

Families reject Met's 'whitewash' inquiry over sex abuse claims

James Gillespie

THE internal inquiry into the handling of Operation Midland ordered by Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, the Metropolitan police commissioner, has run into problems after key witnesses refused to co-operate.

Sir Richard Henriques, a retired High Court judge, is leading the "private" inquiry into the operation, which was launched following unsubstantiated claims by a single witness known only as "Nick".

The Met spent almost £2m and used up to 30 detectives to investigate the allegations, including claims that three boys were murdered by a gang of paedophiles that included the former prime minister Edward Heath, ex-MP Harvey Proctor, Lord Brittan, Lord Janner and Lord Bramall.

Last week the family of Janner, who died in December, and Proctor confirmed that they would not co-operate with

Henriques, who conducted a previous inquiry for the Crown Prosecution Service that identified three occasions on which the CPS missed an opportunity to prosecute Janner, a former Labour MP who was ennobled in 1997.

In letters sent to individuals or the families of deceased people who were wrongly accused, Henriques says it is "neither intended nor foreseen that this review will result in a whitewash for the Metropolitan police service".

However, one source close to the inquiry claimed: "It bloody well will do."

The Sunday Times has recently highlighted questions about the evidence given by alleged victims of Janner.

The over-arching inquiry into child sexual abuse led by Dame Lowell Goddard has asked Janner's solicitors to supply documents and details of witnesses who would have given evidence on his behalf. A friend of the Janner family said: "The CPS report by

Henriques was flawed and will be challenged at the Goddard inquiry. The family has been told by the solicitors that there is a very strong defence case, but none of the defence witnesses were asked anything by Henriques."

The friend said that the Janner family had been "astounded" to be asked to do so this time, but did not believe the report would fairly reflect their position.

They have not been asked for evidence that would have



Janner died in December

challenged the complainants' allegations.

Henriques has said that the role of the inquiry is to look at the Met's handling of the inquiry rather than examine evidence about individuals. But Proctor, a former Tory MP, claimed it was part of a PR strategy by the Met to deal with the fallout from Midland.

"Sir Bernard has chosen his own judge, set up his own inquiry and decided his own terms of reference. It's a cover-up," he said. "I would urge Henriques to resign."

In a statement the Met said: "The commissioner requested a former High Court judge examine the way non-recent sexual allegations against public figures have been investigated by the Metropolitan police service (MPS). The review being undertaken by... Sir Richard Henriques is independent and as such its conduct is a matter for Sir Richard. The MPS awaits his report and recommendations in due course."



Catherine Zeta-Jones has been cast as the Cocaine Godmother

Zeta-Jones beats J.Lo to Latina role

Sharon Feinstein

JENNIFER LOPEZ was beaten to the role of a Colombian drug cartel boss by Catherine Zeta-Jones in a forthcoming film because she "doesn't have the acting quality to pull it off", its executive producer said.

Zeta-Jones, who was born in Swansea, found herself at the centre of a discrimination row when she was cast as gangster Griselda Blanco in *The Godmother* ahead of Lopez, a Hispanic actress.

Speaking about the controversy, Bernard Koppe said: "Jennifer Lopez had a campaign going to get the role because she thought it could get her an Oscar."

"She lobbied that she was perfect for the role because this is a Latin woman... but she was told it's too challenging, that she doesn't have the acting quality to pull it off."

Defending the choice, he added: "She [Zeta-Jones] looks surprisingly Latino. She has been in *Zorro* films, which is a Latin look, and she has been in

Traffic, where she was the wife of a drug lord. So this is not an entirely new sort of casting."

The choice in 2014 of a non-Hispanic actress to play Blanco, who was known as the Cocaine Godmother, stirred complaints of "whitewashing" — a Hollywood term for racially biased casting. "Are there no Latin actresses?" tweeted Yolonda Ross, a black actress.

Koppe acknowledged that "a lot of people say it [the role] needs a Latin woman, so why is a [Welsh] actress involved?"

That is another challenge for her: she has to portray this woman so well that people say, 'Fair enough, you have pulled this off'."

Blanco, 69, was murdered in Colombia in 2012 after cornering much of the cocaine market in southern Florida in the 1970s and 1980s.

