239. Detective Chief Superintendent Ridgway, who was in charge of the Manchester end of the investigation, decided not to disclose to the West Yorkshire officers or to his own Inquiry Team members that the post-mortem examination of Jordan had revealed an attempt to saw off her head with a hacksaw. Chief Superintendent Ridgway wanted to keep this vital fact from the press so that it could be used in the future as an important corroborative clue.

240. Since October 1976 Peter William Sutcliffe had been employed as a lorry driver by T. & W.H. Clark (Holdings) Limited, of Hilliam Road, Bradford. This firm was one of those which drew its payroll from the Shipley Branch of the Midland Bank. For the purpose of the £5 note inquiry the various firms involved were given an alphabetical prefix and employees were given a serial number. T. & W.H. Clark were allocated the prefix 'F' and Sutcliffe the number 44, so that for the purposes of this inquiry his reference was 'F'44.

241. On the 2nd November 1977 Sutcliffe was interviewed at his home in Garden Lane, Bradford by Detective Constable Howard of the Greater Manchester Police and an officer of the West Yorkshire Police. This interview was in Phase 1 of the inquiry and it was first established that Sutcliffe did not have any £5 note from his pay of the 29th September. In answer to questions Sutcliffe told the officers that on the 1st October he had remained at home all the evening and that on the night of the 9/10th October he had been at home at a house-warming party which he and his wife had given for their friends and relatives. He said that he had last visited Manchester some twelve months previously whilst making a delivery for his previous employers. The officers also recorded that Sutcliffe did not own a motor car but this was clearly wrong and they cannot now remember whether Sutcliffe told them this or they assumed it because they had not seen a car at the house. At the time Sutcliffe was the owner of the red Ford Corsair No. PHE 355G which he had acquired on the 26th September 1977.

242. Sonia Sutcliffe, who was present throughout the interview, confirmed that her husband had been at home all the evening of the 1st October and that they had both been at the house-warming party on the 9th October. What she failed to mention was that after the party her husband had taken some of his relatives home by car and had been gone some time.

243. In the light of the information available to the inquiry officers there can be no real criticism of this interview. The Sutcliffes were amongst 8,000 people being interviewed and there was at that stage no reason for the officers to suspect them.

#### **8th November 1977 — THIRD INTERVIEW**

244. The officers in charge of the inquiry felt that it was important that the people being interviewed should not develop a "cosy" relationship with one pair of inquiry officers. It was thus a matter of policy that no person would be seen twice by the same officers although those carrying out subsequent interviews should have access to all of the information which had been obtained earlier. The interview under Phase 2 of the £5 note inquiry was conducted by Detective Constable Rayne of Greater Manchester and Detective Constable Smith of West Yorkshire. Neither officer can now recall the actual interview which was obviously one of many in which they were involved in this period, and reliance now has to be placed on the record which they made at the time. This shows that Sutcliffe and his wife claimed to have been at home together on the 1st October and to have been involved in the house-warming party on the night of the 9/10th October. This explanation was quite acceptable in the light of the fact that the young couple had only moved into the house in Garden Lane on the 26th September. The alibi for the 9/10th October was strengthened by Sutcliffe's mother who had been present at the party. The two officers went to see her and obtained a statement in which she confirmed the date and the fact that she had been

present. The two officers also found out that Sutcliffe was the owner of a red Ford Corsair motor car and that he had earlier owned a white Ford Corsair which had been disposed of as scrap some two months previously. They did not examine the Ford Corsair neither did they carry out a full search of Sutcliffe's house although they did ask questions about tools and footwear without learning anything which aroused their suspicions.

245. Reports on the interviews in Phase 1 and 2 were submitted to the senior investigating officers who marked them "File" in the belief that genuine confirmation of both alibis had been provided by the wife and mother. It is worth mentioning, of course, that amongst the 8,000 people interviewed many were unable to supply any form of alibi so the fact that Sutcliffe had a corroborated alibi was a substantial point in his favour.

246. Some indication of Sutcliffe's character can perhaps be gained from the fact that a little more than a month after this third interview, and whilst the Bradford area was still the centre of urgent police activity, he carried out a serious assault on Marilyn Moore in Leeds. Some of the West Yorkshire officers involved in the £5 note inquiry were transferred to the investigation of the assault on Marilyn Moore but this did not restrict the scope of the joint operation in Bradford.

247. In spite of the fact that the first and last numbers of the series of 69 £5 notes had been published and broadcast by the news media and that persistent inquiries had been made by the police no note from amongst the 69 was ever traced. Early in January 1978 it became obvious to the senior investigating officers that their vital clue had yielded nothing. They were still satisfied that they were on the right lines but were aware that some means would have to be found to reduce the inquiry base and allow the person who had received the £5 note to be pinpointed more closely. The officers from Greater Manchester returned home disappointed but hopeful that it might be possible to re-activate the inquiry at some future stage. Copies of all the Manchester inquiry papers together with the nominal index cards were sent to West Yorkshire to be included in the files of the main Incident Room at Leeds.

248. It is now obvious that the interview with Sutcliffe in the 2nd phase was not the in-depth probe which had been intended and amounted, in fact, to fairly superficial questioning and to answers which were accepted at their face value. Further questioning about the house-warming party in particular might have allowed what was regarded as a concrete alibi to be broken and so pave the way for further investigation of Sutcliffe and his identification as a suspect. As mentioned previously it is highly probable that at the time this interview was conducted Sutcliffe's car had on it similar tyres to those which left the tread marks at the Richardson scene. The failure to examine the car and its tyres was therefore significant, more particularly in the light of the fact that Sutcliffe was to use the same car at the time of his assault on Marilyn Moore a little more than a month later. The interviewing officers clearly failed to comply with their instructions that the house, garage and motor car of interview subjects were to be searched and so lost an opportunity to confirm or deny the factors spelled out to them during their briefing. Whilst the officers had no reason to suspect Sutcliffe any more than any other person being interviewed there was a distinct possibility that the person to whom the Jordan £5 note had been paid would be seen during the inquiry, and therefore, their attitude was not as positive as it should have been.

249. There is little doubt that senior investigating officers of West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester did not attach sufficient weight to the tyre mark evidence recovered from the scene of the Richardson murder because of it having been superseded by the description of the Mark II Ford Cortina in the Long case. Inquiry officers were thus not specifically told to record the details of the tyres on cars owned by interview subjects and could, therefore, be excused for not having taken this step on their own initiative. It is also worth mentioning, (as will be referred to again later) that throughout this inquiry the officers of the Greater Manchester Police travelled to Bradford daily in the most extreme weather conditions and generally worked a 12/14 hour day.

250. Detective Chief Superintendent Ridgway's decision to withhold the knowledge that an attempt had been made to sever Jordan's head was in some ways understandable but on balance was wrong. Since it had been clearly established that a hacksaw had been used on Jordan's body officers should have been briefed to take possession of hacksaws so that they could be subjected to forensic examination.

#### 13th August 1978 — FOURTH INTERVIEW

251. The "Cross Area Sighting" inquiry intended to identify vehicle owners who made frequent visits to "red light" areas, prompted Sutcliffe's fourth interview with the police. Between the start of the computerised "Punters Index" on the 19th June 1978 and the 7th July 1978 Sutcliffe's red Ford Corsair was recorded on seven occasions, six in the prostitute area of Bradford and once in the Chapeltown area of Leeds. Sutcliffe was thus printed out as a "Cross Area Sighting" on the second computer print-out and was made the subject of the Incident Room action. A little over a month after his sighting in Leeds on the 7th July (during which time he had — unknown to the inquiry officer — been sighted on a further nine occasions in Bradford in his newly acquired Sunbeam Rapier car) Sutcliffe was seen at his home by Detective Constable P. Smith of the West Yorkshire Police. Constable Smith had previously been briefed that the object of his inquiry was to eliminate subjects by accounting for their movements on one or more of the murder dates. A list of the dates was provided and elimination was to be achieved by the examination of diaries, passports, holiday booking forms, records of periods in hospital or family anniversaries, etc. He (and other officers doing similar inquiries) were told that on no account was it to be made known that police observations were being carried out in prostitute areas nor were ball-pein hammers to be mentioned.

252. On the positive side, inquiry officers were briefed to find out whether people being interviewed made use of prostitutes and whether they possessed motor vehicles included in a list of types which could have made the tyre marks found at the scenes of the Richardson, Moore and Millward crimes. It was emphasised that vehicles in the BMC "Farina" range were most suspect but the instructions were that if any vehicle mentioned in the list was encountered during inquiries then full details of the tyres fitted to it should be obtained.

253. Constable Smith was aware of Sutcliffe's two previous interviews during the £5 note inquiry and had copies of the relevant papers with him. He was aware of the loose alibi which had been supplied and it was his intention to obtain a stronger alibi for the most recent murder which was that of Vera Millward in Manchester on the 16/17th May 1978. When Constable Smith arrived at Sutcliffe's home on Sunday, 13th August, he was busy decorating the kitchen. Sonia Sutcliffe was present during the interview. They explained that they had recently bought the house and that they spent most of their spare time on alterations and in decorating it, adding that they seldom went out and that when they did so they were always together. Initially they were not able to remember their movements on the 16/17th May but Sonia Sutcliffe subsequently said that on the 16th her husband "would have come home from work and stayed with her all evening". They both made written statements to that effect. Whilst his wife was out of the room Sutcliffe was asked whether he used prostitutes. He denied that he did and was then asked about the use of his car. It must be borne in mind here that Constable Smith was under instructions not to reveal that Sutcliffe's car had been seen in specific locations and was merely asking general questions about the use of his car during the evenings. Sutcliffe apparently satisfied Constable Smith that the Bradford sightings could be accounted for by journeys between Sutcliffe's home and the city centre and his place of work. He denied having visited Leeds and Constable Smith did not pursue this since he was aware of a fairly high error rate in the "Cross Area Sighting" inquiry. Perhaps not unreasonably Constable Smith accepted that the Sutcliffes were a normal young couple who were anxious to improve their home and were putting most of their effort into doing so. He was certainly impressed by finding Sutcliffe decorating when he arrived at the house and any suspicions he might have had were allayed by the couple's calm and normal demeanour.

254. Constable Smith did not check the tyres of Sutcliffe's car neither did he carry out any search of the house or garage. He later explained that he did not do so because he did not believe that the tyre tracks at the murder scenes could have been left by a Ford Corsair and because he had seen from previous papers that Sutcliffe's house had been searched during earlier interviews. This was, of course, not strictly accurate and the inquiry officer took too much for granted.

255. No particular suspicion was attached to the fact that Sutcliffe was being interviewed for the "Cross Area Sighting" inquiry having already been interviewed during the £5 note inquiry since Constable Smith believed that it was not unusual for people living in Bradford to become subjects of the two separate inquiries. The Bradford "red light" area sits astride a number of main access routes to the city so that many people going about their legitimate business would be recorded there. Unfortunately, Constable Smith did not have the actual times of the Bradford sightings



when he interviewed Sutcliffe as these were not available due to the limitations of the PNC print-out. Had they been checked from the input documents it would have revealed that the earliest sighting was at 8 p.m. and the latest at 12.50 a.m. which was hardly compatible with Sutcliffe's assertion that he "rarely went out in the evenings". Failure to challenge Sutcliffe on his denial of having visited Leeds in the evening was also unfortunate but perhaps depended more upon the general instructions about the conduct of the inquiry rather than a failure on Constable Smith's part.

#### **23rd November 1978 — FIFTH INTERVIEW**

256. When Constable Smith submitted his report in connection with the fourth interview together with the statements from Sutcliffe and his wife, the results were acceptable to his immediate supervising officer. When the papers were seen by Detective Superintendent Holland, however, he instructed that as Sutcliffe had owned two Ford Corsair motor cars (which were within the list of vehicles for the "Tracking Inquiry") the tyres of both vehicles should be checked. He also called for details of Sutcliffe's employers and for his personal banking arrangements to be obtained.

257. This inquiry in the form of a new Incident Room action was returned to Constable Smith. Although the action was dated 29th August 1978 the actual interview did not take place until the 23rd November because most members of the outside Inquiry Team had by that time been directed to the "Farina" inquiry, which had progressively developed following the murder of Helen Rytka in January 1978.

258. It is now obvious that this fifth interview with Sutcliffe was treated as a matter of simple routine to the extent that Detective Constable Bradshaw who accompanied Detective Constable Smith on his visit to Sutcliffe's home did not even get out of the police vehicle. Constable Smith discovered that Sutcliffe had banked with Barclays Bank in Bingley until the end of 1977 after which he had transferred his account to the Halifax Building Society at the Bradford Branch. Sutcliffe had, by that time, disposed of his red Ford Corsair which was not, therefore, available for examination. The two officers then visited the home of the new owners of the car where they examined the tyres. The tyres were not of the makes recorded at the Richardson, Moore and Millward crime scenes and Constable Smith added a note to his action report that the tyres had been fitted after the vehicle had changed hands and that details of the previous tyres were unknown. Records in the Incident Room gave details of Sutcliffe's employers, T. & W.H. Clark Limited, one of the firms involved in the £5 note inquiry. The inquiry action was endorsed to that effect.

259. What happened to the action and its associated papers when they were returned to the Major Incident Room cannot be ascertained. The staff there were clearly under a great deal of pressure with hundreds of actions awaiting allocation and the position worsened dramatically after the murder of Josephine Whitaker on the 4/5th April 1979. In any event the papers which related to the fifth interview were not to re-appear until eleven months had passed. Many things had happened by that time.

260. Whatever pressures were being felt in the Incident Room, no papers which were returned to it having been properly actioned should have been misplaced. I have commented elsewhere on the failure of the West Yorkshire Police to allocate sufficient manpower to the inquiry, particularly when completely new lines of inquiry such as the "Cross Area Sighting" inquiry or the "Farina" inquiry were commenced. The backlog of work in the Incident Room which resulted in important papers being mislaid or becoming temporarily unobtainable was to have even more serious implications for later interviews.

#### **29th July 1979 — SIXTH INTERVIEW**

261. In May 1978 Sutcliffe bought a black Sunbeam Rapier motor car which, as mentioned previously, was quickly to build up a list of sightings in the Police National Computer records. In time the volume of inquiries generated by the "Cross Area Sighting" inquiry was so great that the method of operation had to be changed so that action was called for only in respect of "Triple Area Sightings".

262. Between 26th June 1978 and the 22nd November 1978 Sutcliffe's Sunbeam Rapier was observed in the prostitute areas of Bradford on 36 occasions and in the Chapeltown area of Leeds,

twice. It was thus printed out as a "Cross Area Sighting" but because of the change of policy no action was taken in this connection. By the 22nd February 1979, the vehicle had been seen in both Leeds and Bradford on a further three occasions and it was also seen in Manchester and was subsequently printed out as a "Triple Area Sighting". This information should have been of the utmost significance had it been related to the earlier "Cross Area Sighting" of Sutcliffe's Ford Corsair and his earlier involvement in the Manchester £5 note inquiry. Unfortunately the three factors were not connected, an omission with the gravest consequences for the future of the inquiry.

263. As mentioned earlier in the report, all members of Inquiry Teams attached to the Millgarth Major Incident Room were transferred to Halifax following the murder of Josephine Whitaker on the 5th April 1979; no actions generated by the Millgarth Incident Room were issued for a significant period. Not until the 29th July (five months after Sutcliffe's car had been sighted in Manchester) was Sutcliffe seen in connection with it. Detective Constables Laptew and Greenwood of the West Yorkshire Police went to Sutcliffe's home where they saw him and his wife. They were completely unaware of the previous police interviews with Sutcliffe and in particular that he had been a subject of the £5 note inquiry. They were thus starting from the beginning with a man who, to the best of their knowledge, had not been involved but had come to notice because of the "Triple Area Sighting" of his vehicle. Whilst alone with Sutcliffe the officers asked him if he made use of prostitutes, telling him that if he did they would arrange to see him again at some other time when his wife was not present. He denied having anything to do with prostitutes and said that he had no need for that sort of woman. Sutcliffe then gave details of his work and the location of his employers' premises from which the officers concluded that the 39 sightings of his vehicle in Bradford could be accounted for by journeys between home and work and visits to the city with his wife. Sutcliffe also said that he had once taken his wife to a nightclub in Leeds and had used a route through Chapeltown Road, which led the officers to believe that this would account for one of the Leeds sightings. Sutcliffe was asked whether he had visited Manchester and denied having done so. Although the sighting was later verified the matter was not pursued with him for fear of alerting him to police surveillance of "red light" areas. Sutcliffe and his wife made statements covering their visit to Leeds but said that they could not recall having visited Manchester. Constable Laptew ascertained that Sutcliffe had visited Sunderland in connection with his work, although inquiries made later showed that he had not been there on any of the dates when the letters and tape recording were posted. The fact that Sutcliffe spoke with a quiet Bradford accent was noted as was a detailed description of him including the colour and style of his hair, details of his beard and moustache and the fact that he took size 8½ shoes and wore boots of the soft crepe soled variety. By the time of this interview Sutcliffe had sold the Sunbeam Rapier and had replaced it with a Rover 3.5 saloon. The officers later traced the Sunbeam Rapier to its new owner, recorded details of the tyres fitted to it and searched it but found nothing. Constable Laptew had, by that time, become suspicious of Sutcliffe and he made arrangements for the Sunbeam Rapier to be available for forensic examination should his senior officers feel that this was desirable. Unfortunately, no examination of that sort ever took place.

264. This interview with Peter and Sonia Sutcliffe took almost two hours during which the couple were calm and quiet, answering the questions put to them without apparent difficulty or embarrassment but not volunteering any additional information. During the interview the officers obtained a sample of Sutcliffe's handwriting in the form of a letter which he had written to his wife and they also searched his car and garage but found nothing to connect him with the crimes.

265. Sometime after this interview the two officers visited the offices of Sutcliffe's employers where he was described to them as a model worker. They were not told that he had previously been seen by the police in connection with the £5 note inquiry although a general mention was made that the firm had been one of those involved in the inquiry. Details of Sutcliffe's hours of work on the most recent murder date were obtained and also some of his records of work as a further sample of his handwriting.

266. Detective Constables Laptew and Greenwood were not satisfied with the outcome of the interview and they discussed a number of points arising from it, as follows:—

- (a) The loose alibi
- (b) Sutcliffe's denial of having been to Manchester after a positive sighting of his vehicle

surely he would have felt that the reservations which Laptew expressed about Sutcliffe were worth a major probe to resolve. Equally, one must ask how Detective Chief Superintendent Ridgway became satisfied with the outcome of the reactivated £5 note inquiry, confident as he was that one of the 241 had at some time handled the Jordan £5 note. The senior officers of the West Yorkshire Force were also affected, of course, by the policy decision to stake everything on the letters and tape which, at the time, may have seemed to offer a very simple form of salvation in the light of the mass of divergent information and separate lines of inquiry which the investigation had by then accumulated.

305. The final irony in connection with Sutcliffe's interviews is that immediately before the tenth interview, seven of the eight officers who took part in interviews 6, 7, 8 and 9, were working together at Idle Police Station. Several of these officers had reservations about Sutcliffe and collectively they were in possession of all the relevant information about him. It is obvious that they did not communicate with each other so as to co-ordinate the information against him although there is good reason to think that this was due primarily to a lack of effective briefings for personnel involved at the grass-roots level of the inquiry.

#### **(vii) Media Relations**

306. The formation of a Community Affairs Department within the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police in 1974 gave an opportunity for a re-assessment of the role of the Force Press Office. Chief Superintendent Domaille, who was the first commander of the newly formed department, conducted a comprehensive review of the arrangements for liaison with the media, as a result of which a civilian press officer with previous journalistic experience was appointed. The press officer was provided with an assistant and administrative support, but no police officer was appointed to work with him. In many police forces an officer in the rank of inspector is appointed to work alongside a civilian press officer so that someone who is recognisably a police officer is available to take a personal part in press conferences and in local radio and television programmes. In the absence of such an appointment in West Yorkshire, Chief Superintendent Domaille accepted personal responsibility for the work, particularly in relation to serious crimes such as the early murders in the Ripper series which occurred in 1975 and 1976. In each of these cases the Chief Superintendent made early contact with the senior investigating officer and made the necessary arrangements for press conferences and press releases.

307. When Chief Superintendent Domaille left the Community Affairs Department for other duties in 1977 his personal interest in press relations was not maintained by his successor so that the weight of further inquiries fell squarely on the press officer, Mr. Baxter. Unfortunately, to the media Mr. Baxter lacked the professional status of a senior police officer so that there was a tendency for reporters to bypass him and make direct contact with senior investigating officers in important cases. Mr. Baxter looked after the mechanics of press conferences and the distribution of press releases but was not made as aware as was desirable of developments in serious crime inquiries so that he was not in a position to help press representatives directly. Mr. Baxter's situation was not helped by the fact that the senior investigator in the two earliest murders in the Ripper series, Detective Chief Superintendent Hoban, was very popular with press reporters with whom he had an easy familiarity. Mr. Hoban also fully appreciated the assistance which an investigating officer could gain from accurate and helpful press coverage of serious crimes.

308. A number of senior investigating officers undoubtedly enjoyed their contact with the press and the status which involvement in radio and television broadcasts brought them. There was thus no strong pressure from them for the appointment of another police officer as press relations officer, even when the existence of a very serious series of crimes was recognised.

309. Although some senior investigating officers enjoyed their contacts with press, radio and television, others did not. Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield, for instance, loathed television and was never happy using the medium on which he often appeared ill at ease, stilted and inarticulate. Relationships with the media were an additional burden which Mr. Oldfield had to carry once he had taken control of the inquiry, and clearly harassed him at times when he should have been pre-occupied with the investigation.

310. The Ripper inquiry, by its very nature, excited the interest of the local, national and

international press to an extent never before experienced in relation to a murder investigation in the United Kingdom. There was, therefore, a very strong case for the establishment of good formal relationships, and as the series developed media relations called for expert and careful handling by a well trained professional team.

311. During the early stages of the investigation the relationship between the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police and the press was quite good and appears to have been handled properly on both sides. The attacks on Rogulskyj, and Smelt were treated by both the press and the police as purely local incidents, whilst the murder of Wilma McCann in Leeds excited only local interest in spite of press efforts to obtain sympathy by publishing a story about her children waiting in the fog for her to come home.

312. The murder of Joan Harrison at Preston was also dealt with as a local matter although there was some minor press speculation that the crime might be connected with the murder of Yorkshire prostitutes following the murder of Emily Jackson in Leeds. It was this murder which first saw the use of the term "Jack the Ripper" in connection with these crimes. This ensured that the murders were referred to in the national press but they still did not attract much public interest outside Yorkshire.

313. The murder of Irene Richardson in Leeds just over a year later was immediately linked by the press with the murders of McCann and Jackson, a point which was conceded on the police side by Detective Chief Superintendent Hobson who said that there were striking similarities between the crimes. The murder of Patricia Atkinson in Bradford was also linked with the series and the "Daily Express" used the headline, "Ripper's Triangle", and published photographs of McCann, Jackson, Richardson and Atkinson. The murder of 16 year old Jane MacDonald was the subject of very considerable coverage. MacDonald's youth and the fact that she was not a prostitute produced rather more response from the public, and media interest sharpened in consequence. Both the police and the press expressed the view that the killer might have made a mistake and wrongly identified MacDonald as a prostitute. The possibility that any unaccompanied woman was a potential Ripper victim was not considered at that time.

314. The attempted murder of Maureen Long was also linked with the crime series. The attack did not excite much public sympathy, however, probably as a result of the description of Long as a woman of loose morals. The murder of Jean Jordan in Manchester was also identified as being within the series, and the start of the first £5 note inquiry generated considerable interest. The tone of press articles at that stage was still generally sympathetic to the police and to their problems in dealing with a series of this nature. The fact that prostitutes continued to be the victims conditioned response from the public and although five murders and a serious assault were at that time regarded as being within the series there was no evidence of undue public concern. Some media attempts to improve the public response by conducting interviews with prostitutes failed to achieve any significant change of attitude.

315. The attempted murder of Marilyn Moore was again quickly recognised as being linked with the previous crimes and a photofit impression which Moore compiled of her attacker was widely circulated. Unfortunately, as is referred to elsewhere, although the photofit impression was a good likeness of Peter Sutcliffe, the police did not regard it very highly and the press treatment of the case reflected this lack of interest.

316. The murder of 18 year old Helena Rytka at Huddersfield did invoke public sympathy and was well covered by the press. The fact that the victim, an attractive girl with a twin sister, was also an orphan produced some public response so that police appeals for assistance produced an improved flow of information. At the same time concern was being expressed about the disappearance of a Bradford prostitute, Yvonne Pearson. The problems facing the police in connection with the known crimes and with Pearson's disappearance were highlighted in a number of feature articles which included coverage of the operation of the Major Incident Room. The subsequent discovery of Pearson's body was immediately hailed by the press as a further Ripper murder although senior police officers had reservations about the crime because of the unusual character of the head injuries and the absence of stab wounds.

317. The murder of Vera Millward at Manchester was quickly recognised by the media as a Ripper crime but press coverage again reflected the fact that the victim was a prostitute.

318. The comparatively harmonious relationship between the police and media reporters which had previously existed underwent a significant change with the discovery of the body of Josephine Whitaker at Halifax. Although this crime was immediately linked with the Ripper series it marked a change of pattern in that, apparently for the first time, the victim was a young woman of good character, murdered in a respectable residential area of the town, and who could not possibly have been looked upon as a prostitute by the murderer. The first rift between the police and the press stemmed from the publication of a photograph showing the dead girl's body and the crime scene. This photograph, published initially by the "Halifax Courier" and later reproduced in other papers, caused a great deal of public resentment and a loss of confidence by the police in the willingness of the press to deal responsibly with information about the crimes. Publication of the damaging photograph was followed by the publication of a spurious photofit impression and other misleading information.

319. The receipt of the third "Sunderland" letter in March 1979 and of the tape recording on the 18th June 1979 was to lead to a further loss of harmony between the police and the press. It was also to lead to a recognition of the fact that a 'mole' was operating within the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police. Once a decision had been taken to ask for public assistance to identify the author of the letters and tape, a transcript of the tape recording was prepared in anticipation of a press conference at which the letters and tape inquiry was to be made public. Within a very short time of its preparation, a copy of the transcript of the recording was in the hands of a local newspaper which used some of the information in a report prior to the press conference. This leakage and lack of co-operation on the part of the press hardened attitudes amongst senior police officers who subsequently timed that particular press conference so as to enable television to "scoop the press". Release of information about the letters and tape generated a tremendous amount of publicity and excited public interest so that the response to the appeal for information was quite considerable. Unfortunately, as is recorded in detail elsewhere in my report, the letters and tape were spurious so that media brainwashing of police and public alike, that the author was the Ripper, was to fatally flaw the whole investigation.

320. The murder of Barbara Leach, at Bradford, prompted widespread press coverage highlighting the previous assumption that no unaccompanied woman was immune from attack. The whole mood of media coverage of the inquiry changed and articles and broadcasts became critical rather than supportive of police action. The "Daily Express" began a campaign to "bring in the Yard" whilst the "New Statesman" of the 12th September 1979 included an article which was highly critical of the police handling of the investigation and exposed a number of "clues" which, it was alleged, the police had not trusted the public with.

321. The publication, on the 13th September, 1979, of the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police "Special Notice" about the Ripper's crimes was anticipated by the Chief Constable during an address to a Conference of Chief Officers of Police at Preston on the 7th September. This was the first occasion when the attacks on Anna Rogulskyj and Olive Smelt were publicly included in the series and this caused problems because, unlike the majority of other victims, neither Rogulskyj nor Smelt was classified a prostitute. This point may not have been made sufficiently clear to press representatives covering the Conference since it led to the homes of Rogulskyj and Smelt being besieged by reporters. As a result of her treatment at the hands of the press Anna Rogulskyj consulted a solicitor and threatened legal action against the Chief Constable and the "Yorkshire Post". The security of confidential information belonging to the West Yorkshire Police was again called into question because it is clear that the press quickly obtained copies of the Police "Special Notice" to which they made blatant reference during the remainder of the investigation. This is not the only evidence of breaches of security involving police documents and David Yallop's book "Deliver us from Evil" is notable amongst other things for its reproduction of confidential police telex messages in connection with the Ripper case.

322. In spite of some lack of harmony between the police and the press, the sponsored publicity campaign on the letters and tape, which commenced on the 4th October 1979, was fully supported by the media with widespread coverage in newspapers, on radio and on television.

323. The effort was so effective that the public response swamped the Major Incident Room with low grade information, a situation which ought to have been foreseen by the Chief Constable and his senior officers. It is now clear that the objectives of this campaign should have been specified

more exactly and that proper provision should have been made within the Major Incident Room or elsewhere for adequate staff to be available to handle the response which the campaign was intended to promote from the general public. In the event, of course, this additional publicity further brainwashed police and public alike into accepting the validity of the North Eastern connection.

324. The arrival of Commander Nevill and Superintendent Bolton of the Metropolitan Police in Leeds in November 1979 attracted a great deal of attention and prompted further pressure in the London based daily papers for "The Yard to be brought in to investigate the Ripper crimes".

325. Probably as a result of their failure to control the effect of the publicity campaign on the letters and tape, the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police adopted a campaign of relative silence early in 1980. This restriction on the flow of information to the press and media was not well received and relationships became even more strained. Fortunately the change of policy coincided with a period of inactivity on Sutcliffe's part so that there was time for both sides to reflect on the situation.

326. The murder of Marguerite Walls was the subject of local publicity but the change in Sutcliffe's method of operation to causing death by strangulation prompted the senior investigating officer to say that it was improbable that the crime was part of the Ripper series. This may have been a genuinely held view, reinforced by the circumstances of the subsequent attack on Uphayda Bandara where strangulation was also attempted. It now seems clear, however, that some senior detectives in West Yorkshire believed that there was a connection between the murder of Walls and the assault on Bandara and the remainder of the series.

327. Denial that the attempted murder of Teresa Sykes at Huddersfield was connected with the Ripper series is, however, less easy to explain in retrospect. It is now apparent that although denial of the connection between this assault and the remainder of the series was categoric, a number of senior detectives were convinced that it was a Ripper crime. The denial given to the press may therefore have been little more than an attempt to reduce the public, media and Parliamentary pressure to which the force was being increasingly exposed.

328. The discovery of the body of the final Ripper victim, Jacqueline Hill, in Leeds, led to unprecedented press and television coverage which gained an even greater upsurge when it was learned that the police had been handed Miss Hill's handbag near to the murder scene just over two hours after the attack on her, and yet failed to find her body until directed to it by a member of the public the next morning. There was perfectly proper speculation that if the police had searched more diligently Jacqueline Hill might have survived the attack. This topic is dealt with in more detail later in my report and it is sufficient at this stage to relate that the murder of this respectable University student, coupled with apparently clear evidence of inefficiency and suspected lack of concern on the part of the police, promoted media pressure thereafter which was to undermine the confidence of the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police to a very serious extent. Whilst some of the early and factual reports were perfectly justified, the "goldrush" amongst reporters, including representatives from Europe, America, Australia and Japan, led to a lowering in the standard of reporting and to the concoction of fictitious information. Particularly damaging was an item in "The Sun" on the 21st November 1980 which gave a completely fictitious account of the experiences of a student named Andrea Procter who was alleged to have witnessed the attack on Miss Hill. In the hysteria of this period proper standards of conduct amongst journalists reporters broke down in a scramble for any information about the series. Spurious calls were made to the police to test the promptness of their response and items of property were reported to have been found, with camera men in attendance to record the police action which resulted. Old and dated photofit pictures were resurrected and republished as current information about the series and large scale publicity was given to the opinions of "mediums" and other self-styled "experts".

329. The pressure from the press during that period was not solely felt by the police. Reporters used fraudulent means to gain access to Leeds University buildings, a practice which led the Students Union to take the unprecedented step of inviting the police to patrol the University campus to keep pressmen out. The opinion of students about the activities of the press in general was summed up by a large banner displayed on the Students Union building on which was displayed the pointed comment, "Piss off press".

330. The investigating officer in the Jacqueline Hill case, Detective Superintendent Finlay, became so disenchanted with the activities of the reporters that at one very frosty press conference he told them that he would not talk to them again until he had something specific to say.

