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PRESS RELEASE

COURT FINDS THE MET IS STILL INSTITUTIONALLY RACIST

MET Found Guilty of 40 Counts of Discrimination Against Black & Gay Counter-Terror Officer

London, UK, 14 May 2013

The Metropolitan Police have been judged guilty of racism and homophobia against a black and gay counter-terror officer.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) has held the MET guilty of 40 counts of discrimination, harassment and victimisation of Kevin Maxwell, a former counter-terrorism police officer, because he is black and gay.

What the MET is guilty of:

- The MET was found to have committed 40 acts of discrimination, harassment and victimisation against one of their own officers.
- The MET leaked private and personal information to the press about a police counter-terrorism officer, potentially putting him and his family at risk.
- 20 years after Stephen Lawrence, the MET has not changed. It is still perpetuating discrimination and racism is endemic.
- The MET used black and ethnic minority officers as a “buffer” to stop non-white passengers at airports – white counter-terrorism officers would then take over to search the passenger.

After Mr Maxwell raised his original complaint in May 2010, the MET made every attempt to intimidate him into silence:

- Rather than being listened to, Mr Maxwell was further marginalised by his colleagues and superiors, forcing him out of the job he loved and was dedicated to for over a decade;
- His private information was sold to the *Sun*;
- Though having already resigned, he was reinstated by the MET for the sole purpose of subjecting him to spurious misconduct proceedings designed to discredit him; and

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- He was threatened with the OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT, and subject to other acts of intimidation for talking about his experiences.

As a result, Mr Maxwell suffers from a disabling depression. He has lost his home. His civil partnership broke down. He is unable to work. Nonetheless, he did not give in to intimidation and has persevered. He has made every effort to address these issues with the MET, reach a sensible resolution and work with it to improve its anti-racism policy and practices. Instead, in the face of irresistible evidence and an existing judgment against it, the MET insisted on continuing a lengthy tribunal process at unnecessary cost to the public purse.

When the MET was first found guilty of mistreating Mr Maxwell by an Employment Tribunal in February 2012, the MET appealed, despite the judge warning them that they had little chance of success: “[The MET] is directed to consider whether all [its] grounds of appeal should be argued in light of the difficulties...” said the judge.

But the MET ignored the judge, because it is institutionally unable to accept when it is in the wrong. It went ahead despite the harm it continued to cause Mr Maxwell. The EAT has now said that the MET’s appeal was “without merit”.

QUOTES:

Kevin Maxwell: “I have been fighting a long battle for the MET to recognise its mistreatment of me and others like me. Despite today’s judgment, the MET still has not acknowledged the abuse I endured; nor has it addressed the institutionalised racism and homophobia with which it is still rife. When those who have suffered such discrimination speak out, instead of being listened to, the MET bullies them into silence. If only the MET would hear today’s wake-up call and, rather than paying it lip-service, begin to take this matter seriously.”

Matthew Jury, McCue & Partners, solicitor for Mr. Maxwell: “Kevin’s claims of racial and homophobic abuse should have been addressed swiftly and seriously. The bravery he displayed by speaking out should have been held up as an example. Instead, the MET fought him and sought to humiliate him at every turn. This is an organisation that is institutionally incapable of addressing the abuse and corruption which seems to be rife within it.”

Courtenay Barklem, McCue & Partners, solicitors for Mr. Maxwell: “Today’s judgment does not mean that the MET has acknowledged and addressed the discrimination and abuse Kevin suffered, and others suffer daily. If the MET is serious about tackling racism and bigotry within its organisation it needs to recognise the harm Kevin has suffered as well as immediately review an anti-racism policy that is patently not working.”

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