

Our Friends in the North West: The Owen Oyston Affair

From [Lobster Issue 34](#)

Andrew Rosthorn

The Oyston Affair appears to have been the longest and most expensive privately-funded political dirty tricks campaign in recent British history. The astonishing 15-year campaign waged against Owen Oyston by Michael Murrin, the owner of a fish and chip shop in the village of Longridge, Lancs, was backed by help and cash payments raised by two former government ministers and a millionaire friend of Margaret Thatcher. The former Tory ministers are Sir Robert Atkins and Lord Blaker. Their target was the Labour Party's biggest private contributor in the days of Neil Kinnock's leadership.

Sir Robert Atkins was once John Major's best friend in the Commons. He was the MP for South Ribble from 1983 to 1996 and a minister at the Department of Trade and Industry and Northern Ireland. His retirement as countryside minister at 49, 'to spend more time with my family', followed legal action from Oyston lawyers.

Lord Blaker of Blackpool and Lindfield was a career Foreign Office diplomat in the fifties, a cold war warrior as Tory MP for Blackpool South from 1964, a junior Defence Minister and a Foreign Office Minister in the Thatcher governments. He has listed directorships in Central Lancashire Television, East Lancashire Cablevision, East Coast Cablevision and a consultancy with BT. Lord Blaker has said his interests in these firms, which were rival bidders against Oyston for licences, prompted his moral and financial support for Murrin's investigations into Oyston.

Bill Harrison was a grocer who became one of Lancashire's most successful property developers. With managing director Norman Leech he developed an enormous caravan park on Marton Mere, a patch of marshland owned by Blackpool Council. The lease to his firm, granted without any rival bidding by Blackpool Council under its Tory chairman, Len Broughton, was criticised by both the Caravan Club of Great Britain and the *Sunday Times*. Harrison told the *Sunday Times* that after his daughter's car had killed two women pedestrians in Kirkham, he telephoned Len Broughton 'and asked him if he could tell me the name of the police chief that I should contact in order to have certain aspects of the case investigated rather deeper.' This telephone call was cited later in the Osmond Report which led to the sacking of the Chief Constable of Lancashire, accused of improperly reducing the charges against Harrison's daughter. Harrison blames Owen Oyston for a newspaper investigation of the affair. He told a reporter: 'It is very possible that Owen Oyston as a principal advertiser with the *Lancashire Evening Post* had considerable influence on the paper's coverage of my daughter's case.' Oyston says he was actually a friend of the sacked Chief Constable.

Harrison was friendly with Airey Neave, murdered by the INLA after organising Margaret Thatcher's election as Tory leader. During Tory conferences at Blackpool, Margaret Thatcher landed by helicopter on the lawn of Greyfriars, Bill Harrison's home at Preston, where she used to stay overnight. Other government ministers have stayed at Greyfriars.

Lord Waddington, Mrs Thatcher's former Chief Whip and Home Secretary, and the Derbyshire Tory MP Philip Oppenheim have also been involved in the affair.

The total cost of their activities, including the cost of some large-scale abortive police corruption investigations, Inland Revenue operations, vast legal costs and heavy financial damage suffered personally by Oyston appears to be more than £250 million.

The former fish and chip shop owner and insurance agent Michael Murrin claims that his allegations of corruption at Preston Council prompted Operation Angel, a £25 million inquiry during which the Lancashire Constabulary Commercial Fraud Squad raided the town hall and illegally raided the homes of its leader and deputy leader, Labour councillors Harold Parker and Frank McGrath - both friends of Owen Oyston. Although the raids occurred in 1991, and although Angel has not been officially concluded, no council official or elected member has been convicted of any offence.

Michael Murrin has also claimed that it was his allegations against the Deputy Labour leader of Liverpool, Councillor Derek Hatton, passed by him to the Merseyside Constabulary via the *Sunday Times*, which prompted Operation Cheetah, a largely abortive, politically crucial investigation into Liverpool's Labour leaders which is said to have cost £50 million.

Murrin has also pointed out that the 1995 arrest of Owen Oyston and his subsequent six years jail sentence for the rape and indecent assault of a 16 year-old Manchester model followed his reports to Lancashire police that Oyston was involved in drugs and prostitution and his 1992 report to Manchester police in which he claimed Oyston was involved in running the model agency. In 1997 he told a Preston business woman, for whom he was a financial adviser: 'I'm the man who put Owen Oyston where he is today.'

The Murrin campaign cost Oyston £9 million, lost in a single day on the Stock Exchange, £300,000 in Inland Revenue penalty payments, £10 million in a wrecked cable TV deal, the chairmanship of Trans World Communications plc and the almost unquantifiable cost of dealing with years of successive investigations by the following authorities: HM Customs & Excise, US Drug Enforcement Administration, the Stock Exchange, the Takeover Panel, IMRO, Lancashire Constabulary, and Merseyside Constabulary.

A World In Action TV programme depicted Murrin as a malicious man who had dogged Oyston for years. After its screening in 1992, a beautiful model agency 'booker' named Melanie Hardy called Granada TV and asked to be put in touch with Murrin. Hardy said that Oyston was the real owner of various British model agencies. Murrin introduced her to Detective Inspector Malcolm Robishaw of Greater Manchester, telling Robishaw in a letter:

'Firstly I would like to point out that, in my opinion Oyston is/was a very dangerous man. He has immense charm but preys on peoples' weaknesses. He came very close to becoming very powerful at a national level with his close connections with Kinnock and other national politicians. I believe I am right to claim that had I not kicked the stool from under him by

exposing the Inland Revenue investigation into his estate agency business [which I initiated] thus forcing the Royal Insurance to get rid of him, he could have pulled it off and become a very significant figure. The feeding of information into Kroll Associates ensured that he had to dispose of cable TV for next to nothing and Red Rose shares are down to 50p.'

Detective Inspector Robishaw had annoyed Murrin by reporting that Oyston did not own the model agency.

Oyston's lawyers were three weeks away from a hearing in a conspiracy to defame case against Atkins, Blaker and Harrison, when, before dawn on February 9, 1995, a team of 11 Manchester Police officers drove up a rough track through the woods below Oyston's manor house and hammered on the door of Claughton Hall. They carried warrants for Oyston's arrest on charges of rape, indecent assault and procuring girls for sex.

Detective Constable Martyn Hughes recorded Oyston's words at 7.17 am: 'I am amazed. I am astonished by this.' Oyston immediately asked the policeman if he knew that his action against Atkins, Blaker and Harrison was due in court in three weeks.

While Oyston was on bail, awaiting trial, Robert Atkins's resignation was made public in John Major's 1995 cabinet reshuffle. Oyston commented: 'I am pleased to see that Robert is to spend more time with his family. As a family man, he'll understand how outraged my family feel by his behaviour which has caused them and me great difficulties and humiliations over the past 15 years.'

Tracing the course of the conspiracies against Oyston has required the assembly of the 14-year chronology of events published below, the ceaseless discourse between Michael Murrin and the authorities (police, Inland Revenue, Government ministers, Customs and Excise.)

1982

Michael Murrin, Preston insurance agent, said 'During the first quarter of 1982 I was advised, by an employee of Preston Borough Council to "watch Harold Parker, watch Frank McGrath, watch LEL and watch the Dock".'

1983

As chairman of Preston & District Ratepayers' Association, Murrin began an investigation into local government in Preston and Lancashire.

29 January

Michael Murrin unsuccessfully asked Lord Bellwin at the Department of the Environment to call in the plans for the redevelopment of Preston Dock.

1983

Murrin paid a private detective, Chris More, to obtain the bank account details of the Labour leader of Preston, Harold Parker, which showed that Parker was being paid by a company owned by the estate agent Owen Oyston. Murrin made statement to police alleging corruption involving Oyston and local councillors.

30 June

Preston's consultants, Debenham Tewson & Chinnocks, recommended that the Council accept a redevelopment scheme from Mowlem plc. This advice was

rejected.

20 July

A company, Oyston Investments Ltd, was set up in Isle of Man by Select Company Formation, of Douglas [Charles Philip Robinson and Mrs. Gill Cochrane], controlled by Albany Manager Ltd, of The Quarter, Anguilla.

27 July

Murrin wrote to David Waddington MP asking him to persuade the Minister to call in the Preston Dock scheme or 'otherwise investigate the project.'

6 August

David Waddington MP wrote to Murrin agreeing to raise the Preston Dock plans with the Secretary of State for the Environment.

8 December

Murrin wrote to Councillor Harold Parker, leader of Preston Borough Council asking him to resign as chairman of the Preston port sub-committee because Parker was working for Oyston as a self-employed consultant.

22 December

Owen Oyston resigned as unpaid director of Lancashire Enterprises Ltd., a county council-sponsored industrial regeneration firm.

1984

4 January

Private detective Chris More, of CIL Services, reported to Michael Murrin the National Westminster Bank balance the previous day of Harold Parker. He also noted the outstanding mortgage balance of Parker's account at the Bradford & Bingley Building Society, Parker's NatWest business account balance and, obtained from Oyston's by deception, the exact amount paid monthly by Oyston to Parker.

24 January

Murrin noted 'I am now involved in further in-depth of questioning of quality sources and expect to have further information within seven days. The source of information..... is of the highest quality but very sensitive.' His notes include allegations of corrupt behaviour by Councillor Frank McGrath, deputy Labour leader of Preston Council. He noted his press contacts as Andrew Jennings of *BBC* and Roger Ratcliffe of *Sunday Times*. [Murrin said that Roger Ratcliffe told him Oyston was paying off some of Parker's debts].