331. This breakdown in the relationship between the police and the media clearly called for urgent action and with the arrival of the external Advisory Team in November 1980 Superintendent Morritt was appointed as permanent liaison officer for the Ripper series investigation. Superintendent Morritt made tremendous efforts to restore contact between the two sides and within a relatively short time it was possible for them to engage in more meaningful dialogue as a result of which media coverage became more responsible and more accurate. Press conferences, interviews with senior officers and opportunities to film members of the police force undertaking inquiries, were means which were used to keep the public fully informed of current developments. Public misgivings about the conduct of the inquiry were to some extent allayed thereafter. The flow of information which followed these new measures was very heavy indeed and contributed to a further saturation of the Major Incident Room.

332. This closer relationship between the police and the media representatives was to last until the arrest of Peter Sutcliffe on Friday, 2nd January 1981. When it became apparent on Sunday, 4th January that a break-through had occurred in the inquiry media activity became frantic. Further leaks of confidential police information occurred, whilst cheque book journalism developed on a wide scale involving anyone with something to say about Peter Sutcliffe or his crimes. Sutcliffe's arrest and the events up to his trial are dealt with later in this part of my report and it is sufficient for me to say here that within a short time of Sutcliffe's arrest the predominant line of media coverage of the story was one of criticism of the police for their failure to detect Sutcliffe at an earlier stage.

333. The disclosure of further aspects of police inefficiency during and immediately following Sutcliffe's trial and the removal of all sub-judice restrictions resulted in a very wide range of articles and features, each pursuing the objective of a Public Inquiry into the conduct of the police investigation. Protests by the Chief Constable, Mr. Gregory, that he and his force were being subjected to a media conspiracy added fuel to the flames, as did the activities of a number of Members of Parliament and others who repeatedly called for a Public Inquiry into the Ripper investigation. This went on until Sutcliffe's appeal was announced when the sub-judice rule re-emerged, perhaps with greater influence having regard to the Law Officers' public announcements on the issues of Contempt following the notorious Press Conferences at Dewsbury and Sheffield soon after Sutcliffe's arrest.

334. The conclusions which emerge from an examination of relationships between news media representatives and the police during the Ripper inquiry have parallels in several other fields. In the same way as a proliferation of senior inquiry officers made for lack of continuity and duplication of investigative effort, the failure of the West Yorkshire Police to appoint a senior Police Press Liaison Officer, once it was recognised that a serious crime series was in progress, led to unnecessary difficulties. Although Chief Superintendent Domaille's early attempts to control the situation were beneficial, the fact that his successor did not continue the work which he had started, and that no police officer was appointed to share responsibility for press relations with Mr. Baxter, paved the way for a confused situation in which each senior inquiry officer handled his own press relations. The lack of continuity which this lack of organisation involved opened the door for trading on personal relationships and for the exploitation of the lingering loyalties of senior detectives to one or other of the former police forces. The understandable demand for information for publication was not satisfied by the police who could, at a much earlier stage of the inquiry, have made arrangements for the sort of facility to observe police activity which was provided after Superintendent Morritt's appointment. The failure to provide information caused considerable frustration amongst reporters and encouraged them to indulge in speculation and in some cases the fabrication of material. Such action made senior investigating officers very suspicious of reporters and their attitudes ultimately hardened into the "say little or nothing" policy of 1980.

335. Another factor which had an adverse influence on press relations was the illness which caused Mr. Oldfield's absence from duty between August 1979 and January 1980. Although



Mr. Oldfield could never be said to have had an easy relationship with the press, he was one of the few points of continuity and the failure of the force to appoint a clearly recognisable successor to him added to the reporters' difficulties.

336. The conclusion that the West Yorkshire Police failed to make proper formal arrangements for meeting the needs of the media in relation to the inquiry is supported by the fact that relationships went progressively downhill until pressure, developing from the murder of Jacqueline Hill, made it imperative for a senior Press Liaison Officer to be appointed. Superintendent Morrill's own appreciation of what his appointment called for is well worth quoting as a final comment under this particular heading:

- (a) to diffuse the situation with the media
- (b) to try and regain public support and sympathy which had been lost
- (c) to try and eliminate press speculation and correct the "misinformation" supplied to the public
- (d) to regularise the public's understanding of the police investigation and in so doing focus public attention into those areas likely to prove fruitful
- (e) to improve understanding within the force of both the investigator's intentions and beat officers' objectives.

**(viii) Lack of Computerisation of Records**

337. The Police Service has, for a number of years, been heavily involved in the use of computers to improve police efficiency. Such computer applications range from simple information retrieval processes commonly used in all organisations, such as those related to pay and accounts, to large scale systems of command and control used to ensure the most effective use of police resources in an operational context. The use of computers in police administrative functions produces similar benefits and problems to those experienced in other forms of organisation and management. It is not until the police enter the field of computerising information about people and their activities that difficulties arise in relation to privacy considerations and whilst the Service has accepted that there is a need for checks and balances it has been vociferous in its argument to justify the use of such technology in the interest of crime detection.

338. The Ripper police investigation is a good example of where the increased use of computers could have been of invaluable assistance to investigating officers but it should also be realised that such computer usage would inevitably have led to an increase in the storage of information about people and their lawful activities and which, in most respects, could therefore be described as innocent. Examining the criticisms made of the West Yorkshire Police for their apparent lack of use of computer technology in the Ripper case, one must, therefore, consider both the technical and potential aspects of what was or was not done and equally significant, the effect of such considerations when contemplating the way ahead.

339. In general the criticisms made infer that had computer technology been used the offender would have been detected at a much earlier stage, greater and more efficient use would have been made of the information available, and, by implication, cost savings would have been achieved. Indeed it has been suggested from one source that a meaningful system could have been procured for as little as £3,000.

340. The facts relating to the Ripper case are that as early as 1977 West Yorkshire Police were consciously making inquiries into the possibility of using computers to assist in the investigation. A small Working Party was formed with that in mind and consequently the Police Scientific Development Branch (PSDB) was approached to ascertain the then state of the art arising from the experiments which had been ongoing since the need for a computerised incident room system had been recognised in the light of the "Black Panther" case in 1974. At that stage it was clearly apparent that the experiments being conducted would need considerable further development before a viable solution could be found and offered to the West Yorkshire Police. Nevertheless, resulting from this initial approach, numerous meetings were held involving the PSDB and Police Research Services Unit (PRSU).

341. Resulting from these further meetings, in August 1977 an offer was made to the West

Yorkshire Police which envisaged utilising a main frame computer based at the Atomic Energy Authority Establishment at Harwell with an input being made by telephone lines from West Yorkshire and by information being physically passed to Harwell using cassette tapes.

342. There were, of course, at that time considerable problems arising from the conversion of existing records filed in the Major Incident Room. An estimate was made that some 13 man years of effort would be required to carry out this back record conversion. The initial cost of this work amounted to a nominal sum of £25,000 (which Home Office was prepared to fund), plus ongoing costs of £3,000 per week to run the system. After careful consideration this offer was declined by the Chief Constable on the grounds of cost and the premature nature of the scheme in the light of the incomplete development work undertaken. Such a system was subsequently to be used in Derbyshire in 1979 and remains the basis of experiments being conducted by PSDB. The experience gained in the Derbyshire experiment (which was not used in an operational context) has assisted in determining a new package which is currently about to be put out to tender. I have no doubt that the Chief Constable's decision not to embark upon the costly scheme proposed was the right one. The overall technology required was still in its infancy and even ignoring the costs, I am satisfied that it would have been foolhardy in the extreme to have attempted to mount an operation of such magnitude on substantially untried equipment.

343. In May 1978, PSDB and PRSU were again consulted by the West Yorkshire Police and a further study report was produced making a number of recommendations. Essentially, this report recommended that the information held about people in the main nominal index varied to such an extent that problems would arise when endeavouring to convert this information to a computer base. It will be recalled that at the time the police forces involved were commencing to embark upon the task of recording vehicle sightings in various "red light" areas in Northern England and it was immediately recognised that the retrieval of vehicle registration numbers was a much more viable proposition for a computer application. In addition, the existing Police National Computer (PNC) network provided a ready made communication system for this purpose. In essence the study report recommended that consideration should be given to operating the sighting of vehicles on a computer and this led to the Police National Computer Unit (PNCU) involvement in what was later to become known as the "Cross" and "Triple Area" sighting programmes, as described earlier in my report. This computer application ultimately involved the recording of over five million vehicle sightings from six cities in Northern England. I venture to suggest that such an exercise could only have been undertaken by the use of a large computer with a sophisticated communications network. Although, as we know, this application did not lead directly to Sutcliffe's arrest, it did indeed identify Sutcliffe, first in the "Cross Area Sighting" and later in the "Triple Area Sighting" projects. I therefore consider that this initiative in the use of computer technology, and particularly by the PNC, reflects great credit on all those involved.

344. In addition to the consultations with Home Office agencies which resulted in the subsequent use of the PNC application, the West Yorkshire Police also carried out considerable research in the private sector in their efforts to seek a solution to their problems. It is of interest that in 1977 they were quoted for a system capable of supporting the nominal index at a cost of some half a million pounds and in that respect were again advised that the back record conversion was considered to be a mammoth task. In addition, individual approaches were made to numerous multi-national computer companies all of which failed to produce any viable suggestion to assist the police investigation. I am also aware that during this period the force, through its existing liaison with local government agencies, made every effort to establish whether the various computers available and operated by local authorities could assist in the Ripper investigation, but again to no avail.

345. It is clear from this brief synopsis that every effort was made by the force to find a computer solution to the increasing problem being presented to it by the growth of the Major Incident Room records. The PNC application to deal with vehicle sightings was an excellent example of what was achieved by the existing systems. Nevertheless, it is also clear that in relation to the Major Incident Room records two main problems continually presented themselves and were not to any degree resolved:

- (a) Once the series had been recognised the back record conversion problem appeared to be a stumbling block to the implementation of any computerised system, and

- (b) the technology available throughout the course of the investigation (and possibly even to date) could not provide a system which could permit a full text retrieval which was clearly needed to overcome the problems existing in the Incident Room during the Ripper series of murders.

346. It should be borne in mind when considering the use of computers that the considerable cost involved and the complex problems presented by the needs of back record conversion, may all have been to no avail as the Ripper may have been caught at any time. It is therefore my considered view that criticisms levelled at the force in this connection are totally unjustified. In technological terms the equipment was not and to some extent is still not available to cope with an investigation of this magnitude. As to the claims made that the Ripper inquiry could have been run on a computer costing £3,000, I simply emphasise that the additional costs falling as a result of the Police National Computer system being utilised to deal with the vehicle applications alone, and which involved using the existing computer, amounted to more than £240,000.

347. Consideration of the use of computer technology in the Ripper case would not be complete without reference to Sutcliffe's arrest, for it was the use of technology in the form of a personal radio and the PNC which enabled the officers involved to quickly ascertain that the number plates on Sutcliffe's car did not match the description of his vehicle. Furthermore, had Sutcliffe not been brought to notice previously by the computerised "Punters Index" it might well have been that the Ripper squad officers would not have shown such interest in him following his arrest in Sheffield.

348. Although in my view the West Yorkshire Police did all that could have been expected of them in relation to the use of computer technology in the Ripper investigation nevertheless I do have one reservation, in relation to personnel, arising from the recommendations made to the West Yorkshire Police by the Joint Study Team in 1978. In that report it was recommended that a police officer with knowledge and experience of computers should be attached to the Ripper investigation team. This recommendation was never taken up and indeed the senior investigating officers we interviewed appeared unaware of it but thought it would have been of great advantage had it been implemented. I have already indicated elsewhere in my report an apparent lack of knowledge concerning the extent of the computer application dealing with the vehicle sightings, and I have no doubt that the recommendation made by the Study Team was sound and should have been accepted by the West Yorkshire Police.

349. Whilst I have stressed the excellent work done by the Police National Computer Unit in this inquiry in relation to the "Punters Index" I have been told many times by senior police officers of the difficulties they experienced over many months in endeavouring to ascertain the names and addresses of the owners of vehicles whose numbers were printed out in the "Cross Area Sighting" application. Initially this could only be done by feeding those registration numbers back to the PNC by way of a computer terminal and receiving by way of hard copy in return lists of the vehicle numbers together with names and addresses of the owners. It took a considerable period to automate this process so that the "Cross Area Sighting" print-out showed not only the registration number of the vehicle sighted but also the name and address of its owner. There was also another marked limitation in the programme. When the "Cross Area Sightings" were fed into the computer they were given the time and date of the input but not the actual time of sighting of the vehicle in the "red light" area so that what might have been incriminating evidence to the investigating officer was not readily available to him prior to relevant interviews. I have discussed these limitations with senior staff of the PNCU who quite rightly have pointed out the enormous efforts which they made to alter existing software to make the system as useful as it was to the police. Regrettably, the continuity of staffing and maintaining the necessary expertise were ongoing problems within the Unit which did not permit better progress in extending the automation of this particular application. I believe that these limitations were contributory factors to the delays occurring in the Incident Room and the general inefficiency of follow-up inquiries and thus should have been recognised as a priority area for increased resource deployment.

350. I shall refer to the need for common incident room systems to be adopted throughout the Police Service and the need for staff training. I shall also deal with the means currently being utilised to overcome these problems. These difficulties have been recognised since 1974 when clear

terms of reference were given to PSDB as follows:

“In the light of the police requirement for improved means of handling information during inquiries after a major incident (e.g. murder or a major disaster) to examine the feasibility of using computerised information retrieval systems for this purpose and to report on the costs, likely benefits and other aspects of any such use.”

351. It was not until 1979 that a critical appraisal was undertaken to identify the requirement for a computerised major incident facility which could be fully evaluated. The objectives of this were:

- (i) to examine critically the possible area where benefits can be derived from computerisation of a major incident room
- (ii) to suggest how the computer system should be integrated with the Major Incident Room itself and how indexing should be performed by a computer”.

352. There was therefore little progress made during the intervening five year period. Apparently some useful work was done between 1974 and 1977 but then three senior scientists left the department and only one junior scientist remained to carry on with the project. There should have been a higher priority afforded this much needed development programme especially since departmental staff must have been well aware of the enormous difficulties then being experienced in the Ripper Major Incident Room. Finally, I think it worthwhile to add a caveat about innovating new computerised systems of police records and it is simply this; the Service, whilst endeavouring to progress in this computer age, should be constantly aware of the dangers of being persuaded to adopt an extremely sophisticated solution to a problem where such sophistication has to await the advent of technological advance.

#### **(ix) The murder of Jacqueline Hill**

353. As there was a great deal of criticism surrounding the police action immediately following the last murder in the series, namely that of Jacqueline Hill, I decided to deal with this as a separate issue .

354. Between 9.15 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Monday 17th November 1980 Sutcliffe killed Miss Hill as she walked from a bus stop on the Otley Road towards the University Halls of Residence on Alma Road, Leeds (fig. 17). The initial attack took place on Alma Road opposite an unoccupied house called “Oakfield” and Miss Hill was then dragged on to waste ground at the rear of the Arndale Centre where additional injuries were inflicted to her body.

355. At 10 p.m. that night a 31 year old Iraqi student at Leeds University, Amin Moosa Hussain, was walking along Alma Road from Otley Road towards the Lupton Flats Halls of Residence when he found a lady’s handbag (fig. 18) on the footpath opposite “Oakfield”. Hussain found that the handbag contained a Barclaycard and a small amount of cash. He originally intended to take the handbag to the site office at Lupton Flats but when he found that the office was closed he took the handbag to the kitchen of the block where he lived and discussed it with two other students. As Hussain was not familiar with English customs and had an incomplete command of the language, one of the other students, Thomas Curtis, said that he would deal with the matter in the morning. Curtis intended to check with the site office the following morning and to report the matter to the police in the event of the bag being unclaimed.

356. Shortly before midnight Hussain returned to the kitchen (where the handbag had been left) to prepare food. He examined the handbag again and for the first time noticed that there were spots of blood on it. Two other students then came into the kitchen and after Hussain had showed the handbag to them, one of them volunteered to take it to the “duty student”. There was then some further conversation in which a student with previous service as a Colonial police officer, Anthony Gosden, was involved. He suggested that in the light of the bloodspots on the handbag the police should be informed.

357. A 999 call was made and received in the West Yorkshire Eastern Area control room in Leeds

terms of reference were given to PSDB as follows:

“In the light of the police requirement for improved means of handling information during inquiries after a major incident (e.g. murder or a major disaster) to examine the feasibility of using computerised information retrieval systems for this purpose and to report on the costs, likely benefits and other aspects of any such use.”

351. It was not until 1979 that a critical appraisal was undertaken to identify the requirement for a computerised major incident facility which could be fully evaluated. The objectives of this were:

- (i) to examine critically the possible area where benefits can be derived from computerisation of a major incident room
- (ii) to suggest how the computer system should be integrated with the Major Incident Room itself and how indexing should be performed by a computer”.

352. There was therefore little progress made during the intervening five year period. Apparently some useful work was done between 1974 and 1977 but then three senior scientists left the department and only one junior scientist remained to carry on with the project. There should have been a higher priority afforded this much needed development programme especially since departmental staff must have been well aware of the enormous difficulties then being experienced in the Ripper Major Incident Room. Finally, I think it worthwhile to add a caveat about innovating new computerised systems of police records and it is simply this; the Service, whilst endeavouring to progress in this computer age, should be constantly aware of the dangers of being persuaded to adopt an extremely sophisticated solution to a problem where such sophistication has to await the advent of technological advance.

#### **(ix) The murder of Jacqueline Hill**

353. As there was a great deal of criticism surrounding the police action immediately following the last murder in the series, namely that of Jacqueline Hill, I decided to deal with this as a separate issue .

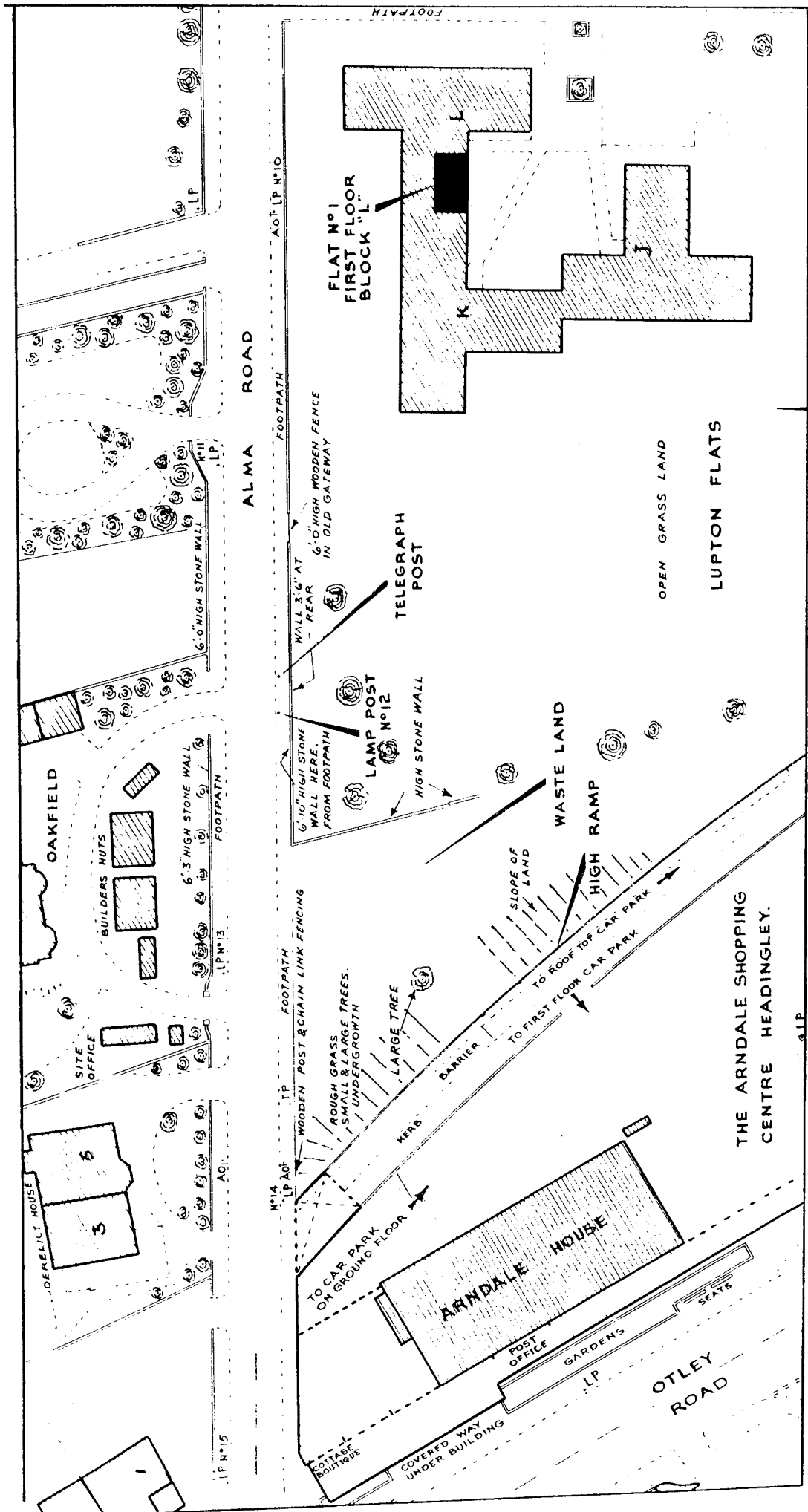
354. Between 9.15 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Monday 17th November 1980 Sutcliffe killed Miss Hill as she walked from a bus stop on the Otley Road towards the University Halls of Residence on Alma Road, Leeds (fig. 17). The initial attack took place on Alma Road opposite an unoccupied house called “Oakfield” and Miss Hill was then dragged on to waste ground at the rear of the Arndale Centre where additional injuries were inflicted to her body.

355. At 10 p.m. that night a 31 year old Iraqi student at Leeds University, Amin Moosa Hussain, was walking along Alma Road from Otley Road towards the Lupton Flats Halls of Residence when he found a lady’s handbag (fig. 18) on the footpath opposite “Oakfield”. Hussain found that the handbag contained a Barclaycard and a small amount of cash. He originally intended to take the handbag to the site office at Lupton Flats but when he found that the office was closed he took the handbag to the kitchen of the block where he lived and discussed it with two other students. As Hussain was not familiar with English customs and had an incomplete command of the language, one of the other students, Thomas Curtis, said that he would deal with the matter in the morning. Curtis intended to check with the site office the following morning and to report the matter to the police in the event of the bag being unclaimed.

356. Shortly before midnight Hussain returned to the kitchen (where the handbag had been left) to prepare food. He examined the handbag again and for the first time noticed that there were spots of blood on it. Two other students then came into the kitchen and after Hussain had showed the handbag to them, one of them volunteered to take it to the “duty student”. There was then some further conversation in which a student with previous service as a Colonial police officer, Anthony Gosden, was involved. He suggested that in the light of the bloodspots on the handbag the police should be informed.

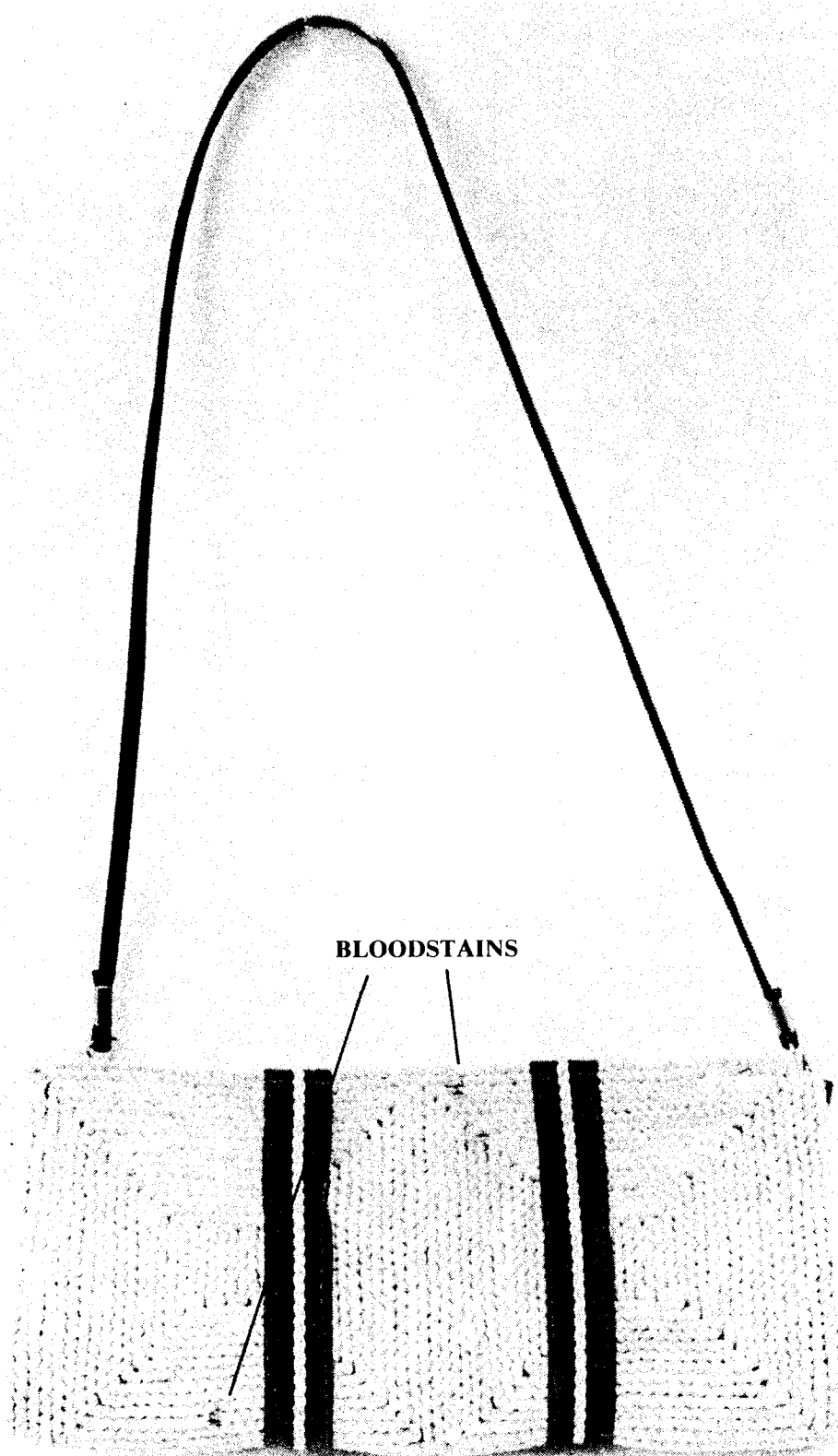
357. A 999 call was made and received in the West Yorkshire Eastern Area control room in Leeds

FIGURE 17 SCENE OF THE MURDER OF JACQUELINE HILL





**FIGURE 18**  
**JAQUELINE HILL'S HANDBAG**



where the message was automatically recorded and timed. The call was received at 12.03 a.m. The details of the telephone call were recorded on a message form under the heading "Found handbag with blood on it". The message was immediately referred to Ireland Wood Police Station.

358. At Ireland Wood the message was received by Policewoman Denham who made out a message form under the heading "Found handbag covered in blood". She then passed the information by radio to Constables Hardisty and Burrough who were working in an incident car. Incident car crews throughout West Yorkshire are required to take initial action in connection with 999 and other emergency calls and to hand on protracted incidents to other officers directed to the scene. The two constables arrived at Lupton Flats at 12 minutes past midnight. At about this time Sergeant Ward read the message form in the Ireland Wood control room and passed the remark "This will be the Ripper's 13th victim". He took no further action in connection with the message.

359. On their arrival at Lupton Flats Constables Hardisty and Burrough went to the kitchen in 'H' block where the handbag had been left and examined it. Hussain, who had to be sent for, explained where and how he had found it. He was then given a receipt for it. There was discussion between the students and the police officers and at some stage the suggestion was made that the owner of the handbag should be traced by means of a telephone call to the Barclaycard Centre with which one of the students was familiar, having worked there. The officers declined to act on this suggestion. Constable Hardisty accompanied one of the students to the site agent's office with a view to checking student records but they were unable to gain entry to it.

360. Whilst this was happening Constable Burrough had been shown where the handbag had been found and when he was joined by Constable Hardisty the two officers searched the grounds of "Oakfield" otherwise referred to as No. 7 Alma Road. The officers said that the reason for searching this area was that they were aware that in the murder of Marguerite Walls at Pudsey the body had been concealed in the grounds of a large house.

361. At 12.30 a.m. the officers were called on radio and instructed to deal with a burglar alarm call. They were engaged on various calls throughout the night and went off duty at 6.10 a.m. on the 18th November having arrived at the Police Station too late for the ordinary de-briefing parade. It is worth mentioning that between 10 p.m. on the 17th and 6 a.m. on the 18th November, 90 burglar alarm calls were received in Leeds of which only three were genuine.

362. Constable Burrough completed a found property report in connection with the handbag but omitted to mention that there were bloodstains on it. The bag was thus dealt with as found property and no special significance was attached to it.

363. The body of Jacqueline Hill was found at 10 a.m. on the waste ground behind the Arndale Centre almost opposite No. 7 Alma Road. Hussain reported the finding of the handbag to the incident post which was set up in Alma Road and Detective Superintendent Finlay who was dealing with the murder, obtained the handbag from Ireland Wood Police Station and subsequently identified it as the property of Jacqueline Hill.

364. Following an internal inquiry by the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police into the handbag incident, Constables Hardisty and Burrough were seen by the Deputy Chief Constable and given advice about their handling of the case. Sergeant Ward was also seen by the Deputy Chief Constable and officially admonished for his failure to take effective action.

365. The crucial question arising from this incident is whether, had the two police officers attached more importance to it, and had they continued their search and found Jacqueline Hill's body, she might have still been alive and capable of being saved? The answer to this question must lie with the pathologist, Professor Gee.

366. As a result of the post mortem examination the Professor was able to say that the principal injuries sustained by Jacqueline Hill were four depressed fractures to the skull including one circular fracture 1 3/8" diameter depressed below the surrounding skull by approximately 7/16". In addition to the four fractures there was a rectangular hole 3/8" x 1/8" through the back of the right eye socket resulting from a stab wound through the eye. There was bruising and laceration on the

brain surface in consequence of the bone injuries. Jacqueline Hill had also been stabbed on the left side of the front of the chest, the wound extending into the body for a distance of 4½". There were numerous bruises and abrasions to the body. Professor Gee concluded that the cause of death was a combination of the head injuries and the two stab wounds. He believed that the head injuries played a major part but that the stab wound of the chest which caused collapse of a lung and bleeding into the chest cavity was a contributory cause. The Professor concluded that although the injuries were severe they might not have proved immediately fatal and that death probably occurred "somewhere during the middle of the night of the 17th/18th November 1980." Professor Gee has since narrowed his estimate of the time of death and now believes that it occurred around midnight. He believes that, had Miss Hill's body been found immediately after the attack, there was a possibility that she might have survived since her injuries were not much more serious than those inflicted on Maureen Long who survived a similar attack in 1977.

367. It is unfortunate that the Iraqi student, Hussain, did not make immediate contact with the police on finding the handbag. He cannot, however, be criticised in the light of his unfamiliarity with the country and its language and it is true to say that the only reason why the police were eventually called was that he noticed the blood spots when he re-examined the handbag in the kitchen. Unfortunately of course, events at the Lupton Flats involved a crucial passage of time so that by the time the 999 call was made for the police assistance the probability is that Jacqueline Hill was dead or at least very close to death. It is Professor Gee's conclusion that had the police officers continued their search and found Miss Hill's body at about 12.15 a.m. there was no likelihood that even if still alive, she could then have survived.

368. Even so, I consider that on the facts disclosed the police officers who dealt with this incident, which was at a time when the local police believed there were two separate undetected series of murders (the Ripper series and the Walls/Bandara crimes), did not display the standards of professionalism which the public is entitled to expect even in a city such as Leeds where the work of incident car crews can be extremely busy and demanding. Although the bloodstains on the handbag (visible in figure 18) are small, the officers appear to have treated the call as one which related to found property rather than to the possibility of a serious crime. Although they did search the grounds of "Oakfield", this search must have been fairly hurried since they were not at the scene for more than 18 minutes in all.

369. In practical terms, bearing in mind Professor Gee's conclusion that at that stage the chance of preserving Jacqueline Hill's life was remote, it is also true to say that the earlier finding of the body would have made almost no difference to the conduct of the police inquiry. Members of the public and particularly the relatives of victims of serious assaults are, however, entitled to expect that police officers, as agents of a caring service, will make a careful and professional assessment of the incidents to which they are called and take a correct line of action rather than the line of least resistance. It is unfortunate that, conditioned by publicity about the Panda system and personal radios, the general public has come to expect a higher level of "fire brigade" policing than the Service can sometimes properly provide. For the police officers who undertake incident car and Panda car patrols in cities like Leeds this means that they are frequently directed to incidents which do not call for immediate action and are sometimes initiated so that a person requesting assistance can avoid the trouble of making a personal visit to a Police Station. This unnaturally high expectation of police response has had the effect of conditioning police officers to regard the bulk of calls for assistance as trivial and routine rather than serious and demanding. I do not offer this as an excuse for the police failure during this case, but merely as a background against which that failure must be seen.

370. In retrospect it must be said that the principal result of this failure was the serious damage which it did to public confidence in police action generally. This loss of confidence was clearly felt within the West Yorkshire Force, especially having regard to the continuing criticism thereafter from all sections of the media. However, at least it led to the setting up of the external Advisory Team and a new command structure in the investigating team which, in turn, gave a much needed impetus to the inquiry.

#### **(x) Command, Control and Resources**

371. In the same way that homicides and other grave crimes frequently require the establishment of a Major Incident Room to service the unusually high level of inquiry activity, the investigation

of such crimes also calls for the use of different skills by the senior investigating officer. Following the example which I used in the section of my report which deals with the function of the Major Incident Room, the individual detective making inquiries about a case of burglary is well aware of the limits which his own availability and other commitments will impose on that inquiry. He does not, therefore, need to make any other calculations about the need for and allocation of resources but can concentrate on direct inquiries until he is either successful or he reaches the point where the inquiry is closed because no further leads are available which offer some prospect of success. For the senior investigating officer in a homicide or other serious crime inquiry, however, questions about resource requirement and availability and "management" under a variety of headings are likely to be very important. The investigation of homicide frequently requires the slenderest of clues to be pursued by quite large groups of police officers, as in the Ripper inquiry when 53,000 vehicles were to be seen in an attempt to identify the one which left the tracks at the scene of the Richardson murder. The management and control of such inquiries, particularly when they involve a series of similar crimes, calls for the use of a range of skills which are otherwise not frequently required and which, as a result, are not always well developed in senior police officers. The attributes traditionally required of a senior detective, for instance, have included professional expertise, a sound knowledge of criminal law and practice and a capacity for assembling evidence in a complicated criminal case into a file which is of a standard acceptable to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Quite clearly a number of additional attributes and skills are also required but over the years these have been pre-eminent as qualifications for advancement to senior detective level. The fact that a senior detective is well qualified in these terms does not automatically mean that he is a good manager in the widest sense or that he is conscious of the wide variety of management concepts which are relevant to a large inquiry. It is equally true of senior officers in uniform that the duties they normally have to perform do not require them to exercise the sort of management which is often required of senior industrial and commercial managers.

372. There has been a significant change in the management style of the British Police Service during the past decade. The change has been brought about by improved training and selection and by a gradual change in the attitudes of senior supervisors, away from the traditional and often autocratic style and towards a more thoughtful and democratic approach to leadership. Nevertheless, traditional attitudes often die hard and there remain within the Police Service senior detectives and senior uniformed officers who, because of the lack of training or of receptiveness to it, or because of lack of opportunities to practice management in the wider sense, are inadequately equipped to handle situations outside the ordinary day to day requirements of their practical positions. I shall touch upon this further when I discuss the training implications arising from my review later in the report.

373. To meet the needs of a crime inquiry like the Ripper investigation the senior investigating officer should, in addition to having the professional skills of the senior detective to which I referred earlier, be a skilled manager in industrial and commercial terms. The idea that a senior "Marks & Spencer" manager might have done a creditable job in the overall control of the Ripper inquiry conveniently overlooks a number of very important issues but nevertheless contains important grains of truth. The control of investigations into 13 murders and 7 serious assaults during a six year period clearly called for unusual leadership qualities and an understanding of such aspects of management as morale, motivation, delegation, communication, training, welfare, cost benefit analysis, etc. Even if the officer placed in command of the inquiry was not personally skilled in the use of such concepts he should have recognised their importance and ensured that his management team contained people who did understand and were able to use their skills in a practical way. The West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police is not without able men whose training and experience well qualifies them to fill supporting management posts of this sort within a major inquiry.

374. From the excellent opportunity we have had of reviewing the protracted police investigation in detail it is clear that there should have been appointed, to head the investigation, a senior investigating officer who could recognise the problems likely to flow from his decisions and use the skills available within the force to overcome them. A comparison can, for instance, be made between the launch of the sponsored publicity campaign on the letters and tape aspect and the launch of a new product by a commercial company. A commercial manager making plans for the launch of a new product would have to be assured that all his wholesale and retail trade outlets were fully stocked to meet the demand for the product before he put his major advertising

campaign into effect. Senior officers of the West Yorkshire force did not obtain such assurances about their capacity to meet the likely response before they allowed the £1 million publicity campaign to be mounted.

375. The senior detectives of West Yorkshire were and are probably no better and no worse than those in other forces. They were, however, not well equipped in management terms to control an inquiry of the size and scale which the Ripper inquiry proved to be. In particular they lacked the flexibility of mind which was required to identify failures in existing systems and to take rapid corrective action. The failures to identify and correct the problems of the Major Incident Room and the damage which was being done to the inquiry by the absence of proper media relations are cases in point.

376. There were other command and control problems which stemmed from this lack of ability in the sphere of management. So far as the leadership of the inquiry is concerned and starting at the highest level, the decision to appoint a different senior investigating officer for each new crime in the series can now be seen to have been unwise. The intention was to bring new minds to focus on crimes in the series in an attempt to ensure that no possibility was overlooked. In practice the proliferation of senior investigating officers added to the complexity of the situation and, as Commander Nevill correctly identified, resulted in the "tendency for officers not to take executive decisions for fear (and this is putting it bluntly) of treading on the toes of other officers of equivalent rank who had previously been involved in the investigation". Commander Nevill recommended the appointment of a single detective chief superintendent to be in overall charge of the inquiry and to be divorced from any other responsibilities within the force. Such an appointment would not have precluded the appointment of an incident officer to control the basic inquiry functions of each new crime but would have done much to have ensured continuity of approach. The decision that Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield should, in addition to his routine responsibilities, take charge of the overall inquiry and at the same time act as senior inquiry officer in the MacDonald murder was also a mistake. It would have been perfectly proper for Mr. Oldfield to have assumed responsibility for the whole series but to attempt to take personal command of routine investigations of the MacDonald, Long, Rytka and Whitaker cases was clearly inconsistent with his wider responsibilities. Once committed to these tasks Mr. Oldfield's working days started in the morning in his office in Wakefield where he dealt with his ordinary responsibilities as Assistant Chief Constable (Crime) which involved the supervision of all C.I.D. operations within the force area. He would then often travel to the Incident Room covering the current murder, frequently returning to his Wakefield office late at night to clear his paperwork. Once the amalgamated Incident Room at Millgarth had been opened after the Rytka murder he also visited it during the day so that his return to his Wakefield office was still further delayed. That this situation led to the breakdown of Mr. Oldfield's health is not at all surprising and the fact that he was allowed to work to this extent is clearly a reflection, not only on his own judgement, but on that of his Chief Constable who should have seen that his senior detective was overloaded and have made arrangements for him to be relieved of his routine responsibilities. The appointment of an Acting Assistant Chief Constable would not have caused any difficulty in a force of West Yorkshire's size and indeed, took place in connection with the appointment of the external Advisory Team in November, 1980.

377. Equally important in connection with leadership was the Chief Constable's failure to take positive action when Mr. Oldfield had to stop work as a result of illness. An Acting Assistant Chief Constable should have been appointed at that stage and clear directions should have been given about ultimate responsibility for the Ripper inquiry. In practice, Detective Chief Superintendent Hobson, who was Mr. Oldfield's deputy, took over the responsibility for C.I.D. matters within the force and, by implication, for the Ripper inquiry. However, Mr. Oldfield had undoubtedly suggested to the Chief Constable that Detective Superintendent Holland should take charge of the Ripper inquiry and this, in effect, is what happened, at least until the appointment of Chief Superintendent Gilrain as the investigating officer for the Leach murder. It was then clearly inconsistent that a Chief Superintendent should be in charge of an individual murder whilst a Superintendent was in charge of the whole series and this situation was remedied on the 20th December 1979 when Chief Superintendent Gilrain was placed in overall command of the Ripper series with Superintendent Holland as his deputy. Although I have not been able to clarify the situation fully, there is an inference that during the period between the 6th August 1979 when Mr. Oldfield started his period of sick leave and the 20th December 1979 when Chief Superintendent

Gilrain was formally placed in charge of the Ripper series, Mr. Oldfield continued to direct the Ripper inquiry from his sick-bed using Superintendent Holland as his intermediary. This was clearly most unsatisfactory and it is perhaps not surprising that it was during this period that the all important "Special Notice" authorising elimination on accent and blood group was prepared and issued to all forces on Superintendent Holland's authority. Chief Superintendent Gilrain's early attempts to qualify the categoric authority for elimination demonstrate quite clearly that although he was the senior investigating officer of the most recent murder, he was not consulted about the "Special Notice" in advance of the publication of it.

378. Once the Ripper crimes had been identified as a series situation then the appointment of a senior investigating officer for the whole series with no other responsibilities outside the co-ordinated investigation would clearly have been advantageous. Such an officer would still have needed an unusual combination of management skills, or the appreciation of the need for them and willingness to use them in other people, but would have had a better chance of maintaining control of the inquiry than did Mr. Oldfield or those who deputised for him whilst he was on sick leave.

379. The second major failure in the management of the inquiry as a whole was that no proper arrangements were made for the delegation of authority to subordinate commanders to deal with different facets of it. Commander Nevill again identified this weakness during his visit when he referred to the fact that individual senior investigating officers and the officer in charge of the investigation as a whole were having to read a great deal of trivial material which did not require their level of skill and understanding. In his report to the Chief Constable he said, "It was disturbing to find that the officer in charge of the case was having to deal with a vast amount of non-relevant paper, much of which we thought could have been settled at a much lower level of command. The present system imposes an enormous workload on such an officer and we would, therefore, propose that there should be established a filter system at a lower level in order that only relevant statements, actions and letters are personally seen by the investigating officer." This lack of arrangement for formal delegation of subordinate functions meant that a number of senior officers were overworked whilst some of their subordinates were underworked and under-utilised in terms of authority and responsibility. Although it may sound incongruous, the health and well-being of an officer in charge of such an onerous investigation demanded that he should take at least one day off each week to enable him to "recharge his batteries" and maintain himself in good physical and mental condition. Although a senior officer in such a position should have expected to work hard, the requirement that he should regularly work a 12 or 16 hour day could not be justified on a long term basis. Failure to make arrangements for the delegation of subordinate inquiries such as the "Tracking Inquiry", the "Cross Area Sighting" inquiry and the "Letters and Tape" inquiry meant that the initiative of junior officers was often stifled and the progress of the inquiry slowed up because of the need for the senior investigating officer to be kept permanently in touch with developments. The "Tracking Inquiry", for instance, was clearly a case which could have been delegated to a competent detective superintendent or detective chief inspector to run in its entirety, only referring to the senior investigating officer when he had positive information to report. Not only was this not done but arrangements for the control of the inquiry (and others similar to it) did not provide the senior investigating officer with information about its progress in terms of the number of actions completed in comparison with the total number which the inquiry involved. Ideally the senior investigating officer would not have required such detail but should have been given brief progress reports by the officer to whom the inquiry had been delegated, with an estimated completion date and an indication of future manpower requirements. Such action was not taken and the senior investigating officer attempted to control and direct the subordinate inquiries at the same time as he handled the important aspects of more recent crimes. We should not be surprised therefore that the inquiries were inconclusive and that they were often abandoned before conclusion and without proper consideration of their potential.

380. The motivation of detectives as individuals and in groups clearly posed problems as the inquiry developed. The disciplinary action taken against a number of detectives who concocted false statements during one of the motor car inquiries rather than continue with the interminable round of interviews of vehicle owners is a clear indication that both motivation and morale had failed to attract the management attention which they so obviously required. It is unlikely that the detectives who were disciplined were by nature lazy or dishonest and it would seem that their malpractice was prompted by a lack of confidence in the tasks they were undertaking. As I have mentioned earlier, the commencement of an inquiry in which 53,000 vehicles were to be examined



in the hope that one would bear a combination of tyres which could be linked with a scene of crime was a daunting prospect. It is now known that the target figure might have been appreciably reduced by the application of more skilful analysis but the fact that the inquiry was attempted without due regard to the motivation and morale problems which it was likely to involve is a further indication of lack of consciousness of management and leadership concepts within the West Yorkshire senior detectives. Protracted vehicle inquiries involving thousands of actions clearly called for the very highest standards of briefing and debriefing and for the adoption of measures calculated to promote and maintain morale within the inquiry teams. A senior inquiry officer who was not bogged down in the detail of the case might, for instance, have personally joined in the actual conduct of these inquiries from time to time as a demonstration to his officers of their importance and his willingness to expose himself to the monotony with which they were involved. He would certainly have given frequent encouragement to his teams and emphasised that the successful conclusion of this aspect of the operation was undoubtedly important. There is no evidence that such measures were taken in West Yorkshire and the failure of a number of potentially profitable lines of inquiry might well have been due to the poor morale and motivation of inquiry teams. There is evidence that at the start of some of the special lines of inquiry, such as the joint £5 note operation, inquiry teams were given imaginative briefings on all aspects of the operation. It would seem, however, from discussions we have had with various personnel that such briefings were the exception rather than the rule. In fairness, it should be borne in mind that the inquiry as a whole lasted for six years and individual lines of inquiry were running for months rather than days or weeks. Whilst it is relatively easy to maintain a very high level of morale and commitment for a short term operation it is very much more difficult to maintain it over a protracted period, more particularly when there is no evidence that any of the efforts which are being made are proving successful. The morale of members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary during the worst period of sectarian violence when the force was clearly failing in its primary duty to protect life and property is a case in point. Only when manpower, organisation, systems and techniques had developed to the extent that significant numbers of terrorists could be arrested and prosecuted to conviction did morale return to an acceptable level. The available evidence supports the contention that the morale of any group depends upon the extent to which the group identifies the task to which it is committed as valid and likely to be productive and the extent to which they believe that between them they have the skill, experience and resources to bring the task to a successful conclusion. This proposition was clearly not met in many aspects of the Ripper inquiry.

381. Another important aspect of the management of the Ripper case was the failure to plan the introduction of each new line of inquiry. This is the area where the "Marks & Spencer" manager would probably have been at an advantage. Lack of familiarity with profit and loss accounting and of balancing needs with resources clearly led West Yorkshire's senior officers to embark on new lines of inquiry without making any valid assessment of their likely impact on the overall situation. In the vehicle "Tracking Inquiry", for instance, it would clearly have been advantageous for a detailed analysis to be made of the manpower requirement and probable duration of the inquiry in the light of the fact that 53,000 vehicles had to be traced. This assessment, providing a conclusion in terms of man/weeks, months or years could then have been used as a basis for calculating the inquiry strength required to complete the inquiry within a realistic time scale bearing in mind the decline in motivation and morale which was likely to occur if the inquiry were allowed to continue for too long a period. There can be a tendency for officers investigating a case of homicide to adopt a line of inquiry in spite of its manpower implications, in the knowledge of the fact that although they might incur public criticism for not pursuing an inquiry which held even a remote prospect of success they would be unlikely to be criticised for mounting an inquiry which proved to be unsuccessful. A probable example of this is the fact that the West Yorkshire police decided to go public on the letters and tape at a time when all the outside inquiry teams attached to the Major Incident Room had been withdrawn to deal with the public response to the Whitaker murder. It was clearly pointless to launch publicly a new line of inquiry which would inevitably produce a large number of actions in the Major Incident Room at a time when existing actions were not being processed because there was no one to deal with them. It is equally true that the "Mark II Cortina" inquiry launched after the attack on Long and the "Farina" inquiry started after the murder of Rytka could only be staffed if other existing lines of inquiry were abandoned or curtailed. The conflict between various lines of inquiry was a factor which jeopardised some of those which, with hindsight, clearly held the best prospects of success. The fact that Sutcliffe was not interviewed until 29th July 1979 in connection with the important "Triple Area Sighting" of his motor car in February of that year is a case in point.

382. The decision to mount major lines of inquiry within a police investigation of a serious crime is clearly a case for proper planning, assessment of impact, reporting and control and can probably best be dealt with by delegating the function to a competent officer once the decision has been taken to go ahead. The abrupt curtailment of an agreed line of inquiry such as the "Tracking Inquiry" (at a time when Sutcliffe had not been seen) clearly reflects that at the time the decision was taken to go ahead, senior officers had little confidence that there was a worthwhile prospect of success. Had this not been the case the inquiry must have been continued until all 53,000 vehicles had been seen.

383. The final important aspect affecting command and control of the inquiry is that there were notable failures to make proper arrangements for the welfare of the officers who were involved. The two most telling examples involve both of the jointly mounted £5 note inquiries. In Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the first £5 note inquiry, for example, the Greater Manchester officers who were involved travelled daily from the Greater Manchester area to West Yorkshire where they worked a 12 hour day on the inquiry. This daily travelling commitment during the winter must have had some influence on the attitudes of the officers who were involved. The evidence which is available suggests that commitment can be maintained, even in conditions of some hardship, for a relatively short period when the prospects of success are considered to be high. The longer an inquiry continues, however, the more important matters of welfare become in the eyes of those who are involved so that, in the absence of proper welfare arrangements, neutral feelings may degenerate to active dissatisfaction and hostility. The situation was only slightly improved when the all important interviews with the 241 people in the second £5 note inquiry were started. During this inquiry the officers from Greater Manchester were accommodated in lodgings in Wakefield which were not up to the usual standard and were also required to provide their own evening meals. Given the importance of the inquiry, even as recognised at the time and without the benefit of hindsight (that one of the 241 people had been the initial recipient of the Jordan £5 note), nothing should have been spared to ensure that it was successful. All senior detectives have to contemplate that the strength of their efforts is that of the weakest link in their organisation so that a whole inquiry may be jeopardised by the lack of ability and unhelpful attitude of a single detective involved in it. Although the second £5 note inquiry can be said to have failed more because of the failure of the Millgarth Incident Room to record Sutcliffe's previous involvement in the case than for any other cause, the attitudes of the officers who interviewed him, particularly when some previous connection was discovered, were not sufficiently positive to result in a much deeper probe and possibly his arrest. There were, of course, a number of factors (including the letter and tape publicity) which undoubtedly affected the attitudes of officers engaged in the investigation, but the occasional lack of attention to welfare may well have added to the general malaise at important times.

384. The inevitable conclusion about the command and control of the overall operation is that at the individual level the vast majority of officers involved in the Ripper investigation worked diligently and conscientiously to detect the crimes. Relatives of some of the victims have commented on this outstanding commitment and said how determined the officers dealing with their particular case were to bring the criminal to justice as quickly as possible. What was lacking was not individual application, some of which led to illness and domestic disharmony, but the management capacity which would have ensured that the workload was distributed so as to capitalise on the individual skills of as many officers as possible and so that no inquiry was attempted in the absence of the resources which would have enabled it to be brought to a conclusion within a satisfactory timescale. This judgement, however, needs to be viewed in line with the unprecedented nature of the protracted Ripper investigation as illustrated, for example, by the schedule of manpower commitment by the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police alone at fig. 19 and the statistics of inquiry involvement within West Yorkshire and the North East of England at fig. 20. Even in the light of such statistical information there are clearly lessons for the future in the spheres of command, control and resource allocation and I will refer to these in Part IV of my report.

#### **(b) Sutcliffe's Immediate Associates**

##### **(i) Trevor Birdsall**

385. During the trial of Peter William Sutcliffe the witness who probably attracted the greatest attention from the media and others was Trevor Birdsall so much so that I have decided that the facts surrounding Birdsall warrant a separate heading in this part of my report.

382. The decision to mount major lines of inquiry within a police investigation of a serious crime is clearly a case for proper planning, assessment of impact, reporting and control and can probably best be dealt with by delegating the function to a competent officer once the decision has been taken to go ahead. The abrupt curtailment of an agreed line of inquiry such as the "Tracking Inquiry" (at a time when Sutcliffe had not been seen) clearly reflects that at the time the decision was taken to go ahead, senior officers had little confidence that there was a worthwhile prospect of success. Had this not been the case the inquiry must have been continued until all 53,000 vehicles had been seen.

383. The final important aspect affecting command and control of the inquiry is that there were notable failures to make proper arrangements for the welfare of the officers who were involved. The two most telling examples involve both of the jointly mounted £5 note inquiries. In Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the first £5 note inquiry, for example, the Greater Manchester officers who were involved travelled daily from the Greater Manchester area to West Yorkshire where they worked a 12 hour day on the inquiry. This daily travelling commitment during the winter must have had some influence on the attitudes of the officers who were involved. The evidence which is available suggests that commitment can be maintained, even in conditions of some hardship, for a relatively short period when the prospects of success are considered to be high. The longer an inquiry continues, however, the more important matters of welfare become in the eyes of those who are involved so that, in the absence of proper welfare arrangements, neutral feelings may degenerate to active dissatisfaction and hostility. The situation was only slightly improved when the all important interviews with the 241 people in the second £5 note inquiry were started. During this inquiry the officers from Greater Manchester were accommodated in lodgings in Wakefield which were not up to the usual standard and were also required to provide their own evening meals. Given the importance of the inquiry, even as recognised at the time and without the benefit of hindsight (that one of the 241 people had been the initial recipient of the Jordan £5 note), nothing should have been spared to ensure that it was successful. All senior detectives have to contemplate that the strength of their efforts is that of the weakest link in their organisation so that a whole inquiry may be jeopardised by the lack of ability and unhelpful attitude of a single detective involved in it. Although the second £5 note inquiry can be said to have failed more because of the failure of the Millgarth Incident Room to record Sutcliffe's previous involvement in the case than for any other cause, the attitudes of the officers who interviewed him, particularly when some previous connection was discovered, were not sufficiently positive to result in a much deeper probe and possibly his arrest. There were, of course, a number of factors (including the letter and tape publicity) which undoubtedly affected the attitudes of officers engaged in the investigation, but the occasional lack of attention to welfare may well have added to the general malaise at important times.

384. The inevitable conclusion about the command and control of the overall operation is that at the individual level the vast majority of officers involved in the Ripper investigation worked diligently and conscientiously to detect the crimes. Relatives of some of the victims have commented on this outstanding commitment and said how determined the officers dealing with their particular case were to bring the criminal to justice as quickly as possible. What was lacking was not individual application, some of which led to illness and domestic disharmony, but the management capacity which would have ensured that the workload was distributed so as to capitalise on the individual skills of as many officers as possible and so that no inquiry was attempted in the absence of the resources which would have enabled it to be brought to a conclusion within a satisfactory timescale. This judgement, however, needs to be viewed in line with the unprecedented nature of the protracted Ripper investigation as illustrated, for example, by the schedule of manpower commitment by the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police alone at fig. 19 and the statistics of inquiry involvement within West Yorkshire and the North East of England at fig. 20. Even in the light of such statistical information there are clearly lessons for the future in the spheres of command, control and resource allocation and I will refer to these in Part IV of my report.

#### **(b) Sutcliffe's Immediate Associates**

##### **(i) Trevor Birdsall**

385. During the trial of Peter William Sutcliffe the witness who probably attracted the greatest attention from the media and others was Trevor Birdsall so much so that I have decided that the facts surrounding Birdsall warrant a separate heading in this part of my report.

**FIGURE 19**  
**MANPOWER DEPLOYMENT TO RIPPER CRIMES IN WEST YORKSHIRE**

<i>Case</i>	<i>Period</i>		<i>Approximate Total Hours</i>
McCANN	30 October 1975	— 2 January 1976	53,399
JACKSON	20 January 1976	— 6 February 1977	64,009
RICHARDSON	6 February 1977	— 23 April 1977	94,783
ATKINSON	23 April 1977	— 10 July 1977	96,028
MACDONALD	26 June 1977	— 1 August 1977	77,199
LONG	10 July 1977	— 1 October 1977	72,204
JORDAN (£5 note)	1 October 1977	— 31 December 1977	27,215
MOORE	14 December 1977	— 31 January 1978	6,741
PEARSON	21 January 1978	— 17 May 1978	11,582
RYTKA	31 January 1978	— 18 March 1979	197,407
WHITAKER	5 April 1979	— 3 September 1979	97,161
LEACH & HILL	3 September 1979	— 21 November 1980	223,761
Total:			1,021,489

**DEPLOYMENT OF INDEPENDENT UNITS**

TASK FORCE	750,900
PROSTITUTE OBSERVATIONS	227,396
VISUAL DISPLAY UNIT (CROSS AREA SIGHTING INQUIRY)	130,348
LEEDS INCIDENT ROOM (Separate since Rytka)	106,762
Grand Total:	2,236,895

N.B. The crimes listed in Figs 19 and 20 exclude seven of those with which Sutcliffe was ultimately charged, for which statistics are not readily available.

**FIGURE 20**  
**INQUIRY STATISTICS FOR RIPPER CRIMES IN WEST YORKSHIRE**

	<i>Persons Seen (‘B’ Refs)</i>	<i>House to House Enquiries</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>Cars</i>
McCANN	3,297	5,058	2,880	538	3,490
JACKSON	6,393	3,720	5,226	830	3,509
RICHARDSON	46,615	4,385	4,400	1,611	99,502
ATKINSON	5,325	2,356	3,915	2,161	1,924
MACDONALD	10,698	2,994	5,979	3,804	10,305
LONG	6,316	638	1,914	911	7,000
MOORE	1,478	103	839	149	404
RYTKA	56,079	1,800	21,268	7,938	16,542
PEARSON	3,995	511	966	331	1,155
WHITAKER	45,044	2,269	11,426	4,509	5,011
			34,729 *	700 *	
LEACH	58,729	2,214	36,207	4,505	8,106
HILL	3,000 •	1,100	750	700	500
TOTALS:	246,969	27,148	130,499	28,687	157,448

• An additional 8,740 ‘B’ references with 5,605 completed actions awaited checking and filing when this table was prepared.

\* Actions and statements in the North Eastern inquiry based on the Sunderland Major Incident Room.

386. In the period 1966 to 1972 Birdsall was a close friend of Sutcliffe and frequently accompanied him on visits to public houses in the West Yorkshire area. In his evidence at the trial Birdsall said that they had both spent time watching prostitutes soliciting in Leeds and Bradford and that he suspected that, whilst they were out together in 1969, Sutcliffe had assaulted a prostitute with a stone in a sock. He also suspected that after he had driven him to Halifax one evening in 1975, Sutcliffe had attacked another woman named Olive Smelt. Birdsall saw later the press report of the attack on Smelt and at the time this had set him wondering as to whether or not Sutcliffe had been responsible.

387. Although Birdsall was suspicious of his friend he kept this to himself until the autumn of 1980 when he discussed the matter with Gloria Conroy, with whom he was then living, having separated from his wife. Conroy, possibly motivated by thoughts of the very large reward which was then being offered for information leading to the arrest of the Ripper, persuaded Birdsall to tell the police of his suspicions, first by anonymous letter and subsequently by a visit to the police station.

388. To my mind, Birdsall's involvement in the case raised two important questions which this review needed to cover. First, was Birdsall's involvement as innocent as he suggested or was he an accomplice in Sutcliffe's crimes? Second, why did the anonymous letter and Birdsall's subsequent visit to Bradford Police Station not lead to Sutcliffe's arrest before January 1981? So far as the first question is concerned it is pertinent to say that Birdsall, who is now 33 years of age, first met Sutcliffe in 1966 when he was 18 and Sutcliffe was 20. For the next six years the two men saw each other frequently and went drinking together travelling initially in a Reliant three wheeled motor car and then in a Mini saloon, both owned by Birdsall and, subsequently, in one of Sutcliffe's cars. Birdsall recalled that in 1968 whilst they were out in his Reliant car Sutcliffe left the vehicle in Backend Road, Bradford to speak to a woman. On his return to the car Sutcliffe said that he had been "comforting her". The incident involving the "stone-in-sock" occurred in 1970 when the two men were travelling through the Clayton area of Bradford in Birdsall's Mini saloon. Birdsall remained in the car whilst this incident took place and did not see the assault which Sutcliffe subsequently admitted to him. Birdsall also accompanied Sutcliffe to Halifax on the evening of his attack on Olive Smelt although there is no suggestion that he either participated in the attack or was aware of it at the time.

389. It might be thought that when Birdsall saw the newspaper report of the attack on Olive Smelt soon after the incident his suspicions ought to have been sufficiently aroused for him to have contacted the police. Birdsall has since said that he "found it hard to believe that he, as a friend of mine, could be the man the police were looking for." Birdsall maintained this attitude even when he became aware that Sutcliffe had been interviewed in connection with the £5 note inquiry and he has stated that he was subsequently relieved when the "Sunderland" tape recording was broadcast in June 1979 indicating that the Ripper had a "Geordie" accent, which, of course, meant that he could discount Sutcliffe.

390. After Birdsall's marriage in 1972 the two men did not go out together as frequently as before although they sometimes went out with their wives or in the company of other people.

391. Birdsall's suspicions about Sutcliffe apparently did not come to the fore until he saw reports of the murder of Jacqueline Hill on the 17th November 1980. He had earlier been out with Sutcliffe in the Rover 3.5 saloon which Sutcliffe had acquired in June 1979 and he linked this vehicle with press reports of a "dark squarish saloon car" which had been seen in Alma Road near to the scene of the Hill murder at the material time. Birdsall subsequently saw Olive Smelt giving a television interview about the attack upon her in Halifax back in 1975 and his suspicions of Sutcliffe became even stronger. He used the "freephone" to play over the recording of the "Sunderland" tape in an unsuccessful attempt to link Sutcliffe with the voice but then, after discussing the matter with his girlfriend, he wrote an anonymous letter to the police. Gloria Conroy persuaded him that the contents of his letter were insufficient to convince the police that the information was genuine and she prompted him to visit the police station. This he did and subsequently he was required to give evidence at Sutcliffe's trial.

392. With the exception of Birdsall's tenuous involvement in the "stone-in-the-sock" case and the assault on Olive Smelt no evidence has been adduced to link him with any of Sutcliffe's other

crimes. Sutcliffe has not implicated Birdsall in his voluntary statement and, perhaps more significantly, none of the surviving victims of Sutcliffe's admitted or suspected assaults has mentioned the presence of a second man. Equally, whilst footprints have been found at some of the murder scenes they have not indicated the presence of more than one person apart from the victim. Sutcliffe was alone when he was arrested with the Sheffield prostitute Olivia Rievers and on the basis of my review of the case I have concluded that it is most unlikely that Birdsall was involved as an accomplice in any of the crimes. He might be criticised for his failure to have made known to the police his suspicions about the Olive Smelt case, particularly in the light of the series of crimes which then followed. His claim to have been misled by the "Sunderland" tape recording is, however, difficult to criticise in the light of the effect which the recording had even on those who were professionally dedicated to the arrest of the Ripper.

393. On Tuesday 25th November 1980, arising from his suspicions following the murder of Jacqueline Hill, Birdsall wrote the following anonymous letter to the Ripper Incident Room in Leeds:—

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to inform you that I have every good reason to believe I now the man you are looking for in the "Ripper Case".

It is an incident which happened within the last 5 years. I cannot give any date or place or any details without myself been known to the ripper or you if this is the man.

It is only until recently that something came to my notice, and now a lot of things fit in to place.

I can only tell you one to two things which fit for example, this man has had dealings with prostitutes and always had a thing about them. Also he is a long distance lorry driver, collecting engineering items etc. I am quiet sure if you check up on dates etc., you may find something His name and address is

Peter SUTCLIFFE  
5 GARDEN LANE  
HEATON, BRADFORD

(CLARKS TRANS.  
(SHIPLEY.

The original letter is reproduced at fig. 21.

394. When the letter arrived it was one of many, the majority of which were anonymous, that were being received by the police in consequence of an appeal for information in connection with the Hill murder and following the enhanced reward offered by the Police Authority and the local newspapers. Such letters were opened by a team of officers who took special precautions, by wearing gloves, to preserve any possible evidence which might become available should one of the letters prove to be from the author of the "Sunderland" letters and tape. Detective Sergeant Boot received Birdsall's letter on Wednesday 26th November 1980 and marked it "Action to trace/interview Sutcliffe." He then initialled and dated this note and marked the letter "Priority No. 1." All letters were given a priority code on the following scale:—

1. Easy actions containing good detail (e.g. name and address supplied).
2. More difficult actions requiring further inquiries (e.g. christian name only with possibly a street name).
3. General comments only (e.g. "I think the Ripper is a farmer").
4. No interest — irrelevant or cranky.

395. Birdsall's letter was then directed to the table in the Incident Room where information relating to the murder of Jacqueline Hill was being dealt with. It was received by Policewoman Bainbridge who subsequently prepared an action form for Sutcliffe to be traced and interviewed. The form was then passed to the Index Clerk, Policewoman Neave, whose job it was to create a new nominal index card for the subject of the action form and to ascertain whether any previous nominal index cards existed in the same name. Policewoman Neave created a new nominal index card and found that Sutcliffe had three previous index cards on which references relating to the



FIGURE 21

ANONYMOUS LETTER FROM TREVOR BIRDSALL

Action to trace <sup>25-11-80</sup> <sup>unseen</sup>  
Sutcliffe <sup>105579</sup>

~~To~~ Whom it may <sup>25/11</sup> concern

I am writing to inform you that I have very good reason to believe I now the man you are looking for in the "RIPPER CASE".

It is an incident which happened within the last 5 years. I cannot give any date or place or any details without myself been known to the ripper or you if this is the man.

It is only until recently that something came to my notice, and now a lot of things fit in to place.

I can only tell you one or two things which fit for example, this man as had dealings with prostitutes, and always had a thing about them. Also he is a long distance lorry driver, collecting engineering items etc. I am quite sure if you check up on dates etc. you may find something.

~~His~~ HIS name and address is  
PETER SUTCLIFFE { CLARKES TRANS.  
5, GARDEN LANE. { SHIPLEY  
HEATON, BRADFORD.

“Cross” and “Triple Area Sightings” were recorded. Policewoman Neave summarised the contents of the index cards on the newly created action form. These functions were completed during the period between 29th November and 9th December 1980. As has already been mentioned there was at that time a considerable backlog of work within the Incident Room so that the delay in dealing with these papers was not unusual in relation to the new information reaching the operatives there.

396. Once Policewoman Neave had completed the indexing process she placed the action in a wire filing basket so that the previous papers which related to the references transferred from the index cards could be copied and attached to the action before it was sent to the outside inquiry team. For some inexplicable reason the action remained in the filing basket and was still there when Sutcliffe was arrested in Sheffield on the 2nd January 1981. Such a lengthy delay was not typical of this aspect of the work of the Incident Room. It may have resulted from the fact that papers relating to “Cross Area Sightings” (all of which bore a “7S” reference) were filed in a separate room at the other end of the main corridor to the Incident Room. At the time, only a few members of staff were aware of this sub-division of the filing system and it was, in fact, referred to infrequently. Persons seeking “7S” papers would need to leave the Incident Room, walk the length of a corridor, unlock a filing system with which they were not familiar, locate the relevant papers and then return to the Incident Room to copy them and, finally, return the papers to the “7S” file. Because of this unfamiliar procedure it would seem such work naturally gravitated to the bottom of the filing basket.

397. The delay was indicative of the general malaise within the Incident Room system at that time which resulted in Sutcliffe being at liberty for more than a month when he might conceivably have been in custody. Fortunately this limitation did not result in any further murderous assaults being committed by Sutcliffe before his arrest in Sheffield in January 1981.

398. After Birdsall had explained to Gloria Conroy what he had written in his anonymous letter she quickly decided that the information was not sufficiently conclusive to result in prompt police action. Apparently still interested in the prospects of the reward she persuaded Birdsall to visit the Western Area Headquarters of the West Yorkshire Police at Bradford. Birdsall and Conroy went there together at 10.10 p.m. on Wednesday 26th November 1980. On arrival at the inquiry desk they were seen by Policewoman Nicholson who ascertained that they wished to give information in connection with the Ripper crimes. Needless to say, this was a common occurrence and indeed at that time Policewoman Nicholson was already dealing with another person wishing to give information concerning the Ripper case. She therefore asked Police Constable Butler, a recent recruit to the Police Service, to deal with Birdsall and Conroy. He interviewed them both and noticed they had been drinking. Subsequently Constable Butler made the following record in his official notebook:—

“On Friday the 16th August 1975 Mr. Birdsall was out with Mr. Sutcliffe in his car, blue Ford with white roof, at Halifax at approximately between 11.00 p.m. and 12.00 p.m. on Boothtown Road, when we stopped when we saw a woman by herself walking down. Mr. Sutcliffe got out of the car and followed her and returned 20 minutes later. He seemed to have changed his manner. He then dropped Mr. Birdsall home and said that he was going back home.”

399. At no time during his visit to the Police Station did Birdsall mention that he had written an anonymous letter the previous day. Because of Constable Butler’s relative inexperience, Policewoman Nicholson compiled the report form for him giving details of his interview with Birdsall and Conroy. Constable Butler then signed the report which included the information from his pocket book and submitted it to his supervisory officer, Sergeant Walsh.

400. The report was transmitted to the Incident Room in Millgarth Police Station where it was read by Constable Summers who, by coincidence, had earlier been responsible for supervising Constable Butler’s work during the first few weeks of his service. It is clear that Constable Summers read the report which should then have been passed to a senior officer for further instructions.

401. Following Sutcliffe’s arrest an internal inquiry in the force was mounted in an endeavour to

trace the report, but without success. It is likely that the report has been misfiled but whatever the reason for its loss it is a further indication of the overall lack of efficiency within the Incident Room.

402. Although the exact date on which Constable Summers saw Constable Butler's report has not been established there are good grounds for concluding that the report was received in the Incident Room by the 4th December 1980. Had it been seen by a senior police officer it is reasonable to assume that he would have realised the significance of the date, "Friday 16th August 1975", referred to in the report, as being directly connected with the attack on Olive Smelt, which by that time had been classified as the second crime in the Ripper series. This in turn might conceivably have led to Sutcliffe's arrest one month before it actually occurred although it would not, of course, have prevented any of the violent crimes admitted by him.

403. In essence, the failure to take advantage of Birdsall's anonymous letter and his visit to the Police Station was yet again a stark illustration of the progressive decline in the overall efficiency of the Major Incident Room.

**(c) Sutcliffe's Arrest and Subsequent Events**

410. As anticipated by many people including police officers of all ranks, Sutcliffe's eventual arrest for his heinous crimes resulted from basic patrol policing by uniformed officers, in much the same way as happened a few years previously in the notorious "Black Panther" case.

411. It was at 10.50 p.m. on Friday 2nd January 1981, that Police Sergeant Ring and Police Constable Hydes were on motor patrol duty in Melbourne Avenue, Sheffield, when they noticed a Rover saloon car, with the registered number HVY 679N, parked in a driveway just off the road. They decided to check the vehicle and Police Constable Hydes found Peter William Sutcliffe in the driving seat and a woman named Olivia St. Elmo Reivers, in the front passenger seat. Constable Hydes asked Sutcliffe if he owned the car and he said that he did. When asked for his name and address, he replied "John Williams, 65 Dorchester Road, Canklow." Sergeant Ring then joined Constable Hydes and he questioned Sutcliffe about the lady passenger. Initially, Sutcliffe claimed that she was his girl friend but it subsequently transpired that he had only met her that evening and did not know her name. On being questioned by the Sergeant, the woman gave her correct name.

412. Both officers then went to the police car and put through a radio call to the local Divisional Police Headquarters giving details of Sutcliffe and Reivers and they also asked for the registered number of Sutcliffe's vehicle to be checked with the Police National Computer. By chance, Police Sergeant Armitage and Constable Tune were in the control room when the call was received and, as both were on anti-vice duties, they were able to immediately identify Reivers as being a convicted prostitute and the subject of a suspended sentence. Information then came from the PNC that the registered number on Sutcliffe's Rover saloon car had in fact been allocated to a Skoda motor car. This information, together with that relating to Reivers' previous convictions, was passed to the two officers at the scene and they decided to arrest both Sutcliffe and Reivers on suspicion of theft. At the same time Constable Hydes examined and took possession of a vehicle excise licence displayed on the vehicle and which related to a Rover motor car, registered number FHY 400K.

413. Surprisingly, Sutcliffe was allowed to walk away from his car towards an oil tank situated a few feet away whilst Reivers was being taken to the police car. It was then that Sergeant Ring's attention was attracted by a noise which he later described as a "scuffle" coming from the direction of the oil tank. He saw Sutcliffe walking from the tank towards the police car and on being questioned as to why he had not accompanied Reivers towards the vehicle, Sutcliffe said that he had been looking for somewhere to urinate. This particular incident was to become of great significance later.

414. Upon arrival at the police station, Sergeant Ring and the two prisoners were seen by Sergeant Armitage, who was about to leave on another assignment with Constable Tune. These two officers were obviously intrigued by the circumstances surrounding the arrest of Sutcliffe and Reivers and they decided to visit the scene of the arrest which was in an area well known to be frequented by local prostitutes and their clients. On arrival there they were surprised to see the Rover car parked facing the road, as the usual practice in that vicinity is for cars to face the opposite direction so as to give more privacy to the occupants.

415. Upon examining the vehicle, Sergeant Armitage saw that the registration plates numbered HVY 679N had been taped over the original registration plates with black adhesive tape and were obviously false to the car. The original plates bore the registered number FHY 400K.

416. Meanwhile, at the police station, Sergeant Ring and Constable Hydes had established Sutcliffe's correct name and address and also the fact that he was the registered owner of Rover motor car FHY 400K. He readily admitted having stolen the registration plates HVY 679N from a Skoda motor car in a scrap yard near to Brighouse in West Yorkshire. Consequently Sergeant Ring telephoned the Divisional Police Headquarters at Dewsbury which covers Brighouse and he told an officer there of the facts. Sometime later, at about 1 a.m. on Saturday 3rd January, he also telephoned the Ripper Incident Room at Millgarth in Leeds and spoke to Detective Sergeant Bennett, relating to him the circumstances of Sutcliffe's arrest with the known prostitute and the fact that he had been in his own car which had been displaying false number plates stolen from the scrap yard near Dewsbury. He asked Sergeant Bennett if he was interested in Sutcliffe in relation to the Ripper inquiry. Bennett said that he would search the Incident Room records and would telephone him back. Bennett found that Sutcliffe's index card showed that he had been interviewed in connection with the £5 note inquiry and also as a "Cross Area Sighting". Additionally, there was a reference to his handwriting and also that his shoe size was 8½ and that he had a gap in the centre of his upper teeth.

417. Sergeant Bennett saw that Sutcliffe had previously been eliminated from the inquiry solely on handwriting, but thankfully and to his credit, he regarded this as being an inconclusive elimination and therefore decided to check the other papers relating to him within the system. Perusing the relevant papers he noticed that in a written statement Sutcliffe had previously made to the police, he had said that he was a long distance lorry driver (which had always been a suspect occupation in the Ripper series) and that he had denied ever going with prostitutes. He also saw from the records that Sutcliffe had never been satisfactorily alibied for the series of murders apart from a generalised alibi from time to time by his wife. There was also a further telling factor in that certain officers who had interviewed Sutcliffe had not been satisfied with him and said so in their reports. Reading the papers as a whole therefore, Sergeant Bennett came to the conclusion that Sutcliffe should be classed as a suspect worthy of re-interview for the Ripper murders and that he should be kept in custody during the interim. He telephoned the South Yorkshire Police to that effect and in so doing spoke to Constable Hydes, as Sergeant Ring had returned to outside patrol.

418. Subsequently Sutcliffe was taken in custody to Dewsbury Police Station and during the course of Saturday the 3rd January he was interviewed by Detective Sergeant O'Boyle of the West Yorkshire Police about his possible implication in the Ripper murders but to no avail.

419. When Sergeant Ring resumed duty at 10 p.m. on Saturday 3rd January, he was told by the duty Inspector that Sutcliffe was still in custody at Dewsbury. There followed speculation as to whether Sutcliffe could be classed as a strong suspect for the Yorkshire Ripper murders and this prompted Sergeant Ring to return to the scene of the arrest of Sutcliffe and Reivers the night before and search the immediate area. Sergeant Ring, whilst searching under some leaves near to the oil tank, found a ball pein hammer and a knife. This was a mammoth development, of course, and the information was relayed to Detective Inspector Boyle of the West Yorkshire Police at about 1 a.m. on Sunday 4th January. In possession of such important evidence, and with photostat copies of the documents relating to Sutcliffe as filed in the Major Incident Room, Inspector Boyle went to Dewsbury Police Station. Throughout that day Sutcliffe was then interviewed by Detective Inspector Boyle and Sergeant O'Boyle. Eventually he admitted all the offences for which he was later to be convicted.

420. Naturally, the events in the 48 hours following Sutcliffe's arrest were a hectic period in the life of the arresting officers and especially Sergeant Ring. According to him it was not until the 8th January, some four days after Sutcliffe's admissions, that he had sufficient time to fully reflect on the detailed happenings surrounding the arrest. Among other things, he no doubt realised that the actual police action at the scene of Sutcliffe's arrest had not been in strict accord with recognised police practice in that he and Constable Hydes had allowed Sutcliffe, on alighting from his car, to walk across towards the vicinity of the oil tank and so have the opportunity to hide the hammer and knife beneath the leaves. This obviously prompted him to think about other events surrounding Sutcliffe's arrest and detention and he then recalled, so he says, that Sutcliffe had been allowed to use a lavatory at the police station, before being searched, and without close police supervision. He reported this to Detective Inspector Slack who, accompanied by Sergeant Ring, searched the water cistern in the lavatory and found a wooden handled knife. During his lengthy interview at Dewsbury, Sutcliffe admitted to the police that he had concealed this knife in the lavatory cistern and also the ball pein hammer and the knife near the scene of his earlier arrest.

421. In so far as the concealment of the knife in the police station is concerned, it should be said, in fairness to Sergeant Ring, that when the two officers arrived at the police station with Sutcliffe and Reivers after their arrest, it was buzzing with activity. It had been an exceptionally busy night following a raid on an unlicensed drinking club which had resulted in several arrests. In addition the prison officers' dispute current at the time had resulted in many extra prisoners being held at the police station. Due to these many pressures every room in the building was in use and it is perhaps not surprising that Sutcliffe was allowed to use the toilet without close supervision. He was not, of course, a strong suspect for the Ripper murders at that particular time.

422. Further, and whatever limitations there were in the actual police action at the time of Sutcliffe's arrest and immediately thereafter, it is to the credit of Sergeant Ring that he went back to the scene the following night to find the hammer and the knife and also that he was open enough to record his suspicions to Detective Inspector Slack about Sutcliffe's unsupervised visit to the toilet when in custody at the police station.

423. Following Sutcliffe's admission of liability whilst in custody at Dewsbury, the news media, as was usually the case in West Yorkshire during the Ripper investigation, quickly came to know of the developments and by the late afternoon there was increasing activity outside the police station at Dewsbury with crowds of reporters and photographers. There was also similar activity in the vicinity of Sheffield Police Headquarters. Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Hobson was in charge of the Ripper investigation at that time, of course, but due to old loyalties within the force, (as will be referred to later) Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield was told of Sutcliffe's admission before Hobson and it was Oldfield who issued a press statement at 5 p.m. saying a press conference would be held at Dewsbury Police Station at 8.30 p.m. that day.

424. The civilian press officer to the force, Mr. Baxter, was called at about 6 p.m. to arrange the conference but Superintendent Morrith, who had been placed in charge of Police/Press liaison a few weeks before, was not officially notified and he was to learn of the developments from a press contact. When Mr. Morrith went to Dewsbury, of his own volition, at about 8 p.m., he found the police station besieged with press men and camera crews. He eventually saw the Chief Constable in the Divisional Commander's office and was told to assist with the conference that was to be held at 8.30 p.m.

425. Subsequently, the media representatives were ushered into a large room at the police station. It was decided by the police to tape record the proceedings and to read out a prepared statement. Photographs would also be allowed and a few non-contentious questions would be answered.

426. Looking back at the highly adverse publicity that followed this conference it is all too clear that what the police might have had in mind was soon thwarted once the conference had started. The tape recording of the press conference was later transcribed and in view of the recommendations I shall be making later, the transcript is worth quoting in full.

The transcript reads as follows:—

Chief Constable: *On Friday evening last, a man was detained in Sheffield by the Sheffield Police (South Yorkshire Police) in connection with a matter which was identified as theft of number plates of a motor car and the number plates had been stolen from the West Yorkshire area.*

*He was brought to West Yorkshire and as a result of discussions between the South Yorkshire Police and the West Yorkshire Police further inquiries were made and this man is now detained here in West Yorkshire and he is being questioned in relation to the Yorkshire Ripper murders.*

*It is anticipated that he will appear before the Court in Dewsbury tomorrow. I cannot say where he is at the moment because a lot of inquiries have to be made. Mr. Oldfield and Mr. Hobson and other senior investigating officers have to make a number of inquiries tonight, but I can tell you that we are absolutely delighted with developments at this stage.*



Photographer: Can you all smile, please? Can you move in together, please, and keep smiling? Smile everybody please.

Chief Constable: *I said at Dewsbury, but it may not be at Dewsbury, it may be at another Court, but he will appear in West Yorkshire some time later tomorrow.*

Question: Can you give us any details at all about the man?

Chief Constable: *No, not at this stage because the man is being interviewed at this very moment in time, but indications are that there will be a charge later tomorrow.*

Question: Can you tell us whether he has a Geordie accent?

Chief Constable: *I cannot tell you that because I have not heard him speak.*

Question: Can you give us any details of the arrest, Mr. Gregory? The circumstances of it, not actual details.

Chief Constable: *All I can say is that he was detained in Sheffield. He was with a lady. He was detained in relation to an incident in Sheffield and he was detained, let me tell you, by a Sergeant — two outstanding police officers — Sergeant Ring, of the South Yorkshire Police, Robert Ring, and Constable Robert John Hydes, H.Y.D.E.S., of the South Yorkshire Police. They are uniformed officers who have my heartfelt thanks, who made this original detection and as a result of questioning later on by West Yorkshire Police we have reached the present stage. It is just the initial stages and I thought you should know now before we go any further.*

Question: Are you scaling down the operation, the general hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper from this moment on?

Chief Constable: Yes, right.

Question: Do you know yet what he will be charged with in the morning? Will it be the motoring offence probably?

Chief Constable: *I can't tell you what the charge will be at this moment, but it may be a serious charge.*

Question: Can you say if these two officers were on foot or in a vehicle?

Chief Constable: The South Yorkshire officers? I think they were on an anti-vice patrol.

Question: Would that be on foot or in a vehicle?

Chief Constable: *Vehicle.*

Question: Could you say what time?

Chief Constable: *About eleven o'clock on Friday evening.*

Question: PM?

Chief Constable: *P.M.*

Question: Can you tell us where?

Chief Constable: *In Sheffield. I'm sorry I'm not just certain of the area.*

Question: Was it near the motorway?

Chief Constable: *Near the centre of Sheffield.*

Question: Could you say if there was any violence of any sort?

Chief Constable: *None at all.*

Question: Can you tell us whether it was a red light district?

Chief Constable: *I cannot tell you that, I don't know.*

Question: What's happening to the lady he was with? You mentioned a lady.

Chief Constable: *She has not come to any harm.*

Question: Is she helping with your inquiries?

Chief Constable: *She is, yes.*

Question: Does that mean she is under arrest?

Chief Constable: *No, she is not under arrest. No.*

Question: Was it a woman he was with?

Chief Constable: *He was with a lady, yes.*

Question: Was she an acquaintance of long standing?

Chief Constable: *No.*

Question: Was this car being sought because there had been any sort of incident earlier?

Chief Constable: *No.*

Question: Did the officers first stop him because of the false ..... because of the questionable number plates or because of the lady?

Chief Constable: *They came upon him in a certain position and they looked at the car, checked on the number plates, found they were false.*

Question: Would it be fair to say it was an indelicate position?

Chief Constable: *I cannot say what it was. I don't know what the position was at all.*

Question: At that stage was the lady with him injured in any way?

Chief Constable: *None at all.*

Question: Was he injured?

Chief Constable: *Not at all. No. No.*

Question: Were they in a state of undress?

Chief Constable: *I don't think so. I can't say. I don't know. I have not seen ..... you see, all the statements have not come through yet.*

Question: The car was at a standstill, it wasn't flagged down?

Chief Constable: *No. Standstill.*

Question: Can you tell us what sort of car, Mr. Gregory?

Chief Constable: *It was a Rover motor car.*

Question: Was that the old style or the new style?

Chief Constable: *Bearing false plates. I don't know what syle.*

Question: What colour was it?

Chief Constable: *Dark coloured V.8 George says.*

Question: Getting down to the really important things, are you able to tell us the man's, without giving the man's name, well presumably, will you be giving his name tonight?

Chief Constable: *His name will be disclosed tomorrow.*

Question: What about his age?

Chief Constable: *His age will be disclosed tomorrow. He's about 30 odd and he comes from Bradford.*

Question: And is he a bachelor?

Chief Constable: *I think he's a married man.*

Question: Has he got a North East accent at all?

Chief Constable: *I don't know about that, I don't know yet, I've not spoken to him.*

Question: Is he a married man?

Chief Constable: *He is a married man.*

Question: Is he a family man?

Chief Constable: *I don't know.*

Question: As far as you know, Sir, is he or has he been, until the arrest, been living with his wife?

Chief Constable: *I don't know.*

Question: Do you know his occupation?

Chief Constable: *It's too early to go into much detail and if I could I would tell you, but he is helping police with their inquiries at this very moment in time.*

Question: Do we have an occupation for him, Sir?

Chief Constable: *I don't know his occupation. No.*

Photographer: Can we just have you all smiling again, please, gentlemen. Can you all smile, please, Sir?

427. I will now comment specifically about the passages underlined

(a) *Absolutely delighted with developments.*

This inferred at least that the Chief Constable considered Sutcliffe was the Ripper.

Whether or not this was so, it should not have been commented on in such terms to the media.

- (b) *He was detained in Sheffield. He was with a lady.*  
The first part about the location of arrest was fairly innocuous but the reference to the "lady" was unnecessary.
- (c) *Two outstanding police officers ..... who have my heartfelt thanks.*  
Such words were clearly unnecessary at that stage and were bound to stimulate follow-up inquiries by the media.
- (d) In answer to the question — "Are you scaling down the operation, the general hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper from this moment on?" the Chief Constable replied "Yes right." This was a difficult question to field and shows the inherent danger of becoming too involved in a question and answer session with reporters following an arrest for crime. In such circumstances it is very difficult indeed to pave a way through a minefield of likely questions and this confirms the view that a prepared press statement is the best way of dealing with such a situation involving as it does the constraints flowing from the sub-judice doctrine. Having said that and in fairness to the police it is also essential to consider the very real fear of females living in northern cities at the time of the Ripper crimes. Certainly the brief comment made by the Chief Constable under this heading prompted a feeling of relief to over 1 million women in West Yorkshire alone. Some would say, especially those well versed in legal principles, that it would have been better not to have said what was said but many others would maintain that the public had a right to be reassured if possible and especially if the comment made was not unduly prejudicial to the accused.
- (e) *The South Yorkshire Officers? I think they were on anti-vice patrol.*  
Obviously this statement should not have been made.
- (f) *They came upon him in a certain position and they looked at the car, checked on the number plates, found they were false.*  
There was absolutely no excuse for saying that.
- (g) In answer to the question — "Are you scaling down the operation, the general hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper from this moment on?" the Chief Constable replied, "Yes, right."  
This was a repeat of the question and answer at (d) above and therefore my previous comment under that heading applies.
- (h) In answer to further questions the Chief Constable said, as before, "The South Yorkshire Officers? I think they were on anti-vice patrol."  
Again, and as related under (e) above such a statement should not have been made.

428. In the newspaper photographs published later, a group picture taken at the press conference and showing the Chief Constable, Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield and Assistant Chief Constable Hobson laughing together prompted a great deal of criticism. Examination of the transcript shows that this particular photograph was prompted by the photographers in the room with such requests as, "Can you all smile please?" "Can you move together please?", and "Keep smiling, smile everyone please." In the euphoria which by that time was clearly to the fore at the conference these were not unnatural requests and as such would have been difficult to resist but even so, the senior officers involved should have anticipated that such a photograph when published would be likely to prompt criticism bearing in mind the established constraints imposed by sub-judice practice. As is already well known the photograph appeared in almost all the daily newspapers and on both television channels with captions ranging from "junketing by the police" to "police absolutely delighted". Both the police and the press came in for a great deal of criticism arising from the Dewsbury Press Conference including statements in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

429. In addition to the intense media activity at Dewsbury from late afternoon on Sunday, 4th January 1981, similar pressure began to mount at the Sheffield Headquarters of the South Yorkshire Police. Between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. about 150 telephone calls were received from journalists including calls from Australia, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United States. By 7 p.m. there were also at least 40 journalists at the station including radio and television reporters.

430. At 8 p.m. that evening a telex message was received at the Sheffield Headquarters from the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire to Mr. Brownlow, the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire. The message read:—

*“Will you please convey to your Sergeant Robert Ring and PC Robert John Hydes my sincere personal thanks for their outstanding policing on Friday evening the 2nd January 1981. They are a credit to the Police Service, and in West Yorkshire we appreciate their efforts very much indeed, Well done.”*

431. Later in the evening Mr. Brownlow became aware of the press conference at Dewsbury and after discussing the matter with his senior officers he decided to mount a press conference at Sheffield. His reasons for so doing were as follows:

- (a) The intense media interest aroused by the arrest
- (b) The press conference already given by the West Yorkshire Police
- (c) The arresting officers were being pestered by reporters who had even secured the ex-directory home telephone number of Sergeant Ring and were telephoning his home continuously
- (d) In addition to the media presence at the force headquarters the officers' sub-divisional station at Hammerton Road was also crowded by reporters
- (e) It had become necessary in order to avoid journalists to take Miss Reivers, the prostitute arrested with Sutcliffe, to a secluded hotel and it was thought that a conference might dissuade reporters from searching for her
- (f) As it was not intended to reveal any more information than had already been given by the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police there would be no harm done and at the same time the media interest might then be likely to wane

432. Prior to the arrival of the two arresting officers, Sergeant Ring and Constable Hydes, the assembled journalists were told by the Superintendent in charge of the press conference that the two officers would be available to be photographed and interviewed under highly controlled conditions and that the format would follow this pattern:

- (a) Upon arrival the two police officers would be available to be photographed
- (b) At the end of the photographic sessions the officers would be withdrawn to be briefed by a senior officer and upon completion of that brief the press would be invited to question the officers.
- (c) Within the terms of the briefing given to the two officers they would subsequently be available for interview by the press, radio and television.

433. At about 11.30 p.m. that evening Sergeant Ring and Constable Hydes arrived at Police Headquarters and were photographed both inside and outside the building. They were then briefed privately by the Superintendent who emphasised to them that they could give brief details of the arrest in line with what had been said earlier at the West Yorkshire press conference. They would also be allowed to refer to the congratulatory telex message sent earlier by Mr. Gregory and if asked, also give brief details of their previous police service.

434. At the outset of the press conference the Superintendent emphasised to the reporters that they would be restricted to asking the two officers for comments in relation to the following information and no more:

*“The two officers on Friday night were on duty in uniform, in a Panda car near the city centre, when they came across a Rover car bearing false plates. That was enough to make both officers suspicious.*

*They checked with the Police National Computer and things were not all they seemed to be.*

*They subsequently arrested the man. There was also a lady in the car. The man alleged he was the owner of the car. The man was taken to Hammerton Road Police Station where he was questioned and eventually handed over to the West Yorkshire Police.”*

435. The Superintendent then gave details of the congratulatory telex message previously received from Mr. Gregory. Undoubtedly, the press conference at Sheffield was more controlled by the Police than the earlier one at Dewsbury. However, I have not had the benefit of reading a transcript of the Sheffield conference as the proceedings were not recorded by the police as in West Yorkshire. It has been possible to scrutinise part of it which was recorded by BBC television

~~There were two BBC TV reporters namely, Mike Smartt and Ken Cooper involved with Sergeant Ring and Constable Hydes in the news item as follows:—~~

- M. Smartt: The arrest on Friday night near the centre of Sheffield had started as routine police work, two officers, Sergeant Robert Ring and PC Hydes were on patrol in a Panda car. About 11 o'clock the officers drove on Wellbourne Avenue near Sheffield University and not far from the city's red light district. It is a quiet tree-lined road and the officers became suspicious of an old Rover car parked there with a man and a woman inside. The police were alerted by the car's number plates.
- Sgt. Robert Ring *I drove up to that car and Police Constable Hydes had a conversation with the driver. I took down the registration number which was being displayed on an old Rover car and it came back that they were allocated to a different vehicle. I did two more checks, until I was quite sure about the old Rover. PC Hydes and myself then questioned the driver further and, as a result, he and the lady he was with, accompanied us to the Police Station.*
- K. Cooper What was his reaction to being questioned?
- Sgt. Robert Ring *The driver, he was anxious that I should deal with it there and he produced documents and gave some reason for being in possession of the licence plates. He was anxious we should not arrest him, however, he was taken down to the Police Station.*
- K. Cooper Now, PC Hydes, you actually questioned him about the car, what impression did you form of him?
- PC Hydes *Well, like Bob says, he seemed very anxious, he wanted it squared there and then.*
- K. Cooper You have only been in the force for 11 months, how do you feel about subsequent developments?
- PC Hydes *Well, obviously it looks good on the force and it looks good on Hammerton Road Police Station and I am only too pleased to be part of it.*
- K. Cooper Was it a matter of luck, do you think?
- PC Hydes *I think it is a question of being in the right place at the right time and obviously luck does play a big part in it.*

436. My specific comments arising from the passages underlined by the Director of Public Prosecutions are:

- (a) "officers drove on Wellbourne Avenue ..... not far from the city's red light district" Smartt, the reporter, had already gleaned the information of the whereabouts of Sutcliffe's arrest and his emotive reference to the "city's red light district" should not have been said although such an expression is very much in keeping with the usual form of preface to an interview of this nature which is obviously designed to capture the attention of the viewer. I would not have thought the phrase was particularly damaging to Sutcliffe's interests.



- (b) *"I took down the registration number .... came back that they were allocated to a different vehicle*

A statement of evidence which clearly should not have been given, having said that, it had already been released to the media by the West Yorkshire Police at the earlier conference at Dewsbury.

437. One further press conference was arranged prior to Sutcliffe's first appearance at court on Monday 6th January 1981. It was conducted by Superintendent Morrith at Dewsbury Police Station at 2 p.m. that day some 2½ hours prior to the court hearing. The transcript of this particular conference has also been seen by the Director of Public Prosecutions and again, he has underlined the passages which he considers should not have been said. The transcript reads as follows:

Supt. Morrith

*Can I first of all confirm information that I have no doubt many of you already possess and that is that the man who is currently helping us with our inquiries is Mr. Peter William Sutcliffe aged 35 years, a lorry driver of 6 Garden Lane, Heaton, Bradford. If our current arrangements materialise, it is intended that Mr. Sutcliffe will be charged with offences and he will appear before Dewsbury Magistrates' Court, hopefully at 4.30 p.m. this afternoon. Can I also please take this opportunity of reminding various members of the media, that the lady who was with Mr. Sutcliffe at Sheffield and various other people who not unnaturally you are trying to interview; can I remind you please that those people are material witnesses to a prosecution which is now being launched, and I would ask you to bear that in mind when you seek interviews etc.*

*Can I also please make one other point, I am given to understand and I believe I am right in saying, that again not unnaturally you have gained possession of photographs of the accused man.*

*Can I take this opportunity of saying to you again, that that man's facial features will form part of the prosecution case, and therefore any publications in that respect that you may or may not consider, I ask you to bear that aspect in mind when that decision is made by you and your editors.*

Question:

Are you asking us not use these pictures?

Supt. Morrith

*From my point of view, it would be helpful if they were not used. Far be it from me even to try to suggest or dictate what you should or shouldn't do. From my point of view, it would be helpful to the inquiry if they were not published.*

Question:

What would be the nature of the charges?

Supt. Morrith

*The precise nature of the charges have not yet ..... in fact at this moment in time a discussion is taking place upstairs to arrive at the exact nature of those charges. My information is that one charge will relate to the suspected stolen vehicle registration plates, and I think it's fair for me to say that one charge will be a charge relating to the "Ripper" series of incidents.*

Question:

Is the interviewing complete?

