

Transcript created by Epiq

Event: Callum Tulley BBC Video Diaries
BBC000621 - KENOV3046

Digital transcript of Epiq Europe Ltd
Lower Ground, 18-22, Fournival Street | London | EC4A 1JS
Phone: + **DPA**
Web : www.epiqglobal.com/en-gb/ | Email: **DPA**



MALE INTERVIEWER 1: Tell me what happened today.

CALLUM TULLEY: In the morning, at about 8.30am -- oh, no, in the morning at about 8.45am, I walk onto B-wing and hear arguing and shouting coming from the B-wing office. So, I go in and this detainee from the Congo is asking for new boxers, and the officers behind the desk are saying he's been given a full set already, and he also has his own clothing, so they're saying no. And this detainee is kicking up a bit of a fuss, and once he realises he can't get his boxers, he starts asking for socks, and the officers carry on saying no. When he realises he's not going to get his own way, he becomes quite abusive, really. Certainly very rude, starts swearing at the officers. They were being quite firm with him in response, but they were being fair as well, I think. He did have a lot of clothing, what he had done was he had put all his dirty washing in the laundry and basically had nothing else to put on as a result, apart from what he was wearing. So, the officers were adamant he couldn't have any more clothing. He said he wasn't leaving without any, and there was some arguing and swearing, and some shouting, but nothing really out of the ordinary. Until Darren Thomsett gets involved.

And although this detainee was becoming increasingly agitated, and he was just trying to push it, push it and see if he could intimidate the officers into giving him some stuff, I don't think he was ever going to be violent, or actually smash the place up, as he was threatening to do. But I didn't believe he was going to do that. And Darren just sort of goes off on one, starts ranting at him, and basically they end up having some sort of face-off, where they're basically squaring up to each other, although the counter is in between them. Darren is

shouting at him, saying, "I'm not scared of you, the day I'm scared of you is the day I need to pack it in." And although he wasn't being -- the detainee was being far more unreasonable I think, compared to Darren, but Darren needs to -- the thing is with Darren, he's got such a short fuse, and if he responds like that to the wrong person, then it's only going to end one way. And as unreasonable as some of the detainees can be sometimes, mainly because they are in extremely stressful conditions and an extremely challenging environment, which brings out the worst in officers as well as detainees, Darren has to rise above that, and he can't start squaring up to detainees and almost provoking them.

Luckily, Darren sort of walked away from the situation in the end because the detainee reluctantly backed off. Darren was basically telling him, if he wanted to go, then have a go. And the detainee didn't because it wasn't -- he was making empty threats, and he wasn't going to smash the place up. So, the whole incident de-escalated, and everything was fine in the end, but it could have been a completely different story.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: Tell me about who was in the office with you as this started to unfold? Can you remember what set Darren off?

CALLUM TULLEY: This confrontation was already going on when I got there, and it continued to go on for quite a few more minutes. And it was quarter to nine in the morning, so half an hour into the shift, and already there's arguments, and people getting abused. I think Darren just thought, "I'm not having this", and he couldn't be bothered to resolve it properly, really. He just lost his temper, he completely lost his

temper, and they're extremely stressful conditions to work in. So I do understand the frustration, but at the end of the day, as officers they're paid to do a job and remain professional, and you can't start squaring up to people and basically inviting them to have a pop at you.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: Tell me a little bit about Darren?

CALLUM TULLEY: Darren is extremely efficient in many ways when it comes to his job. He works extremely hard on the wing. He does inductions brilliantly. He does work, he works really, really hard. But he also puts himself under quite a lot of stress. He's got hundreds of people coming in every week onto B-wing, because it is the induction wing of the centre, and as a result his workload's very heavy, and he just tries to get everything done to the best that he can. But it's not -- he -- he allows -- when the stress of the job gets to him, he takes it out on the detainees, and when detainees are being particularly challenging, he will jump at the opportunity to get involved in a conflict, probably as a way of venting off his anger and his stress that he feels in what are quite impossible conditions to work in at times. But I think he channels it in the wrong way, and it spills over into unprofessionalism at times.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: Do you think there's any kind of knock-on effect, the fact that when he does have these bursts, he's on the induction wing? I mean, is there any kind of knock-on effect to the detainees?