Zeta-Jones, 46, who is married to the actor Michael Douglas, won a best supporting actress Oscar in 2003 for the film *Chicago*. Representatives of Lopez did not respond to requests for comment.

Police to investigate army intelligence links to murder of IRA 'traitors'

Tom Harper

HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

ONE of Britain's top counter-terrorism experts is to lead a police investigation into the activities of Stakeknife, the British agent suspected of involvement in more than 50 punishment killings while he was the head of the IRA's "nutting squad".

Jon Boutcher, who led coun-

terterrorism operations as a senior detective and is now chief constable of Bedfordshire, will spearhead an inquiry that is expected to involve about 50 officers and to last for up to five years.

Stakeknife was a highly prized informer for MI5 and military intelligence while head of the Provisional IRA's internal enforcement unit between 1978 and 1995.

He has been widely named as Freddie Scappaticci, a former senior IRA man who vanished in 2003 after denying he was Stakeknife.

Boutcher's inquiry is potentially explosive for the British authorities as it is expected to examine alleged collusion between intelligence officers and Stakeknife over dozens of killings.

The agent was regarded as

the most important informer for MI5 and military intelligence during the Troubles.

He was greatly feared within the IRA as head of its so-called "nutting squad", which tortured and killed suspected informers.

His British handlers have long faced claims that they turned a blind eye to his murders because he was such a valuable source of intelligence.

The chief constable of Northern Ireland, George Hamilton, has conceded that the case could stretch to 50 deaths.

Last year, the Northern Ireland director of public prosecutions called for police to examine Stakeknife's activities and what was known by his handlers. The Northern Ireland government argued that, as the province was under direct

British rule while Stakeknife was active, London should pay for the investigation and take responsibility for it by putting a senior British police officer in charge.

Boutcher is responsible for undercover policing on the National Police Chiefs' Council. As a senior detective he led the hunt for the four terrorists who tried to set bombs off in London on July 21, 2005, two weeks

after the devastating 7/7 attack.

He was the "silver" commander with the SO13 anti-terrorist branch at Scotland Yard on the day that Jean Charles de Menezes, a Brazilian electrician, was shot dead on a Tube train by police officers hunting for the terrorists.

Boutcher's powers and terms of reference will be revealed when his inquiry is

formally announced next month. The Police Service of Northern Ireland said yesterday that it "is at an advanced stage of progressing the referral from the director of public prosecutions to investigate a range of activities surrounding an individual codenamed Stakeknife and an announcement will be made in early June."

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Threat to axe free licence fee for 600,000 pensioners

Nicholas Hellen

SOCIAL AFFAIRS EDITOR

HUNDREDS of thousands of over-75s could lose their free licence fees under plans for a "stealth" welfare cut being considered by Lord Hall, the BBC director-general.

In an attempt to save £100m a year when the BBC takes over responsibility from the government for funding free licences, Hall is considering axing the benefit for those over-75s who have someone in their household who works.

An estimated 600,000 households would lose out on the perk, worth £145.50 a year, if the BBC presses ahead with the plan in 2020. Caroline Abrahams, charity director at Age UK, warned that Hall's proposal could be "the thin end of the wedge", and said the BBC "needs to understand how significant it is to older people". Television is "the main form of companionship for 45% of over-75s".

She said the government should not have passed responsibility for funding the benefit to the BBC without consultation, nor should the BBC have accepted it.

"Any such proposal would be a form of rationing of what has been until now a national entitlement for all over-75s," she added. Gordon Brown introduced the benefit, which is not means-tested, in 2000.

Informed sources said Hall hoped his plan would reduce the burden for the BBC of taking on the £750m cost of the concessionary licence fee in 2020, yet avoid a head-on battle with the over-75s.

The number of homes claiming a free licence for the over-75s has ballooned from an initial 3.16m to 4.55m households, meaning that one in six households receive the benefit, regardless of income. Official predictions estimate it will rise to 5.06m households by 2019-20.

Around 1.1m households receive the perk even though they include at least one person under the age of 75. An estimated 600,000 of these are in work.

Hall agreed to take on the

cost of the over-75s concession as part of a deal agreed with George Osborne, the chancellor, last July.

In return the government agreed in principle to increase the licence fee in line with inflation and to close a loophole on catch-up TV that was costing the BBC heavily.

