



## BOOK EXTRACT

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## A Straight Red

**T**he night this episode of *MacIntyre Undercover* was aired on television I watched it with my local solicitor – I’d had a tip-off that it was going to be shown – but more of that later – and my phone didn’t stop ringing. Everyone said to me at the time, “You’ve got nothing to worry about, have you?” but for me it was always going to be very uncomfortable viewing.

So I went away for a couple of weeks after that, just to let the dust settle a bit, and then after I’d got back and a couple of months or so had passed I started to think I was home and dry. Well you would, wouldn’t you? As everyone had said at the time, I hadn’t actually done anything wrong at all, however bad the programme makers had tried to make me look. Surely even a blind man could see that much. Yet during that time, oh let me tell you, I’d got sick to fucking death of hearing MacIntyre’s name. To me he’ll always be a prick and a proper mongrel, sneaking around and screwing up people’s lives and then passing it off as undercover journalism to an unsuspecting public. He must have had his dinner money taken off of him at school to make him the way he is now – nothing more than some bitter and twisted ‘wannabe cozzler’, still waiting to arrest his tormentors from nursery.

Talking of cozzers, in March 2000, four months after the programme was aired, I went to Twickenham police station and requested information on Donal MacIntyre. The reason I gave them was that I believed he was involved in terrorism – well why not? He’d done the same sort of thing to me, as how else do you think he’d got the information he needed? Do you remember at the start of the programme when they showed all those pictures from police files of the suspected football hooligans?

Exactly! I’d sort of guessed that the Old Bill weren’t going to plonk a big fat file on MacIntyre in my hands and say “Help yourself,” but listen, they only had the front to tell me they didn’t give out information on other people. I said to them, “How can you stand there and tell me that when this film crew’s come in here and got all the information under the sun on me, handed to them on a plate by you lot? You bent over backwards to help MacIntyre and his pals make their programme and yet I’m not a terrorist, I’m just an alleged football hooligan.”

“What is it? One rule for one and one for another?” I told them as I was leaving the station and just to let them know I added, “Well, I’ve made my point and I’ll see you later” – I couldn’t have guessed at the time I’d see them all again

the next morning.

Wednesday 22 March 2000 is not a day I'll forget. Well, for starters Chelsea were playing Lazio in the Champions League that evening and I was really looking forward to it, but first I had a business to run.

A kid called Aaron works for me and I went round his house at about 8 o'clock just to make sure he was ready for work, as he's a typical young man and didn't need a reason to have a 'light ale', but he sort of looked up to me as a father figure. It just so happened that Aaron was ready and he was all set to drive off from his house when his mum came out and told him that Poriky was on the phone.

Poriky's an Indian fella who has an MOT station next to my tyre business so I couldn't work out at first why he would call me when he knew Aaron and I would be at work any minute. Well, these things get your nut working, don't they, and it soon dawned on me – I knew the 'other' people were there.

I was keeping a serious eye out as we approached the main gates, and just as Aaron drove on into the yard I noticed a typical Old Bill car opposite. So it was unmarked but, c'mon, it still stood out like a pork pie at a Jewish wedding.

Poriky made his way over to my car window and said, "Fucking hell, mate, what have you done? They're everywhere!" And then for a minute it all went absolutely fucking mental.

I looked in my wing mirror again and I could now see two of the ugliest men I've ever seen in my life, because before they'd been out of sight lying down in their 'haddock'. So straight away I rammied my motor into reverse, swung out onto the main road and – don't ask me why because I couldn't tell you; maybe it was just a rush of blood to the head – I started laughing like mad as I was overtaking all the other cars.

When I finally pulled over, well, talk about something 'on top', it was like a scene from *The Sweeney*. I'd been chased by the Tactical Support Group, the Football Intelligence Unit and the two 'unnoticeable' cozzers in their Vauxhall. Altogether there must've been 25 Old Bill all for one person, which was ridiculously over the top. I'd sort of guessed by now that it was more than my tax disc they wanted a word with me about. And, don't forget, Andy was getting the same treatment at exactly the same time in Reading, so that's 50 Old Bill all told between the two of us – PATHETIC!