1984

Murrin reported meeting Tom Cato, a Tory businessman from Fleetwood, who was a client of Chris More's detective agency. At this time, Murrin said he wrote to the Chief Constable of Lancashire and was invited to meet Assistant Chief Constable Mander. He made a statement to Mander but said later,

'I made a statement but was disturbed when Mr. More of Commercial, Insurance and Legal Services told me he was certain that the contents of my statement were being passed back to Oyston. I was eventually told by Mr. Mander the police could find no evidence to substantiate my information and that, as far as the police were concerned, the matter was closed. It was not until 1987 that I was told

by another informant that they had been told Mrs. Louise Ellman had a close personal relationship with a senior police officer based at Hutton.'

4 February

Private detective More reported that Oyston Greenwood estate agency in Maghull, Liverpool, since February 1983 had paid standing orders to the NatWest and Co-operative Bank accounts of Harold Parker and his firm Activus, totalling £550 per month. More noted that the figures matched those obtained earlier by him from the National Westminster Bank.

1984

Chris More supplied a large amount of information on Parker's loan repayments and indebtedness which was only obtainable from the National Westminster Bank branch at Liverpool Road, Penwortham, Preston. This included the names of two of Parker's loan guarantors: [M.A. Goody and Owen Oyston] and the fact that his mortgage standing order had not been paid in February 1983.

27 March

Watchdog, a BBC TV *Sixty Minutes* programme, was screened. This programme was prompted by Murrin, and claimed that Oyston's consultancy work with Parker was improper, even though Parker was openly employed by Oyston in a proper way. The programme forced a Preston Council debate on the Dock.

28 March

Lancashire Evening Post and *Blackpool Evening Gazette* followed up the *Watchdog* programme with stories about the Labour leader.

5 April

Chaos broke out between Labour Party and Rate-payers Association members at public meeting on the Preston Dock affair. Murrin revealed he was behind *Watchdog* and invited Councillors Parker and McGrath to sue him.

27 April

Owen Oyston filed a writ for libel against the BBC and its reporter Andrew Jennings.

28 April

Preston Tory councillor Audrey Scott introduced Michael Murrin to Conservative MP Robert Atkins at her home in Preston.

30 April

After insuring his life for £100,000, Murrin announced his Ratepayers Association would send information to Lancashire police.

11 May

Robert Atkins MP introduced Murrin to the wealthy Fylde developer Bill Harrison. Murrin reported later, 'I was introduced to a new source of funds.' Harrison, who 'five times' hosted Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher at his home, dealt directly with the private detective Chris More, and handed over £20,000 for work in hand. 'At this point I was pushed out of the picture and the funding source took over,' said Murrin. 'His approach was to ensure that the funds applied were wasted and no significant results were achieved.'

28 June

Preston & District Ratepayer's Association sacked Murrin as Chairman. 'He was more or less carrying on a witch hunt,' said new chairman Bryan Chapman.

8 October

Albany Managers Ltd resigned as director of Oyston Investments Ltd and directors Abdul Sattar Khan [London], Sultan Mahmood Beg [Dammam] and Ashad Nizam Shah [Karachi] took over the £100 company.

1985

In this year, Lancashire police investigated the activities of Owen Oyston, Councillor Harold Parker and Councillor Frank McGrath. Director of Public Prosecutions Allan Green said in 1989, 'No evidence of any criminal offence was revealed.'

27 February

Oyston announced in confidence to staff his intention to take Oystons to stock market as a public company.

20 March

Keith Beabey of the *News of the World* handed over press cuttings on various estate agents connected to Oyston to detective Chris More. These were passed to Murrin.

6 August

Bill Harrison called Murrin. He urged him to contact More, the private detective hired with Harrison's money to investigate Oyston.

7 August

Bill Harrison complained that he has paid More 'a lot of money' for investigating Oyston and had nothing to show for it.

16 August

Harrison told Murrin, 'It's all to do with Oyston, he's behind everything and once you destroy the myth... you see we both agreed that everybody thinks he's so powerful and wealthy... beyond reproach.'

Joe Hood, Tory leader on Preston Council told Murrin about the results of an interview that month at Lancashire police head-quarters between police and Jack Heatley, a Tory councillor making allegations against Labour councillors.

6 September

Geoff Scott, husband of Tory councillor Audrey Scott, told Murrin that Joe Hood, Preston's Tory leader, and Robert Atkins MP 'have stated that the Chorley-based Cable TV Consortium will get the franchise being offered locally. The Oyston, Askew and McGrath consortiums will be blocked -- as they were before -- because of their suspected involvement in corruption.' Behind the Cable TV consortium was Tory MP Sir Peter Blaker.

1986

Murrin reported that in this year, 'Relations broke down between the investigator and the funding source. Mr. J. Seddon came into the picture during 1986 and led to enquiries into Merseyside Cable and the application for the Lancashire Cable franchise. A national newspaper was persuaded to consider joint funding.'

February

Bill Harrison complained to Murrin about More's demands for money and repeated failure to deliver:

27 February

Bill Harrison telephoned Murrin to tell him that he had arranged to meet the detective Chris More. Murrin said, 'At the beginning of the conversation he mentioned that he had been asked to get involved in this thing, and I quote, "in the North West by Lord Young". Now I've not heard that before. That's the first time he's said anything like that, although in the reports and that, that are along with this tape, there was a reference at the beginning of this matter that Harrison had very close connections with Thatcher.'

4 March

Murrin says he commissioned Chris More to investigate and he 'reported that he had found Councillor Parker receiving £450 per month directly or indirectly from Balfour Beatty.....I believe Mr. More arranged for a reporter from *The Star* newspaper to confront Mr. Parker with the above information.' No such evidence has ever been discovered but the *Daily Star* confronted Harold Parker with other documents at this time.

17 March

Murrin telephoned Sheila Catlin, an employee of Bill Harrison who was an former employee of the Oyston Group and gathered information on Richard Arnold, a disaffected Oyston accountant. Murrin then phoned Arnold and arranged to meet him to discuss the Oyston business. He then called Stephen Long, an investigator at the Inland Revenue Special Office in Liverpool and arranged for Long to call at his home in Preston on 21st March

21 March

Murrin met Stephen Long of the Inland Revenue.

24 March

Murrin telephoned Long to confirm that the Inland Revenue were interested in further illegally-obtained information on Oyston.

8 April

Richard Arnold, an accountant employed by the Oystons estate agency Group, met Murrin in Stockport but refused to confirm the existence of memos in which he had warned Owen Oyston about tax irregularities. Murrin said he was present at Progress Park [Harrison's office] when Harrison gave £2000 to his employee, Sheila Catlin, a former Oyston employee. Sheila Catlin then obtained from Arnold details of the 1984 salaries and expenses of senior employees and directors of Oyston Group. Copies of Arnold's personal 1984 memos warning Oyston about Inland Revenue irregularities were handed to Murrin. Copies of large sensitive files on stock market flotation of the Oyston Group were stolen and handed to Murrin. Murrin said he got these later from another source in the Oyston Group and handed them over to the Inland Revenue.

27 May

Murrin wrote to Sir Peter Blaker to say that he wanted go to London to meet the *Private Eye* journalist Paul Halloran and asked Sir Peter for funding.

9 June

Abdul Khan made annual return for Oyston Investments Ltd., with a cheque

drawn on Bank of Credit and Commerce International, received on this date.

19 June

Murrin met Sir Peter Blaker at his home, 55 Ashley Gardens, Ambrosden Avenue, SW1.

14 July

Murrin acknowledged receipt of £2500 from Sir Peter Blaker's solicitors, Piper, Smith & Basham. This was part payment of £10,000, plus VAT.

20 July

Murrin wrote to Sir Peter Blaker's solicitor to say, 'the enquiry agent has been instructed to carry out enquiries into reports of tax evasion and company fraud. His fee has been agreed at £2500 plus VAT.' Murrin reported to Sir Peter Blaker that after Oyston had sold out the family estate agents to Royal Insurance he would be concentrating on: '1. Cable television and the funding of Lancashire Cable. 2. Reports of sex parties and drug abuse. 3. Reports of tax evasion.'

22 September

Murrin reported to Sir Peter Blaker's solicitor, 'The Revenue have confirmed that they intend moving in for the £250,000 at some stage and that their own investigations are to continue.' This referred to an Inland Revenue Special Office raid on Owen Oyston at Claughton Hall.

1 October

Murrin reported to Sir Peter Blaker's solicitor, 'Confirmation has been received that the Revenue have enforced a settlement of six figures for the PAYE irregularities identified by my source.'

22 December

Murrin reported to Sir Peter Blaker that he had been introduced to a solicitor, 'Bill McNabb' [actually Bill Nabb] 'a man of undoubted integrity' who had worked for Oyston. After the meeting, Murrin produced a two-page report for Sir Peter Blaker, noting things like, 'Oyston did bring gold back from Hong Kong' and 'My contact and Mr. McNabb then went to see Mr. Richard Arnold FCA. Papers were secured and the agreement was reached that Mr. Arnold should talk to the Revenue.'

The report says, 'the papers secured show fraudulent claims for expenses, non-payment of PAYE and National Insurance due.' Murrin's meeting notes include, 'Bob Oyston paid out by Oyston,' 'Brian Street's childrens' education paid by Oyston' and 'Karen -- illegitimate daughter -- mother on payroll.'

1987

21 February

Murrin wrote to George Gordon, Associate Editor of the *Daily Mail* linking Oyston with fugitive Merseyside developer Ted Spencer and Liverpool's deputy Labour leader Derek Hatton.

5 March

Murrin told Paul Halloran of *Private Eye*, 'I have now secured a small

Murrin talks to Sir Peter Blaker about Philip Oppenheim MP and David Bookbinder, leader of Derbyshire County Council

Murrin

I've sent a letter to Edwina Currie.

Blaker

amount of further funding to enable me to proceed with my enquiry.'