Supt. Morrith

*Not prepared to discuss that aspect anymore.*

Question:

How long do you think it will be before charges are made?

Supt. Morrith

*Again, I can't be certain. That discussion is now taking place upstairs and its an area that I don't want to enter into in this sort of situation.*

Question:

Where's he being questioned?

Supt. Morrith

*Not prepared to answer those sort of questions.*

Question: Can you tell us whether the incident that you are talking about, the “Ripper” are they likely to be one of the murder cases, as opposed to one of the others?

Supt. Morrill *That I can't say. That I can't say. Probably yes, but I can't say for definite.*

Supt. Morrill *Okay?*

Question: Mrs. Sutcliffe helping with inquiries?

Supt. Morrill *Mrs. Sutcliffe has been seen and is being spoken to by ourselves, yes.*

Question: Will she face any charges?

Supt. Morrill *I can't discuss Mrs. Sutcliffe's involvement in it, other than to say that at this moment in time, from our point of view, the probability is that she will be a material witness. And on that basis .....*

Question: Is she in protective custody?

Supt. Morrill *She is not in custody, in any shape or form.*

Question: Not in protective custody

Supt. Morrill *She is not in custody in any shape or form.*

Question: Is she in the same police station as her husband?

Supt Morrill *I am not prepared to answer where people are at this moment in time, and on that basis, ladies and gentlemen, can I say thank you very much. It will be Dewsbury Court at 4.30 p.m., unless there is a hiccup in our arrangements.*

438. As will be seen, Sutcliffe's name and address were given and the fact that he would be charged with offences. As most of the reporters present had already acquired such details by then that part of Morrill's statement was not very important in that instance. What was vitally important, however, was the plea made to the journalists not to publish photographs of Sutcliffe which they had acquired — an infinitely more relevant point in safeguarding Sutcliffe's right to a fair trial.

439. Superintendent Morrill's comment about one charge being a charge relating to the “Ripper series of incidents” should not have been said, although in fairness to him, by that time such information was common knowledge. The later reference pertaining to Mrs. Sutcliffe's involvement and the probability of her being a material witness is much more open to criticism than what had gone before.

440. Quite clearly there were errors of judgement by the police in connection with the press conferences held following Sutcliffe's arrest and before the first appearance at court.

441. Before leaving this theme, however, I believe it only right that I should also briefly refer at this point to the limitations of the press following Sutcliffe's arrest. There is abundant evidence to show that many reporters and their editors blatantly ignored the well established constraints

arising from the then legal principles governing contempt. Such conduct prompted the Solicitor General on the 6th January 1981 to give a timely reminder to newspaper editors and the controllers of radio and television programmes about their responsibilities under the law in reporting the Sutcliffe case. He also thought fit to emphasise "the vital principle, embodied in English law, that a man accused of a crime, however serious, is presumed to be innocent and is entitled to a fair trial".

442. I could give many instances of media malpractice that I have identified during my review but in view of the fact that the Press Council is already conducting an inquiry into the press coverage of the Sutcliffe case I think it will suffice if I give just one example in my report as embodied on the front page of the "U.K. Press Gazette" of 1st June 1981 (Fig 22). The details given are self-explanatory and typify the cowboy tactics employed by so many journalists at the time.

443. Following Sutcliffe's conviction at the Old Bailey, the Judge, Mr. Justice Boreham commended Sergeant Ring and Constable Hydes in these terms:

*"I think too that the public would wish me to mention Sergeant Ring and Constable Hydes. They were engaged in, what I suspect from what I hear sitting in these Courts is very often a very humdrum routine duty. They must be very gratified, and the public in general, and Miss Reivers in particular must be very relieved that those police tasks which they performed were carried out assiduously and with such attention to detail. I cannot help recalling the expression of the Sergeant. He had not fallen off a Christmas tree. We are very grateful he had not. I commend them too to their Chief Officer of Police. I hope that that commendation may be sent to him and may be kept for their records for as long as they serve."*

444. The professional purist might say that Sergeant Ring and Constable Hydes were fortunate to be given this recognition in the light of the elementary mistakes they made in allowing Sutcliffe to hide the ball pein hammer and the knife at the scene and also the knife in the water cistern at the police station. I think that such a conclusion would be misplaced because the elementary mistakes were, in fact, remedied by Sergeant Ring himself in an open manner and the overall action of both officers did, after all, lead to the capture of the most wanted man in this country for many years. It came as no surprise when both the South Yorkshire and later the West Yorkshire Police Authority commended both officers for what they termed, inter alia, "their exceptional diligence".

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As Editor of the newspaper that secured and published the world exclusive interview with Mrs. Sonia Sutcliffe, I can offer one or two matters for general thought.

While preparing the article in London for publication, various members of my staff were offered, by various journalists:

- \* £10,000 and a job if the writer concerned would turn his article over
- \* £ 5,000 in banknotes in a suitcase if the reporter would reveal the whereabouts of Mrs. Sonia Sutcliffe
- \* £ 50 if the reporter concerned would speak to the writer of the article

I am proud to say that my staff remained loyal to their newspaper and upheld the traditions of honest journalism in an exemplary manner.

Yours faithfully,

DAVID FLYNN  
 Editor

To U.K Press Gazette from the editor of *The Star*, Sheffield

**TORTURED EDITOR ON 'GENOCIDE OF JOURNALISTS': PAGE 3**

## PART IV — LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

445. It is easy to be wise with hindsight and I have been mindful of this when identifying in the previous section of my report the overall limitations of the police investigation. Where there has been little or no blame attached to the police I have made this clear. Equally, where the police have been responsible for serious errors of judgement, negligence, or indifference or carelessness then this too has been highlighted. All these conclusions have been reached by my team and me following a carefully balanced and professional consideration of all the factors involved. This last point cannot be over emphasised.

446. Not surprisingly, the limitations in the police investigation take up a greater part of my report than do the lessons for the future. This is because it was essential to make a deep probe into all the main elements of the Ripper investigation so as to arrive at the essential truth of what went wrong. Having related my conclusions in that regard, the lessons for the future come as a natural follow-up and I will now deal with each in turn giving recommendations where appropriate.

### (i) Major Incident Rooms

447. The single most important lesson for the future so far as Major Incident Rooms are concerned is that standardisation of procedures must be achieved so that compatible systems, capable of being interfaced in appropriate cases, are in use in all police forces. As I described in the previous section of my report, the Major Incident Room systems of Greater Manchester, Lancashire and West Yorkshire were not compatible and, once in use, were incapable of being interfaced. Even standardisation would not allow for the amalgamation of active systems in their entirety although it would provide for the amalgamation of indexes. Had Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire used standard nominal index cards for instance, it would have been possible, even after the separate indexes had become established, to amalgamate them into one integrated index covering the whole series. The objective for the future should be that a member of any police force with experience of Major Incident Room work should be able to go to a Major Incident Room of another force and immediately know the location and contents of indexes and records and the management structure of any inquiry.

448. Standardisation is even more important when the use of computers in Major Incident Rooms is contemplated. Unless methods of indexing, recording and filing are common in forces contemplating the computerisation of records of crimes within a series, the project is likely to prove impossible to mount. As I shall explain under the next sub-heading of my report the computerisation of Major Incident Room records in series crimes is still likely to be difficult and might well involve the use of separate micro-computers each dealing with a single crime. Opportunities for the experimental development of such systems on live series crimes are thankfully rare so that future development work will often involve simulation using information from old crimes. In the absence of standardisation of Major Incident Room systems such experiments are likely to be time wasting and unnecessarily expensive so that complete standardisation is seen as an absolute prerequisite for further development work in this area.

449. I recommend that the Association of Chief Officers of Police (through the Computer Development Committee) be asked to consider the standardisation of Major Incident Room documents and procedures and to report their conclusions within a reasonable time limit. Unfortunately, previous experience in a number of areas has shown that Chief Constables are reluctant to make standardisation agreements unless pressure is exerted on them so to do. Tentative agreements in the field of police training, crime reporting and the reporting of road accidents have all failed to last for more than a few months and the current state of computer development within the Police Service is indicative of a general unwillingness to share systems not exclusively tailored to the individual force. I regard this area as so important as to justify the specification of a time limit by which standardisation ought to be achieved.

450. There is another important aspect of Major Incident Room work worthy of close scrutiny and this relates to staffing. This is a difficult area since the extent to which resources are available to staff a single Incident Room depends upon the number of commitments which an individual force has to handle at a particular time. So far as an Incident Room dealing with a major crime is concerned it will be necessary in future, especially in the light of the failings in the Ripper case, to

ensure that adequate resources are allocated. I have explained earlier how the Millgarth Major Incident Room was overwhelmed by the weight of information which it was expected to handle and how senior officers of the force failed to recognise the crisis which had arisen so as to deploy an adequate scale of manpower to clear it. I can perhaps emphasise this general point by saying that at the time when Chief Inspector Tyman reviewed the operation of the Major Incident Room, following the murder of Jacqueline Hill, only one typist was allocated to the Room to undertake all the typing work originating there. Equally, no telephonists were employed to receive information from the public so that all members of staff including the Inspector, whose duty it was to supervise the overall running of the Room, had to deal with their ordinary work during any breaks between telephone calls. I have also referred elsewhere to policy decisions which allowed major lines of inquiry, likely to lead to public response, to be started in the absence of staff to handle the consequential flow of information. This was clearly wrong and contributed to the Major Incident Room's failure to meet operational requirements. What should have happened in these cases has a parallel in the police arrangements for major incidents such as aircraft or rail crashes. In such incidents the police open casualty inquiry bureaux so that the police stations from which the incident is being controlled are not overburdened by public inquiries. The arrangements which should have been made in the Ripper case for each new line of inquiry which was likely to generate a large public response, or as a consequence of a new murder in the series, should have had much in common with the casualty bureaux scheme which can be operated at any police station where facilities were available. Such arrangements would have enabled the work of the Incident Room to proceed in reasonable tranquility rather than against a constant background of telephone bells and conversations.

451. Following Chief Inspector Tyman's review of the operation of the Millgarth Major Incident Room in December 1980 additional manpower was allocated to all aspects of the work and some inroad began to be made into the backlog of outstanding inquiries which had by then accumulated. This should not have needed to happen on a crisis basis but should have been identified and remedied before the problem assumed such proportions. The lesson for the future is that the Major Incident Room is a potentially decisive factor in the investigation of serious crime and that unless proper resources are allocated to it commensurate with potential workload, it will tend to degenerate into bureaucratic inefficiency.

452. Another important factor likely to affect the operational efficiency of a Major Incident Room is the extent to which the staff allocated to it are specially trained. The work of a Major Incident Room cannot be completely equated with routine police work although there may be a common element so far as the reception and recording of telephone calls from members of the public are concerned. Much of the work so far as it involves maintenance of indexes and the filing of documents may be well outside the normal experience of people allocated to the Incident Room some of whom may not have had the benefit of even working in the ordinary office situation. In the light of the importance of the tasks and their effect on the progress of an inquiry as a whole, there is a very strong case for as many as possible of the people who are to work within the complex to have had previous training in its systems and methods of operation. It is clear that on many occasions during the life of the Ripper Major Incident Room, untrained staff were deployed to quite crucial tasks. Nowhere was this more apparent than when the list of 241 people to whom the Jordan £5 note might have been paid came to be checked against the Millgarth nominal index. All the signs are that several people were involved in this process and were either police constables or cadets. Whatever the reason was it is now known that this search failed to identify Sutcliffe and 10 others who were in the list and who had had a previous connection with the inquiry. This led to inadequate briefing of inquiry officers with disastrous consequences. Had the system worked efficiently Sutcliffe would have been identified as a prime suspect amongst the 241 people. I have not been able to identify why the references on his nominal index cards were not located when the list of names was being searched but I suspect that it was because of the inexperience of people charged with the task or because the index had by that time become so ineffective that Sutcliffe's cards were not in their correct position. There were other examples of human failure in the Incident Room but it is not necessary to quote them here in support of the basic premise that the police cannot expect to employ untrained personnel in such tasks and at the same time expect the Incident Room to function effectively in a serious or complex crime case.

453. The nominal index of the Ripper Incident Room included, at the time of Sutcliffe's arrest, more than a quarter of a million names. Bearing in mind that this was a card index and that it was being searched frequently as actions were issued and new names came into the system, it should



have been anticipated that cards would be misplaced so that the integrity of the system would be degraded. When Chief Inspector Tyman completed his review he said that "because of its long use and its enormity there has been misfiling by people who have had access to it". It is clearly the case that there was misfiling within the index on quite a large scale, in addition to which the West Yorkshire practice of adding duplicate and triplicate index cards to an original made it possible for cards to become detached and lost in the system. It is obvious that an index system as large as this should have been subjected to a continuous process of audit on rather the same principle as the painting of the Forth Bridge. There is here a real lesson for the future which is that the misplacing of a single card in a nominal index system can jeopardise the whole inquiry. No manual system or even computerised system relying on a manual input can ever be completely free of error but system management should ensure that errors are kept to a minimum and are not allowed to escalate to the stage where the integrity of the system is jeopardised.

454. It is perhaps worth noting that in just the same way as the morale and motivation of members of outside inquiry teams deserve the constant attention of senior investigating officers, the staff of the Major Incident Room deserve equal attention. In a long running inquiry a Major Incident Room can become a centre of repetitive drudgery having much in common with production line working. Both the senior investigating officer and the officer in charge must give adequate regard to the welfare, motivation and morale of the staff so that a high level of efficiency and effectiveness is maintained. Such arrangements must involve the regular controlled turnover of personnel so as to maintain continuity without allowing individual members to become stale. In a prolonged inquiry such as the Ripper case the arrangements for staff deployment must also take account of career development and the legitimate desires of staff members for promotion or redeployment.

455. I have already had informal discussions with Mr. Bunyard, the Chief Constable of Essex and Chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Steering Committee, on Major Incident Rooms and let him know of my general misgivings. I anticipate that by the time formal contact is made with the Association following your Parliamentary Statement about my review, steps will have been taken with a view to achieving standardisation of Major Incident Room procedures, computer policy and the overall training needs of personnel.

#### **(ii) Computerisation of records**

456. The Police Service has for many years recognised that computers should be able to offer the senior investigating officer in a major crime inquiry a more simple and effective means of handling the information flow generated. As has already been made clear, these problems can be enormous and become more and more difficult as the inquiry becomes protracted. Furthermore, they are always exacerbated where a series of incidents is involved and this is particularly marked when incidents take place in more than one force area. Happily such series of incidents are rare, but they are nevertheless, in my view, of sufficient magnitude and importance to justify a major effort by those Departments concerned to provide the operational policeman with the most efficient tool to do the job.

457. The research undertaken to date has identified a requirement to produce a computer application which will handle every facet of the Incident Room system. Regretably, as I described earlier, such systems do differ considerably from force to force. The approach undertaken thus far has been to meet the need by a system of "full text" retrieval which automatically indexes every word in a statement taken from a witness as it is typed or from any other relevant document. Thus the investigating officer has the facility to recall on a visual display unit any statement, part of a statement, or any number of documents which relate to a specific incident for example "man with dog" or "taxi driver". Such a system has enormous advantages to the detective who is endeavouring to identify every person who becomes the subject of his inquiries and ultimately to identify the murderer by this means. Whilst those concerned are conscious of the difference in systems utilised throughout the country these experiments have been conducted so as to take account, as far as possible, of such differences and thus produce a system which will be available to all forces who wish to avail themselves of it. However, those forces whose systems differ in a fundamental way from the package will, necessarily, have to make appropriate changes to their systems if essential progress on a national basis is to be achieved. As I have intimated previously discussions I have had with Chief Constables recently lead me to believe that the Service is ready for a lead in this direction and recommendations arising from my report will provide this.

458. The research which has taken place over the years has been confronted with considerable technological difficulty. It is hoped that such difficulty has now been overcome and a full scale experiment under the code name M.I.R.I.A.M. (Major Incident Room Indexing Actioning Management) is currently being mounted by the Police Scientific Development Branch of the Home Office in the Essex Police area. This system is currently about to go to tender with a quotation price in the region of £700,000. It must, however, be said that even if this experiment is successful it will be some years before it will produce a package which will be generally available to the police.

459. In recent months consideration has also been given to the design of a system utilising new developments in micro-computer technology which it is thought may be able to provide a computer system of sufficient capacity to handle the nominal name indexes and references normally used in a major crime inquiry. The work in this respect is at an early stage but is showing signs of promise. A micro-computer of this type costs something in the order of £20,000 and is capable of running one such nominal index, but unfortunately, problems relating to the interface of that murder index with other murder indexes which may occur in the series have not been resolved, neither have problems arising from incidents occurring in different force areas been overcome. The solution to these difficulties as currently proposed is a pyramid structure using a number of micro-computers to handle any number of incidents at the base of the pyramid and when a series is identified, utilising a larger computer to which can be transferred information from a number of micro-computers dealing with single incidents. Ultimately, and no doubt some years ahead, it is hoped that such a system could be developed which would be nationally based for those major series such as the Ripper case.

460. The gap between this two pronged approach has also been considered and what might be termed a middle course solution is being simultaneously developed under the code name M.O.S.E.S. (Miriam Operational Status Enquiry System). This system, utilising the experience gathered to date, provides something more than the simple indexing system given by the micro-computer, whilst falling short of the comprehensive system envisaged in M.I.R.I.A.M. It is based upon a total package being provided by a private sector computer bureau on a hire or purchase basis to any police force requiring it. The hire costs are estimated to be in the region of £70,000 to £80,000 per annum but it would provide a stop gap should the Police Service be faced with another series of horrific crimes such as happened in the Ripper case. I am, however, once again mindful that this technology is untried in a police environment and I am doubtful that such a system would be used in an operational context other than to meet a very dire need.

461. We have had detailed discussions with all the Home Office Departments involved in this field, and I am especially grateful to Mr. R. Bunyard, whose force is hosting these experiments and who so readily gave of his valuable time to assist me in my deliberations. Flowing from these meetings arrangements have been made to bring these matters to the urgent attention of ACPO Computer Development Committee expressing my confirmed view that police forces should not embark upon individual projects to meet their local needs, but rather agree upon common systems being developed in support of the M.I.R.I.A.M. project, and the short term micro-computer based solution. I understand that there is likely to be a Circular issued from Home Office on these lines in the near future and the general advice will be to the effect that Chief Constables should consult the Home Office, through the Inspectorate, for guidance in the use of a computer in any crime investigation. I welcome this initiative which should be reinforced when the general lessons to be learned from this review are being promulgated to the Service.

462. The discussions I have had in this particular sphere have also served to reinforce my view that the part played by the PNCU in the Ripper case has more than amply demonstrated that this unit should be drawn more closely into departmental consideration of the way ahead.

463. The major attractions of ultimately utilising a national system with an ability to interface with existing national records of vehicles and criminal names indexes are obvious. If, as I believe, we should be looking to a national system in the years ahead, I have no doubt that PNCU can and should now be providing the means by which these plans can be laid. In addition the acknowledged difficulties in mounting vehicle related inquiries and the considerable resources required to complete such operations which have been highlighted elsewhere, together with the

considerable contribution made by the PNC in the Ripper case in relation to the handling of a mass of motor vehicles numbers, persuades me that the Police Service should look carefully at this area of activity and the assistance which can be given by PNC

464. In addition to these technical considerations I am extremely conscious of the privacy aspects involved in the police use of computers. It is essential, in my view, that all concerned realise the advantages to an investigating officer in serious crime incidents, of the value of efficient computer technology and weigh these properly against the disquiet which can arise from the fact that the information stored in a particular case about members of the public and their movements at material times which can be completely lawful and innocent. I have no doubt that by far the majority of the general public would recognise and accept that in a case such as the Yorkshire Ripper, it was perfectly proper to collate by technological means the vehicles and ultimately the owners of those vehicles being seen in "red light" areas. I would go further and suggest that in such a series of offences or in cases such as murder or rape there would be a general acceptability of the use of computer technology to assist the senior investigating officer to store and sift all the information coming to the notice of the police. Even so, it still needs to be effectively and sensitively put over to the public that, unless the use of such technology is accepted by the community, it must be prepared to tolerate that the detection of major crime will be impaired by the use of paper and pencil in preference to magnetic disc and tape.

465. Finally on this topic I believe there is also a need to put this message across effectively when the proposed legislation in this difficult area is being debated. There must be a centralised monitoring system to ensure that decided privacy rights are strictly maintained whilst at the same time ensuring that in crime investigation, especially in serious cases, computer technology is utilised to the utmost. This monitoring service in forces should be provided by the Inspectorate.

### **(iii) Management of Series Crimes**

466. As I identified in the section of my report which deals with command, control and resources the most important prerequisite for the successful completion of a major series crime inquiry is an appropriate level and range of management skills in the senior investigating officer. It is with some reluctance that I have concluded that not all of the 43 police forces in England and Wales have senior detectives in post who could be expected to deal competently with an inquiry on the Ripper scale. It will be important in future for the Service, and in particular Chief Officers, to remedy this deficiency by improving the arrangements for selection, training and career development of people to fill these positions. Those who are earmarked for future service as senior detectives should be encouraged to develop their appreciation and understanding of management skills and be given opportunities to put them into practical effect. The aim for the future should be to ensure that in addition to having personal skill as detectives, the officers to whom major crime inquiries will be entrusted should be good managers in the widest possible sense and be conscious of the need to use a wide variety of highly developed individual skills within their inquiry teams. This is perhaps the most important aspect of all. The training which I shall prescribe later is intended to ensure that such expertise is more widely available in future.

467. I shall also deal later with the appointment of senior investigating officers for series crimes investigations, especially in multi-force areas, and with the appointment of an external Advisory Team. In the case of the senior investigating officer, when appointed to take charge of a series type investigation, he should not have any other responsibilities. This recommendation should not be seen as precluding the appointment of an individual investigating officer for each new crime in the series, whose responsibility would include the completion of all the routine inquiries which would be required for a similar crime which did not form part of a series. The senior investigating officer should not be so fully committed with routine matters arising from the overall investigation that he does not have time to apply his mind to the identification of new and profitable lines by which the detection of a suspect might be hastened.

468. During my review of the Ripper crimes the greatest single difficulty which I have encountered has been the identification of major police decisions taken during the currency of the investigation. Although I am confident that my report reflects the most accurate information which is available, interviews with senior officers of the West Yorkshire and other forces involved have clearly demonstrated a lack of common understanding of policy issues at various stages of the inquiry. For example, it has not been possible to identify beyond doubt, who was responsible

for the decision to "go public" on the "Sunderland" letters and subsequently the tape or who took the decision to mount the sponsored publicity campaign late in 1979. A further example is provided by the decision to bring various lines of inquiry to a premature conclusion or to open new lines of inquiry during the currency of an existing inquiry. The initial car "Tracking Inquiry", the "Mark II Ford Cortina Inquiry" and the "Farina" inquiry are all cases in point. There was within West Yorkshire no formal arrangement for the recording and dissemination of major policy decisions. Some decisions taken by the senior investigating officer were entered in the relevant murder log but others were never recorded. As I pointed out earlier, the fact that Superintendent Stainthorpe eliminated Sutcliffe on handwriting despite Chief Superintendent Gilrain having varied the elimination criteria previously provided in the "Special Notice" of September 1979, is a pertinent illustration of the confusion which often follows improperly documented decisions. An inquiry of this magnitude called for "corporate" management, for regular meetings of the senior management team, for the recording of minutes of meetings and the documentation and circulation to relevant officers of major policy decisions. A noteworthy lesson for the future is that the senior investigating officer together with members of the external Advisory Team, when appointed, and the individual incident officers from each crime in the series, should meet on a regular basis to discuss the development of the investigation, the cancellation of any unproductive or exhausted lines of inquiry and the adoption of new investigative avenues. These meetings should also deal with the management of independent inquiries including the resources available to them and the delegation of authority to subordinate officers to carry them out to an agreed time scale. Such meetings should be minuted and circulated on a "need to know" basis.

469. A good example of independent lines of inquiry and the problems of resource allocation and time scale was provided by the "Tracking" and "Cross Area Sighting" inquiries in the Ripper case which, as described earlier, went hopelessly wrong. Before any such inquiry is mounted in future its objectives should be clearly identified and resources allocated to it on a scale which will allow it to be completed within an agreed time limit. The inquiry should be delegated in its entirety to someone other than the senior investigating officer or the incident officer for any of the independent crimes and he should only be required to report positively during the inquiry or generally at its conclusion. The line of inquiry should not be abandoned before conclusion unless it has been overtaken by a course of events (for example, the arrest of the culprit) or has become irrelevant because of new information which has become available. The decision should be taken by the senior investigating officer in consultation with his corporate management team and should be properly recorded.

470. Commander Nevill strongly recommended the formation of an intelligence unit within the West Yorkshire Major Incident Room. The need for the type of work which such a unit could do had earlier been recognised within West Yorkshire and had led to the formation of the internal Review Team under Chief Superintendent Domaille. This Team did valuable work but once its report had been submitted to the Chief Constable it was disbanded and no similar work was done until recommended by the external Advisory Team appointed in November 1980.

471. As a result of that particular recommendation a number of independent lines of research were conducted into the operation of the Major Incident Room, the production, timing and content of Police Circulations about the crimes and the validity of the "Letters and Tape Inquiry". These initiatives unfortunately came too late in the investigation for their impact to be conclusive but they were effective in revealing the way in which outstanding problems might have been tackled at an earlier stage. As I have earlier identified, the decision to mount the "Letters and Tape Inquiry" without proper analysis of their contents in relation to information which had been made available through the media, was wrong. This was the sort of task which might have been given to an intelligence unit had one been available. I do not contend that such a unit should be in post at all times throughout the course of a series inquiry, only that capable officers to staff such a unit should be made available on an ad hoc basis whenever there are independent lines of research available, the pursuit of which could assist the senior investigating officer. The content of Police Circulations in relation to series crimes is clearly an area where members of such an intelligence unit could provide valuable assistance by ensuring that the best possible information was circulated in such a way as left readers in no doubt of the relative importance of each aspect of it. An intelligence unit in the Ripper Major Incident Room might well have foreseen that not all Sutcliffe's attacks on women resulted in the death of the victim and therefore contemplated that more extensive inquiries amongst surviving victims might have given more positive leads or new

avenues of inquiry. Such an intelligence unit could clearly have included an officer or civilian employee with extensive computer experience, able to ensure that full advantage was taken of any relevant computer application.

472. It is said that the true test of police effectiveness at a major incident such as an aircraft or train crash is the length of time which elapses before the police can demonstrate that they are fully in control of the situation. In the early stages of an incident, for instance, police officers and members of other emergency services arrive in an unco-ordinated way so that it is difficult for the officer in charge of the incident to say how many members of the different organisations are present at the scene and what they are doing. One of the primary tasks is to control access to the scene, to identify and control existing resources and to deploy them to the tasks which remain to be done in a proper order of priority. Only when the senior officer can clearly identify the different aspects of the situation which exists, the outstanding tasks in order of priority, the individual members of various organisations working on the site, the length of time they have been engaged and the time when they are due to be relieved for rest and refreshment can he claim to be in control. These questions should not need to be asked in connection with a developing situation such as a series of major crimes. It ought to be possible for the officer in charge to maintain records throughout the currency of the inquiry so that he is always able to identify the current situation. This was clearly not the case during the Ripper investigation and one of the reasons for the appointment of the Domaille Review Team was the need to identify stages which a number of subordinate lines of inquiry had reached. It should not be necessary to take this sort of action on a crisis basis. An inquiry into a serious crimes should involve a proper system of central administration through which all resources deployed to the inquiry are controlled and monitored. This is not a difficult requirement and does not involve a heavy manpower commitment. It does, however, involve senior investigating officers and incident officers observing a disciplined approach to the management of resources, all of which should be provided through the central administrative agency. Only by this means can proper control be exercised over the costs of an investigation including those of specific lines of inquiry.

473. Although many forces now make proper support and welfare arrangements for serious crime inquiries, experience with some welfare arrangements in the Ripper case lead me to emphasise that whenever an inquiry involving the deployment of manpower on a large scale is being contemplated, proper administrative support arrangements should be made. An individual officer should be given responsibility for the welfare of officers involved in the investigation in the widest sense. Included within this overall responsibility should be arrangements for accommodation, feeding, continuity of deployment, staff turnover and any other problems likely to be experienced within a large group of men and women who are almost inevitably working away from their normal operational base. The effort should be intended to maintain the motivation and morale of inquiry officers and to reduce the amount of time which they might need to spend away from the inquiry dealing with domestic or welfare issues through the ordinary channels available to them. As I have identified in the part of my report which deals with Command and Control, the promotion and maintenance of high motivation and morale is more related to the nature of the work which people are required to do than to welfare considerations. Pre-occupation with welfare issues over a protracted period can, however, dull the interest and enthusiasm of inquiry officers and prevent them applying their best efforts to their work. The apparent lack of morale and motivation amongst officers engaged in the £5 note inquiries during the Ripper investigation is a typical example. Whilst perspiration is more likely to clear up a difficult investigation than inspiration there must be regular boosts given to junior officers who are engaged on mundane duties, such as house-to-house inquiries over a lengthy period, if motivation and morale are to be kept at an efficient level. Realistic and interesting briefings on a regular basis provide an excellent means for doing this and the basic aim should be to make every officer engaged on the particular inquiry, however junior he might be, feel as though he is doing something important in the overall interests of the investigation and that he can make any suggestion or comment at a briefing in furtherance of this ideal.

474. In essence the management of series cases such as the "Black Panther" or Ripper investigations calls for far more than the basic professional techniques looked for in the average senior detective who might regularly investigate individual cases of murder. In the series investigation, especially over a protracted period, he will need to marshal not only the normal force resources but also very often those from elsewhere. He will be looking for individual skills in his team leaders so as to strengthen the corporate effort. The logistics of the operation coupled

with the financial implications will need to be understood so as to enable him to persuade his chief officers and sometimes others, of the validity of his strategy in any part of the investigation. There might be occasions when perhaps an Advisory Team of senior officers from elsewhere (in line with a recommendation I shall be making later) is called in to assist him and in order to achieve maximum benefit from such an arrangement he will need to be sufficiently astute and imaginative not only to balance in the right way any advice given, but also to harness the professional expertise of the group to serve his needs to the full. To achieve all this the selection process and career development of such top flight detectives must be improved in many instances and there also needs to be a reappraisal of the training programme available. I will cover this latter point later when giving my recommendations under the "Training Requirement".

**(iv) Senior Investigating Officer in "Series Crimes"**

475. A lesson which the Police Service has clearly failed to learn from the notorious "Black Panther" crimes of the mid-1970s is that where crimes within a connected series occur, and especially in different force areas, special arrangements need to be made for command of the co-ordinated inquiry. In the "Black Panther" case which involved murders being committed in Yorkshire, Lancashire and Staffordshire with a subsequent kidnapping in the West Mercia area, each of the four forces conducted its own independent inquiry into the crimes, assisted by members of the Regional Crime Squad and ultimately by a senior Scotland Yard officer. Although there were liaison meetings the inquiry was never under unified command as a result of which a number of embarrassing mistakes were made. None of the inquiries in the four police areas was successful in identifying a suspect and Neilson, the murderer, was eventually caught by a routine police patrol in Nottinghamshire, in a similar way to Sutcliffe's arrest in Sheffield for the Ripper crimes.

476. The problems associated with a multi-force crime series investigation derive from the fact that each Chief Constable of a police force has complete operational authority within that force area. Although there is a legal framework under which one Chief Constable can provide assistance to another, there is no provision under which, in ordinary circumstances, a Chief Constable can be compelled to surrender any part of his operational authority to a senior officer from another force. Local force prestige is a likely barrier in the way of requests for assistance, especially since the advent of larger police areas, whilst history shows that there are few, if any, occasions when a Chief Constable would voluntarily allow an inquiry into a crime within his force area to be controlled by an officer from elsewhere.

477. When the Ripper case first involved the Greater Manchester Police following the murder of Jean Jordan, Greater Manchester immediately assumed complete responsibility for the investigation. This decision was taken in spite of the fact that the crime was clearly linked with others which had already occurred in West Yorkshire and in relation to which an extensive investigation was already under way. There was no voluntary move towards an immediate amalgamation of the inquiries under a single senior investigating officer and the Greater Manchester force established a Major Incident Room in Manchester from which they controlled their inquiry as if it were wholly independent of any other crime. There were, of course, consultations between senior detectives on both sides of the Pennines but although some common lines of inquiry were established there was never a suggestion that the two investigations should be fully co-ordinated under one "Supremo" investigating officer. The failure to mount a co-ordinated inquiry was a principal factor leading to the problems which I identified in Part III of my report, and particularly in relation to the work of the Major Incident Room, the £5 note inquiry and the "Letters and Tape" inquiry.