I had a quick look across the road where there were a few shops including my mate Mark's cafe (don't go there if you're expecting any bills that month as it's probably cheaper to pay off your mortgage!) and there were photographers and TV crews everywhere. I didn't really have time to count them all so I don't know how many there were, but I think I made my feelings towards them clear enough before one of the cozzers came up to me and said, "Jason Marriner, I'm arresting you on conspiracy to cause violent disorder and affray."

I just laughed at the Old Bill first of all, and when he tried to explain what it was all about I started laughing even harder. "Conspiracy, my bollocks! What are you talking about?"

However, another one of the cozzers started to get a bit fresh as he must've spotted the cameras as well and wanted to make a big show for them by forcing my arm up my back – it seems everyone needs their '15 minutes of fame' except me, doesn't it? – so I just shouted, "What are you doing, you fucking prick?!"

I'm not a fool – the Old Bill must've leaked my planned arrest to the press for there to have been all those newspaper reporters and film crews just waiting across the street to capture it all as it happened. You'd have thought I must be a mass murderer or something to get that kind of media attention. I couldn't do anything about that and, as for the Old Bill, well apart from the one trying to take my arm off they were only doing their job (although it's not a job I'd choose myself – would you?)

There was still no getting away from the cameras even when I was inside the police van, as when I turned around there was this great big zoom lens being stuck right in my face. He was that close filming me that I felt like I was the best man at a celebrity wedding. Now, if he was a police cameraman there wasn't much I could complain about, but if he wasn't then he was trespassing and shouldn't have been allowed inside the police van. More than that, he was really giving me the zig. Yet if he wasn't one of MacIntyre's film crew and he really was a police cameraman, then who was it that later gave this footage to MacIntyre to use in his follow-up programme? Yeah, tricky one that.

You have to ask yourself, just how close was the link between the police and the programme makers? Well, I'd already worked that bit out, so if you saw the results in the MacIntyre update you'll know that by this time I was really spitting mad. Well, sometimes it just makes you feel better to get it off your chest, doesn't it?

Yet because they'd made their arrest the police then had an excuse to spin my yard and we all went back there in one big showy convoy. They rifled through my tyre shop searching for anything incriminating, and do you know what they found? Yeah, tyres – unbelievable, isn't it? I couldn't have worked that one out. The only thing they 'found' was my book of phone numbers – you know, work contacts and friends, that sort of thing. So, to everyone reading this book, be very careful about keeping people's numbers as it can lead you into a lot of trouble. And no, I'm not joking. I'll explain what I mean a bit later. I might add that a lot of the numbers were connected to football but, hey, I've got a life outside of work.

I've also got close links with travellers. A lot of travellers are good friends of mine and I've lived on travellers' sites

on and off over the years. So having just seen the cozzers spin my yard I didn't want them spinning my mate Cliff's trailer just because I'd been staying there. Not that they'd have found anything if they had, but you know what they're like.

I shouted out to the lads in Romany to warn Cliff, and they were staunch. I also told one of the kids to let Andy Frain know what had happened but, although I didn't know it then, he'd been nicked at the same time as me.

I was finally taken to Staines police station and during the journey the cozzers made a few comments and asked a few questions, but I wasn't interested and didn't respond at all. Well, that's not quite true, as anyone who knows me will tell you I'm a piss-taker. I just can't help myself, whatever's going on around me. So I made a few sarcastic comments such as, "I haven't been to Staines for a while, but no doubt I'll make up for it with my length of stay today."

One copper replied, "No, you'll be bailed in a few hours."

I just laughed (there's something about cozzers - they're always funny when they aren't trying to be) and told him straight, "I've got as much chance of that as your old woman not letting the milkman in to tuck under her belt."