CALLUM TULLEY: It does -- it sets an example early on. I mean, if you're a detainee and you've just come in to Brook House, and you've had no experience in a custodial setting before, you've never been to prison, you've overstayed your visa, for example, or you've come from Calais or somewhere like that, and this is your first impression. You walk downstairs from the top landing of B-wing into the office and you see these officers and detainees squaring up to each other. And you're very quickly going to think that this is a place where it's every man for himself, and you can't trust people. It's volatile, toxic, it's hostile, and people become defensive. They have to put up defence mechanisms. Sometimes you see detainees unnecessarily acting the big man and having this bravado, just to put up this protective front so people don't cross them. It doesn't need to be that way. It really doesn't need to be that way. But when you're coming into Brook House and you're immediately hit by confrontation and arguments and abuse, then you're either going to sink or swim in Brook House, and most detainees are going to do their damned best to start swimming.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: Do you know much about the detainee from the Congo? Do you know anything about him?

CALLUM TULLEY: This detainee is an extremely challenging detainee. He is -- he is disruptive, he is abusive. And, yes... yes.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: What else happened today?

CALLUM TULLEY: At about 10.30am I was asked to get my riot kit for the planned intervention on a detainee who was being sent to Harmondsworth. He didn't want to go to this detention centre, and as a result we were going to have to remove him by force, and hand him over to the escorts.

When I was leaving the library to go and pick up my kit, I was met immediately by two officers, Shane and Ryan, who were also getting kitted up. This detainee was on Shane's wing, and Shane was basically saying, he's boiling his kettle, he's getting his kettle ready for the team when they come in. So immediately your adrenalin starts skyrocketing because you've just heard that you're going into a potentially dangerous situation, and although you're covered by a boiler suit and other protective gear like helmets, etc, boots, you just worry that maybe a bit of skin is going to be exposed, and if we get boiling hot water thrown at us when we go into this guy's cell, it's going to hurt, obviously, it's going to burn. So, I was scared going to get my kit. But we were lucky because this detainee decided to walk down at 12.00pm, before we even needed to go up to the top landing, the managers managed to negotiate with him and tell him to come down, and he went on his transfer. So fair play to the managers who resolved that peacefully.

And then -- but that wasn't it, although I thought it was. That wasn't the end -- well -- I'll start that bit again. So that removal went off successfully, no force had to be used, no one got hurt, no one got injured. But as I'm getting my dinner later on, at about 5.00pm, just heating up my chicken soup, sit down in the staff room, and there are already six officers getting kitted up in riot gear. This is for a different

detainee of course now, a guy who's refusing to go to another detention centre.

And there was this embarrassing moment for the management when they realised they hadn't organised enough kit -- officers to get in riot kit at the very last minute, just as the roll count was called correct and we were given the go ahead to go up to the cell. I say, "we", originally, I wasn't meant to be involved, I wasn't in kit. But they didn't have enough officers kitted up, so I was asked by a manager if I didn't mind being the fourth officer on the first team that went in. The fourth officer is the handcuff officer, so you don't have to go in straight away, but if you're needed to, if you're needed, then you will go into the restraint. And I accepted this because it was -- I said, "Yes, I'll be fourth officer, I'll be the cuff officer," because it was an opportunity for me to witness another removal, but this is completely -- it was completely against protocol to have me involved. I wasn't in riot kit, I wasn't meant to be in this restraint. I was just in my normal uniform, everything exposed.

And we go up to -- everything exposed, fuck's sake, my cock out. Sorry. I was in my normal uniform, arms, legs exposed, nothing covering my neck or my head or my hands or anything. And even so I was expected to be involved in this guy's restraint as a handcuff officer. So, we go up to his room and this detainee is boiling the kettle, and he's refusing to go, and there's real apprehension from the management as to whether he should open the door, because he knows he could get burnt. They weren't expecting this detainee to be quite so non-compliant, and suddenly the officers -- you could see the nerves start to kick in, they start playing with the back of their helmets to make sure their necks are covered, and after quite a long pause