478. The other serious consequence arising from the failure to appoint a senior commander with authority in both forces was West Yorkshire's failure to profit from independent professional advice. Senior investigating officers had the opportunity to benefit from the research work of Detective Inspector Zackrisson of Northumbria in relation to the letters and tape; of Detective Inspector Fletcher of Greater Manchester in relation to the "Tracking Inquiry"; of Messrs. Outteridge and Stockdale, the forensic scientists, in relation to the descriptions of suspects by the surviving victims and of Commander Nevill of New Scotland Yard in relation to a variety of important aspects of the investigation. All these opportunities to benefit from independent professional advice were not effectively acted upon by West Yorkshire and this might well have

been due to the fact that such advice was being offered by members of other forces. I do not imply that these opportunities were rejected without consideration; merely that the senior officers of West Yorkshire did not believe what was being offered was superior to the research done and opinions held within their own force.

479. It could be argued that an error of judgement made by a "Supremo" investigating officer might have a more catastrophic effect on a multi-force inquiry than those made by officers in charge of the separate investigations of series crimes within the independent force areas. I do not accept that this is the case. Certain errors of judgement made in West Yorkshire during the Ripper inquiry were very serious indeed and were not prevented or ameliorated by the influence of senior investigating officers from other forces. In fact West Yorkshire had a number of opportunities during the investigation to benefit from independent professional advice but more often than not chose not to do so.

480. This concept of parochial superiority must be overcome if some principal lessons from both the "Black Panther" and Ripper cases are to be effectively digested within the Service. Looking to the future, I shall refer later in my report to the "Training Requirement" which, if implemented to the full, should help overcome such outdated insularity.

481. I am firmly of the view that in the series serious crime situation there needs to be one officer in overall command of the investigation with the authority to direct the course of the investigation in all the police areas affected. His rank should be either Assistant Chief Constable or Detective Chief Superintendent depending on the size of the operation and during his appointment he should have no other responsibilities. In the case of a multi-force investigation he should be appointed following the mutual agreement of the Chief Constables concerned.

482. The choice of officer to take supreme command is obviously of vital importance. The temptation to appoint the "senior man" on age or service grounds should be resisted, unless it is clear that this candidate has all of the qualities required in an inquiry "leader". The person appointed requires not only the professional competence which will inspire confidence in those who work for him but the charisma which will ensure loyalty to him and his policies, even when there is individual doubt about their validity. These attributes were clearly not present during the Ripper inquiry and it was Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield's failure to lead effectively which paved the way for loss of confidence in and loyalty to his inquiry policies. There is evidence that loyalty to various senior inquiry officers was undermined by their contemporaries during the investigation and that the work was less effective in consequence. Perhaps the best example of the operation of old loyalties is that the first senior officer to visit Dewsbury Police Station following Sutcliffe's arrest was Mr. Oldfield, in spite of the fact that he had been removed from command of the inquiry! Assistant Chief Constable Hobson, appointed to the control of the inquiry in November 1980, found out about the arrest by accident, as did the Press Liaison officer Superintendent Morritt. Loyalties and jealousies stemming from the former constituent forces now combined in West Yorkshire will lose their impact with the passage of time. For the foreseeable future, however, I hold the view that senior officers appointed in the ranks of Assistant Chief Constable and Chief Superintendent should wherever possible, be drawn from outside the present force area so as to give a much needed cross fertilisation of the senior command team and also help overcome the obvious prejudices and misplaced loyalties as identified during my review.

483. In the light of the limitations already widely known within the Service arising from the two notorious cases previously mentioned, I believe that the Association of Chief Police Officers would be willing to adopt not only the procedure which I have outlined for the appointment of a "Supremo" investigating officer but also for the appointment of an independent Advisory Team which I shall describe later to assist the senior investigating officer when appropriate in the series crime situation. In my view, if these two particular recommendations are adopted within the Service then much of the frailty exposed in the management of the Ripper style investigation should be overcome.

#### **(v) The Appointment of an Advisory Team**

484. In one sense it was very fortunate that the Ripper crimes were committed predominantly in West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. These two forces are amongst a comparatively small



been due to the fact that such advice was being offered by members of other forces. I do not imply that these opportunities were rejected without consideration; merely that the senior officers of West Yorkshire did not believe what was being offered was superior to the research done and opinions held within their own force.

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480. This concept of parochial superiority must be overcome if some principal lessons from both the "Black Panther" and Ripper cases are to be effectively digested within the Service. Looking to the future, I shall refer later in my report to the "Training Requirement" which, if implemented to the full, should help overcome such outdated insularity.

481. I am firmly of the view that in the series serious crime situation there needs to be one officer in overall command of the investigation with the authority to direct the course of the investigation in all the police areas affected. His rank should be either Assistant Chief Constable or Detective Chief Superintendent depending on the size of the operation and during his appointment he should have no other responsibilities. In the case of a multi-force investigation he should be appointed following the mutual agreement of the Chief Constables concerned.

482. The choice of officer to take supreme command is obviously of vital importance. The temptation to appoint the "senior man" on age or service grounds should be resisted, unless it is clear that this candidate has all of the qualities required in an inquiry "leader". The person appointed requires not only the professional competence which will inspire confidence in those who work for him but the charisma which will ensure loyalty to him and his policies, even when there is individual doubt about their validity. These attributes were clearly not present during the Ripper inquiry and it was Assistant Chief Constable Oldfield's failure to lead effectively which paved the way for loss of confidence in and loyalty to his inquiry policies. There is evidence that loyalty to various senior inquiry officers was undermined by their contemporaries during the investigation and that the work was less effective in consequence. Perhaps the best example of the operation of old loyalties is that the first senior officer to visit Dewsbury Police Station following Sutcliffe's arrest was Mr. Oldfield, in spite of the fact that he had been removed from command of the inquiry! Assistant Chief Constable Hobson, appointed to the control of the inquiry in November 1980, found out about the arrest by accident, as did the Press Liaison officer Superintendent Morrill. Loyalties and jealousies stemming from the former constituent forces now combined in West Yorkshire will lose their impact with the passage of time. For the foreseeable future, however, I hold the view that senior officers appointed in the ranks of Assistant Chief Constable and Chief Superintendent should wherever possible, be drawn from outside the present force area so as to give a much needed cross fertilisation of the senior command team and also help overcome the obvious prejudices and misplaced loyalties as identified during my review.

483. In the light of the limitations already widely known within the Service arising from the two notorious cases previously mentioned, I believe that the Association of Chief Police Officers would be willing to adopt not only the procedure which I have outlined for the appointment of a "Supremo" investigating officer but also for the appointment of an independent Advisory Team which I shall describe later to assist the senior investigating officer when appropriate in the series crime situation. In my view, if these two particular recommendations are adopted within the Service then much of the frailty exposed in the management of the Ripper style investigation should be overcome.

#### **(v) The Appointment of an Advisory Team**

484. In one sense it was very fortunate that the Ripper crimes were committed predominantly in West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. These two forces are amongst a comparatively small

number in the country which are almost big enough to sustain the demands of such a large and complex inquiry. Had the series occurred predominantly in North Yorkshire or in one of the other shire counties such as Leicestershire or Northamptonshire, there is no possibility that the inquiry could have been sustained from internal resources so that significant external aid would have had to be called for. Although the mutual aid provision of Section 14 of the Police Act 1964 (mainly used by police forces to provide assistance in public order situations) could be used to make operational detectives available to assist another force with inquiries into a particularly difficult crime, it is unlikely that this provision would be used to provide "staff" assistance from senior detectives. Some provincial Chief Constables are mindful of this potential problem and as one said to me recently,

"Twenty or thirty years ago when Forces were relatively much smaller it was generally accepted by many Chief Constables that it was advantageous to call in New Scotland Yard to co-ordinate what might turn out to be a protracted murder investigation. The Detective Superintendent from the Yard would come up on the afternoon train with his sergeant and his bag and this did much to allay public apprehension about an undetected murder and it also helped to maintain our professional expertise at the right level. The weakness in the system now, especially within the smaller forces, is that whilst we do not call in the Yard, save on rare occasions, we have done nothing to replace a recognised system which served us well."

485. Very probably, some colleagues of this particular Chief Constable would not wholly subscribe to the views he expressed to me but I believe there is merit in his underlying philosophy which envisages the need for some national facility to be readily available to assist a provincial force which might be faced with a protracted and complex murder inquiry especially of the series type. I have already expressed a view in my report that I believe that the Association of Chief Police Officers would be willing to accept procedural changes as recommended by Home Office which encompassed not only the appointment of a "Supremo" investigating officer in appropriate cases but also the appointment of an Advisory Team comprised of senior police officers and a forensic scientist with proven professional track records and the special skills required to assist the senior investigating officer in the complex multi-murder type investigation.

486. As explained earlier, the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police had various opportunities to benefit from independent professional advice during the course of the Ripper inquiry. These offers were not always taken up and there was no procedure by which the person offering the advice could urge its adoption other than by having a dialogue at the time with West Yorkshire senior investigating officers. After that, there appears to have been little incentive to implement the advice given about the important facets of the investigation. For example, Commander Nevill produced a useful report for the Chief Constable and suggested a number of changes which, had some been implemented, would have been of great benefit to the overall investigation. However, having regard to his terms of reference, Mr. Nevill was unable to refer back to the force or to any independent authority to ascertain to what extent his recommendations had been adopted. We have ascertained that his report was to some extent reviewed by Detective Chief Superintendent Gilrain at the instigation of the Chief Constable but relatively little appears to have been done to implement the recommendations, particularly those which involved a change in existing priorities that might have given beneficial results.

487. Only with the arrival of the external Advisory Team who were appointed following the public disquiet about the police action in the Jacqueline Hill murder case in November 1980, was external advice to have any significant impact on the Ripper inquiry. At that time Detective Chief Superintendent Hobson was appointed Temporary Assistant Chief Constable and took over command of the Ripper investigation from Mr. Oldfield. The Advisory Team comprised two deputy chief constables, one assistant chief constable, a commander of the Metropolitan Police and a leading forensic scientist.

488. They were all highly regarded in the professional sense especially in the investigation of serious crime. Equally important, the new head of the Ripper inquiry, Mr. Hobson, was genuinely interested in the advice given by the Team and did his best to implement any recommendations made. Although the potential assistance of this external advisory effort was overtaken by Sutcliffe's arrest there are clear indications that the course and progress of the inquiry might have

taken a dramatic turn for the better as a result of their presence. Without the benefit of hindsight, some of the more important deficiencies in the investigation were highlighted (in a tactful way) to the Chief Constable in a report presented to him in December last, the month before Sutcliffe's arrest. From the contents of this report it is clear that the Team members proved their worth and professional credibility. Had Sutcliffe not been arrested in January this year (the month when the Advisory Team were due to return to West Yorkshire) there is good reason to think that with the acceptance of the main recommendations in their report about new lines of inquiry it is likely that Sutcliffe would have become a much stronger suspect than hitherto with the possibility of a more thorough interrogation by experienced senior detectives.

489. Consequently I have come to the conclusion that there must be a means of harnessing the best detective and scientific talent in the country to assist the senior investigating officer in a protracted investigation. The best way of achieving this would be to have an ad hoc Advisory Team earmarked centrally by H.M. Chief Inspector of Constabulary, in consultation with ACPO Crime Committee. The police members will normally be of ACPO rank with relatively recent experience of practical detective work at senior level. For instance, the Advisory Team appointed in West Yorkshire last November included two senior officers with Murder Squad experience at New Scotland Yard, a Metropolitan Commander who had been head of a Provincial Force CID and had also been in charge of Criminal Intelligence at the Yard, and a deputy chief constable previously National Co-ordinator of Regional Crime Squads. The forensic scientist was head of the Forensic Science Research Establishment at Aldermaston. This was obviously a team of the highest professional talent as was readily accepted by the media and other critics of what had gone before during the Ripper investigation. However, for a team to be looked upon with such favour both within and outside the Service it must be changed regularly to ensure the best up-to-date operational experience is maintained within it. Members should be drawn from different forces (excluding those already involved with the crimes) and in addition there should be a forensic scientist of similar repute and where appropriate, an experienced member of the Police Research Services Unit the Police Scientific Development Branch and the Police National Computer Unit having regard to the problems facing the senior investigating officer.

490. Bearing in mind the limitations exposed in police investigative techniques in the earlier "Black Panther" case and now more recently, the Ripper case, I feel sure that the Service is anxious to benefit from the resultant lessons. There are many benefits which accrue from a decentralised policing system such as we have in Britain but there are also inherent weaknesses which were starkly illustrated by the lack of co-ordinated efficiency in the two cases mentioned. I anticipate that all Chief Officers will readily appreciate this point and will be willing to co-operate in any recommended procedures on these lines as promulgated by Home Office in due course. Even so, there is, in my view, an additional prerequisite to ensure the future success of what I have in mind and that is an increasing interventionist role by the Inspectorate on the grounds of efficiency when deemed necessary. This might arise, for example, if a series homicide investigation were to cover three separate police areas and one of the chief constables concerned declined to co-operate in either the appointment of a "Supremo" investigating officer or an Advisory Team as suggested. It would then be for the Regional Inspector of Constabulary to report to Home Office accordingly with appropriate action taken thereafter. I hasten to add that I do not envisage the need for this course of action arising but on balance, I think it would be right to cover this possibility when drafting any recommendations in due course. I fully realise that under our constitutional system the Home Secretary has no power to tell Chief Constables how they should conduct an investigation nor do I think this would be desirable. But, having said that, there is the Home Secretary's overall responsibility under the Police Act, 1964, "to promote the efficiency of the police" by using the powers under the Act and I envisage that it would be for the Regional Inspector of Constabulary to keep the Home Office fully apprised of any local situation developing to the point of concern.

491. Finally, it should be borne in mind that members of the external Advisory Team unlike the senior investigating officer as previously recommended, need not be completely divorced from other duties. They should visit, as required, the force or forces concerned in a consultant capacity but should not be classed as permanent members of the inquiry team. It will be recalled that in Part III of my report I referred to the appointment of Messrs. Outteridge and Stockdale as resident scientific advisers in the Ripper Inquiry. In practice there was clearly a limit to the benefit which could accrue from the two scientists being resident in West Yorkshire and indeed they both

withdrew after a relatively short period. With the benefit of hindsight their assistance would probably have proved more useful had they been employed on a regular consultancy basis and I consider this should also be the case with regard to any external Advisory Team and I so recommend.

**(vi) Specialist and Scientific Support Services**

492. The Police Service in England and Wales is served by a network of Home Office Forensic Science Laboratories which are sited in such a way as to attempt to provide the optimum service for each of the 43 forces involved. The Metropolitan Police, of course, has its own dedicated science laboratory and the service throughout the country is supported by the Home Office Central Research Establishment at Aldermaston. The function of these eight establishments is to provide the Police Service with readily available scientific support at all levels from the processing of blood/alcohol samples to the identification of the most minute quantities of substances by advanced scientific techniques. All scientific fields are covered including biology, chemistry, toxicology, document examination and a very wide range of other sciences.

493. The services of laboratory scientists are obtained in two principal ways; first and most common by the submission to the Regional Laboratory of samples recovered from the scenes of crime by the police and second, usually in connection with more serious or difficult crimes, by a visit of a scientist to a crime scene where he will obtain his own samples and take them to the laboratory for analysis. Police liaison officers are on the staff of each laboratory to assist in the transfer of evidence and information between police officers and scientists. Over the years these posts have become more administrative than functional and the appointment of large numbers of police scenes of crime officers has severely restricted their participation in actual crime inquiries.

494. In the early stages of an inquiry the scientist is the adviser of the investigating officer and he attempts to provide him with the maximum amount of relevant information which can be obtained from evidential material in an easily assimilated form. Later the scientist becomes an adviser of the Courts. This means that once an offender is detected and it is proposed to place him before a Court, the scientist's responsibility is to provide the Court with scientific evidence which will help it reach a conclusion. The scientist in this situation is a servant of the Court rather than of the police and it may well be that some of the conclusions which he may draw, on the material presented to him, might eventually be seen as being harmful rather than helpful to the prosecution case. This shift of emphasis is fully accepted by the Police Service and by those who act in the defence of people appearing before the Courts, both of whom recognise the need for complete integrity and impartiality in the handling of scientific matters of fact and the conclusions which should be drawn from them.

495. The Forensic Science Service was extensively involved in the investigation of the Yorkshire Ripper crimes, the laboratories at Wetherby and Chorley having had the greatest individual commitment. The Wetherby laboratory alone dealt with 2,652 items of evidence during the series. In the event, forensic science was not instrumental in bringing Peter Sutcliffe to justice and there were in fact few evidential avenues which could have been very greatly helped by the application of forensic science techniques. Had Peter Sutcliffe ultimately pleaded not guilty to the offences with which he was charged evidence supporting his complicity in some of them could undoubtedly have been provided by scientific means, but this proved unnecessary. It is thus true to say that whilst my inquiry has revealed limitations in the scientific investigation of the Yorkshire Ripper case none of them was, or could have been, as significant as the principal limitations identified in Part III of my report.

496. An underlying problem which affected the handling of scientific evidence in this case had an exact parallel in the police organisation of the investigation. In just the same way that a large number of different investigating officers were involved in Sutcliffe's many crimes, a large number of individual scientists at both Wetherby and Chorley were also involved. In connection with the 20 crimes which Sutcliffe has admitted, ten scientists were involved. Of the ten, one handled one case only whilst another was involved in five cases. In 17 of the cases the scene of the crime was visited by a scientist and nine different scientists were involved in such visits. Co-ordination of the work of the several scientists was handled by the Chief Biologist at the Wetherby laboratory, a post which changed hands during the period of the inquiry.

497. The lack of co-ordination in scientific support for the series was identified whilst the investigation was in progress and the Controller of the Forensic Science Service at the Home Office, Dr. Curry, arranged for Mr. R.A. Outteridge, the Director of the Nottingham Forensic Science Laboratory and Mr. R.E. Stockdale of the Wetherby Laboratory to be seconded to the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police as resident scientific advisers. The two scientists were provided with accommodation at the Western Area Police Headquarters at Bradford from where, during the four month period of their attachment, they produced a number of reports for the investigating officers. Twenty-six of these reports dealt with specific queries from the police on scientific issues affecting the crimes and a further ten dealt with more general matters in relation to which the scientists offered suggestions about new lines of inquiry which might be undertaken. One of the recommendations in this latter category was that all of the descriptions provided by eye witnesses of attacks and by surviving victims should be assembled in schedule form and considered as a whole to see whether common factors emerged. As described earlier, although such an exercise was conducted by the Domaille Review Team in 1979 it was not done again subsequently as a result of which valuable opportunities were lost. Messrs. Outteridge and Stockdale ultimately withdrew from the inquiry because it was felt that their continued resident availability was not serving any useful purpose. This was probably partly due to the concept of resident scientific advice being unfamiliar to the police who failed to identify a satisfactory role in which the scientists could assist the inquiry.

498. When Commander Nevill visited the force, he commented on the lack of scientific evidence and on the absence of liaison between the investigating officers and the laboratory. As a result of his comments a number of liaison meetings were held and the situation is thought to have improved slightly. Given the lack of continuity both of investigating officers and of scientists, effective liaison was inevitably difficult to provide. An example of what should have happened, rather than what did happen, is provided by the informal liaison which developed between Professor Gee (the Pathologist who examined the bodies of all the murder victims and the injuries of some of the survivors) and Detective Superintendent Holland. Superintendent Holland, although not the investigating officer in most of the crimes was, in fact, the police officer associated with the investigation perhaps more than anyone else in the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police so that it was natural for Professor Gee, anxious to have some permanent and reliable point of reference, to develop this valuable informal relationship. The recommendation for the future is, of course, that such things should not be left to accident and that wherever a senior investigating officer is appointed to an inquiry in accordance with my earlier recommendation, a senior scientist should be appointed as the permanent scientific adviser to the senior investigating officer for the duration of the inquiry. Such an appointment would do a great deal to ensure that things were not overlooked because one scientist believed that another scientist was doing them when, in fact, that was not the case. The concept of the permanent scientific adviser is that he should be a "laboratory on two feet" able to advise on scientific courses of action and put them into effect, rather than a "liaison" point between a senior investigating officer and another scientist back in the laboratory.

499. The appointment of a senior scientist as adviser for the series should have the effect of preventing police forces from indulging in separate lines of specialist inquiry into quasi-scientific matters which should properly be the province of the forensic science laboratories. This occurred during the Ripper inquiry in connection with the tyre marks which were found at the scene of the Richardson murder. As described earlier, this involved an attempt to identify the vehicle which might have been responsible for leaving the tracks by measurement of the distance between the two wheels and identification of the manufactured track width of the vehicle. This line of inquiry initially produced a list of 100 vehicles as possible but the list was later reduced to 51 before an attempt was made to see each of the 53,000 vehicles of the relevant type which were owned by people living in West Yorkshire or the Harrogate area of North Yorkshire. The problem which developed with this line of inquiry followed the independent employment of other specialists by the West Yorkshire force and later by Greater Manchester. The two separate lines of research, conducted in Yorkshire by Inspector Sidebottom and in Manchester by Inspector Fletcher led to different conclusions, as a result of which the boundaries of the West Yorkshire "Tracking Inquiry" were drawn much too widely at tremendous cost in terms of investigative effort. The recommendation for the future, which a scientific adviser ought to be able to promote, is that once such a line of inquiry is initiated with a laboratory (as it was in the Richardson case) the laboratory and the forensic science service generally should be responsible for the pursuit of that line of inquiry using external specialist assistance as necessary for the purpose.

500. Another feature of the "Tracking Inquiry" during the Ripper investigation was that three different sets of people looked at the question of tyre marks, and the marks themselves were examined in two different laboratories. There was never any occasion when the marks from all three relevant crimes were examined together, a step which clearly ought to have been taken in an attempt to establish whether the marks at all three scenes had been made by one or more identical tyres.

501. One of the problems which affects the Police Service and the Scientific Service alike is that a wide variety of specialist departments have been created (such as the Police Motor Vehicle Inspection Branch) which can logically be involved with the specialist part of any serious crime inquiry. The problem which the availability of numerous specialist advisers poses is the very old one of "too many cooks spoiling the broth".

502. Over-specialisation is also a potential problem within the forensic science service although it is a natural response to the level of scientific expertise which is required in each of a very large number of specialist fields. The tendency in recent years has been for scientists to be appointed to deal almost exclusively with one particular scientific field with the result that they do not develop the wide ranging expertise of which the pioneers of the service were commonly capable. It is an unfortunate feature of over-specialisation that those who are involved in it tend to view all problems from the perspective of their area of specialisation and to disregard possibilities based on alternative lines. Such a "blinkered" approach tends to prevent scientists from having effective liaison with detectives who are frequently unable to find a common language with which to handle problems of the specialist area. It is recommended for the future that an attempt should be made within the forensic science service to ensure that all reporting scientists, (i.e. those who have qualified as expert witnesses and give evidence in Court) many of whom inevitably spend much more time at their benches rather than at crime scenes, have an opportunity to "get the feel of" the practical police operations which their work is intended to support. It is a matter for senior members of the forensic science service to determine how this need to promote appreciation of problems "on the ground" can be achieved. The attachment of forensic scientists to busy police forces for short periods could be valuable as could an interchange of scientists between those with predominantly bench functions and those with opportunities for frequent visits to scenes of crime. The tendency for forensic scientists to become more specialised and more "bench-bound" is an inevitable consequence of the rapid growth of diverse specialist knowledge. It will be important in the future to ensure that all scientists are fully conscious of their function of providing scientific support for the police at the operational detective level in addition to refining and developing very specialised techniques to deal with isolated examples of material which come to the bench.

503. The attendance of scientists at the scene of a crime is certainly a means by which commitment and interest in the detection of the crime can be obtained. It is obviously the case that the best and most comprehensively equipped forensic science laboratory in the world is worthless unless material is found at scenes of crime and submitted for examination. Police forces employ scenes of crime officers, both police officers and civilians with the required specialist skills who are, in the main, responsible for the recovery of relevant evidence from crime scenes. As I mentioned earlier in connection with fragmentation of inquiries, there is an implicit danger here that the use of a large number of different scenes of crime officers or scientists to examine the scenes of crime which form part of a series may result in the application of different standards and a failure to identify evidence present at a scene because the person responsible for the search is unaware of its relevance. The recommendation for the future is obviously that, where a series of serious crimes is identified, the same personnel should examine the scene of each crime as it occurs. Ideally this should be a joint operation involving the senior police scenes of crime officer and the permanent scientific adviser assigned to the whole series of crimes so that the previous experience of both can be used to best advantage.

504. A further example of administrative failure which occurred during the investigation of the Ripper crimes was that scientists did not always reinforce comments which they made to investigating officers at scenes of crime by written reports. In connection with the murder of Josephine Whitaker, for example, the scientist who visited the scene passed the verbal opinion that the marks left in the soft ground by Sutcliffe's boots were sufficiently detailed (particularly in relation to the wear pattern of the right boot) to allow any 'suspect' boots which might be obtained to be positively identified. This opinion was not confirmed in writing and although details of the boots were included in the "Special Notices" relating to the crime, the important fact that they

might be capable of being positively identified was not. Inquiry officers did not therefore accord the footwear of interview subjects too much attention and Sutcliffe has since alleged that on one of the occasions when he was interviewed by the police he was, in fact, wearing the identical boots. This is not the only example from the series where a scientist failed to supply senior investigating officers with written reports of the findings as soon as possible after visiting a crime scene and it is obviously a recommendation for the future that this should always be done as matter of standard practice.

505. It is equally important that the submission of a report should not be part of a bureaucratic process, but should lead to an interchange of information which might indicate other useful areas of inquiry. In connection with the vehicle "Tracking Inquiry" for example, had the scientist who examined the casts and took the track measurements been able to sit down for discussion with Inspector Sidebottom and perhaps some trade specialists, the all important question of wheel diameter identified in Inspector Fletcher's later inquiry might have emerged with consequent savings in the scope of the inquiry. Even when an acknowledged "expert" gives advice to senior investigating officers arrangements should be made for discussion of his findings on the basis that he could be wrong.

506. The final comment which is relevant to the application of science to the investigation of the Yorkshire Ripper crimes is the value of "probability" rather than "elimination". During the Ripper inquiry the analysis of semen recovered from the body of Joan Harrison in Preston was important because it appeared to tell investigating officers the blood group of the murderer. The fact that the analysis showed the murderer to be a 'B' secretor was used as a basis for eliminating from the inquiry anyone who did not have the blood group 'B'. Quite coincidentally, Sutcliffe was of group 'B' (although not a secretor) so that this elimination decision was not relevant to him. Had his blood group been 'A' however, there is a the strong possibility that he could have been eliminated from the inquiry on that basis. The lesson for the future, perhaps more for the Police Service than for the Forensic Science Service, is that the use of any factor, scientific or otherwise, as a basis for the categoric "elimination" of suspects from an inquiry is inherently dangerous. The better course is to work on a basis of "probability" in connection with which it might have been correct to say that it was probable that the suspect in the Ripper case had the blood group 'B', but that that probability might not be borne out in practice. There is a temptation for senior investigating officers to use, without justification, elimination factors in an attempt to reduce an otherwise excessive number of people, any one of whom might be within the suspect category. Clearly, a major lesson to be learned from the Ripper investigation is that the use of categoric eliminators, unless absolutely conclusive, is fraught with danger.

#### **(vii) The Police and the Media**

507. The first principle which must be accepted before formal arrangements covering the relationship between the police and the press are considered is that the public are entitled to be kept informed about crimes and other activity which affects the area in which they live, or indeed, in the national context. The established communication channels of press, radio and television are the only means of bringing such information to the attention of the public and it therefore follows that the police have a responsibility to provide the media services with as much accurate information as can be released without prejudicing the investigation of the crime or the fair trial of an accused. Police officers do not always see themselves as having a positive duty in this direction and believe that their role is merely one of providing limited information in response to journalists' inquiries. This is, I believe, a fundamental misconception, the correction of which would undoubtedly be a considerable benefit to both the police and the press.

508. Viewed in another perspective, it has to be recognised that journalists of all types operate in a competitive commercial situation in which their personal earnings and professional status are often directly related to the amount of material which they are able to have printed or broadcast. Unfortunately this sometimes leads them to exploit all sources of information about serious crimes and other incidents of public interest and sometimes to publish and broadcast material in the knowledge that, whilst it might not be strictly accurate, it will capture a headline or maintain coverage. These commercial pressures sometimes have the effect of lowering the standards of journalists' professional behaviour to the extent that they are in conflict with the police and indeed with other people connected with a particular crime. This, as I have indicated previously, was



certainly true of the period immediately following the murder of Jacqueline Hill in November 1980. If the police need to understand their positive duty to assist the media to provide the public with accurate information about serious crime, reporters in turn must understand their duty to act responsibly and not to publish or broadcast information which is fabricated, contrived or which is known to be inaccurate or speculative. A pertinent side issue worthy of mention is that most police officers see themselves as being unfairly placed in comparison with journalists since almost any excess of duty on their part may lead to the formal investigation of a complaint against them with possible disciplinary action. Although the Press Council aspires to the maintenance of high journalistic standards, police officers generally believe that sanctions against journalists who behave improperly are almost entirely non-existent so that members of the fringe element can and do act irresponsibly without sanction and in some cases with the support and encouragement of their editors and proprietors.

509. In the light of the Police Service's duty to supply the media with information, the appointment of permanent media liaison officers within all police forces is clearly justified. Experience has tended to show that two appointments should be made, one of the trained professional journalist who can help his police colleagues with the appropriate style and content of press releases, and the other, a police officer of sufficient rank to represent the force as a credible ambassador especially on radio and television. A police officer is much more likely to be able to keep himself well informed about developments in the investigation of serious crime than a civilian colleague who has not had the actual experience of being a police officer. That apart, the appointment of a police officer to such an important position allows journalists to form a proper working relationship with someone who is able to speak as a working policeman rather than as a civilian spokesman who may be seen solely as a communication channel between the police and the press. Mr. Baxter, the civilian liaison officer in West Yorkshire, was undoubtedly in this position during the Ripper investigation. He was not kept fully aware of developments in the case and journalists often bypassed him and went direct to the investigating officer whom they saw as being the most reliable source of up-to-date information.

510. The majority of police forces in England and Wales do employ both civilian and police press liaison officers so that in relation to routine operations at any rate, media relations are generally satisfactory. However, in the light of the experience gained in a protracted, major investigation such as the Ripper case, it is essential that a police/media relations officer of sufficient rank is specifically appointed to deal adequately with journalists. The failure of the West Yorkshire Police to recognise this need undoubtedly caused the difficulties in the Ripper inquiry as previously mentioned. The appointment of Superintendent Morrith as Press Officer at the same time as the external Advisory Team was appointed in November 1980 had a profound effect on the progressively deteriorating relationship between the police and the media. Within a short time the situation improved dramatically so much so that Mr. Morrith was invited to appear on such prominent television programmes as "Nationwide" and did an excellent job putting across the police point of view, and equally important, he did much to restore an effective working relationship between journalists and the police.

511. It is essential that the Service takes account of the unhappy experience in media relations during the Ripper investigation so that in the event of a similar protracted case in future the need to appoint a senior police officer of the right calibre to act as the permanent media relations officer is clearly recognised. I appreciate that some forces already have such an officer of senior rank in post and, if so, I merely add the rider that in a case of the magnitude of the Ripper investigation he cannot be expected to cope with the day to day commitments of the department and also acquit himself effectively as the regular police spokesman in the case with the added responsibility of fostering and maintaining an efficient liaison with all the journalists involved.

512. As I have indicated in several parts of my report, there were undoubtedly within the West Yorkshire Police, officers or members of civilian staff who acted as "moles" and transmitted confidential information to the press. Although one officer was prosecuted for the unauthorised disclosure of information, others were never identified and made responsible for their illegal disclosures. Journalists who have taken advantage of "leaks" are of course understandably reluctant to reveal the sources of their information. In spite of that there are very strong reasons why every "leak" of confidential information should be investigated as rigorously as possible. The leakage of the transcript of the "Sunderland" tape is a case in point. No police officer or member

of civilian staff was ever identified as having been responsible for it, although it would have warranted salutary punishment had the offender been found.

