

Coronavirus

Lockdown: A police constable's perspective



by David Scott

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The UK Column received the following letter from a serving police officer. His name must remain confidential, for, by speaking up for the law, and for the rights of the British people, he places his job in jeopardy. Such is the nature of our institutions today.

We reproduce this letter in full and thank the officer who had the courage and firmness to write it.

I am a serving police officer and I am writing this to give my perspective on what is happening to UK policing in the context of this so-called "Covid crisis".

I have been a police officer for 14 years and have seen a lot of change in the service, even in that relatively short time. I have seen the gradual, but very deliberate drift towards political correctness, a concerted drive for diversity

and equality at the expense of a robust, protective and impartial policing function, and the degradation and dismantling of the world-renowned policing model by the government, the mainstream press and a small minority of woke pressure groups.

Despite this, I think the public at large have maintained a healthy respect and gratitude for the difficult and vital job that we do in maintaining law and order as a “thin blue line”. However, I fear that the public trust in the UK police service is now circling the drain. In the structure of the force, the cracks that have been covered over in recent years are starting to show. The events of this year have exposed how political policing has become, and how entrenched the training and values of the last decade now are. This has manifested in the deteriorating behaviour and conduct of many officers and of the police service as a whole. I have watched in disbelief and dismay at the way in which some of my colleagues across the UK have resorted to extreme force and heavy-handed tactics against people who are simply exercising their basic human rights to freedom of speech, freedom to protest, freedom to work and gather with family and friends, freedom to worship, and freedom over their own bodies and health.

I understand that there was a pandemic of sorts at the beginning of the year, and there was an element of the unknown, for which some action had to be taken. I am mindful of the loss and grief of those who have lost someone due to this virus, but all the evidence I have seen says that there is no longer a risk to the general public and that the figures have been grossly inflated and misrepresented. Some of our more vulnerable and elderly people need to be protected, but no more so than any other year during flu season, and there is absolutely no justification for wholesale lockdown and arbitrary regulations to strangle the life out of the economy, which will inevitably lead to a “cure” that is immeasurably worse than the disease. The police service will end up dealing with fall-out from lockdowns for decades to come — mental health, suicides, increased crime of all types, drug and alcohol addictions, domestic abuse, public unrest and so on.

How an organisation that depends on thorough investigation and collation of evidence, and whose founding idea is the protection of the public, cannot see this is astounding. Senior officers and chief constables across the country are simply following the government diktats without question, or at least so it seems. Certainly, from my position within the police service, I have seen nothing to suggest that we are properly upholding the oath we all make, and carrying out the duty we have to uphold human rights with fairness, integrity, diligence and impartiality, according equal respect to all.

This has been most obvious to me in the policing of different protests over the past six months. I have been directly involved in policing protests by Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion and anti-lockdown groups, and the contrast between them has been stark and alarming. There is undoubtedly a lack of impartiality and fairness in the way that these different groups have been treated. I have seen first-hand the way in which police have facilitated and “taken the knee” to BLM protesters for fear of any appearance of institutional racism (which doesn’t exist, in my experience), and to the detriment of the safety of the public and officers on the ground. In a similar vein, Extinction Rebellion are given the freedom to protest, block roads, bring major city centres to a standstill, damage property and intimidate with their presence for weeks on end, without any robust and decisive police action. Contrast this with the anti-lockdown protesters, who are made up of a diverse cross-section of the general law-abiding public and are not “anti-vax conspiracy theorists”, as the mainstream press would have you believe. These protests have been met with almost immediate and disproportionate aggression and violence from the police. It is what is now commonly being referred to as “two-tier policing”, which I’m sorry to say is fairly accurate and not something I ever thought I’d see.

From working within the organisation, I can see how Covid enforcement is absorbing a disproportionate amount of time and resources. High-level meetings are held, strategies and policies are devised and filtered down the ranks, all at the expense of dealing with the usual workload of crime and the other vast responsibilities that the police service has. This is all done in the name of “public health and protection”, which in turn is based on misleading or fraudulent statistics and one-sided propaganda, pushed by the government through the mainstream media. Officers on the front line are confused by the constantly changing guidelines and legislation, and even they don’t know what they are supposed to be enforcing from day to day. Most rely on briefing documents for their direction and guidance, rather than studying the legislation for themselves.