8 March

Murrin reported to Sir Peter Blaker and Robert Atkins MP that, 'The more recent objective of crippling the ship has moved ahead and the "rev" [Inland Revenue] are now involved. I am now seeking ways of pushing them to seize documentation and / or prosecute...'

28 March

Lancashire Evening Post reported that Councillor Frank McGrath had become a millionaire through the success of Red Rose Radio shares and had become a director of the company after Oyston regained control.

April

Owen Oyston sold the remainder of the Oyston estate agency to Royal Insurance.

Murrin located two mysterious companies called Oyston Ltd. He sent details of them to Mr. David Thomas, a Customs Officer based in Liverpool, fighting drug smuggling. He talked to the Customs officer about politicians and drugs money.

12 April

Murrin called David Thomas of HM Customs & Excise, the man who had first told him about a rumoured link between drug smugglers and Labour politicians in Liverpool. Murrin had just sent Thomas the company details of the Isle of Man drug money-laundering firm called Oyston Ltd.

1 May

Murrin wrote to Mr. S. Long of Inland Revenue Special Office in Liverpool alleging, 'Corrupt business interests in Bristol are now operating in Preston. One name involved is Harris, believed to be an associate of Frank McGrath.'

13 May

Oyston, the biggest private shareholder in *News On Sunday* since its launch in April, took control of the paper in a rescue bid.

Yes. I saw that. You sent me a copy. I wouldn't bother with her. Ha Ha Ha. She's too busy making a name for herself and she won't have time to pursue this. Oppenheim's your man. [Tory MP for Amber Valley] Er, Oppenheim's taking this seriously, I talked to him yesterday.

Murrin

Is he taking it seriously?

Blaker

Oh yes. What? The Oyston Question?

Murrin

Yes.

Blaker

Very much. He's got a research assistant.

Murrin

Yes. I spoke to the... I saw the research assistant Wednesday of last week. Blaker The research assistant I haven't met. But Phillip, who I haven't previously talked to very much, but I had a talk with him yesterday over a cup of tea, he's taking it very seriously. Er he's much interested in getting Bookbinder into the soup, which he believes Bookbinder deserves to be in. He's... Bookbinder's a real so-and-so and he's much interested in the Derbyshire County Council pension fund affair. Umm, I've put him in the picture a little more widely about the nature of Oyston, which he seemed to know something about already.

22 May

Murrin told *Private Eye* he had located the company Oyston Ltd., incorporated on 30 April 82 in the Isle of Man and controlled by money launderer Patrick Diamond. Murrin also told Mr. S. Long, Inland Revenue Special Office, Bootle, about the Oyston Ltd. company and sent him documents.

June

Murrin received £5000 funds from Sir Peter Blaker's solicitors and paid £1000 to private detective Chris More, £130 to the now defunct magazine *The Digger*, and 'expenses' of £166.91 to a *Private Eye* reporter.

15 June

Murrin wrote to Robert Atkins MP: 'I have been told on many occasions that T.1 [Oyston] has protection from highly-placed individuals. If this is the case then it is unlikely that I will be able to dislodge him, it would require action to be taken by individuals or organisations with influence and real power.'

21 June

Murrin reported to his backers that Joe Hood, the Tory opposition leader on Preston Council said that an office development on the Dock would improperly go to Tustin Developments Ltd, on the recommendation of council official John Field [who was later arrested in Operation Angel, tried and acquitted of corruption with Hossein Ghiassi of Tustin].

12 July

Murrin told Sir Peter Blaker, 'An alternative funding source really needs to be lined up but I can only leave that to you. My own network of intelligence is now building up and I would expect results after the summer.'

30 July

Owen Oyston resigned as chairman of Red Rose Radio.

September

Oyston bought control of Blackpool Football Club.

4 September

Oyston won power struggle to retake control of Red Rose Radio.

October

Peter Martin of 24, Mosley Street, Manchester, was paid £2292.00 by Growfar Ltd., supply company for the *News on Sunday*, for supplying models in October 1987.

26 October

Murrin told Paul Halloran of *Private Eye* that he refused to identify his funding source but that Halloran could have funds for investigations, 'subject to very reasonable conditions.'

28/

29 October

Murrin paid *Private Eye* reporter Halloran's bill for an overnight at Crest Hotel, Preston.

4 December

The Digger magazine reported on Oyston's business career and the collapse of *News on Sunday*.

14 December

Murrin wrote to Martin Tomkinson, deputy editor of *The Digger*: 'I was approached by an old acquaintance who is ex-police and asked if I had heard of the target's interest in child pornography.'

18 December

The Digger claimed Inland Revenue men had spent 10 weeks at Oystons' offices in Blackpool, and printed excerpts from the stolen Arnold memos to Oyston.

1988

20 January

In a Commons committee Philip Oppenheim MP questioned Owen Oyston's involvement in the Derbyshire County Council pension fund investments.

31 January

Murrin wrote for funds to hire a *Private Eye* journalist to investigate Oyston.

11 March

The Digger claimed McGrath must have been lent money to buy Red Rose Radio shares by Owen Oyston.

25 March

The Digger claimed OYSTON PROFITS IN DEAD NEWS and attacked Derbyshire County Council deal.

31 March

Murrin offered Martin Tomkinson of *The Digger* £3000 to write a book with the provisional title 'Oyston The Man and The Myth'.

Murrin wrote to Philip Oppenheim MP saying that he had sent off documents taken from Oystons, referring to 'blatant and naive tax evasion', to the Inland Revenue Special Office in Liverpool and saying that he suspected Owen Oyston was the actual owner of the Manx money laundering firm Oyston Ltd.

14 April

Murrin offered stolen Oyston papers to John Robertson, of Inland Revenue, Enquiry Branch. 'A week prior to going to the Royal Insurance AGM I phoned up the guy at the Revenue and asked him if he wanted it. He said, "Yes" and he was keen to have it.'

Murrin asked Tory Councillor Jack Heatley to keep pressing Lancashire police Detective Inspector Nigel Webster to chase up progress on a police investigation of Labour councillors at Preston.

21 April

At the annual general meeting of Royal Insurance Murrin asked Sir Anthony Tuke, deputy chairman, whether Royal was aware of an Inland Revenue investigation at Oystons. Sir Anthony said Royal were unaware, but Roy Randall, Royal's head of corporate relations was forced to retract the deputy chairman's statement later in the day. Royal then took total control of Oystons, paying Oyston in shares which fell £4.5 million in 1988 stock market crash.

22 April

Lancashire Evening Post reported 'Oyston chain's tax probe.' *The Digger* magazine attacked Owen Oyston's rescue of Derbyshire County Council's investment in *News on Sunday*.

25 April

Murrin noted, 'Preston Borough councillor J. Heatley has made a complaint to the police concerning an alleged bribe paid to [Councillor] H. Parker by the owner of a local pub for planning consent.'

23 May

Owen Oyston, Peter Martin, Melanie Hardy, Lindsey Butler, Susan Burrows, Alison Brown, Dianne Boroviak flew to Gibraltar for a week.

10 June

Murrin released a 22-page report entitled 'Preston Dock Redevelopment, Red Rose Radio and Cable Television' libelling Oyston. One paragraph concluded, 'there had been constant reports of Oyston being involved in prostitution and blackmail.'

12 June

Murrin sent to Conservative MPs Edwina Currie and David Waddington, the company registration of Oyston Ltd and demonstrated its link with drugs money launderer Patrick Diamond, which had been explained to him by John Huber, Drug Enforcement Administration man at the U.S. embassy in London.

20 June

Murrin published a press release entitled 'Royal Lies', releasing excerpts from many of the Oyston flotation proposal documents stolen from Oystons the year before and suggesting the Royal's purchase of Oystons was unwise and that there were still Inland Revenue problems.

Sir Peter Blaker MP advised Michael Murrin on how to approach Sir David Waddington MP, Mrs. Thatcher's Chief Whip:

'Don't land him in the soup. He's your MP. He's also the Government Chief Whip. He's potentially useful because if he sees that that this is something that should be investigated, then he's the sort of chap, he's a barrister, a QC, an able man, so he is potentially very much to be cultivated at the appropriate time. I think that looking at it from Waddington's point of view, if you accompany the sending of the affidavit to him, or the affidavit, being the long statement of which I saw a partial draft, right, I think if you accompany it with publicity you may put him off. I think a much better tactic is to get him interested. You must avoid the risk that he thinks you're a crank. Once you make it clear its about malpractice by the leader of the Labour Party on the county council, by the leader of the Preston district council and his principal assistant and by a leading Labour Press, media tycoon, you will have his interest.

27 June

Murrin told reporter Andrew Rosthorn that the *Private Eye* reporter Paul Halloran had said to him, 'I want a blank cheque made payable to me, cash up front. I want access to your informants.' Murrin gave Rosthorn the telephone number of John Robertson of the Inland Revenue Enquiry Branch in Liverpool and put

Rosthorn in touch with former Oyston employees Bill Nabb, Richard Arnold and Sheila Catlin. Murrin passed on to Rosthorn information about Liverpool drug dealers, accountants and councillors and details of the Comerford Old Bailey case of 1986 in which 'Bob the Dog' McGorin was named as Liverpool's leading drug dealer under cross-examination. Murrin said Liverpool's deputy Labour leader Derek Hatton was linked to these men and that developer Ted Spencer, who fled Britain at about same time as McGorin, had done property deals in Preston with its deputy Labour leader Frank McGrath. Murrin called Bill Harrison and told him a Merseyside reporter was, 'connecting Derek Hatton with drugs in Liverpool, Bobby McGorin, the Hughes Twins. He's coming up with all the same names as I'm coming up with.'

6 July

Alerted by Andrew Rosthorn, Dale Campbell-Savours MP put down notice of an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons asking Owen Oyston to state whether Oyston Ltd, registered in the Isle of Man and controlled from Hong Kong by Patrick Diamond had any connection with Oyston Estates Agency Ltd. He also put down a question 'to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, if all investigations into the tax affairs of Oyston Estates Agency Ltd. and related companies are complete.'

9 July

Rosthorn's inquiries at Adverttee Ltd., an advertising firm recently bought by Oyston from the directors of a bankrupt publishing firm, revealed that ex-policeman Peter Martin was apparently running the firm, with offices in Manchester and Preston. Martin said he was a former fraud squad policeman and ran the Model Team International agency in Manchester. Martin 'boasted that he was getting £50k per annum as Oyston's "toe rag".' Martin talked of getting calls to take models at night to Oyston in London. Models at the agency had complained to the Adverttee staff that they had paid for a 'course that never materialised and have not been paid.'

Oyston and Campbell-Savours MP met in Cumbria, after which Oyston promised a 'world-wide investigation' to find who was behind the two 'Oyston companies'.

11 July

Rosthorn reported Halloran's activities with Murrin to Ian Hislop, editor of *Private Eye*.

13 July

Oyston served an injunction on Murrin forbidding him from further publishing his Red Rose document.

Martin Tomkinson told Murrin that the *News of the World* had already 'looked at Peter Martin'.

Owen Oyston flew to Crimea to investigate a holiday development proposed in partnership with Derbyshire County Council's pension fund.

14 July

Peter Martin noted in his diary: '*July 14th: M. Murrin.*' Six years later Murrin's name was noticed by police checking the diary and logged the Greater Manchester HOLMES police computer by a Detective Inspector with the words, 'I have liaised with Mr. Roberts re this who instructs that no actions be raised in relation to this entry.'

18 July

Reporter Andrew Rosthorn, investigating Murrin's dealings with Paul Halloran, reported to *Private Eye* editor Ian Hislop that, 'Oyston has put high tech *News on Sunday* and other publishing assets in hands of Peter Martin, the owner of a Manchester model agency called Model Team International.' Rosthorn told Hislop that two Oyston publishing executives said the Model team girls had complained to them that they 'never get the tuition they paid for, just Oyston sex outings.' Rosthorn also reported a conversation with a former *News on Sunday* executive: 'Oyston suite at the Labour Party conference in Brighton was full of Brighton whores, day and night. Champagne and all bills were paid by Transport and General Workers' Union.' Rosthorn visited the Model Team International model agency with reporter Martin Tomkinson and talked to a Manchester private detective about Peter Martin and his early career as a policeman. Nothing untoward about the agency was discovered. A former Oyston company, Advertree, was being run on the premises. The Advertree people had noted Martin talking about taking girls to London to meet Owen Oyston. Tomkinson and Rosthorn acquired a supply chit from the closed *News on Sunday* newspaper, which authorised the payment of money to Model Team for supplying models to the *News on Sunday* suite at the Labour Party conference. Handwriting on the chit said, 'Peter -- models.'

Rosthorn told Michael Murrin about the negative result of this investigation. Murrin asked Manchester private detective, Chris More, to get information about the model agency.

23 July

Writ for libel served on Michael Murrin by Owen Oyston's solicitors in respect of Preston Dock Redevelopment, Red Rose Radio and Cable Television.

Murrin called Bill Harrison to arrange a meeting later in the day. Harrison asked Murrin what he knew about a firm Tustin Developments Ltd., which Murrin said was controlled by two Iranians. Harrison then revealed to Murrin that he had been advised that the Commission for the New Towns had been selling land on the Red Scar industrial estate. Harrison claimed the estate agents Robinson had said the land had been sold in May: 'But it wasn't sold until the end of September, apparently.' Murrin said it had been bought by Tustin for £3 million. Harrison told Murrin, 'I thought that was rather annoying.' This sale became the subject of an abortive prosecution under Operation Angel, three years later.

Summer

Michael Murrin visited *Sunday Times* Insight office and met reporter Peter Hounam, offering him 'material on council corruption.'

1 August

Owen Oyston re-married Vicki Oyston.

3 August

Tustin Developments Ltd. sued some of their customers for libel in the High Court, in Manchester. The residents of Swansea Park estate had run a campaign against Tustin Developments and Preston Council which was organised by Michael Murrin.

30 October

Acting for a London merchant bank, Kroll Associates, the American corporate investigators, contacted Murrin and arranged for him to travel to meet them in

London. They refused to allow him to bring reporter Andrew Rosthorn. Murrin advised Sir Peter Blaker of the Kroll contact.

3 November

Murrin and his solicitor Craven, a local Tory, travelled to London to meet Kroll at their offices in Curzon Street.

11 November

Journalist Martin Tomkinson wrote to Murrin: 'Any euphoria about Kroll has now worn off and I'm writing to establish some new, and binding ground rules. First and foremost I hope you really do appreciate that this thing is now 100% for real. You and I have just fucked-up a £10 million plus deal for Oyston [or so it seems]. This does not happen every day and from now on things can only get dirtier.'

25 November

Tomkinson reported that Kroll's client, '100% threw out Oyston' and that he had received from *News on Sunday*, contacts lists of Oyston's bank payments and gifts to people.

1988

Michael Murrin tape-recorded himself telling the former Government minister, Sir Peter Blaker, 'Did I tell you we've located the model agency in Manchester? Sources who are saying that he's involved in prostitution.'

1989

March

Oyston's Miss World firm took over Piccadilly Radio.

13 March

Philip Oppenheim MP, who was being sued for libel by Derbyshire County Council, asked Murrin for help in his defence.

3 April

Murrin relied to Oppenheim to say that because of libel proceedings he must refer inquiries to his solicitors, Berg & Co. of Manchester.

25 May

Owen Oyston's injunction against Michael Murrin was made permanent and Murrin apologised unreservedly to Oyston.

8 August

The *Sunday Times* reported the City Takeover Panel clearing the conduct of Oyston's firm, Miss World, and Derbyshire County Council in the Piccadilly Radio takeover battle.

22 August

Michael Murrin noted that Labour leader of Preston, Councillor Harold Parker had a penthouse flat in Sandown Court, Preston, formerly the Kendal/Penrith high rise flats 'owned by Cable TV [Oyston]... Sandown Court bought by Merseypride [Ted Spencer] now Case Holdings fronted by Robin Hill. Robin Hill [twice bankrupt] now the main developer/contractor, [RH Developments Ltd.]

24 September

The *Sunday Times* Insight Team published a libellous story about Oyston's share-

dealing that was to cost the newspaper £1 million after a 1991 court case.

27 September

Reporter Andrew Rosthorn sent a story to Roy Greenslade, features editor of the *Sunday Times*, about the Hong Kong Oyston company and an investigation into Owen Oyston by two Labour MPs, Dale Campbell-Savours and Brian Sedgemore.

5 October

Oyston executive Julian Allitt wrote to Michael Murrin to arrange a meeting.

29 October

Murrin wrote to his MP, David Waddington, QC, saying reporter Peter Hounam of the *Sunday Times* was 'interested in Oyston.'

1 November

Sir Allan Green, the Director of Public Prosecutions, wrote to David Waddington: 'I understand that there was a substantial investigation by the Lancashire police into the activities of Mr. Owen Oyston, Mr. Parker and Mr. McGrath over four years ago, but that no evidence of any criminal offence was revealed.'

6 November

Southwestern Bell Corporation of USA purchased Oyston Cable Communications Group.

9 November

Oyston Cable Communications Ltd announced deal with Southwestern Bell to start cabling operations in Central Lancashire.

5 December

Reporter Andrew Rosthorn told Peter Hounam of the *Sunday Times* about an interview with Paul Smelt who was an Oyston Group accountant at the time of *News on Sunday*. Paul Smelt said he had been involved in Richbold Ltd., which owned Peter Martin's firm Model Team Management, 'in order to help Peter Martin's partner Melanie Hardy.' Melanie Hardy was running the agency at that time.

14 December

Waddington wrote to Murrin, 'Thank you for your letter. I think you ought to see the result of an approach which I made to the DPP in November. I am pretty sure the matters you mention have been looked into, but just in case I am writing again to the DPP.'

1990

10 March

Murrin wrote to David Waddington, now the Home Secretary, after the *Daily Mirror* had claimed that the NUM had received money from the Soviet Union. He said he had been told in 1986 that there had been an Inland Revenue investigation into Councillor Derek Hatton, Deputy Labour leader of Liverpool, because he was suspected of receiving illegal payments from developer Ted Spencer and the construction firm McAlpines. He speculated that McAlpines' connection with Mrs. Thatcher had blocked the investigation.

30 April

Home Office acknowledged Murrin's letter and referred him to the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

14 October

Facing bankruptcy for libel costs owed to Oyston, Michael Murrin travelled to Oyston's home, Claughton Hall, to discuss giving evidence for Oyston in an action for conspiracy to defame being brought by Oyston against Sir Peter Blaker. Among the names Oyston mentioned to Murrin as possible associates with Atkins and Blaker was Bill Harrison. Murrin did not confirm this suggestion. Oyston said his solicitors would pay Murrin for transcribing his taped telephone conversations.

October

Chris More, private detective, called Murrin to ask him whether he had talked to Oyston. Murrin said, 'He says he won't pay me.' More suggested that Murrin should tell Oyston to hire Frank Dobson, another private detective friend of More, to conduct a big inquiry in which some of the proceeds would be given back to Murrin. Murrin suggested this to Oyston, but Oyston refused to employ Dobson. (In fact, Dobson was later paid by the *Sunday Times* to investigate Oyston.) More asked Murrin if he wanted him to alert his own client, Bill Harrison, to developments. More then suggested that Oyston would also have to pay a further sum of money to More to finish his 'struggle'. 'Get in there quickly and grab some,' said More. Another suggestion made by More at this time was that Murrin should 'go to the police' and report that he was being blackmailed by Oyston.

Murrin called Harrison and told him he had handed his material over to Oyston.

Murrin reported to Blaker. Blaker said he could not understand how his involvement in the campaign against Oyston had become known. Murrin told him that Harrison's involvement was still not known by Oyston. Murrin said, 'The police have been in there. I precipitated the Cheetah inquiry.' [Cheetah was a major investigation of Liverpool's Labour Deputy leader Derek Hatton's links with land deals and the Wimpey firm.]

16 October

Peter Hounam, *Sunday Times*, called Murrin to discuss whether Murrin would be giving evidence for Oyston against the *Sunday Times*. Hounam said on tape, 'I think if you are planning to set him up, you've got to try and get him to, obviously you don't want to disabuse him of your importance, you want to blow it up out of all importance, likewise you should go for a substantial sum.' Hounam said if Murrin acted to set up Oyston, he must be decisive: 'It's got to be the coup de grâce' for Oyston.

Murrin discussed his next meeting with Oyston in the taped conversation with Peter Hounam of the *Sunday Times* in which Hounam suggested Murrin go to the meeting 'wired up'. Hounam then told Murrin about his progress investigating Derek Hatton, the deputy Labour leader of Liverpool Council. Hounam told Murrin that a prosecution of Hatton before the 1987 election had been stopped 'from on high' and that Hatton might be charged with an offence soon.

28 October

The *Sunday Times* published allegations that the Merseyside police Operation Cheetah was revealing political corruption connected to the drugs business.

29 October

Murrin declared to Lord Waddington that although he was barred from discussing

Oyston with Peter Hounam of the *Sunday Times* he had been the source of the information that led to Operation Cheetah:

'I did, however, agree to meet Mr. Hounam and was able to provide information concerning alleged corruption in Liverpool. The information I gave was as follows:-

1. An informant told me that a Mr. E. Spencer was involved in paying bribes to Mr. D. Hatton in return for planning consents and preferential treatment re: land deals.
2. Mr. Spencer was put under 24 hour surveillance by Liverpool drugs squad because of his association with Mr. Bobby McGorin an alleged drugs dealer. Mr. McGorin was associated with the Hughes twins described as a "couple of Liverpool thugs.

Mr. Hounam then started making inquiries in Liverpool and on page 12, col. 2 par. 6 of *The Sunday Times* it states, "it was this paper which prompted the fraud squad investigation by presenting the results of its own inquiries to the Merseyside police force in march this year..." In telephone conversations [which I have recorded] Mr. Hounam confirms the information I gave him has led to Cheetah.'

Murrin then asked Lord Waddington to press for investigation into 'the activities of Mr. Hemmings' (of CentreParcs) and into 'Mr. Oyston's activities locally'.

A report revealing the tax affairs of Preston's Labour leaders Parker and McGrath and the PAYE records of their wives, which was illegally obtained by the detective Chris More and sold to Mrs Thatcher's friend Bill Harrison, was given to Lancashire and Merseyside police by Murrin. Neither police force appears to have investigated this obvious breach of the Official Secrets Act.

30/31 October

Murrin reported further contacts with Kroll to Sir Peter Blaker MP: 'They say their client is a merchant bank in London but refuse to name the bank.'

11 November

Martin Tomkinson contributed a profile of Owen Oyston to the *Independent On Sunday*.

10 December

Lord Waddington sent Murrin a copy of a letter he had received from the Director of Public Prosecutions.

16 December

Murrin wrote to Peter Hounam of the *Sunday Times* to say he had sent all his papers to Chris More as he had a personal bankruptcy hearing due the following month.

1991

January

Preston's chief financial officer, Ian Threlfall, said that in January he held the first of a series of 'high level' meetings about suspect land deals with

Murrin and Sir Peter Blaker discuss newly-appointed Minister Robert Atkins

Blaker

the town's auditors and the police.

6 January

Murrin handed over to Owen Oyston about 36 cassettes of tape recordings which showed that two former Government ministers, Lord Blaker and Robert Atkins MP, and a millionaire developer, Bill Harrison, had raised about £50,000 to buy stolen information from Oyston's companies, to obtain his personal income tax statement for 1987 and banking details, which were used in the campaign against Oyston.

February

Oyston paid £1500 to Murrin, on account, to start transcribing the tape recordings at £12.50 an hour. Murrin reckoned in a tape recorded conversation that he might get 'about seven and a half to ten' thousand pounds out of Oyston.

24 February

Murrin told Oyston's solicitor, Pepper, 'The funds placed on account will be exhausted by the end of the week and I will require a further £2500 on account within seven days if the momentum is to be maintained.'

3 March

Murrin notified Pepper he had left home 'due to matrimonial difficulties.'

7 March

Murrin complained to Lord Waddington about being threatened after passing tapes to Owen Oyston.

24 March

The *Sunday Times* claimed that Merseyside Police 'Operation Cheetah', a major investigation of Liverpool's Labour Deputy leader Derek Hatton's alleged links with land deals and the Wimpey firm, was provoked by their article of March 1990. This was then confirmed later by the reporter, Peter Hounam. Murrin wrote immediately to Lord Waddington, former Home Secretary, saying he had originally alerted the police to Hatton, after he had heard that an Inland Revenue investigation of Hatton had been shut down on the instructions of a Tory cabinet minister, just before the general election.

25 March

Next day, Murrin published a press release asserting that he, not *The Sunday Times*, had provided the information for Operation Cheetah and that he had recently been invited to 'attend Stanley Road police station in Liverpool and make a statement concerning the source and content of the information provided to the *Sunday Times*. This request was complied with.' The source, he said had been 'official'.

30 July

You know that Robert's in the government now?

Murrin

Yes, I did. Yes.

Blaker

Which is good for him. Mind, he deserves to be. Done a great job. I think we should keep Robert in on this, by the way.

Murrin

Oh everything that you've got, he has got.

Blaker

Yes but I think we should keep himWhat I'm saying is that you and I should keep him involved..... he's still interested in the subject.

Oyston resigned as chairman of Trans World Communications, retaining 22% share holding. He was forced out by pressure from *Guardian Media*.

7 August

Lancashire Police began a very large inquiry into allegations of corruption in local government at Preston, Operation Angel, carrying out raids on the Town Hall and illegal raids on the homes of the Labour leader, Harold Parker and the Deputy Labour leader of Preston, Frank McGrath. In a 1995 letter, Detective Chief Superintendent John Jameson, of Lancashire Police, named the 1983 BBC 'Watchdog' programme as the first of six reasons for the creation of Operation Angel.

One Operation Angel police document is a note written for police by Preston Borough Treasurer Ian Threlfall in which names are listed under the heading *Preston Mafia*. The first name is Owen Oyston, the second name is the building tycoon Trevor Hemmings of CenterParcs and Scottish & Newcastle. The list includes the names of Harold Parker, Frank McGrath and Louise Ellman, then leader of Lancashire County Council, now a Labour MP.

On the same day as the Operation Angel raids, Michael Murrin wrote to MPs Press Association, Reuters and the *Lancashire Evening Post* alleging previous investigations in Preston had been tainted by leaks to the targets and that 'one senior officer named in the attached note should be removed from the current investigation.'

15 August

Murrin asked Andrew Rosthorn to report to the *Sunday Times*' solicitors that he had been approached by Oyston to hand over tapes.

27 August

Murrin named the Chief Constable of Lancashire, Brian Johnson, as the officer who should be removed for forewarning the politicians and officials targeted in Operation Angel.

30 August

The Chief Constable of Lancashire sued Michael Murrin for libel.

11 September

Michael Murrin met Owen Oyston and the Oyston solicitor Alasdair Pepper . Murrin told them that it was Geoff Scott, husband of a Tory councillor, who introduced him to Robert Atkins, who in turn introduced him to Bill Harrison. When Harrison's funding dried up, Atkins introduced him to Sir Peter Blaker MP, who paid him £5000 in total. Murrin told Oyston and Pepper that after a Merseyside Inland Revenue investigation had been closed down, on instructions from Downing Street, he was taken into the Inland Revenue Special Office in Liverpool:

'I was left in an office, on my own, with a file with a couple of papers in it. Quite honestly I was too bloody frightened, I mean, it's like Colditz in there, I didn't know, I mean nobody was going to support me, I found out.'

17 September

Alasdair Pepper of Peter Carter Ruck and Partners wrote to Murrin saying the Murrin tapes would only be used in legal actions.

23 September

The *Lancashire Evening Post* reported that Councillors McGrath and Parker had started legal action against Lancashire police for unlawful Operation Angel searches of their homes. This action was successful.

Detective Inspector Michael Needham and Detective Chief Inspector Gudgeon of Operation Angel interviewed Preston's Tory leader Councillor Joe Hood. Councillor Hood told them that Councillor Parker, the Labour leader was questionably employed by Hemm Inns Ltd, a company controlled by Trevor Hemmings of CenterParcs and Scottish and Newcastle. He said he was concerned about Tustin Developments Ltd. at Swansea Park and at the Red Scar industrial estate, where 10 acres had been sold to them 'at a ridiculously low price.' He questioned the development of Ribble Village by R.H. Estates Ltd., a firm run by Robin Hill, described by Hood as a former bankrupt with no experience. Detective Inspector Needham's report said, 'He also queried Owen OYSTON's involvement in the former Lancastria Co-op known as Lancastria House, when Owen OYSTON wanted to use this building as an estate agency and then sold out his interest in it.'

All the matters raised by Councillor Hood had previously been raised by Michael Murrin, the man who was at this very time being sued for libel by the Chief Constable.

7 October

The *Sunday Times* apologised in open court for libelling Oyston on 17 September 89 and agreed to pay him 'substantial damages'. Cost to the paper -- £1 million.

8 October

Lancashire Evening Post reported under headline 'Riddle of Tory link in Oyston probe': 'Lancashire Tory MPs Robert Atkins and Sir Peter Blaker allegedly organised the inquiry after concern about the tycoon's business links with the council. Mr. Oyston is now considering taking legal action against the *Sunday Times*, which reported the MPs alleged role in the inquiry. The millionaire said private detectives were hired to investigate his links with the council.'

9 October

Michael Murrin told reporter Andrew Rosthorn that the total cost of his investigation into Owen Oyston and four Labour politicians was £25,000.

'I met John Seddon, a cable TV pioneer who had suffered serious problems with Oyston on Merseyside cable TV projects. Seddon put me on to Peter Blaker, who had cable TV interests in Preston. Blaker was at that time trying to get the Preston cable TV franchise. I used the name of Robert Atkins as a reference in my dealing with Blaker. I met Atkins and Blaker together on three occasions. The total amount of money used in the investigation was £25,000. Bill Harrison gave me £5000 and paid other bills direct. It was, in my opinion, very good value for money.'

10 October

Lancashire County Council leader Louise Ellman successfully moved that the Council would ask the Chief Constable of Lancashire to investigate the activities of Robert Atkins MP and Sir Peter Blaker in the Oyston Affair. The two MPs told reporters they were happy to co-operate with such an investigation.

Robert Atkins MP, a Tory Government minister, that same day was passing very inaccurate information to the Operation Angel team. The Lancashire Police tried to hide Robert Atkins's identity on their computer. The text in a police document, R6C, says: 'DET CH SUP HACKING RE INFO RECEIVED FROM.....' The text has been blacked out by the police so that the name of the informant cannot be made out but failed to obscure the address of the informant. From fragments of the addresses, it is obvious that the informant was Robert Atkins MP. He and Lord Blaker are the only informants whose names were blacked out. The names of other Tory informants, Councillors Joe Hood and Mrs. Audrey Chaloner, are in clear. Most of the information was inaccurate.

11 October

The *Lancashire Evening Post* reported that 'Sports Minister and South Ribble MP Robert Atkins issued a statement on behalf of himself and former Foreign [Office] Minister Sir Peter Blaker' in response to the Lancashire County Council demand for an investigation into "The Oyston Affair".'

12 October

A *Sunday Express* story by Chris Blackhurst, identifying Bill Harrison as Murrin's backer in the campaign against Oyston was killed by editor Eve Pollard, later honoured by Mrs. Thatcher.

13 October

Murrin wrote, 'Mr. Kehoe is wrong to say that none of the Conservative councillors on the Preston Borough Council knew of, or had involvement in my investigation. I had extensive contact with Conservative councillors over a number of years:- Audrey Scott, Marjorie Horam, Philip Worrall, Ron Ball, Jack Heatley, Joe Hood, Dorothy Chaloner, Alec Gittins and Mr. Jordan.' Murrin also named Robert Atkins and Lord Waddington as his contacts.

25 October

Private Eye magazine revealed Bill Harrison's part in the campaign against Oyston and said that it stemmed from a road accident when his daughter's car killed two young mothers. After a newspaper campaign by the *Lancashire Evening Post*, Chief Constable Stanley Parr had been sacked for reducing the charges against Bill Harrison's daughter. *Private Eye* reported that Murrin was transcribing 40 hours of tapes of his conversations with his backers and informants before handing them over to Oyston.

9 November

Murrin sent tapes of his conversations with Robert Atkins MP to Dale Campbell-Savours MP and alleged that Merseyside police were investigating a former Tory cabinet minister, a government minister and a member of the 1922 committee. He said the allegation was that government policy on out-of-town shopping centres was changed for £1 million contribution to Conservative Party funds.

November

Murrin revealed to Paul Halloran that Atkins and Blaker had seen the Chief Constable of Lancashire about Operation Angel and that Blaker claimed he had arranged that the Chief Constable would not proceed against Murrin on the libel writ caused by Murrin's accusing the Chief of tipping off Labour politicians and Oyston that they were targets of Operation Angel.

December

Murrin told reporter Andrew Rosthorn that he had a tape of Sir Peter Blaker

telling him that 'as far as he was concerned, if Harold Parker topped himself that was alright and that was doing me a good turn in adding to my case.' Under headline, 'Your Favourite Tories On Tape', *Private Eye* published transcripts of Blaker talking to Murrin on tape and a transcript of Robert Atkins saying how he would get 'the boys' at the DTI put onto Oyston

9 December

Detective Chief Superintendent Bill Hacking called Murrin to arrange a meeting with Murrin and Assistant Chief Constable Brown at Lancashire police headquarters on 2 January 92 as part of Operation Angel.

10 December

Murrin told Peter Hounam of the *Sunday Times* that freelance reporter Martin Tomkinson was paid £5000 by Owen Oyston while taking work for Kroll Associates investigating Oyston.

11 December

Murrin told Halloran that Chris More wanted £450 before he would release Murrin's files to Oyston.

12 December

Chief Constable of Lancashire Brian Johnson's solicitors wrote to Murrin pressing on for judgement in their libel action against Murrin.

1992

2 January

Murrin met Detective Chief Superintendent Bill Hacking and Asst. Chief Constable Brown. Murrin later said the two policemen asked him to get back from private detective Chris More the documents which he had lodged with More for safe-keeping. Murrin said he had given a 'statement' to police as 'a chronological view of what happened.'

7 January

Operation Angel detectives arrested Frank McGrath and his solicitor Colin Marland in land deals probe.

4 February

Lord Blaker telephoned an Operation Angel detective, Detective Inspector Michael Needham. Needham's report is one of two documents in a list of unused material disclosed by Lancashire Police to lawyers for the former Deputy Town Clerk of Preston, Mr Hugh McClorry. The documents are police-coded 'R2AX' and 'R6C'. R2AX refers to the report from Detective Inspector Michael Needham written up

A man called Brown calls Murrin...

Brown

Ten years ago, Mr Imbert, Assistant Chief Constable... of Thames Valley, came to the Fylde to investigate various aspects of police ... Parr... perpetrated by Oyston. Mr Imbert is now the Chief Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police. I reckon he'd like a copy of that.

Murrin

How do you mean, perpetrated by Oyston?

Brown

Well he set all that stuff up did Oyston.

Murrin

What? He set up the investigation?

Brown

No. No.

Murrin

He set up the thing with

after his call from Lord Blaker. The text in the document after R2AX says 'D I NEEDHAM RE INFO RECEIVED FROM....' at this point the text has been blacked out by the police so that the name of the informant cannot be read. Blaker told Needham, 'OYSTON and MCGRATH in the past have been offering shares in various small companies to officers of Preston Council.' Most of Blaker's information was inaccurate.

19 February

Murrin told Mark Hollingsworth of *World in Action* that he had been involved with former Home Secretary Lord Waddington: 'I have seen him on three or four occasions, one meeting at his constituency office in Clitheroe, he said to me that what I was doing was a public service, at another at his surgery in Preston, he said that the whole affair stank.'

Parr?
Brown
Ah yes. Everything.
Murrin
Did Imbert go into Oyston?
Brown
Don't know. Got called off the case.
Murrin
Did he?
Brown
Well Imbert was called back. Change of government, you see, and change of policy. You sent that to them. I think you should send a copy somewhere else.

2 March

Granada TV screened a *World In Action* programme, The Dirty War, about a plot against Oyston by Murrin and Tory politicians. This provoked model agency manager Melanie Hardy to call *World in Action* and ask them to put her in touch with Murrin.

10 March

Murrin was named in Commons Early Day Motion 841, which claimed the *World in Action* programme was 'wholly misleading' by not linking Murrin with his financing by Lord Blaker and Robert Atkins MP.

April

Esquire magazine carried a 5-page article by Chris Black-hurst on 'The Oyston Tapes', 'A seamy saga of smears, death and vendetta. Or how two Tory MPs, a fish and chip shop owner, and a Blackpool wheeler dealer with a secret grudge tried to ruin a socialist millionaire.'

29 April

Christopher More called Murrin to ask what was in the *Esquire* article. Murrin said he was just thinking how to reply to the questions that were coming in to him. More asked Murrin, 'Is Harrison considering taking legal action against them?' Murrin said he had no idea. He had not spoken to Harrison. Murrin said he had told the *Evening Gazette* that the tapes on which Oyston relied had been 'tampered with'. More encouraged Murrin to sue Carter Ruck and Oyston for releasing the tapes to journalists. Murrin told More that Detective Chief Superintendent Hacking told him the police investigations were 'immensely complicated' and, 'All that Hacking said to me was, "You've been at it 12 years and we've been at it 12 months."'

13 May

Murrin wrote to Peter Hounam of the *Sunday Times*. Mark Killick of *World in*

Action called Murrin to ask him for help. 'We are currently having a row with Peter Hounam over our programme. Peter's view is that you had nothing whatsoever to do with any of the three articles that the *Sunday Times* published.' Murrin said this was not true and told Killick, 'They automatically went through the stuff I had sent down on Oyston in Preston and I had moved on and had received some information concerning Derek Hatton in Liverpool and I gave that to the *Sunday Times* and they checked that out. If it hadn't been for the information I gave, concerning Liverpool, the police enquiry in Liverpool wouldn't be going ahead now.'