513. The final lesson for the future in connection with media relations must relate to the conduct of the police at post arrest press conferences. As I commented earlier when dealing with the various limitations of the police, much of what was said by senior police officers at press conferences, following Sutcliffe's arrest, particularly the one at Dewsbury on Sunday, 4th January 1981, was in response to the promptings of journalists who were present. The officers were naturally jubilant that the case which had hung like a millstone around their necks for five years had finally been detected. Even so, the police and journalists concerned should not have allowed this euphoria to result in such a major breach of recognised sub-judice practice.

514. Since the Sutcliffe press conferences the Contempt of Court Act 1981 has become law. Under the Act criminal proceedings are deemed to become active as from the time when any of the following have occurred:

- (a) Arrest without warrant
- (b) Issue of a warrant for arrest
- (c) Issue of a summons to appear
- (d) The service of an indictment or other document specifying the charge
- (e) Oral charge

515. As soon as criminal proceedings are active any communication about the case may be treated as Contempt of Court if it creates a substantial risk that the course of justice will be seriously impeded or prejudiced.

516.

517. In essence, this means that from the time the police anticipate a person will shortly be charged there should be no interviews about the case with journalists nor any formal press conferences, although where appropriate a brief prepared statement might be issued. In so far as the prepared statement is concerned

would be best confined to the usual formula that a man is "assisting with inquiries", although if pressed, it might be proper to give some indication of when a charge is likely to be preferred or when the man may be making a Court appearance.

518. It is to be hoped that when the findings of the Press Council inquiry into the media involvement in the Ripper case are announced, the opportunity will be taken by the Council to include strict rules of guidance for journalists to follow having regard to the current legal provisions relating to contempt.

519. The practice of cheque book journalism following Sutcliffe's arrest has already received wide publicity and requires no other comment from me than complete condemnation. The disgraceful scramble for information about Sutcliffe and his associates discredited all those involved and reinforced doubts, especially in the minds of the police, about the ethics and attitudes of

journalists and editors. The hunger for news to feed an ever increasing number of press, radio and television outlets is a problem for society as a whole rather than for the police in particular. Although not strictly within the terms of reference of this report the problems of "power without responsibility" as they affect the press and news media are undoubtedly worthy of debate elsewhere. In the strict context of my review of the Ripper investigation I would merely add the contention that it is the duty of both the police and the media to act in furtherance of the public weal. The fundamental differences between the organisation, objectives and perspectives of the two groups should not be allowed to militate against this ideal and both police officers and journalists should endeavour to learn from the mistakes of the past. Neither group can escape blame for the limitations clearly exposed in the Ripper case in the sphere of police/media obligations.

#### **(viii) Training Requirement**

520. My review of the Yorkshire Ripper case has indicated a number of areas where police performance was below the level which was required and this was often due to inadequate training. Amongst the most senior officers involved in the case the deficiency manifested itself mainly as an inadequate appreciation of the controlled use of resources and of the management concepts involved in a protracted large scale inquiry. The professional expertise of these officers in the ordinarily accepted sense was perfectly adequate but their lack of understanding of broader management issues allowed them to overlook important considerations affecting the overall efficiency of the inquiry. At lower levels of operation the training inadequacy showed itself in the form of poor performance by members of outside inquiry teams and by the staff of the Major Incident Room.

521. So far as the Major Incident Room was concerned problems arose as much as anything from the assumption that any police officer or cadet can automatically work effectively in any situation with the minimum of "on the job" training. Since police officers are normally required to fulfil a variety of different roles during their service the assumption that they will perform effectively in any situation is quite commonly held. However, in practice, this is often not so and in particular the work of the Major Incident Room calls for planned training of the people who are to staff it. I previously mentioned under the heading of "Major Incident Rooms" in this part of my report that, following informal discussions I have had with the Chairman of the Steering Committee on Major Incident Rooms (under the aegis of the Computer Development Committee), I anticipate that ACPO will soon be in a position to give guidance on such training programmes.

522. The training of Major Incident Room personnel is, of course, basically a local requirement until such time as complete standardisation of systems has been achieved in line with the earlier recommendation I made. Most police forces nominate a basic team for Major Incident Room work and the officers selected often have previous experience so that additional training is often unnecessary. In some of the larger forces the fact that several Major Incident Rooms may be operating at any one time means that a considerable number of people are trained in local systems. In some small forces, however, significant periods of time elapse between crimes which call for the establishment of Major Incident Rooms so that given the ordinary turnover of staff there may be occasions when it would be impossible to raise a team for a Major Incident Room, all of whom had previous relevant experience. There is a very definite case for the nomination of primary and reserve Major Incident Room teams in all forces, with a regular training arrangement intended to maintain the motivation and commitment of nominated members of staff and to re-inforce in their minds the need for absolute accuracy and a dedication to the supervision of personnel who might be drafted into the Major Incident Room on a temporary basis. It will obviously not be possible to train in advance all the people who might at some time be required to work in a Major Incident Room. A highly trained nucleus of staff is, however, essential as is the need to select untrained staff from amongst people with clerical or administrative backgrounds. When computerisation of records becomes a reality it will obviously be essential to ensure that people who are well trained in the use of visual display units and printer terminals are used for this work. The input of information to a computer is just as prone to error as any other form of information recording. The high error rate amongst vehicle registration numbers in the "Cross and "Triple Area Sighting" inquiries during the Ripper case is an indication of the problems which are likely to occur. The effect of similar errors on a "full text retrieval" system as described earlier in this part of my report can well be imagined.

523 Some indication of the complacency which exists in some police forces in connection with Major Incident Rooms can be gained from the fact that although nominated members of staff of casualty inquiry bureaux (referred to earlier in connection with major incidents) are often required to undertake practical exercises at least once a year and sometimes more frequently, the nominated staff of Major Incident Rooms are only rarely involved in such training. This is a generalisation which will not be true of every police force in England and Wales but should certainly act as a reminder that the function of Major Incident Rooms is so crucial to the success of serious crime inquiries that staff training should be seen as a matter of high priority.

524. Turning to other police problems which manifested themselves during the Ripper investigation I recommend that training on the following lines should be implemented within the Service as soon as practicable.

525. So far as senior officers are concerned the Commandant of the Police Staff College has already intimated that he would be prepared to include "The conduct of major crime investigations" within his carousel of courses for senior officers. The carousel concept is that officers should be able to attend one or more short courses at the Staff College to improve their knowledge of some specific aspect of police work or management with which they are currently engaged. A newly appointed Assistant Chief Constable (Operations) might well, for instance, take a carousel course intended to bring him up to date on all aspects of public order and riot control. A newly appointed Assistant Chief Constable (Administration) might equally visit the College to be updated about the most recent developments in police finance and budgetary control. The proposed course on the conduct of major crime investigations fits easily into this training concept and should do a great deal to ensure that an Assistant Chief Constable or Commander (Metropolitan Police) responsible for operations generally or for crime in a larger force is better prepared to face the problems arising from a serious crime investigation in the future. The specific topics covered in the carousel course should include the following:

- (a) Planning and use of resources — to include financial budgeting
- (b) Multi-force control of operations — to include discussions on compatibility of systems used and overall control
- (c) Command and control of investigations with emphasis placed on command structure and areas of responsibility; also the strict recording of operational and policy decisions
- (d) Appreciation of modern methods of investigation and technical aids including computers. To deal with audit and control sampling as the investigation progresses
- (e) Stress — strains put on management and all personnel
- (f) Relationships with the media
- (g) Co-ordination of resources and use of other agencies including Forensic Science Laboratories, etc.
- (h) Personnel — including selection and training of key staff
- (i) Conference briefings and de-briefings at force and local level
- (j) Planning the prosecution of a case including control of exhibits — liaison with legal advisers

526. So far as the needs of detectives in the rank of superintendent and chief superintendent are concerned, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir David McNee, has indicated to me his willingness to mount a number of short courses at the Metropolitan Police Training School at Hendon on roughly similar lines to the carousel courses at the Police College but taking account of the lower rank level. The areas of study of these intended courses would have much in common with those at Bramshill but would also focus particular attention on the problems of personnel management and the administration and control of large scale inquiries. Other topics to be covered at Hendon would include the following:

- (a) Briefing and debriefing of outside inquiry teams and other members of staff
- (b) The form and content of Police Circulations and the use of advertising techniques to focus attention on the most important issues

- (c) Management concepts affecting major inquiries including leadership, morale, motivation, communication and delegation
- (d) The administration and control of major inquiries
- (e) Systems management (both for computerised and manual record and information retrieval systems)
- (f) Specialist services
- (g) Personnel and welfare problems

527. Whilst a number of these topics feature in the programmes of training courses within police forces and at the Police Staff College they have, to the best of my knowledge, never been related specifically to major crime inquiries. Aspects of management, for instance, are often dealt with on special courses which fail to demonstrate the specific link between the concepts and actual police operations particularly in the crime detection sphere. Management training often involves a requirement for attitudinal change which is not always easily achieved in the absence of concrete practical examples which demonstrate unequivocally the connection between an abstract concept and the success or failure of a practical police operation. It will be important if this sort of training is to be successful for the maximum possible advantage to be taken of practical examples from the Ripper case and from other cases where similar problems have been identified. Whilst training at the Police Staff College and the Metropolitan Police Training School ought to satisfy the immediate training requirement for officers of senior rank it would obviously be helpful if Chief Constables who organise training for senior officers on a local or regional basis included in their course programmes, aspects of the management of serious crime inquiries on the lines indicated in this report.

528. Another training deficiency identified during my review relates to the interview techniques of members of outside inquiry teams. It will be recalled that one of the serious limitations identified earlier in my report was the failure of the officers who interviewed Sutcliffe and his wife to probe deeply enough so as to shake the credibility of alibis and other information which Sutcliffe and she provided. As I have described, these officers operated under a number of constraints which tended to limit their effectiveness and were also pre-conditioned to believe the letters and tape connection. In spite of that, a more positive approach and a little more determination in testing out Sutcliffe's answers, would undoubtedly have aroused their suspicions and produced more positive results. The techniques of interviewing is a topic which deserves greater attention within police training programmes and ought to be dealt with very thoroughly during detective training courses. I do not wish to specify a training programme for this project but would suggest that the failure of Sutcliffe's nine specific police interviews in connection with the Ripper inquiry should be borne in mind when the training objectives relating to crime investigations are being determined. Detectives who are members of outside inquiry teams will obviously be influenced by the restraints under which they work and the attitudes of supervisors. If they are to be successful, however, they need not only to be members of a well organised inquiry team; they also need the spark of individual flair and determination which will enable them to take advantage of opportunities which come their way. Several of the officers who interviewed Sutcliffe during the Ripper inquiry placed him in the "not happy about him" category. What they lacked was the determination and confidence which would have enabled them to capitalise on having been put into contact with the killer and to have turned their intuitive suspicion into evidence which would have justified an arrest.

529. I recommend therefore that the training requirements stemming from the review of the Ripper case should be included in future training programmes not merely in the short term but as a continuing process. My deliberations with both the Commandant of the Staff College and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner lead me to believe that the training of senior investigating officers on the lines suggested can be commenced within a reasonable time. Officers below the rank of superintendent will need to be catered for elsewhere either at Detective Training or Force Training Schools.

530. Apart from the training of Major Incident Room personnel which is already being examined by ACPO Computer Development Committee, I consider that the best means of achieving the desired progress in other spheres is through the ACPO Crime Committee in the first instance with appropriate liaison thereafter with the Police Staff College, the Metropolitan Police and those

Chief Constables able to provide the necessary facilities for the other training needs. I so recommend.

**(ix) The Way Ahead**

531. As I am about to draft this final part of my report, coincidentally I have just read the editorial in the "Yorkshire Evening Post" (6th November 1981). There has been much written in newspapers in the aftermath of the Ripper case but this latest editorial, which in my view, has the advantage of sensing the pulse of local opinion in the area of Sutcliffe's main activities, gives the balanced approach to the case which my team and I have endeavoured to follow since being appointed to conduct the review. I think I can do no better than quote the editorial in full:

"Will the results of the secret inquiry into the six year hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper be made known to the public?

Already MPs are demanding that they should. But this is not a simple issue of public accountability. The fact is that the Ripper was eventually caught, by police officers, and the internal "inquest" has not been into any failure to catch him.

Predictably, any inquiry as to flaws in the procedures which made this a long-drawn out hunt, had to wait until the killer was behind bars.

It is now being said that the four month long inquiry is critical of some mistakes made during the hunt for Sutcliffe, which was the most costly in British criminal history.

It is hardly suprising that there were mistakes, no organisation is perfect. But will anything be gained by merely publishing, for public consumption the opinions of the team which conducted the searching inquiry?

Mr. Ken Woomer, MP for Batley and Morley says the report "must not be seen as a whitewash" and of course he is absolutely right.

But more importantly, it must not be seen merely as a castigation for areas of West Yorkshire policing which are felt to have failed.

It must be seen, and must be used, as an instrument of change. And the only way this should be done is for Mr. William Whitelaw, the Home Secretary, when he makes his statement to the Commons soon on the inquiry, to give an assurance that action will be taken.

If he does not, then MPs would only be acting in the public interest, and not in any spirit of revenge, by insisting on a select Committee of Inquiry into the issue of whether or not police methods used in the Ripper hunt were inadequate."

532. It would have been easy for us to look at the protracted Ripper Investigation in the style of armchair critics and find faults. As the editorial rightly quotes "It is hardly surprising that there were mistakes; no organisation is perfect." What we have endeavoured to do throughout the review is to identify the mistakes and omissions that were made in the investigation and to view them in a balanced, objective manner from our own collective professional experience before coming to any conclusions. In doing this I feel sure that we have taken account of the very real pressures facing the police during the inquiry whilst at the same time pinpointing those major limitations which resulted from either bad management, lack of professionalism or even worse, plain carelessness.

533. In my interviews with the relatives of victims who wished to see me, I emphasised that whilst we would be looking critically at the police investigation so as to identify any important errors that were made, I firmly believed that at the end of my review the most constructive action that could be taken in the light of the findings would be to ensure that any lessons which might be learned should be made known to the police forces generally. This conclusion was of course, in line with your Parliamentary Statement at the time of my appointment to review the case.

534. Referring again to the editorial quoted above a significant passage on the same theme reads "It (the review) must be seen, and must be used, as an instrument of change." This is absolutely

right and the "Lessons for the future" as detailed in this part of my report will need to be promulgated to the Service and acted upon if the limitations identified in Part III of the report are to be avoided in future similar cases.

535. I have referred from time to time to the so-called "Black Panther" case which was the other notorious series homicide case within the last decade or so. Some of the limitations identified in the Ripper investigation were also clearly apparent in the "Black Panther" investigation and it is with regret that I have concluded that the Police Service just did not learn some vital lessons arising from the earlier case, particularly those relating to the management and control of a multi-force murder investigation.

536. Following the conviction of Donald Nielson for the "Black Panther" series of murders there was an adjournment debate in the House of Commons on the 4th August 1976 (Hansard: Volume 916 — 2 column 2095). During the course of the debate the then Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Dr. Shirley Summerskill) pointed out that the Home Secretary has no responsibility in the day-to-day conduct of a particular police investigation. She also related to the House that the case had been discussed by chief officers of police collectively and that she was quite sure that they were fully aware of the need to learn any lessons which may be learned from such an investigation.

537. Unfortunately, there is now good reason to think that whilst chief officers of police collectively might have been mindful of the need to learn lessons from the "Black Panther" case, there is very little evidence emanating from the Ripper Case review to show that they did.

538. The dilemma in looking to the future is that with the operational independence of Chief Officers of Police clearly established by Statute and Common Law, any Home Secretary is in a delicate and sensitive area when endeavouring to give guidance in the way major crime investigations should be conducted in future. As the minister rightly pointed out in the adjournment debate previously referred to:

"The fact that a particular investigation is a matter for discussion by chief officers of police is a reflection of our system of policing in this country. The local control of police forces is an essential element of that system. Chief Constables in this country, unlike some continental countries, do not come under the direction of a Minister of the Interior in the enforcement of law. The responsibility of deciding how an offence should be investigated is for them and them alone."

539. Fortunately, there is one tremendous advantage in the aftermath of the Ripper case when compared to the post-trial period of the "Black Panther" case. There is now to hand the findings of an independent professional review team including a balanced consideration of the lessons for the future arising from the limitations of the past. Having regard to the discussions I have had with various chief police officers, including the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, during the period of the review, I feel sure, as I have intimated earlier, that the Service is desirous of implementing the changes that are so obviously necessary to avoid similar mistakes to those which were made in both the "Black Panther" and the Ripper cases. In this regard I have taken the liberty of discussing the matter informally with the President of the Association of Chief Police Officers and he has assured me that he and his colleagues fully appreciate that there will be lessons to be learned arising from this review of the Ripper case and that the Association is anxious to do as much as possible to ensure that such lessons are adopted within the Service as quickly as possible.

540. With this potential spirit of goodwill towards the recommendations I have made, it would seem that following your Parliamentary Statement, the best approach in the first instance might be to have a joint meeting between the principal ACPO officers, the Commissioner (or a senior representative of the Metropolitan Police) and Home Office officials (including HMCIC and myself). I have put this suggested procedure to those concerned, including the President of ACPO and the Commissioner, and all are agreed that this would be the best way ahead. If you concur then it might be useful to include details of it in your Parliamentary Statement in due course so as to afford a clear indication of the prompt constructive action that is being taken following the review.



541. In any event, I think it would be appropriate in the first instance to issue a Home Office circular in general terms about the review intimating what is being done by Home Office and ACPO (including the Metropolitan Police) in the light of the review recommendations. This would include, for example, the move towards standardisation of Major Incident Room procedures together with a mark-time agreement on any computerisation of Incident Room records pending the short and long-term solutions that are being evaluated.

## **PART V — SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **The Police Investigation (Part III)**

#### **Limitations**

542. My review of the case has substantiated some of the criticisms which have already been levelled against the police for having failed to arrest Sutcliffe earlier. Other important limitations in the various aspects of the police investigation have also been identified during this review. (para 85)

#### *The Major Incident Room*

543. Many of the limitations stemmed from the failings of the Major Incident Room. (para 86)

544. With the advent of larger police forces there is no longer dependence upon assistance from New Scotland Yard in local murder investigations. This local independence has resulted in varying Major Incident Room systems being implemented, few of which are capable of being interfaced. This factor had a considerably adverse influence on the Ripper Inquiry. (paras 90 to 92 and paras 109 to 113)

545. The conventional Major Incident Room systems of all 43 police forces in England and Wales currently depend upon manual card indexes. Computer based experimental systems for Major Incident Rooms are in the course of development. At the onset of the Ripper case in 1975 there was no experience in this country of a working computer system for Major Incident Rooms and the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire cannot be criticised for declining the offer by the Police Scientific Development Branch of an untested system. (paras 93 to 100)

546. Whilst the West Yorkshire Police Major Incident Room procedure is well documented and had been used successfully in the past, the complexity of the protracted Ripper investigation created many problems. (paras 101 to 106)

547. Commander Nevill of the Metropolitan Police made certain recommendations in November 1979 in connection with the accelerating problems of the Major Incident Room but no decisive action was taken by the police until the murder of Jacqueline Hill in November 1980. (paras 107 to 108)

548. For most of the time during the Ripper investigation the Police National Computer facility for searching criminal names was not available. This had a tragic consequence in that the national conviction card showed Sutcliffe as having a previous conviction for "going equipped with a hammer" whereas the local conviction card, upon which the West Yorkshire Police relied, did not. This gives a clear indication of the value of the "Single Centre Reporting System", now established. (paras 115 to 116)

549. Sutcliffe was never regarded as "suspect" under the 'D'62 index system of the Major Incident Room because of undue reliance on the "Sunderland" letters and tape which served to eliminate him. (para 118)

550. In essence, the basic limitation of the Major Incident Room in the Ripper investigation was the inherent rigidity of the system which was incapable of being adapted to deal effectively with the continuing murders and assaults. (para 119)

551. The Major Incident Room was persistently overwhelmed by work loads without commensurate staffing levels. Instead of being the nerve centre of the most important detective effort in history it frustrated the work of senior investigating officers and junior detectives alike. (paras 120 to 125)

#### *The Cross Area Sighting Inquiry*

552. Prior to the murder of Josephine Whitaker, in April 1979, Sutcliffe's victims were predominantly prostitutes and therefore it was reasonably assumed that the murderer was a "punter" (a prostitutes client). This resulted in the police recording vehicle registration numbers

in "red-light" districts of certain Northern cities. This surveillance data was recorded on the Police National Computer and became known as the "Punters Index". (paras 126 to 129)

553. There were certain limitations in the PNC computer facility and had a senior police officer with computer experience been appointed, in line with a recommendation contained in a joint study conducted by PSDB, PNCU and PRSU, there would have been a better understanding of what could have been achieved. (paras 130 to 131 and 147)

554. The system began on 19th June 1978. By March 1979 20,000 "Cross Area Sightings" (a vehicle seen in the "red light" areas of two different cities) had been recorded but only one quarter of the vehicle owners had been seen. Due to pressure of work the police decided to change to a "Triple Area Sightings" project (vehicle recorded in three different cities). In all there were 5.4 million sightings recorded before Sutcliffe's arrest including 20,000 "Cross Area Sightings" and 1,200 "Triple Area Sightings". (paras 132 to 135 and 137)

555. Sutcliffe was interviewed by the police as a consequence of his vehicle being recorded in both the "Cross Area Sighting" and the "Triple Area Sighting" projects but due to poor index searching and the failure to locate previous papers within the Major Incident Room the officers conducting the interviews were inadequately briefed. (paras 136 and 141)

556. The covert "Sightings" operations were restricted by the policy on computer privacy including the storage of non-criminal information. These constraints, together with limitations in the information from the Police National Computer, inhibited police officers conducting inquiries and to some extent in their interviews with Sutcliffe. (para 138)

557. The Major Incident Room procedures in relation to the "Sightings" inquiries were complex and with the addition of incompetent staff to meet new demands the error rates increased. There were also general problems on data handling. Even so, Sutcliffe was identified for interview in both the "Sightings" projects. (paras 139 to 140, and 142 to 143)

558. Following an attack on \_\_\_\_\_ in March 1979, Detective Inspector Sidebottom obtained a computer print-out of 850 suspect vehicles from the "Punters Index". Sutcliffe's vehicle was included in the list of 850 and he was one of three owners within the list previously recorded as a "Triple Area Sighting". He should have been regarded as a prime suspect for the attack on \_\_\_\_\_ but was not interviewed due to a lack of appreciation of the information contained in the computer print-out. (paras 144 and 147)

559. Whilst the recording of vehicles seen in "red light" areas was sensible and the PNC involvement was commendable, the police can be faulted for not having allocated sufficient resources to meet the new demands stemming from the project. (para 145)

560. Even taking into account the sensitivity of police inquiries arising from the "Punters Index" there is good reason to think that officers should have been briefed to take a more positive line during the resultant interviews. (para 146)

#### *The Tyre Marks and Vehicle Tracking Inquiry*

561. Tyre marks found at the scenes of three of the Ripper crimes were a prominent feature of the investigation. The tread patterns of the tyres were cast at the scenes and measured to yield "tracking data" so as to gain some indication of the vehicle used in each case. (para 148 to 149)

562. In the Richardson murder the tracking data yielded a list of 100 vehicle types but was subsequently reduced to 51 by a more refined selection process. In turn this second list gave a total of 53,000 vehicles and registered owners. By the 10th July 1977 (following the attempted murder of Long) 20,000 of these vehicles remained to be examined, including Sutcliffe's, but the project was then suspended. (paras 150 to 151)

563. Unfortunately the index cards made out in the vehicle "Tracking Inquiry" recorded vehicle registration numbers only and not owners' names otherwise Sutcliffe's name would have been in the system for the first time and available thereafter for interviewing officers (para 152)

564. Following the Long case in July 1977 5,000 owners of Mark II Ford Cortinas living in Yorkshire were set to be interviewed but the project was abandoned after 3,000 owners had been seen. Then came the notable "Farina" inquiry. Both the Mark II Ford Cortina and "Farina" projects were based on a false premise and doomed to failure. (paras 153 to 155)

565. The Greater Manchester Police initially supported the "Farina" inquiry but following an analytical report by Detective Inspector Fletcher decided that the vehicle to be traced was confined to Ford Cortina Mark I and Ford Corsair models from 1964 onwards. Detective Inspector Sidebottom of West Yorkshire concluded that a range of five vehicles only, including the Ford Cortina Mark I and Ford Corsair needed to be considered. Both these assessments were discounted by the West Yorkshire Police and the false "Farina" inquiry was allowed to continue as highlighted in the "Special Notice" of 13th September 1979. (paras 156 to 157 and 161)

566. Sutcliffe was interviewed on the 2nd and 8th November 1977 in connection with the Jordan £5 note inquiry and had the wheels and tyres of his red Ford Corsair been closely examined by the interviewing officers he might have been associated with the Richardson murder the previous February and therefore, viewed with a great deal more suspicion. (paras 158 to 160)

567. The vehicle tracks found at the Richardson, Moore and Millward scenes provided investigating officers with factual evidence which, whilst difficult and time consuming to process, might well have led them to view Sutcliffe as a strong suspect. It failed to do so for the reasons given. (paras 161 to 169)

#### *Description of Suspects, Photofits and Other Assaults*

568. The recognition of the Ripper crimes as being a connected series came with the murder of Emily Jackson in January 1976 and established a criteria of recognition to be followed subsequently. (paras 170 to 174)

569. In March 1978 an internal review team was set up "to examine all reported attacks on women.....to find any common link or pattern". Fourteen such cases were linked and included in the "Special Notice" of June 1978. It was a valuable exercise but the criteria applied were too narrow so that a number of assaults with good descriptions or photofit pictures of suspects were not included. (paras 175 to 180)

570. It is unfortunate that a similar review was not mounted later in the series since further attacks, in several cases with a hammer, were committed by a man with a dark beard and/or moustache. (para 181)

571. The appraisal report of 10th December 1980, by Superintendent Charlesworth gave criteria which if followed, would have included five other cases in the Ripper series and prompted useful clues from some of the victims. (paras 182 to 184)

572. With the additional benefit of hindsight it can now be clearly established that had senior detectives of West Yorkshire assembled the photofit impressions from surviving victims of all hammer attacks or assaults involving serious head injuries on unaccompanied women, they would have been left with the inescapable conclusion that the man involved was dark haired with a beard and moustache. Three such victims would also have emphasised that he did not have a "Geordie" accent. (paras 185 to 189 and Fig. 10)

573. Such information would have been invaluable to investigating officers especially before the "Sunderland" letters and tape were used as eliminators in 1979 and as a possible guide to the crimes in the series. (paras 190 to 193)

574. It is my firm conclusion that between 1969 and 1980 Sutcliffe was probably responsible for many attacks on unaccompanied women, which he has not yet admitted, not only in the West Yorkshire and Manchester areas but also in other parts of the country. I have arranged for senior operational officers in the forces concerned to ensure that my findings are taken into account in the further interrogation of Sutcliffe after his appeal has been finalised. (paras 195 to 196)

### *The Letters and Tape Inquiry*

575. Between March 1978 and June 1979 two anonymous letters and a tape recording were received by the West Yorkshire Police and a further letter was received by the Chief Editor of the "Daily Mirror" from a man claiming responsibility for the crimes and signing himself "Jack the Ripper". As a consequence, major police resources were allocated to trace the author; the police and the public were conditioned to believe they came from the killer who was a native of Sunderland; the letters and tape were used to eliminate suspects (paras 197 to 198)

576. I find no fault with the application of significant resources in this way which was a matter for the professional judgement of the investigating officer. However, the complete acceptance that the author was the killer was not justified by the evidence available at the time and should, in any case, have been tested by rigorous analysis as was done very competently by Detective Inspector Zackrisson of Northumbria. (paras 199 to 205, 213, 222 to 224, 226 to 227 and Fig. 15)

577. The public response to the publicity given to the letters and the tape had a significant impact on the Major Incident Room and overwhelmed the available manpower. This stopped the processing of actions from the Incident Room for a period and eventually the additional burdens imposed on the staff employed there proved an important contributory factor in the specific mistakes which allowed Sutcliffe to remain free. (paras 206 to 207)

578. Sutcliffe might still have been arrested, however, despite the problems arising from the failure of the Major Incident Room had the letters and the tape not been used as factors for elimination of suspects. (paras 208 to 216)

579. Commander Nevill of the Metropolitan Police expressed certain reservations about using the letters and the tape as a positive sieve and the external Advisory Team appointed in November 1980 expressed grave doubts about the authenticity placed upon them by the West Yorkshire Police. The latter prompted an in-force review of the different aspects of the inquiry which was not completed before Sutcliffe's arrest. (paras 217 to 220)

580. Without wishing to minimise the error of judgement by the police in relation to the letters and the tape sieves, it should be said, in fairness, that once details of the eliminating factors had been passed to police forces and the massive publicity campaign mounted on similar lines, the die had been well and truly cast. On the resources available it would have been an almost impossible task to reverse the earlier decision. (para 225)

### *The Police Interviews Involving Sutcliffe*

581. Sutcliffe was interviewed by the police on twelve occasions between 5th July 1975 and following his arrest for the Ripper crimes. Of these, nine of the interviews can be regarded as part of the actual police investigation of the Ripper series before Sutcliffe's arrest for them. (paras 228 to 229)

582. The first interview on 15th October 1975 was in connection with the theft of tyres by Sutcliffe from his employers and had no significance so far as the series of murders and assaults were concerned. (para 230)

583. The second interview was in connection with a new £5 note found in a secret compartment of Jean Jordan's handbag near to the scene of her murder in Manchester in November 1977. Jordan was a prostitute and it was believed that the note had been paid to her by the murderer for her services. It was also thought to have been passed through the Midland Bank at Shipley in West Yorkshire as part of a wages consignment. A joint inquiry was mounted by Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire Police to interview employees of all the local firms involved. Consequently, Sutcliffe was interviewed on 2nd November 1977 at his home. Sonia Sutcliffe supported the alibi he gave. In the light of the information available to the inquiry officers there can be no criticism of them. (paras 231 to 243)

584. The third interview was a follow-up to the second and involved D.Cs Rayne and Smith. The reports from both interviews two and three were then submitted to the senior investigating officers and they were marked "File" in the belief that the alibis from Sutcliffe's wife and later his mother, were genuine. In so far as the third interview was concerned it was not the in-depth probe intended

and the interviewing officers clearly failed to comply with instructions given to them at an earlier briefing that the house, garage and motor car of any interviewee were to be searched. Inquiry officers were not told to record the details of car tyres, however, and therefore could be excused for not having taken this particular step on their own initiative. They were also not in a position to know that any hacksaw blade should be seized for scientific examination as certain information had been with-held on the instructions of Detective Chief Superintendent Ridgway of Greater Manchester Police. (paras 244 to 250)

585. The fourth interview was prompted by the "Cross Area Sighting" inquiry which was intended to identify vehicle owners seen in "red light" areas. Sutcliffe's car had been seen in both the Leeds and Bradford areas. The interviewing officer, D.C. Smith, (not the D.C. Smith in the previous interview) was not allowed to mention that observations were being kept in "red light" areas or make any reference to ball-pein hammers. He knew of Sutcliffe's connection with the earlier £5 note inquiry and that the "Farina" style car was a suspect vehicle. Sutcliffe's wife alibied her husband for the Millward murder date of the 16/17th May 1978. The officer did not check the tyres on Sutcliffe's car, neither did he carry out any search of the house or garage. On balance, he took too much for granted including the denial by Sutcliffe of his visit to Leeds on the evening of the sighting. (paras 251 to 255)

586. The fifth interview arose because of Detective Superintendent Holland's dissatisfaction with the fourth interview. A memo went to D.C. Smith on 29th August 1978 but as he had been directed to the "Farina" inquiry by then, Sutcliffe was not interviewed until 23rd November 1978. This interview was treated as a matter of simple routine and the papers were resubmitted with the further information. Thereafter the papers were missing from the filing system for a period of eleven months. (paras 256 to 260)

