

Police Federation National Detectives Forum

Keynote Address

Inspector Steve Williams - Chairman

Tuesday 18th May 2010

Please Check Against Delivery

I am very proud to have been elected to be your Chairman my sincere thanks to you for voting for me. Having your support and confidence means a lot - my commiserations to Ray Lewis who was a worthy candidate.

I have picked-up the baton from my good friend and colleague Brian Stockholm and in thanking him for his hard work I am sure you will join me in wishing him all the very best for a long, happy and healthy retirement.

My mission is clear! It is to ensure that Detectives and their vital work are placed firmly on the agenda in all relevant areas.

You know, I have recently spent a lot of time in the political arena. I have met them all...Cameron, Brown, Clegg, First Ministers', party chairs', Home Secretary's, shadow ministers and so on.

Their talk is always about 'bobbies on the beat', 'visible presence', high profile policing', 'collaboration', 'public funding', 'G20', and 'heavy-handedness' - rarely did I hear a word about detective work.

I know that a lot of us work under-cover, but we're obviously doing it too well, because it's as if we have become invisible. No one seems to see us or show any interest. In fact not once did I hear about detective work. *Well that's going to change!*

Ironically, we are all acutely aware that when government and ACPO have their backs to the wall in relation to crime they will always call upon the Detective to save the day. Of course we obligingly roll-up our sleeves and get the job done, but it shouldn't be solely about that.

Our unwavering commitment and dedication should not be something that is just taken for granted or abused. We have a respected role of investigating crime.... a world renowned one, but that is so often forgotten.

Well I say, it will not continue to go unnoticed and that the sterling work being undertaken in CID offices across the land will receive the attention and acclaim that it deserves.

We are the workhorses behind the scenes solving an increasing wave of crime and our pivotal role in policing needs to be recognised and widely promoted. We deserve the attention, admiration and pride of the public.

Detective work makes great Television dramas: Morse, A Touch of Frost, Poirot (pause) ‘Danger-mouse’ and Inspector Gadget – to name but a few. But they, the powers that be, need to remember that we are *real* professionals’ not just fictional ones, and we are doing a *real* job in the *real* world.

We are committed thief-takers, responsible for catching the baddies and an essential part of the modern police service. The detective role needs to be supported and nurtured – not civilianised, so that we can continue to apprehend those that prey on law-abiding citizens and the most vulnerable within our communities.

Right now, I am extremely concerned about the retention issues affecting Detectives. I have similar worries over Training, Funding and Resources.

My aim is to ensure that Detective services provided by fully warranted police officers are a priority for not only the Federation's Joint Central Committee but also for ACPO and the Home Office.

We all know that there are challenging times ahead with more so-called reforms planned under the dark cloak of 'Workforce Modernisation'.

Make no mistake; 'Workforce Modernisation' has more to do with cutting cost than cutting crime. I don't trust the motives driving this destructive programme and we cannot allow the noble role of the detective to descend into some quasi-investigation-agency run by civilians. Our communities and our colleagues deserve better!

Let me make it plain; I have nothing against the civilian staff carrying out these new roles, many are retired police officers. This argument is one of principles and not personalities, but the fact remains, they are fulfilling a deficient and defective role that *is* undermining the very foundation of investigative policing in this Country.

The reality is clear.... the thin layer of veneer is cracking. Take a look at Surrey, which is hailed as the jewel in the crown of workforce modernisation. Surrey has the lowest ratio of officers to staff; it's the first force where the number of police staff exceeds that of warranted police officers. Surrey also has the lowest detection rate of England & Wales!

Is this a coincidence? I don't think so - and it does little to support the so-called modernisers like Sir Ian Blair, in their assertion that civilianising police duties will lead to improved performance or value for money.

These “modernisers” know the cost of everything but the value of nothing!

My primary focus lays in the direction of these ill-conceived and badly implemented policy initiatives that dilute the Detectives’ role, give no credence to professionals and de-motivate the service I cherish.

My intention - with your support, is that we all work together to promote and uphold the true meaning of what makes the office of a warranted Detective so very crucial to the wellbeing of the communities we serve.

We need to get the detective officer off of the endangered species list and ensure that numbers are increased so that the job can be done properly – before we pass the point of no return.

Politicians, ACPO and HR Managers who have been gripped with this compulsion to civilianise like some malignant virus will soon be counting the costs of substituting a quality service provided by dedicated professional detective officers, with the second-rate inferior provision of poorly trained civilian replacements.

I give you my assurance that I will fight tooth and nail to retain and progress the standing of all warranted Federated Detectives of England and Wales, It is my duty and my honour to do so.

Ladies and Gentlemen thank you for your indulgence.

We will now move to the agenda of this afternoon's meeting: