

Confidential

Independent Investigation into Brook House

Wednesday, 11 April 2018

**Interview with
Owen Syred
Welfare Officer**

This transcript has been prepared from a recording taken during the interview. Whilst it will not be attached in full to the final report, extracts from it may be included in the report. It forms part of the evidence to the Investigation and as such, will be relied on during the writing of the report and its conclusions. When you receive the transcript, please read it through, add or amend it as necessary, then sign it to signify you agree to its accuracy and return it to Verita. If the signed and agreed transcript is not returned within two weeks, we will assume that you accept its contents as accurate.

233. A. I think it could happen at any time. The fact that ordinary people turned into killers in Nazi Germany. I know it's not to the extreme but it's a similar sort of thing - it gives some of them a bit of power.
234. Q. Do you think there are still, within this centre, a few officers, perhaps a few managers as well, who are a bit macho and cliquey. We know some of those people who left under *Panorama*. Do you think there are still some?
235. A. At the moment I don't think there are. I go down to E Wing quite a bit and I went there this morning and the guys around there I've worked with a long time. I know them, I know their character and I know they've all got good hearts. The guys who worked down there before I didn't go down there that much.
236. Q. E Wing?
237. A. Yes. Most of those guys apart from one, Charlie, I knew well - he was always very good with detainees. One of them I actually had issue with and I said to him myself 'you're out of line' about an incident that happened. Of course I wasn't too surprised but you can understand when they're working in that environment down there they become quite close. What goes on there stays there - that's their sort of attitude. I've worked down there myself -
238. Q. You don't see an evident clique at the moment?
239. A. I don't see an evident clique.
240. Q. You see, possibly, some still macho behaviour or not?
241. A. No, it's not as bad as it was. I used to be called 'Cuddly Care Bear' by certain officers and actually the officer he used to call me that got the sack.
242. Mr Marsden: Was it an officer or a manager?
243. A. It was a manager, yes.
244. Q. Was it Nathan?
245. A. Yes. I was seen as being -
246. Ms Lampard: Not in the group?
247. A. Yes. I wasn't part of that clique. I wasn't part of the macho group. I'd overhear talk in the staff room about stuff - people talk about whatever.
248. Q. You don't hear stuff in the staff room, which would suggests to you that there is still that clique and that bad behaviour?
249. A. No, no.
250. Q. You think *Panorama* cleared it out?
251. A. I think it did and I think it's probably rebooted the place. It's made officers more aware of what they can't say and what they can say. Officers that they feel comfortable talking to me - 'he's a bit of a pain in the ass today'. There was an officer a while back, had all his tattoos, into all his body building and he was in reception talking to another officer about smashing someone with a shield. Now there's a detainee with me and I said 'guys, there's a detainee with me', 'yeah, so?', 'you don't talk like this'. This guy said 'is that what you're like', the detainee said that. Detainees know.
252. Q. What happened to that officer?
253. A. He left.