

I wrote this article for Police Oracle but they didn't want to publish it, but I thought it was worth highlighting anyway.

OSINT Tips – Well something a bit different this week, the College of Policing and their Ethics & Integrity.

With the permission of the editorial staff of Police Oracle I've decided to take a week off from writing about the different aspects of Open Source Intelligence and to write about the College of Policing, or ACPO Lite as I like to refer to them, as let's face it that's what they are in danger of becoming.

I was a Police Officer in the 1980's & 90's and whilst I might not have been the most professional officer in the world, I served my community well, arresting the people that needed to be arrested and helping the people that needed to be helped.

I didn't have a second job and neither did the officers I worked with, we were all too busy being Police Officers. Yes there was the occasional officer, usually a traffic motorcyclist, who was a part-time car dealer, or someone with a small holding who sold the odd half a lamb. Now it seems that literally hundreds of officers have their own limited companies, using the skills learnt as Police Officers, which they then sell on to the highest bidder or back to their own police forces.

And despite what Sir Hugh Orde may say about this to the Home Affairs Select Committee or about officers being stopped from taking jobs which are incompatible with being a police officer, it is happening quite often.

Last year when I pointed out to the West Midlands Police that some of their serving officers were running a company offering private investigation services, they said that the ACPO guidelines on which jobs are incompatible with being a police officer was ONLY guidance and they didn't have to follow it or even fully investigate officers who only had permission to run a training company but who then got slightly carried away and ended up following people suspected of having affairs and selling counterfeit goods. Unbelievable to someone of my experience they also refused to check these officers PNC usage as they said that this was disproportionate.

I may publish the full story soon as it was full of unusual events like that and shows how badly let down decent officers are by the actions of their more dodgy colleagues.

So back to the College, who many hard working decent Police Officers may think has been preaching Ethics & Integrity to them since it was formed, with its annual running costs of over £75million.

In June last year I was in discussion with a senior placed officer at the College (I refuse to use their childish CoP acronym) discussing how my Copyright protected training material had ended up on their POLKA system and how serving officers on Working Groups were using the opportunity the Working Group offered them to recommend their own private companies.

I was told that the College had formed a new Working Group to look at this Integrity issue and as a result in the future officers attending such Working Groups would have to disclose any conflict of interests at the start of any meeting. This will be a nice change, as at the moment officers & staff on these Working Groups, previously ACPO Working Groups, can and do very easily hijack them for their own financial gain.

I had previously taken my discoveries on this to Sir Hugh Orde, the president of ACPO, which is no longer just a staff association of senior officers but is a very profitable private company with a very big bank balance; however Sir Hugh felt unable to comment about these corrupt practices being linked to ACPO; however I see that he has recently been talking to the press about other corruption issues.

During the conversation with the College I mentioned that even one of their own instructors, a serving officer, who was on a Working Group, was also running his own private training company, which may be seen as a conflict of interests. This appeared to be news to the College, as apparently when they took over from the NPIA, all their staff had to sign a declaration of their outside business interests etc. but this officer had submitted an empty form and upon checking they also did not have permission for any outside business interest from the Metropolitan Police, where they were seconded from.

I was asked if I was sure about this officer, so directed them to this officers LinkedIn profile where their business interest was listed along their College & NPIA details, and to the Companies House listing. I also included some additional details to show that this company, of which the officer was the sole Director and 100% shareholder of also had a County Court Judgment registered against it.

As a result this was passed to the Metropolitan Police and I was asked not to make comment or to tweet about this whilst it was being investigated, which I agreed to as it seemed reasonable; although it did raise questions about the ability of the College to monitor its own staff, whilst they are preaching Ethics & Integrity to hard working Police Officers.

In December I received an email about another issue from someone who had attended a course at the College, which has resulted in Surrey Police launching an investigation into some of the Colleges staff, over Ethics & Integrity issues.

I decided to check on the earlier investigation by the Metropolitan Police and discovered that the officer who was still an instructor at the College was yet to be spoken to, over 6 months since the College was made aware that a member of staff was running an unauthorised business.

I made a few more enquiries, using Open Source techniques, and found that this serving Police Officer, seconded to the College as an instructor, as well as still running the previous business, which now appeared to have even more County Court Judgments registered against it, had also recently started a new limited company, the website of which was offering "online research and investigation services".... with products that can "be presented in judicial, tribunal and internal proceedings".

This sounds very much like what a private investigator does, but this is a serving Police Officer working at the College of Policing, so I passed this information to the College and to the Metropolitan Police, who seemed slightly surprised at what I had found and asked me how I had found it and why I was looking.

Again I was asked not to comment or tweet about this whilst it was being investigated but that is what I did in June when the issue was first raised and what has happened since then, not a lot, so why should I keep quiet now when the College are still preaching Ethics & Integrity to hard working Police Officers but appear to be happy to do little when issues over the Ethics & Integrity of their own staff are raised.

And make no mistake I've been told by the PA to Rob Beckley that both he and Alex Marshall are being kept updated on the situation of a serving officer who works full-time at the College as an instructor, despite the fact that they know that they are running a number of unauthorised outside business interests and is now also offering private investigation services.

I can only assume that even after Leveson, Alex Marshall is happy for his staff to be offering private investigation services in their spare time, at a time that he is preaching Ethics & Integrity to hard working decent Police Officers.

It appears that this has again been left to the Metropolitan Police to deal with in a month or two's time, whilst the College sits back content to wait and wait and wait, whilst doing nothing about its own staff.

So at the time of writing, the College are content that this officer remains an instructor at the College, whilst still appearing to be running businesses without any permission, whilst still appearing to be incurring debt judgments and now whilst appearing to be offering private investigation services.

Ethics & Integrity, "My Arse" as Jim Royal would say.

And as an aside back to the annual budget of the College, which is currently over £75million and the fact that the plan is, and it is whatever they say, that hard working decent Police Officers around the country will be paying for this sooner or later. Well I could write another article showing how I could run the professional body for Police Officers & Staff for about 5% of their current budget; but at a time when Alex Marshall and other ACPO types are asking hard working decent Police Officers to pay their annual membership fees it should be remembered that ACPO Officers have their annual ACPO membership fees paid for by their PCC's and previously by the Police Authority.

ACPO don't pay their own staff membership fees from their salary but they think that hard working decent Police Officers should pay for ACPO Lite from theirs – "My Arse".