587. The sixth interview arose from the latest "Cross Area" and "Triple Area Sightings" of Sutcliffe's vehicles. These sightings totalled 44 in all and occurred between 26th June 1978 and 22nd February 1979. Such information should have been of the utmost significance especially if it had been related to the earlier sightings and also the £5 note inquiry, but unfortunately these three important factors were not connected with obviously grave consequences for the future of the investigation. Due to increasing pressures, Sutcliffe's sixth interview did not take place until 29th July 1979, some five months after a Manchester sighting which Sutcliffe denied, D.Cs Laptew and Greenwood were not aware of the previous police interviews with Sutcliffe, neither did they know that he had been involved in the earlier £5 note inquiry. (This was due to errors in the Major Incident Room). Even so, after further inquiries, they were not satisfied with the outcome of their interview with Sutcliffe and even considered arresting him on suspicion but decided against it mainly due to an instruction from ACC (Crime) issued in July 1977. Instead they submitted a comprehensive report which included their general impression that there was "something not quite right" about Sutcliffe. Unfortunately, the report was subsequently endorsed "File" by Detective Superintendent Holland, a decision which was based on the handwriting of Sutcliffe. By that time handwriting had become an eliminating factor which tended to over-ride any other information. (paras 261 to 275)

588. The seventh interview was called for following a re-examination of completed actions for the fourth and fifth interviews relating to "Cross Area Sightings". D.Cs Vickerman and Eland were told to eliminate Sutcliffe once and for all. Copies of the papers relating to the fourth and fifth interviews were attached to the inquiry action but the papers relating to the vital sixth interview were missing due to the increasing inefficiency of the Major Incident Room. Mrs. Sutcliffe was present at the interview. Neither officer considered Sutcliffe to be a strong suspect but they described the couple as "strange" and were unhappy at being unable to positively eliminate them. Even so Sutcliffe was, in fact, eliminated on this occasion by Detective Superintendent Stainthorpe, again due to his handwriting sample and lack of a North East connection. (paras 276 to 282)

589. The eighth interview resulted from some painstaking research in late 1979 by the Greater Manchester Police, the Bank of England and the Midland Bank. After practical tests, the team brilliantly concluded that the Jordan £5 note had been drawn as part of a payroll by one of eleven firms in the Shipley area collectively employing 241 people. Sutcliffe's employers had 49 employees on this list and Sutcliffe was number 76 in the full list of 241. A joint operation to

interview these people was mounted prior to which the list of 241 was searched against the West Yorkshire Major Incident Room records. When the list was returned it showed only 7 persons who were the subject of additional information. Due to a disastrous error in the Incident Room Sutcliffe was not included neither were a further 10 who had been previously recorded. It must be concluded that had Sutcliffe's previous involvement in the various facets of the Ripper investigation been identified he must have been regarded as a high priority suspect. Of the 18 in the list previously recorded in the Incident Room, he was the only one who had featured in both the "Cross Area" and "Triple Area Sighting" projects and as an owner of a vehicle within the original "Tracking Inquiry" list. This particular interview was conducted by Detective Sergeant Boot and Detective Constable Bell on the 13th January 1980. Sergeant Boot recorded in his pocket book that Sutcliffe was "a strange runner". However, he did not report his unease about Sutcliffe to his supervisory officers. Other weaknesses were apparent in connection with the issues surrounding the eighth interview which resulted in Sutcliffe being allowed to remain at liberty when he clearly should have been arrested. (paras 283 to 291)

590. Detective Sergeant McAlister and Detective Constable McCrone conducted the ninth interview which again arose through the "Cross Area Sighting" programme. They were in possession of the previous papers apart from those relating to the sixth interview (as commented upon previously) which were missing due to the limitations of the Major Incident Room. Of all the police interviews this was the least efficient. It took place in a police car at Sutcliffe's place of employment and quite clearly the inquiry officers failed to comply with instructions on the searching of interviewees' houses and cars. (paras 292 to 294)

591. Detective Inspector Fletcher, being dissatisfied with the completed action sheet for the ninth interview, immediately arranged for Sutcliffe to be seen again. For this tenth interview D.Cs Jackson and Harrison saw Sutcliffe at his place of work after being briefed by Mr Fletcher. Again, these officers were not aware of the sixth interview in relation to the Manchester sighting of Sutcliffe's vehicle. Following the submission of their report Mr Fletcher wrote a summary of inquiries involving Sutcliffe and highlighted the alibi (now known to be wrong) relating to the Jordan murder. At his recommendation the papers were filed. This particular interview was intended to eliminate Sutcliffe from the inquiry altogether or bring him fully into the category of a suspect. It failed through a lack of preparation, communication, the venue for the interview and the rank and expertise of those conducting it. (paras 295 to 298)

592. The eleventh interview of Sutcliffe took place on the 25th June 1980. Constables Doran and Melia, whilst keeping observations in the "red light" area of Bradford took up a high speed chase after seeing Sutcliffe driving erratically in a Rover 3.5 car. He was subsequently arrested for a drink and driving offence. Before he was released his details were checked with the Ripper Major Incident Room records and the officers were told he had been "eliminated from the inquiry on handwriting". (para 299)

593. Sutcliffe's twelfth and final interview followed his arrest in Sheffield when he admitted all the murders and assaults for which he was subsequently convicted at the Central Criminal Court. (para 300)

594. There is little doubt that Sutcliffe should have been arrested much earlier on the facts associated with his various police interviews. In my view he was not identified as a suspect and more importantly identified as a murderer because of a number of factors. Often, the interviewing officers did not take a sufficiently positive line for a variety of reasons; their attitudes were wrongly conditioned by the policy decisions in relation to the "Sunderland" letters and the tape; on occasions insufficient regard was paid to the welfare of the investigating officers; the Major Incident Room failed to provide a proper service for the inquiry and, in particular, the failure of the nominal index search in connection with the re-activated £5 note inquiry was inexcusable; there was a clear management failure to forecast the personnel requirements arising from each new line of inquiry; the senior officers directing the investigation were bogged down with routine paper work which should have been dealt with at a much lower level. The final irony is that immediately before the tenth interview of Sutcliffe, seven of the eight officers who took part in interviews 6, 7, 8 and 9 were working at the same Police Station. Several of these officers had reservations about Sutcliffe but the overall information against him was never pieced together due primarily to the lack of effective briefings. (paras 301 to 305)



### *Media Relations*

595. Following the formation of a Community Affairs Department in 1974, the first commander, Chief Superintendent Domaille conducted a comprehensive review of arrangements for liaison with the news media and consequently Mr. Baxter, a civilian press officer with previous journalistic experience, was appointed. No police officer was appointed to work with him as is often the case in other forces. Because Mr Baxter lacked the professional status of a senior police officer there was a tendency for reporters to bypass him and make direct contact with senior investigating officers in important cases. Some of these officers enjoyed their contact with the media representatives and therefore, there was no strong pressure from them for the appointment of a police officer to work in conjunction with Mr Baxter as a press relations officer. (paras 306 to 309)

596. The Ripper investigation excited the interest of local, national and international press to an extent never before experienced in a murder investigation in the United Kingdom. Initially relations between the police and the media were quite good and were reasonably well maintained until the murder of Josephine Whitaker at Halifax in April 1979. Thereafter there was an obvious decline prompted by an increasing mistrust between the two agencies. The receipt of the third "Sunderland" letter in March 1979 and the tape recording two months later also caused disharmony because it was clearly established that a "mole" within the West Yorkshire Force was leaking important information to the media. With the murder of Barbara Leach in Bradford in September 1979 the criticism of the police increased and there were calls to "bring in the Yard". (paras 310 to 321)

597. In spite of deteriorating relationships a sponsored publicity campaign on the "Sunderland" letters and the tape which commenced in October, 1979 was given full support by the media so much so that the public response swamped the Major Incident Room with low grade information and accelerated the decline in efficiency. Thereafter the West Yorkshire Police adopted a campaign of relative silence and this caused relationships with the media to become even more strained. The denial by the local police that the attempted murder of Teresa Sykes in Huddersfield on the 5th November 1980 was connected to the Ripper series may well have been prompted so as to reduce the public, media and Parliamentary pressure to which the force was being increasingly exposed. (paras 322 to 327)

598. The limitations in the initial police action at the scene of Jacqueline Hill's murder in Leeds in November 1980 prompted a crescendo of media criticism, some of which was clearly justified. The conduct of many journalists in the hysteria of the period also left a great deal to be desired. Spurious calls were made to the police to test the promptness of response and on occasions outdated photofit pictures were resurrected and republished as current information. (paras 328 to 330)

599. The breakdown in relationships between the police and the media clearly called for urgent action and with the arrival of the external Advisory Team in November 1980, Superintendent Morritt was appointed as permanent liaison officer for the Ripper investigation. Thereafter the relationships showed marked improvement until the arrest of Sutcliffe on the 2nd January, 1981. (para 331)

600. When it became apparent on Sunday 4th January 1981 that a break-through had occurred in the inquiry, media activity became frantic with cheque book journalism developing on a wide scale. With the disclosure of further aspects of police inefficiency there were increasing calls for a Public Inquiry into the Ripper police investigation. (paras 332 to 333)

601. The inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the jaundiced relationships between the police and media representatives, especially in the latter stages of the Ripper investigation, is that a senior police officer, such as Superintendent Morritt, should have been appointed as the official police spokesman much earlier. (paras 334 to 336)

### *Lack of Computerisation of Records*

602. An increased use of computers could have been of invaluable assistance to investigating officers in the Ripper case but it should be borne in mind that such computer usage would inevitably have led to an increase in the storage of information about people and their lawful

activities. As early as 1977 the West Yorkshire Police made inquiries into the possibility of using computers to assist in the investigation. Following meetings involving PSDB and PRSU an offer was made to the Force which envisaged using a main frame computer based at Harwell with a telephone input from West Yorkshire and the use of cassette tapes. The initial cost would have been £25,000 (which Home Office was prepared to fund) plus ongoing costs of £3,000 per week. The Chief Constable declined the offer on the grounds of cost for what in effect was an untested scheme in the operational sense. In my view, he was right to do so. (paras 337 to 342)

603. In May 1978 PSDB and PRSU were again consulted and a further Study Report was produced with recommendations. This led to the "Cross" and "Triple Area Sighting" programmes being run on the Police National Computer. This initiative in the use of computer technology, particularly by the PNC agency, reflects great credit on all those involved. (para 343)

604. In addition to the consultations with Home Office agencies, the West Yorkshire Police made other searching inquiries elsewhere with a view to having the Ripper investigation records computerised, but to no avail. (para 344)

605. The PNC application to deal with vehicle sightings was an excellent example of what was achieved using existing equipment and expertise. However, in relation to Major Incident Room records there were two main problems which were not to any degree resolved. One was the back record conversion problem and the other the lack of computer technology available at the time and to some extent even now. (para 345)

606. Claims have been made in the press and technical journals that the Ripper inquiry could have been run on a computer costing £3,000. This is untrue and indeed, the costs falling as a result of PNC being utilised for the "Sightings" programme with existing hardware, amounted to more than £240,000. (para 346)

607. It was the use of technology in the form of a personal radio and the PNC that led to Sutcliffe's ultimate arrest. Furthermore, had Sutcliffe not been identified in the computerised "Punters Index" previously the Ripper squad officers might not have shown such interest in him following his arrest. (para 347)

608. The only criticisms I would make in relation to West Yorkshire's ongoing computer problem in the Ripper case is that a police officer with computer knowledge should have been appointed to the Ripper investigation as recommended by the Joint Study Team in 1978; the "Punters Index" should have been more sophisticated so as to assist the investigating officers even more than it did; and since 1974, when clear terms of reference were given to PSDB, a greater priority should have been given to achieving a computerised system for Major Incident Rooms. (paras 348 to 352)

#### *The murder of Jacqueline Hill*

609. The last murder in the Ripper series, that of Jacqueline Hill on the 17th November, 1980, prompted an avalanche of media criticism against the police because of the initial investigative limitations revealed. I decided, therefore, to deal with the particular murder investigation as a separate issue. Much of the criticism was justified and in retrospect it must be said that as a consequence the public confidence in the police action generally was seriously damaged. However, at least it led to the setting up of the external Advisory Team and a new command structure in the investigating team which, in turn, gave a much needed impetus to the inquiry in the few weeks prior to Sutcliffe's ultimate arrest. (paras 353 to 370)

#### *Command Control and Resources*

610. The control of a series type major investigation such as the Ripper case, the "Black Panther" case or the Cambridge Rapist series calls for a range of skills which are otherwise not frequently required and which consequently are not always adequately developed in the senior investigating officer. In the Ripper investigation it is now patently obvious that the senior detectives were not well equipped in management terms to control an inquiry of that size and scale. In particular they lacked the flexibility of mind required to remedy system failures, such as the ongoing problems of the Major Incident Room and also to strengthen sectors of the management structure so obviously necessary in the light of changing developments. (paras 371 to 378)

611. No proper arrangements were made for appropriate delegation of responsibility to subordinate commanders and this led to the overburdening of senior officers with mundane matters which clearly had an adverse effect on overall efficiency. Motivation and the maintenance of morale in junior officers were also lacking from time to time by reason of wrong priorities set by the management team. (paras 379 to 380)

612. There was often a failure to adequately plan the introduction of each new line of inquiry. For example, the vehicle "Tracking Inquiry" was launched without a detailed analysis having been made of the manpower implications arising from the need to trace 53,000 vehicle owners. An even more striking example was the start of the letters and tape campaign at a time when all the outside inquiry teams attached to the Major Incident Room had already been withdrawn to deal with the public response to the Whitaker murder. (para 381)

613. The decision to mount major lines of inquiry calls for proper planning, assessment of impact, reporting and control and when commenced should then be delegated to a competent officer to deal with. In a protracted inquiry the welfare of all officers involved is also an important consideration. (paras 382 to 383)

614. In the Ripper investigation the vast majority of officers worked diligently and conscientiously. What was lacking was not individual application but competent management. (para 384).

#### **Sutcliffe's Immediate Associates**

##### *Trevor Birdsall*

615. At Sutcliffe's trial the witness who attracted the greatest attention was Trevor Birdsall. He has also been the subject of much speculation by the media and I decided therefore that the facts surrounding him warranted a separate heading in my report. On the basis of my review I have concluded that it is most unlikely that Birdsall was involved as an accomplice in any of Sutcliffe's crimes. (para 385 and 392)

616. His prominence in the case was principally due to an anonymous letter he sent to the West Yorkshire Police on the 29th November, 1980 followed by a visit he made to Bradford Police Station the following day. In both instances he expressed misgivings about Sutcliffe and indeed in his letter he said that he had good reason to think Sutcliffe was the man the police were looking for in the Ripper case. The anonymous letter was sent to the Major Incident Room and was made the subject of an action form in relation to Sutcliffe no later than the 9th December 1980. Although, in view of the contents, it was given "Priority No 1", it remained in a filing tray in the Incident Room until Sutcliffe's arrest in Sheffield on the 2nd January, 1981. The report compiled in relation to Birdsall's visit to Bradford Police Station probably arrived at the Major Incident Room by the 4th December 1980 but despite a comprehensive search for it since Sutcliffe's arrest it has not been traced. (paras 386 to 402)

617. In essence, the failure to take advantage of Birdsall's anonymous letter and his visit to the Police Station was yet again a stark illustration of the progressive decline in the overall efficiency of the Major Incident Room. It resulted in Sutcliffe being at liberty for more than a month when he might conceivably have been in custody. Thankfully, there is no reason to think he committed any further murderous assaults within that period. (paras 397 and 403).

### **Sutcliffe's Arrest and Subsequent Events**

620. Sutcliffe's eventual arrest for his heinous crimes resulted from basic patrol policing by uniformed officers as happened similarly in the "Black Panther" case previously. He was arrested for suspected theft on 2nd January 1981 in Sheffield with a prostitute named Olivia St. Elmo Reivers. There were false number plates on his car and it transpired these had been stolen from a scrap yard at Brighouse, West Yorkshire. The arresting officers were Sergeant Ring and Constable Hydes but it was additional good work by Sergeant Armitage and Sergeant Bennett (of the West Yorkshire Police) that resulted in Sutcliffe being kept in custody first at Sheffield, then at Dewsbury as a possible Ripper suspect. (paras 410 to 418)

621. The night following the arrest Sergeant Ring went back to the scene of the arrest and recovered a ball-pein hammer and a knife which Sutcliffe had been able to secrete under some leaves. With the discovery of such damning evidence, coupled with the information on record about Sutcliffe in the Major Incident Room, he had a lengthy interrogation on Sunday, 4th January, 1981 and eventually admitted all the murders and assaults for which he was subsequently convicted. (para 419)

622. Four days later at Sergeant Ring's initiative a further knife was found which Sutcliffe had been able to hide in a lavatory water cistern whilst in custody at Sheffield. (para 420)

623. There were limitations in the actual police action at the time of Sutcliffe's arrest because he was allowed to hide from the officers the ball-pein hammer and the knife. He was also able to conceal the further knife in the water cistern at the police station. But it is to Sergeant Ring's credit that on his own initiative, he found the hammer and the knife at the scene later and was also instrumental in discovering the second knife in the water cistern. Both he and Constable Hydes were commended by the trial judge, Mr Justice Boreham, and also by both the South Yorkshire and the West Yorkshire Police Authorities, respectively. (paras 421 to 422 and 443 to 444)

624. Following Sutcliffe's admission of the offences whilst in custody at Dewsbury the conduct of both the police and the media, in relation to the publicity that was to follow, left a great deal to be desired. In particular there was the notorious Press Conference at Dewsbury and to a lesser extent the later one at Sheffield. As described, both police officers and journalists clearly contravened the contempt laws and recognised sub judice practice. (paras 423 to 439 and 441)

626. During the review I have identified many instances of malpractice by journalists but as the Press Council is already conducting an inquiry into the press coverage of the Ripper case I have concluded that one prominent example would suffice. (para 442 and Fig 22)

### **Lessons for the future (Part IV)**

627. It is easy to be wise with hindsight and I have been mindful of this when identifying the limitations of the police investigation and have reached my conclusions following a carefully balanced and professional consideration of all the factors involved. The lessons for the future come as a natural follow-up. (paras 445 to 446)

#### *Major Incident Rooms*

628. The single most important lesson for Major Incident Rooms is that standardisation of the procedures must be achieved so that compatible systems, capable of being interfaced in appropriate cases, are introduced in all police forces. (para 447)

629. Standardisation is even more important when the use of computers in Major Incident Rooms is contemplated. Unless methods of indexing, recording and filing are common to all police forces, the computerisation of multi-force records in a series type investigation is likely to prove impossible to mount. (para 448)

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630. I recommend that the Association of Chief Officers of Police (through the Computer Development Committee) be asked to consider the standardisation of Major Incident Room documents and procedures as soon as possible and to report within a reasonable time limit. (para 449).

631. It is imperative that adequate staff are employed in a Major Incident Room especially in a difficult and protracted inquiry. Policy decisions on major lines of inquiry likely to lead to a consequential flow of information from the public on a large scale should include a forecast of the staff required. (paras 450 to 451)

632. There were occasions during the life of the Ripper Major Incident Room when untrained staff were deployed to crucial tasks with disastrous consequences, for example, when the list of 241 people to whom the Jordan £5 note might have been paid was searched against the records. The operational efficiency of an Incident Room will greatly depend on the extent to which staff allocated to it are specially trained. (para 452)

633. A Major Incident Room index system, particularly in a large scale investigation, should be subjected to a continuous process of audit. The crucial consideration is that the misplacing of a single card in a nominal index system can jeopardise a whole inquiry and with this in mind, systems management should ensure errors are kept to a minimum. ((para 453).

634. In a long-running inquiry due consideration should be given to the welfare of Major Incident Room staff. (para 454)

#### *Computerisation of records*

635. Computers should be able to offer a senior investigating officer in a major crime inquiry a more simple and effective means of handling the information flow generated. One project, code-name M I R I A M, is to be given a full-scale trial by PSDB in Essex shortly but there is a pressing need to have a shorter-term solution to the many problems experienced in the Ripper case and which might arise in future. This might be provided by a system code-named M O S E S which is a total package provided by a private sector computer bureau. (paras 456 to 460)

636. Having regard to the urgency of a computer requirement and the need to have compatibility of any new systems one force with another, I have ensured that ACPO Computer Development Committee know of my conclusions with regard to the use of computers in Major Incident Rooms. Essentially, a force should not embark upon an individual project at this stage but should support the common system being developed under the M I R I A M project and the much shorter-term micro-computer based solution that is currently being evaluated. In future Chief Constables should consult Home Office, through the Inspectorate, for guidance in the use of a computer in a crime investigation. (para 461)

637. The part played by the Police National Computer Unit in the Ripper case has more than amply demonstrated the need to give the Unit full consideration in future plans especially when looking to a national system in the years ahead. (paras 462 and 463)

638. When contemplating the use of computers in the Police Service, there are privacy considerations in addition to technical considerations. In a protracted and emotive case such as the Ripper investigation there would be likely to be considerable support for the concept of collating information by the latest technological means but the requirement still needs to be put over to the public effectively and sensitively. (para 464)

639. Similar considerations should apply when proposed legislation in this difficult area is being debated and reassurances on privacy rights might be satisfied by a monitoring service provided by the Inspectorate. (para 465)

#### *Management of Series Crimes*

640. I have reluctantly concluded that there is a dearth of senior detectives with the overall management skills to meet the demands of an inquiry on the Ripper Scale. It will be important in

future for the Service, and in particular Chief Constables, to remedy this deficiency by improving the arrangements for career development, training and selection of people to fill these positions. They will need to be not only skilfull detectives but also good managers in the widest possible sense. The training I have prescribed should greatly assist. (para 466 and 474)

641. The senior investigating officer in a series type investigation should not have any other responsibilities. (para 467)

642. Major policy decisions should always be recorded and then be disseminated as considered appropriate. A large scale inquiry such as the Ripper case calls for corporate management in the manner described. A particular line of inquiry of any magnitude should be clearly identified and resources allocated to it appropriately and should not be abandoned prematurely without good reason. (paras 468 to 469)

643. An intelligence unit (as described) should prove invaluable to the senior investigating team. (paras 470 to 471)

644. A major series crime investigation needs a central administration through which all resources deployed to the inquiry are controlled and monitored. It should not involve a heavy manpower commitment and is there to provide a disciplined approach to management resources. (paras 472 to 473)

645. To maintain the motivation and morale of outside inquiry officers due regard must be paid to welfare arrangements (as referred to earlier in relation to Major Incident Room staff). Perspiration is more likely to clear up a difficult investigation than inspiration and regular boosts need to be given to junior officers engaged on repetitive mundane duties over a lengthy period. (para 473)

#### *Senior Investigating Officer in Series Crimes*

646. A lesson which the Police Service has clearly failed to learn from the notorious "Black Panther" crimes of the mid-1970s is that where crimes within a connected series occur and especially in different force areas, special arrangements need to be made for the command of the co-ordinated inquiry. For example, in the Ripper case, the West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester Forces did not fully co-ordinate the murder investigations in the two areas by appointing one "Supremo" investigating officer and this caused certain limitations. This concept of parochial superiority must be overcome if some principal lessons from the series cases in the past are to be effectively digested within the Service. (paras 475 to 480)

647. I am firmly of the view that in the series serious crime situation there needs to be one officer in overall command with the authority to direct the course of the investigation in all the police areas affected. His rank should be either Assistant Chief Constable or Detective Chief Superintendent depending on the size of the operation and he should have no other responsibilities. In the case of a multi-force investigation he should be appointed following mutual agreement of the Chief Constables concerned. (para 481)

648. In the Ripper investigation there were misplaced loyalties to certain senior officers and also jealousies which served to undermine overall efficiency. The choice of senior investigating officer in such a large scale inquiry in future will be of vital importance. The temptation to appoint a "senior man" on age or service grounds should be resisted. What is needed is an officer of sound professional competence who will inspire confidence and loyalty in those who work for him. (para 482)

649. This recommendation in relation to the appointment of a senior investigating officer together with the recommendation outlining the appointment of an Advisory Team (which follows), if adopted, should avoid in any future investigation the frailty exposed in both the Ripper and "Black Panther" cases (para 483).

#### *The appointment of an Advisory Team*

650. Had the Ripper series investigation occurred within any of the shire counties rather than in the metropolitan areas of West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester there is no possibility that the



inquiry could have been sustained from internal resources. External assistance by way of mutual aid would have been essential. (para 484)

651. I consider that ACPO would now accept procedural changes which encompassed not only the appointment of a "Supremo" investigating officer in appropriate cases but also the appointment of an external Advisory Team. The appointment of the Advisory Team to the Ripper investigation in November 1980 clearly shows the merits of such a policy. (paras 485 to 488)

652. There must be a means of harnessing the best detective and scientific talent in the country by having the ad hoc Advisory Team earmarked centrally by H.M. Chief Inspector of Constabulary, in consultation with ACPO Crime Committee, as described. It will need to be changed regularly to ensure the best operational talent is maintained within it. (para 489)

653. There are many benefits which accrue from a decentralised policing system such as we have in Britain but there are also inherent weaknesses as starkly illustrated in both the "Black Panther" and Ripper cases. Whilst I believe that Chief Constables will be ready to co-operate fully to prevent such limitations in future it will be for the Inspectorate to ensure this is done on grounds of efficiency. (para 490)

654. The external Advisory Team would be employed on a regular consultancy basis, as required. (para 491)

#### *Specialist and Scientific Support Services*

655. The Police Service in England and Wales is covered by a network of Forensic Science Laboratories. The services of the scientists are obtained by submitting samples to the regional laboratory or by a visit by the scientist to the scene of the crime (usually in the more serious or difficult crimes). The scientist's prime responsibility is to provide the Court with scientific evidence so as to help it reach a conclusion. (paras 492 to 494)

656. The Forensic Science Service was extensively involved in the Ripper investigation, the laboratories at Wetherby and Chorley having the greatest individual commitment. The Wetherby laboratory alone dealt with 2,652 items of evidence during the series. Even so there were few evidential avenues which could have been greatly helped by forensic science techniques. Whilst my review has revealed certain limitations in the scientific investigation of the case, none of them was as significant as the principal limitations involving the police. (para 495)

657. There were too many individual scientists involved in the case. The resultant lack of co-ordination in the scientific support was recognised in September, 1979 by the Controller, Dr. Curry, who arranged for two senior scientists to be seconded to the case as resident advisers. They did some valuable work before returning to their respective laboratories. (paras 496 to 497)

658. In the series type of murder investigation a senior scientist should be appointed to act as adviser to the senior investigating officer throughout the investigation. This should prevent police forces involved from pursuing separate lines of specialist inquiry into quasi-scientific matters (as happened with the Richardson murder tyre tracks). The concept of the scientific adviser to a complex investigation is that he should be a "laboratory on two feet" and not merely a liaison officer between the senior investigating officer and the laboratory. (paras 498 to 499)

659. The tyre marks found at three of the Ripper murders were never compared one with the other which is a further indication of the need for a co-ordinating scientist where an investigation covers different laboratory areas. (para 500)

660. The wide variety of specialist departments serving the police need to be co-ordinated better in any serious crime inquiry. Over-specialisation within the Forensic Science Service can also create difficulties in that scientists can tend to view all problems from the perspective of their own specialisation and so disregard possibilities based on alternative lines. Attachment of forensic scientists to busy police forces for short periods and an interchange of scientists between those with predominantly bench functions and those normally in the field, should prove valuable in this regard. I so recommend. (paras 501 to 503)

661. In addition to the scientific adviser seconded to any series murder investigation in future, there should also be appointed a senior police scenes of crime officer so as to ensure that each scene of crime in the series is examined by the same personnel. (para 503)

662. In the light of other limitations identified in the Ripper case, scientists should always ensure that scientific conclusions are committed to a written report so as to assist the investigating officer. The report should not be part of a bureaucratic practice but, wherever possible, should lead to an interchange of information which might indicate other useful areas of inquiry. (paras 504 to 505)

663. A major lesson to be learned (as evidenced in relation to the so-called Harrison connection) is that the use of categoric eliminators, scientific or otherwise, is fraught with danger unless absolutely conclusive. (para 506)

#### *The Police and the Media*

664. The Police need to understand their positive duty to assist the media to provide the public with accurate information about serious crime and reporters in turn must understand their duty to act responsibly and not to publish or broadcast information which is fabricated, contrived, or which is known to be inaccurate or speculative. (paras 507 to 508)

665. The appointment of permanent liaison officers within all police forces is clearly justified. In a protracted major crime investigation it is essential to have in post a police/media relations officer of sufficient rank to deal adequately with journalists. He should be capable of putting across the police point of view, especially on television. Where such an officer of senior rank is already in post he will need to be divorced from his normal day to day commitments when involved in a complex major homicide investigation. He should then be able to acquit himself effectively as the regular police spokesman and also foster and maintain an efficient liaison with all the journalists involved. (paras 509 to 511)

666. As indicated in my report there were "moles" within the West Yorkshire Police who transmitted confidential information to the press about the Ripper investigation. In the light of experience in this case there are very strong reasons for investigating as rigorously as possible any "leak" of confidential information. (para 512)

667. Since the Sutcliffe press conferences the Contempt of Court Act, 1981 has become law.

668. Neither the police nor the media can escape the blame for the limitations clearly exposed in the Ripper case and both agencies should recognise their duty to act in furtherance of the public weal (paras 518 and 519)

#### *Training requirement*

669. My review has indicated a number of areas where police performance was below the level required and this was often due to inadequate training. In senior officers it manifested itself in the lack of management concepts akin to a protracted large scale inquiry. At lower levels it showed itself at times in the poor performance by members of outside inquiry teams and by the staff of the Major Incident Room. (paras 520 and 523)

670. In so far as Major Incident Room staff are concerned I anticipate that ACPO will soon be in a position to give guidance on such training programmes. (para 521)

671. There is a need to nominate primary and reserve Major Incident Room teams in all forces with an appropriate training commitment. When records are computerised it will be essential to ensure that staff are well trained in the use of visual display units and printer terminals. The input of information to a computer is just as prone to error as any other form of information recording. (para 522)

672. Following discussions I have had with the Commandant of the Police Staff College I recommend that the training of senior investigating officers in the rank of Assistant Chief Constable or Commander (Metropolitan Police) should be on the lines described. (para 525)

673. Following similar discussions I have had with the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police he has kindly offered to take on a training commitment at Hendon for officers of chief superintendent or superintendent rank. I recommend that such training on the lines described be implemented. (para 526).

674. Whilst training at the Police Staff College and the Metropolitan Police Training School ought to satisfy the immediate training requirement for senior officers, it would prove helpful if Chief Constables who organise training for senior officers on a local or regional basis were to include in the course programmes the management of serious crime inquiries on the lines indicated in this report. (para 527)

675. The techniques of interviewing is a topic deserving of greater attention within police training programmes and should be dealt with very thoroughly during detective training courses. (para 528)

676. The training requirements stemming from this review of the Ripper case should be included in future training programmes not merely in the short term but as a continuing process. The training of Major Incident Room personnel is already being examined by ACPO Computer Development Committee and I recommend that the other training programmes be discussed in the first instance with ACPO Crime and Training Committees respectively, with appropriate liaison thereafter with the Police Staff College, the Metropolitan Police and those Chief Constables with the facilities for the other training needs. (paras 529 to 530)

#### *The Way Ahead*

677. In line with your Parliamentary Statement at the time of my appointment my team have been mindful of looking at the Ripper case, sometimes with the benefit of hindsight, so that lessons which might be learned from it can be made known to police forces generally. (paras 531 to 534)

678. Regretfully some of these lessons were previously identified at the conclusion of the "Black Panther" case in 1975 but in the light of the Ripper case, quite clearly the Police Service has not learned from them, particularly those relating to the management and control of a multi-force murder investigation. (paras 535 to 538)

679. Fortunately, there is one tremendous advantage in the aftermath of the Ripper case when compared to the post-trial period of the "Black Panther" case. There is now to hand the findings of an independent professional review team and the lessons for the future have been identified. There is also a clear indication that the Service is anxious to take full note of these lessons for the future. (para 539)

680. I recommend that the procedure as outlined should be followed hereafter and that details be included in your Parliamentary Statement so as to afford a clear indication of the prompt, constructive action that is being taken following the review. I also recommend that a Home Office Circular, on the lines described, be issued to the Service, as soon as appropriate. (paras 540 to 541)

#### **Acknowledgements**

681. I should like to express my appreciation for all the assistance I have been given during the course of the review. The members of my immediate team, referred to in paragraph 2 of the report, have been dedicated in their tasks and necessarily have had to work long hours especially having regard to their other important responsibilities elsewhere. They have been ably supported

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