19 May

Lynn Ferguson, reporter for C4 *Hard News* called Murrin and got him to agree to take part in her programme attacking the *Sunday Times*, its reporter Peter Hounam, and freelancers Martin Tomkinson and Andrew Rosthorn. He told her, 'If you look at the articles that the *Sunday Times* did on Liverpool you will see that there is a quote in there that the drugs involvement in Liverpool is so great that there is an involvement by Special Branch because, and I believe I am right in quoting, it has implications for national security. I gave them specific items of information concerning Derek Hatton and other individuals in Liverpool. They went down, Hounam went down, and checked out the information I gave him. He found it to be accurate.' Murrin claimed his information had led to '22 arrests in Liverpool.'

Murrin told reporter Andrew Rosthorn that the police were 'not only going to have McGrath but they are going to have Parker and if they get Parker they have Oyston.'

16 June

Murrin met Melanie Hardy in Manchester. Hardy told him she had 'fronted model firms for Peter Martin and that Oyston had put up cash to run them.' She told how Martin and Oyston visited Gibraltar with models. She said Martin was currently using Sharon Denby to front his model agency business. She said Martin had worked as a private detective and had hired another detective to spy on Owen Oyston's ex-wife Vicki Oyston. Melanie Hardy also claimed to Murrin that she had that morning noticed signs of an attempted forced entry on her flat. She also indicated that she had discussed seeing Murrin with Peter Martin. She said she had cancelled her first meeting with Murrin after Martin had suggested Murrin might be working for Oyston. All this information was passed to Lancashire police and Greater Manchester police by Murrin.

17 June

A researcher from C4 programme *Hard News* called Murrin twice to collect details about his campaign against Oyston. Murrin says he had 140 half-speed tapes of telephone conversations. He said had sent copies of some of his tapes to Peter Dugdale of the *Lancashire Evening Post* and Andrew Rosthorn.

18 June

Murrin visited Detective Chief Superintendent Hacking of Lancashire CID at Lancashire Police HQ. He told how Melanie Hardy had contacted him after the *World in Action* TV programme on Oyston and what she had alleged against Peter Martin.

Mr Hacking reported the same day to his Assistant Chief Constable and Superintendent John Jameson, 'Miss HARDY had some grievance against

OYSTON and an assistant of his named Peter MARTIN. She made allegations to MURRIN that MARTIN had committed various criminal offences in relation to Manchester companies in which they were both involved. The criminal offences were forgery of share certificates and other documents.'

Detective Chief Superintendent Hacking gave Murrin a contact with 'a Detective Inspector in the Greater Manchester Fraud Squad who would deal with it.' Greater Manchester police say that Murrin wrote to them with allegations.

22 June

Murrin phoned Melanie Hardy to set up a meeting between Hardy and Peter Hounam of *The Sunday Times*. On the same day, he discussed with Paul Halloran arrangements for meeting Owen Oyston in London in July. He also received a telephone call from detective Chris More who had been shadowing model agency boss Peter Martin and reported that Martin was 'said to be involved forming companies for Oyston.'

23 June

Murrin and Hounam of *The Sunday Times* met Melanie Hardy. She told them an Oyston firm, Adverttee Ltd., was run from Martin's office, that Martin was said to have had a homosexual relationship with Chris Quinton of Coronation Street, and that twenty years ago Martin 'was sexually interfering with girls below the age of consent. At that time he came close to being caught.'

In the afternoon, Murrin typed up a report on his talks with Melanie Hardy to Lancashire police, with allegations against Oyston. The report reached Lancashire police on 24 June 92.

24 June

Melanie Hardy telephoned Michael Murrin saying that the West Midlands firm Triplex-Lloyd was employing Peter Martin. Martin, said Hardy, was also receiving '£250 per month'.

29 June

Murrin passed on to police the company details of Triplex-Lloyd and the allegation that Peter Martin was said to have been introduced to Triplex-Lloyd by an accountant called Zissman. A report on Derek Zissman's activities at the model agency was sent to the DPP by Greater Manchester police in 1994.

30 June

Murrin told police, 'Hardy has stated that at the time of the Piccadilly takeover, girls from Peter Martin's model agency were provided to Oyston who used them as inducements to share-holders and or businessmen.'

5 July

Murrin wrote to Detective Inspector Frank Whitehead of Greater Manchester Commercial Fraud Squad saying, 'I have forwarded tapes to Lancashire Police [Operation Angel] as follows: 1. an interview with Mr J. Seddon in which he claims Oyston offered him the sexual services of a woman. 2. A telephone conversation with a Mr McNabb during which he said Oyston had claimed to have compromising photographs of a business associate.

'There were constant reports of Oyston being provided women by Martin and of Oyston providing women to politicians and business associates. The use of "children" was also the subject of one report. I request a full investigation into the

allegations made concerning Martin and Oyston.'

6 July

Detective Inspector Malcolm Robishaw, of Greater Manchester Police Commercial Fraud Squad, called Murrin. 'The matters that you have been writing to Inspector Whitehead have been passed to me for action.' He made arrangements for Murrin and Melanie Hardy, if available, to meet him on

14 July

Robishaw asked Murrin to bring Hardy's documents and asked Murrin for Hardy's telephone number. Murrin told Robishaw, 'I gave some of the information that helped on Operation Cheetah in Liverpool.'

That evening Sir Peter Blaker called Murrin to persuade him to write a letter that his lawyers could use to claim that Sir Peter did not conspire in the execution of Murrin's investigation into Oyston.

7 July

Melanie Hardy was interviewed by Detective Inspector Robishaw and a Detective Constable Schofield.

14 July

Murrin met Detective Inspector Robishaw of Greater Manchester Commercial Fraud Squad. He handed over his reports on his meetings with Hardy .

17 July

Detective Inspector Robishaw reported to Detective Inspector Anson of Greater Manchester Police that,

'This office has received information from a Michael Hugh Murrin of Preston regarding the activities of businessman Owen Oyston who lives in Lancashire. Murrin is also supplying information to Detective Chief Inspector Maloney, Lancashire Constabulary Commercial Fraud Squad, regarding Oyston and members of Preston Borough Council. Murrin has a fixation about these matters and in particular has conducted a vendetta against Oyston. The information Murrin has supplied to this office does not disclose an offence in this force area although some information has been passed to Detective Chief Inspector Maloney re relevant Lancashire matters. A side issue of all these matters is that Murrin has directed me to Melanie Yvonne Hardy b. 6.6.62 and Carole Jones b. 26 8 43. Both these women are model agents who in the past have been associated with Central Models [latterly Model Team] of 44, Portland Street, Manchester. The agency is allegedly owned by Oyston although he is not shown on paper as the owner. The manager of this agency is Philip Charles Billington Martin b. 3.1.44 [no previous convictions] of 82 Northenden Road, Sale, an ex-Manchester PC. He uses the alias Peter Martin. Both Hardy and Jones allege that Martin uses his position to influence girls under the age of 16 into having sex with him either at his offices or his home address. These offences allegedly take place on Saturdays and Sundays when model training for young girls takes place at the agency. At these times some out of town girls stay at Martin's home in Sale. Martin has a common law wife named Tracey Grainey who may also be involved in these matters. It is understood that Martin has made a ventilation cover in his office which directly overlooks the

agency changing room. The inference is that he uses this vent to watch girls changing.

'The information contained in this report results directly from Hardy and Jones. I believe they are truthful but I am also aware that they have personal grudges against Martin and Oyston. Hardy and Jones supply some direct evidence regarding the allegation, i.e. evidence of what they have seen or heard. However, they are not prepared at this stage to make witness statements as they are in fear of Martin who has a reputation for violence. I ask therefore that if Hardy and Jones are re-interviewed with caution and confidentiality are exercised by the interviewer.'

3 August

Detective Chief Inspector Anson of Greater Manchester Police produced a report to explain the background to the letter that Murrin had written to Detective Inspector Robshaw on 15 July 92,

'MURRIN is a prolific writer of letters to the police, MPs, ministers, government departments, etc. and has made a series of complaints to Lancashire Constabulary alleging corruption and malpractice by Preston Borough councillors in respect of land deals: however no hard evidence has ever been uncovered which would justify criminal proceedings in respect of his allegations.

'MURRIN is said by detective Chief Inspector Moloney of the Lancashire Constabulary Commerce Branch to have developed a personal vendetta against Owen OYSTON who MURRIN believes has manipulated Preston Borough councillors to his own advantage in respect of land deals in which OYSTON has concealed interests.'

'Over the past few years MURRIN has written to Lancashire Constabulary on a regular basis making allegations of corruption against OYSTON and his business associates. These have been investigated but not substantiated. In February/March 1992 MURRIN appeared in a Channel 4 television documentary which focused on the leader of Derbyshire County Council, David BOOKBINDER, and his alleged association with OYSTON. There was an inference of, at least, malpractice.'

In fact, this was the Channel 3 Granada TV *World In Action* documentary, titled 'The Dirty War', which sought to expose the plot against Oyston and Bookbinder being run by Murrin, Robert Atkins MP and Sir Peter Blaker MP. Excerpts from the tapes of ex-cabinet minister Blaker talking to Murrin about having Oyston arrested were played on air. Mr Anson's report makes it clear that Lancashire police had fully briefed Manchester police on the background of Murrin and Oyston. Mention of the TV programme means that Greater Manchester Police knew of the campaign against Oyston being waged by Atkins and Blaker. Detective Superintendent Bill Roberts, head of the team that investigated the Oyston rape cases swore on oath in the third trial of Oyston that he was unaware of the civil action being brought by Oyston against the ex-cabinet ministers when he took the decision to arrest Oyston three weeks before the civil case came to court.

19 August

Detective Sergeant Henry Harrison of GMP reported, 'Interviewed both Hardy & Jones. Nothing witnessed. All innuendo and suspicion. No love lost between Tracey Grainey and Melanie Hardy as they were both going out with Philip Martin at the same time.' Harrison concluded: 'It is all supposition on behalf of Jones and Hardy and I have asked them to ascertain girls' names and addresses who they consider to have been abused by Martin from a friend of theirs who still works for Martin. No further action can be taken until we have any complaints. So we must await further developments from Jones / Hardy to look into the under-age sex allegations against Martin.'