It is up to the BBC to decide what to do after the end of the period covered by the Conservative manifesto pledge that all households with someone over 75 would be eligible for a free TV licence.

A BBC spokesman said: "The government has given the BBC responsibility for setting the policy from 2020. We have commissioned Frontier Economics to look at the policy, but they have yet to reach any conclusions on this work."

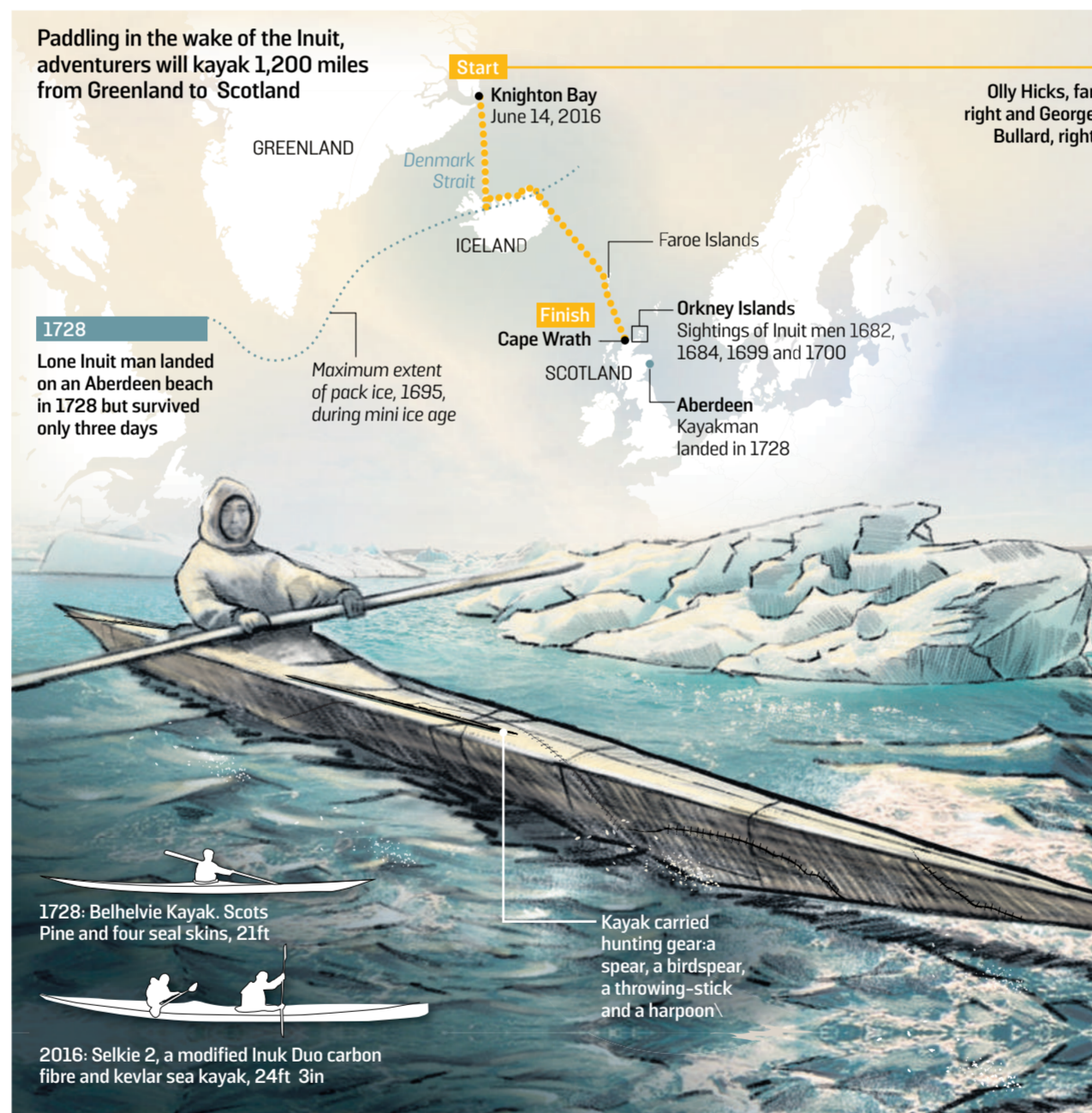
The BBC will be told to publish the remuneration packages of all the executives and television and radio stars who it pays more than £150,000, under plans to be set out in a white paper expected this week.

