

The Chronological Void: 63 Days Which Are Yet To Be Fully Explained

A Commentary on Power, Process and Silence

This paper relates very much to my personal views, based upon evidence which I have already assessed and shared, as well as some, which, although assessed, cannot yet be shared publically.

There are occasions in public life when the most revealing question is not what happened.

It is what happened in between.

History teaches this lesson repeatedly.

Empires do not collapse in a day.

Republics do not surrender their principles in a single act.

Institutions do not lose public confidence because of one decision.

Rather, there emerges a space between event and explanation. A space into which questions enter, but from which answers do not return.

The subject of this paper is such a space.

It is a period of sixty-three days, which begins on 20 December 2021 and ends on 21 February 2022.

On the first date, serious allegations of criminal conduct were reported to the Metropolitan Police Service.

On the second date, a letter was issued informing the complainants that no criminal offences were apparent.

Significantly, the Metropolitan Police Service position is that no criminal investigation was ever commenced.

Let us wholly accept that proposition. Let us assume it to be entirely correct.

In consequence, a very important question then becomes unavoidable - What occurred during the sixty three days in between?

For it is now apparent that those sixty three days were not empty.

Quite the opposite.

The documentary record reveals movement.

- There was discussion.
- There was coordination.
- There was assessment.
- There was communication.
- There was national attention.
- There was operational activity.
- There was concern.

- There was action.
- There was process.

The one thing which remains elusive, is explanation.

A report submitted at a West London police station did not remain at a West London police station - It travelled.

- It travelled through Operation Talla.
- It travelled through national policing structures.
- It travelled through Chief Constables' Council.
- It travelled through operational communications.
- It travelled into Government misinformation frameworks.
- It travelled into intelligence products.
- It travelled into discussions which extended far beyond the boundaries of the original report.

This much is not a matter of conjecture. We have the documents and those documents speak.

The question is, why?

- If the report required no investigation, why did it attract such attention?
- If the report disclosed no criminality, why did it become a matter of national operational interest?
- If the report was unremarkable, why did so many remarkable things occur around it?

These are not political questions. They are questions of process and process is the foundation upon which legitimacy rests.

A State is not judged merely by the decisions it reaches. A State is judged by the manner in which those decisions are reached.

In the ancient world, the authority of a magistrate did not arise from his conclusion. It arose from the lawful process by which he arrived at it.

A conclusion without process was not authority. It was merely assertion.

The same principle remains true today.

- The public can see the beginning of this chronology.
- The public can see the end.
- The public can see the report.
- The public can see the closure letter.
- The public can see fragments of what occurred in between.

What the public cannot yet see clearly is the pathway and it is the pathway which matters.

The difficulty confronting those responsible for explaining these events is a simple one.

The chronology now appears to permit only a limited number of possibilities.

The first possibility is that a substantial evidential assessment occurred.

If so,

- records must exist.
- Methodologies must exist.
- Decision-makers must exist.
- Audit trails must exist.
- Explanations must exist.

The second possibility is that no meaningful assessment occurred.

If so, explanation is required as to how definitive conclusions were reached.

The third possibility is that some intermediate process occurred.

- Neither investigation nor non-investigation.
- Neither assessment nor absence of assessment.

A process of another kind.

If that is so, the nature of that process requires explanation.

Whichever path is chosen, the destination remains unchanged.

Explanation is required, in any of the scenarios.

The difficulty is not that there are too many answers. The difficulty is that there appear to be too few.

For years, discussion has centred upon the allegations themselves, but the allegations are no longer the most interesting aspect of this chronology.

The chronology itself has become the issue.

- A report enters the system.
- Sixty-three days pass.
- National structures become engaged.
- Operational communications are issued.
- Senior policing leaders become involved.
- Government frameworks become involved.
- Assessments are discussed.
- Reviews are discussed.
- Conclusions are reached.

Yet we are told that no criminal investigation occurred.

Perhaps that is correct.

Perhaps it is not.

If it is correct, then a different question emerges from the shadows - What was the process which occurred instead?

That question is now larger than the original report.

- It is larger than Covid-19.
- It is larger than vaccination.
- It is larger than Operation Talla.

- It concerns the relationship between citizen and State.
- It concerns the pathway by which serious allegations travel through institutions.
- It concerns the point at which transparency yields to opacity.
- It concerns accountability.

Most importantly, it concerns confidence, for confidence cannot be commanded and it cannot be instructed or managed.

It must be earned.

Confidence is earned when institutions are willing to explain not merely what they decided, but how they arrived there.

The sixty-three days remain. They stand immovable within the chronology. Neither erased nor explained.

The documents confirm that activity occurred. The chronology confirms that activity occurred.

The question which remains is the simplest question of all
- What was that activity?

Until that question is answered clearly, transparently and comprehensively, the Chronological Void remains exactly what it has always been - Not a void of events, but a void of explanation.

History has never been kind to institutions which mistake those two things for the same.

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