the manager pops the door open, the manager unlocks the door, swings open, the team rush in, the detainee gets hit by the shield, another team of kitted officers rush in to the right hand side of the cell and stand at the guy's bed to make sure he doesn't move or get involved with the restraint of the detainee who is being transferred. He puts up a bit of resistance, but he's very shortly in the control of the officers, and he does then comply, and I'm not needed to get involved, I don't even have to cuff him. And he goes down the back of A-wing and meets the escort team who facilitate a transfer. So, it was another successful removal, albeit this one was a lot more challenging and quite a lot more nerve-racking -- and dangerous for me. Luckily it didn't -- nothing -- it didn't materialise, but if I had to get involved in this -- if I had to get involved in this restraint, this guy had boiled up his kettle and he was going to use it on the officers if they didn't get to him before he got to the kettle. And I can't believe the risk, sometimes, that the management at Brook House put their staff under, it's incredible.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: That's quite a long --

CALLUM TULLEY: Is that not good?

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: No, no, no. That's very good. Could you just kind of explain to me what you mean -- obviously it's quite obvious when you say he's boiling his kettle. Could you just kind of like tell me what that means?

CALLUM TULLEY: Sure. The detainee knows he's being transferred because the managers have asked him if he'll go compliantly. And when he says

no, he knows that people are going to come and remove him by force, because the manager will tell him that. And so when the manager looks into his cell, just before the restraint's about to take place, and he sees the detainee boiling the kettle, that means only one thing, and he is going to try to throw that kettle of hot boiling water over the officers who are going into that cell to restrain him. He had also made the floor soaking wet with water, so it was slippery in there. People were slipping and sliding all over the place. A bit of an over-exaggeration, but it made it very difficult for the staff going into the cell to keep their footing whilst also concentrating on not only restraining this detainee but preventing him from throwing boiling hot water all over them.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: Could you just explain to me, you're stood outside this cell, the manager's peering through the thing. You're stood there in your -- just clarify, you're in your t-shirt, you're not in riot gear. What does the manager turn round and say when he clocks him with his kettle?

CALLUM TULLEY: Yes, I'm stood -- the team going in to restrain him, the three officers who are going to be first in, they're stood on the left hand side of the door, the manager's stood just in front of it, and I'm stood between the manager and the team going in, just in my normal uniform, my t-shirt and my track suit bottoms and my trainers. This manager looks through the viewing panel to see into the guy's cell, and he turns round and says, "He's boiling his kettle." They noticed the water on the floor coming out from beneath the cell door anyway, so they knew something was up. The manager looks quite worried really, and for a moment he doesn't really look like he knows what he's doing, or

knows what he should do. But he makes a judgement call and quickly pops the door open and the team rush in, and they did well. They got to the detainee before he got to the kettle, so everything was all right.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: How ugly could it have got? Have you seen -- how ugly could it have got if he'd have got to that kettle?

CALLUM TULLEY: Oh, I don't want to think about how ugly it could have got. Those officers probably would have been okay with the equipment they were wearing. But staff -- you hear staff constantly complaining to management about the state of the riot kit. There are holes in some of these overalls, there are -- there's an inadequate supply of riot gear for the officers to wear. It's not always going to do the job as it should. So, it could have got extremely ugly for those guys in there. And your neck is slightly exposed because you have a visor which you have down, but then below that there's not much there. You can pull your overalls across your neck, but if that visor gets hit up, or something doesn't go quite right, then someone is going to get badly, badly burnt with the water. And to send -- to have me there about to be sent in if needed to be, then it could have got -- it could have got really bad for me personally because I was wearing no protective gear at all, and if any of that hot water struck me anywhere really it was going to cause serious burns.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: Could you explain to me just again the fact that how against protocol it is? Just tell me what happened, what was wrong with it. That's it.

CALLUM TULLEY: Well, to go into a restraint, and to go into someone's cell where there are two people, you need four officers for each person. You'll have one officer who's the shield officer, he's there to engage in the restraint with the shield if needs be, then take control of the detainee's head. You're going to have two arm officers, one for the left arm, one for the right arm. You'll then have a fourth officer, and he will be the handcuff officer. That was my job this afternoon, and he's there to cuff the detainee. If the detainee is particularly challenging and it's overwhelming the three officers who are engaged in the restraint already, then he would have to take control of the legs, or he would maybe have to relieve one of the officers. Because these things can go on for 20, 30, 40 minutes at a time, and obviously people run out of steam, and they need to be rotated with other officers, and that's why the fourth officer is there.