Ironically, where I work is the only place I feel as though life is normal, because despite the plethora of posters, emails and reminders about being “covid secure” in the police station, most officers take no notice when out of the public eye. It is very interesting that not one police officer has died from Covid-19 across the whole of the UK (to the best of my knowledge), despite the fact that we have worked in a very public facing role since this “pandemic” began and with very limited PPE for the first few weeks.

I also find the over-policing of Covid regulations utterly astonishing. For many years I have worked on different teams across various departments that have been stretched to breaking point due to lack of resources, carrying huge workloads, working enforced overtime, and below minimum staffing. I have dealt with violent offenders and all manner of challenging and complex incidents on my own, managed crime scenes and serious road traffic collisions with a couple of other colleagues, and put my life and health on the line to protect the public. Now, and seemingly from nowhere, it is amazing how hundreds of officers are suddenly available to attend peaceful protests, vanloads can turn up to close gyms, shops and churches, and extra patrols be implemented to ensure Covid compliance. I actually find it insulting to the thousands of officers who turn up to work every day to do a difficult job and for genuine policing purposes.

I have always been proud of wearing the uniform and holding the office of constable, but much of what I have seen in the past few months has made me ashamed of the police service. A police officer has a unique and privileged position in society, with incredible power to intervene in the life of a member of the public, to both preserve and remove freedom. With this power comes great responsibility, and every officer must be held to account for their actions, but I fear that a constable's autonomy, independence and discretion has been eroded beyond recognition. It is almost becoming a case of "I'm just following orders", which didn't stand as a defence in the Nuremberg trials and isn't an acceptable justification for action or inaction by a British police officer.

I have worked with the most exceptional people in my service, many of whom are close and lifelong friends, and I know they didn't join up to enforce draconian laws against law-abiding people. We all joined up to make a small difference, to keep people safe and maintain the peace and freedom that we enjoy in this country. What dismays me is the way in which many of these incredible people are unquestioningly following the orders and instructions from higher ranks, without investigating or understanding what the real motivation and agenda is behind all of this.

I think there are a few elements that combine to prevent officers asking questions or challenging these changes. Being a disciplined and ranked service, there is a reluctance to disobey orders or raise objections, officers have a secure income and pension which they don't want to jeopardise, and there is also a prevailing cynical culture of "us versus them" in regards to the public, which is fostered over years of dealing with desperate situations and difficult people. There is always a rapid pace of change and re-inventing of

the wheel in policing, and I think many officers get fatigued at new initiatives, schemes and law-changes. It's far easier to do what you're told than to fight against the system and stick your head above the parapet.

This all leads me to question of whether or not I want to remain part of a police service that is increasingly becoming an enforcement arm of the state, rather than an independent establishment that is accountable to the public and charged with upholding their safety and security. The police service should keep the government in check and prevent oppression, tyranny and political overreach into the lives of its citizens. The office of constable should be one that upholds laws that safeguard against arbitrary governance and legislation that infringes on the freedom that previous generations fought and died to secure for us.

I can foresee see a time, in the not-too-distant future, where I will have to make a stand and refuse to follow orders because they conflict with my principles, my Christian faith, my belief in the sanctity of human life, and the oath I swore when I joined the police. So far, I have managed to avoid directly enforcing any of these totalitarian measures, but I cannot and will not be acting upon or enforcing any of the legislation under the Coronavirus Act 2020, even if it costs my job.

For the time being, I will do my best to resist the rapid and destructive changes to "The Job" that I felt called to do to make the world a safer and more peaceful place and to serve the public without fear or favour. I do not know how long this resistance can last.

Here we have a statement by a police constable of the type that we would wish to encounter should we find ourselves in danger or distress: the type of police constable who may soon be a distant and nostalgic memory, in the monochrome hues of [Dixon of Dock Green](#).

To the law-abiding and peaceful land of our memories we may soon have to bid "[Goodnight all](#)", and thereafter view every police officer as a dangerous operative of the state machine. For the moment, however, let us remember that such men as this constable still exist, still bring credit to the uniform, and help to our people.

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