A Whitehall source said: "The public has a right to know what the highest earners at the BBC are paid, out of their licence fee."

It is also to be told to boost its output of current affairs, arts, religion and children's programming, but proposals to "top slice" £100m of the licence fee have been dropped.



Hall: deal on cost of licences was agreed with Osborne



Olly Hicks, far right and George Bullard, right

Arctic Kon-Tiki paddles after proof of Inuit Scottish odyssey

Nicholas Hellen

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OLLY HICKS has long been fascinated by the story of an Inuit man who landed, alone and exhausted, on the coast near Aberdeen in 1728, only to die three days later.

He believes other Inuit paddled their tiny kayaks from Greenland to Scotland — a journey of 1,200 miles — in the late 1600s.

Now Hicks, 34, and George Bullard, 27, hope to complete what has been called the Arctic Kon-Tiki expedition, to show Inuit could indeed have made their way across stormy, iceberg-strewn seas to Europe in fragile craft made of sealskin and driftwood.

Before the death of the

unfortunate traveller near Aberdeen, Inuit — called Finmen by locals — had previously been sighted in the Orkneys between 1682 and 1700.

One contemporary account describes a man paddling his boat "like a seagull swimming on top of the water".

Speaking as the modern-day adventurers prepare to start their voyage from Greenland on June 14, Hicks said: "I believe they [the Inuit] could have made it."

Their kayak, Selkie 2 — named after a mythical creature that is half seal, half human — is undergoing sea trials this weekend.

Hicks, who is a friend of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, rowed the Atlantic solo in 2005 and plans to row 18,000

miles around the world in 2017, across the inhospitable Southern Ocean.

He and Bullard will follow in the tradition of Thor Heyerdhal, the Norwegian explorer who crossed 4,300 miles of the Pacific in 1947 on Kon-Tiki, a balsawood raft, in an attempt to prove his theory that people from pre-Inca Peru settled the islands of the southern Pacific from about AD500.

Kon-Tiki, a film about the expedition, won the best documentary Oscar in 1951.

Hicks and Bullard hope to see whether the Inuit really might have pioneered a route to Europe using Stone Age transport, or if there is a less romantic explanation.

Norman Rogers, the author of *Searching for the Finmen*,

said many explorers and whalers of the late 16th century captured Inuit and brought them back to Europe as trophies to impress their patrons.

"Some adventurers at the court of Elizabeth I would bring back Inuit if they didn't find gold," he said. "It seems possible that some of the sightings in the late 1600s were of Inuit who had crossed the sea as captives, for example on whalers, before escaping close to the Scottish coast."

Rogers said the kayak that landed near Aberdeen in 1728 — known as the Belhelvie kayak and displayed at a museum in the city — had only half the volume of a modern sea kayak of comparable length.

He argued it would have been unable to carry enough

supplies for the journey from Greenland, even if the Inuit stopped off in Iceland, the Faroe Islands and the Orkneys.

There was also insufficient space to lie down, he added, meaning a kayaker would have had to go without proper sleep for days. In addition, Rogers said that after three days at sea, water would seep through the sealskin in a traditional kayak and there was no system to bail the craft out.

Yet Hicks and Bullard believe that the hardness of the Inuit has been underestimated and they can convince sceptics such as Rogers to reconsider.

"They lived their lives in kayaks, whereas, however fit we are, we are ultimately just playing at it by comparison," Hicks said. He and Bullard will

paddle a kayak made of carbon fibre and Kevlar and hope to cover the 1,200 miles in six weeks. They will nap at the warmest times of day and spend 12 nights at sea, paddling by the light of the midnight sun.

Inuit in the 17th century may have had a shorter voyage. The period between 1680 and 1700 was the coldest time of the era known as the Little Ice Age, when ice extended further into the area where the Arctic meets the Atlantic than it does today, potentially allowing the Inuit to travel along its edge to Iceland.

That would have reduced the sea journey to as little as 600 miles. "This could solve the riddle," Rogers said.

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