So, it's -- it was just -- all the officers have to be in riot gear, all of them. Because obviously that fourth officer, who may not be needed, but who very possibly will be, is going to get engaged in the restraint, and the guy might have -- people have knives, people boil the kettles. People just -- they make -- they create -- they make improvised weapons, stick a razor blade in the end of a melted toothbrush and wait for it to solidify. It's crazy to have me there as a fourth officer and for me not to be wearing any riot gear. It's phenomenal, the fact that they've put a member of their staff at such risk.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: What do you think it says about management, the fact that, one, they totally miscalculated, and two, they roped you in with no kit?

CALLUM TULLEY: Yes, the management did -- the management did completely miscalculate the risk that this detainee was posing to the officers. Mistakes like that happen, it's not always easy to judge these situations, but there's one thing that all managers know, and that's that when going into restraint, the four officers restraining, each allocated to restrain each detainee have to be in riot gear. And that rule, that rule was just completely disregarded.

And there's no wonder that Brook House has such a problem retaining its staff because they're just not looked after at all. There is a complete lack of care for their staff. They put them at such great risk. And these guys are paid just over £10 an hour, it's phenomenal. It doesn't surprise me that staff are just leaving one after the other, it's crazy.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: What else happened today?

CALLUM TULLEY: Um, at about 8.00, maybe 8.10, there was a first response to health care. I attended it. This detainee was kicking off, basically, because he wasn't being given his medication by the nurses, and there was a huge line of detainees waiting to go and receive their medication behind this man. So, he needed to be dealt with and either been given his medication or just moved along if the nurses really weren't going to give it to him.

There was this one detainee, this Jordanian detainee who was getting extremely agitated because he was having to wait for quite a long time to get his medication, because this guy was obviously holding everyone up. And in the end the nurse promised that in the early hours of the morning, his medication would be brought to him. I've

not made that very clear, actually, what detainee I'm talking about.

The nurse promised this detainee, who was originally kicking off, that his medication would be brought to him at about 2.00am, I think, so that calmed him down, and in the end, he walked away without his medication and the issue seemed to be resolved.

Then he and this Jordanian detainee started shouting at each other, the Jordanian wasn't very happy that he had been made to wait so long for his medication because this guy had been kicking off. And luckily staff and management -- luckily officers and management got between the detainees so they couldn't get to each other and no fight happened. So, he was sent on his way, the guy who was causing the problem in the first place, and the Jordanian stayed to pick up his medication.

I made my way back to the library, because that's where I was meant to be, and I saw this detainee who was kicking off in the first place stood outside the library, and I had just been told by a manager, Steve Lawton, to make sure he goes back to his wing. So, I'm stood with this detainee, I'm -- I'm in an impossible position, really, because I'm trying to persuade this guy to go back on to his wing, but he clearly doesn't want to because he's had this conflict with this other guy. And I'm just asking him, "Go back to your wing, if you see him there's going to be confrontation, none of us want that. Just go back to your wing, mate. I'm not telling you to, I'm just asking you politely, go back to your wing."

And before he does, or before -- I'm not saying he would have done, but before he even has a chance to, this Jordanian guy walks round the corner, and I can see him just going to the left. He's heading back to his wing, which is D-wing, the guy I'm stood talking to is from

C-wing. And I'm looking at this Jordanian detainee and I'm thinking, "God, I hope this guy doesn't see him." And of course, he does see him. And so, he goes, "Oy". And then they approach each other. And they try and have a fight, basically, the Jordanian kicks him, and a little scrap takes place, but officers get in between and pull them apart, and then the issue is resolved really because they're both basically pushed back onto their wings where they can't access each other anymore.

So, there was this fight -- the centre today was just -- there was just this horrible, toxic atmosphere. When you go in and there's officers and detainees squaring up to each other at 8.45 in the morning, you know it's going to be one of those days, and it was just -- the whole place. There's such a bleak atmosphere at the minute. You just despair for the people that live there and just want to get on and sort their cases out and get released; or get deported and go back to their own countries. First thing in the morning there's confrontation, last thing in the day there's confrontation. That is just Brook House in a nutshell really.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: Anything else from today?

