

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refer later in my report to the "Training Requirement" which, if implemented to the full, should help overcome such outdated insularity.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

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 possibles 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