CALLUM TULLEY: No, mate. That's it.

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: Okay.

CALLUM TULLEY: So, I've already filmed one officer talking about assaulting detainees away from the cameras, who, by the way, is the most experienced restraint instructor in the centre. And now we hear another restraint

instructor, Dave Webb, agreeing with Yan that it's the done thing to assault detainees, not where the cameras can see them, but where the cameras can't. They're not stupid, they obviously know how to get away with physical abuse towards detainees.

We've already seen John, who's the most experienced restraint instructor in the centre talking about assaulting detainees out of the view of the CCTV. Now we've seen Dave Webb, another restraint instructor, talking about assaulting detainees in rooms. And we've seen Yan actually assault a detainee in a room away from the cameras. And these guys know that this is the done thing. You're not going to get caught in someone's cell or in a blind spot because there's no CCTV there and no one's wearing a body camera. When you're getting into one of these planned restraints where everyone's in riot gear and the managers are present, and the nurses are present, things are filmed on body cameras so they can't get away with physical abuse. But obviously when the body cameras aren't there and no-one's around, then these guys are pulling people into corners, they're going into their cells and they're assaulting detainees. Brook House just holds detainees. It's run by G4S, but it's actually the Home Office that decide whether they're released or transferred or deported. And then when that decision is made, it's another company, Tascor who facilitate their removal or their transfer. So essentially all Brook House is there for is to hold these guys until they're --

MALE INTERVIEWER 1: So essentially, all Brook House is there for -- waiting for someone else to make a decision.

CALLUM TULLEY: Yeah. (Several inaudible words)

(25 seconds of silence)

CALLUM TULLEY: So essentially Brook House is just there to hold detainees while the Home Office make their decision. In my role in activities, I basically have to do three things. Either monitor the library, monitor the IT room, or activities patrol, which is basically gives me free rein. I can go wherever I want in the centre, play pool, take detainees to the gym, and just do whatever really. You're a bit of a spare wheel sometimes so you're expected to respond to incidents and help out. But I do get access to every part of the centre, which obviously just enables me to see and experience every aspect of Brook House. I go onto these wings and I am like a fly on the wall, I suppose. I don't have to work under the pressure that these guys do, but I can stand there and witness it all.

And you go on to the normal wings and it's two officers with hundreds -- over a hundred detainees who are making countless amount of requests, and some of them don't even speak English, and the officers have got a real struggle on their hands. Being in activities does just enable you to see the day-to-day hardships of the officers and the detainees, and the struggle they're all under, and you witness the stress on the faces of all the staff and all the detainees from every part of the centre. It is the most eye-opening position you can have really within Brook House because you're just exposed to everything that it is.

I was just going about my normal duties in A-wing, and I was speaking to D544 trying to find out if he was still angry, if he still

wanted to kill this detainee who he had a fight with the previous day. After that conversation, he asked me to help out this small Chinese man, who I think was his room-mate. I did. I took him to the wing office and tried to find out what was wrong with him. It became clear that he was quite a distressed little man, he could barely speak any English, and he literally couldn't even string two words together. He looked stressed out, he looked seriously -- even Ed Fiddy felt sorry for him, and he doesn't have much sympathy for the detainees. So I basically took it upon myself to take him to healthcare, because I'd seen the state of his feet and his legs, which were -- they seemed to have some really old scars where he had been scalded by something, and he could barely walk. He could literally barely walk, and he needed some sort of medical attention. So, I took him up to healthcare with two other officers. We took him up in the lift, which he appreciated, and the nurse basically said, "Come back tomorrow morning, you can't come in." So, we had to take him all the way back. I did feel sorry for this guy. This guy's clearly not very well, he can't speak a word of English, he needs help, and it's not there for him. Sorry, mate. Let me try that again.

Here we've got this guy, he's in a detention centre in England, he can't speak a word of English, he's clearly got some serious medical issues, and he needs help, he desperately needs some help, and it's not there for him.