The names, ages and addresses of 16 girls, said to be at risk by Jones and Hardy, were listed by Harrison and his assistant Sharp, but no further action was taken. Parents of under-age girls on the list were not contacted by police.

Two years later, in September 1994, armed with a fresh complaint about Martin from a mother and daughter, Detective Sergeant. Harrison raided Peter Martin's house. Despite having been involved in the 1992 Murrin/ Hardy/ Jones investigation, these 1992 reports were hidden from Crown Prosecution Service and defence lawyers until 8 February 96, a few days before committal proceedings began in multiple rape charges against Oyston. The papers were logged on to the HOLMES police computer that day by Detective Sergeant. Harrison who had been involved in both the 1992 and 1994 investigations of the model agency. Consequently, in the three rape trials of Owen Oyston there was no mention of the fact that police investigations of the model agency began with the reports of Murrin and that the police personnel who investigated Oyston in 1994 were the same as those who had followed up Murrin and Melanie Hardy's allegations in 1992. Neither Murrin nor Melanie Hardy appeared at any court hearings in 1995.

15 September

Owen Oyston issued proceedings for defamation against Sir Peter Blaker, Robert Atkins MP, Bill Harrison and Michael Murrin. This was reported in February 1993.

19 October

Alasdair Pepper of Peter Carter Ruck & Partners wrote to Murrin's solicitors asking for a letter to be written by Murrin.

1993

17 January

Independent on Sunday revealed that Owen Oyston had told David Burnside of British Airways that Peter Martin had been sub-contracted to spy on David Burnside and that he might have been hired by Branson of Virgin.

16 May

Independent on Sunday reported that Michael Murrin, 'who led a relentless campaign against local politicians and tycoon Owen Oyston,' was starting a detective agency called Alpha Investigations.

24 May

Owen Oyston's solicitors told Michael Murrin that he had 28 days to repay a 1991 loan of £1500. Murrin released letter to *Independent on Sunday*, which published it on 30 May. Michael Murrin, trading as Alpha Investigations, produced and circulated to reporters a 22-page report on the financial affairs of Owen Oyston.

12 July

Deborah Parker, BBC TV reporter and daughter of Preston Guild mayor Harold Parker, and her boyfriend Detective Constable Chris Robinson, a Lancashire police detective, were arrested by Operation Angel detectives on mortgage fraud case. The case was dropped in 1997.

1994

5 February

Murrin wrote to Labour leader John Smith MP and the Chief Constable of Lancashire complaining that the Attorney General Sir Nicholas Lyell had refused to allow corruption charges to be brought against Balfour Beatty executives and ex-deputy Labour leader Frank McGrath.

3 April

A *Sunday Times* book review told how Owen Oyston had tipped off David Burnside of British Airways that he was target of an investigation, ordered by Branson.

August

Melanie Hardy visited the Model Team model Lisa Rubotham to discuss seeing Greater Manchester police about Peter Martin. Melanie Hardy telephoned Lisa Rubotham to arrange for police to visit Rubotham.

23 September

Detective Sergeant. Harry Harrison of Greater Manchester Police raided the home of Peter Martin. At 12.30 pm Detective Constable John Ashley of the obscene publications unit raided Model Team at 44 Portland St.

At 14.45 hours Detective Constable Ashley interviewed Melanie Hardy at Boss model agency. Ashley reported that Hardy named Oyston: 'Hardy suspects that girls from the agency were made available to a number of Martin's friends [including OJO]'.
[Note that Greater Manchester Police were using this very personal acronym for Owen Oyston at the very beginning of the 1994 investigation of the model agency. It implies at least that they had read the 1992 material and Murrin's allegations.]

26 September

First known meeting of Operation Chittering team members with Detective Superintendent Bill Roberts. Melanie Hardy contacted Detective Constable Ashley and passed on to him details of Lisa Rubotham. He contacted Rubotham to arrange a meeting the next day.

27 September

Detective Constable Ashley and WPC Stone interviewed Lisa Rubotham at Newton-le-Willows police station and later, for '4-5 hours' at Haydock Thistle Hotel.

30 September

Lisa Rubotham taken to St Mary's Rape Crisis Centre in Manchester for 10 hour interview session during which Lisa Rubotham named one of the women who would later allege she was raped when she was a girlfriend of Owen Oyston.

1 October

News of the raid on Model Team was published in the *Manchester Evening News*. Detective Superintendent Bill Roberts was reported saying, 'We want to hear from any parent who has taken their daughter to this place.'

Hearing of the raid from reporter Rosthorn, Michael Murrin faxed Rosthorn details of his talks with Melanie Hardy and a copy of his letter to Detective Inspector Robshaw.

3 October

Murrin called Melanie Hardy to arrange for Andrew Rosthorn to meet her at the Boss Agency. Lisa Rubotham was interviewed for 9 hours at Bootle St police station, Manchester. She did not report any wrong-doing by Oyston.

5 October

A major incident room was opened at Stretford police station with phones to answer calls from the public about Model Team/Central Models. At some time in this week 'Girl B' [whose evidence was to convict Oyston] called the line, without mentioning Oyston, and said, 'In 1990 I worked at the agency and I want to tell you about the things he [Martin] used to do and ask the girls to do. He used to make them love him, so it was natural.'

Andrew Rosthorn, and Nick Pritchard of the *News Of The World*, met and interviewed Melanie Hardy at the Boss Model Agency, Manchester, where she worked. She said she had been asked not to talk to reporters by Greater Manchester police. She confirmed Murrin's account of their conversations and passed on the telephone number of another Model Team woman who could confirm her account.

12 October

After finishing work at 3.30 pm, 'Girl B' cycled to Accrington police station for a 4 hour first interview. *Police say the notes of this interview are now missing.*

20 October

Detective Sergeant Henry Harrison interviewed Melanie Hardy at Boss model agency.

21 October

Lisa Rubotham was called by police to arrange another interview.

24 October

Lisa Rubotham was interviewed at her home by Detective Constable Denise Lloyd and Detective Constable Martyn Hughes, who mentioned 'Girl A' and 'Girl B' to her.

28 October

Lisa Rubotham was interviewed at Stretford police station. She was interviewed 7 times before 16 November.

1995

5 January

The alleged rape victim, 'Girl B', went to Stretford police station, to look at photographs. Signing her second statement, she stated that she left the model agency in November 92.

12 January

'Girl A' made a statement to Manchester police at her home in Lincolnshire.

9 February

Owen Oyston was arrested at Claughton Hall on charges of rape, indecent assault and conspiring to procure girls connected with Model Team.

12 February

Murrin sent a note to Detective Chief Superintendent Hacking saying Oyston was paying his manager Michael Stoney in cash so as not to prejudice Stoney's legal aid during his forthcoming trial in the Maxwell case.

13 February

Murrin telephoned Lancashire Police headquarters to say he had been approached by Oyston to give evidence in a civil case involving Blaker, Harrison and Atkins.

Detective Constable Fitzsimmons got a warrant to search the homes of Lisa Rubotham and her mother. Lisa Rubotham would eventually give evidence for the defence of Owen Oyston and say on oath that her offer to make a statement that no offence had taken place with 'Girl B' at Claughton Hall was declined by the police.

14 February

Murrin sent letters to Detective Superintendent Bill Roberts, head of the inquiry into rape allegations against Oyston, to Detective Superintendent Hacking of Lancashire Police and to Detective Inspector Ashford at Nechells Green Police Station in Birmingham, making allegations against David Burnside of British Airways, and Owen Oyston and saying he had one report of Oyston 'providing children' to an associate and providing women for sex.

17 February

Murrin telephoned Ann Foulger at Lancashire Police H.Q. to say reporter Rosthorn was being used by Oyston to produce a series of articles to breach *sub judice* rules and put Oyston in a good light. He later phoned to report that Jerry Cousins, of 38, The Strand, Fleetwood, had worked for Oyston, procured prostitutes and paid them on Oyston's behalf.

21 February

Murrin reported to Detective Chief Superintendent Hacking on a telephone conversation with reporter Andrew Rosthorn who had purported to be in the know about Oyston's defence plans.

6 March

Reporter Andrew Rosthorn took Michael Murrin to see Owen Oyston and his solicitor Sammy Lee at the Broughton Park Hotel, Preston. Murrin later dined with Oyston, Lee, Rosthorn and others at the Broughton Park.

7 March

Murrin sent to Detective Chief Superintendent Hacking at Lancashire Police headquarters a 10-page report on the events at the Broughton Park.

8 March

Murrin wrote to Detective Chief Superintendent Hacking saying that accountant Michael Connolly had said Murrin would be dead before the end of the year and

that Murrin believed Oyston is involved in drugs.

13 April

Murrin reported to Detective Chief Superintendent Hacking that he had met a journalist from the *Sunday Mirror* and that reporter Rosthorn was being paid money by Oyston's solicitors. Murrin told Hacking that he had phoned Bill Harrison twice that year.

June

Oyston appealed against a refusal to allow his civil case to proceed against Atkins, Blaker and Harrison.

July

Robert Atkins resigned as a Government minister, revealing he had offered to so the previous year.

16 August

Murrin reported to Lancashire police and Melanie Hardy that reporter Rosthorn called at his house to ask him to try and identify a picture as being a picture of Hardy. He said Rosthorn said Murrin would get a 'chunk of money' for co-operating with the making of a film. Murrin told police Hardy had told him Peter Martin had asked her to give trial evidence for him.

6 September

Murrin reported to police Rosthorn had called again, asking whether Hardy had ever been beaten by Peter Martin.

Murrin wrote to Detective Chief Inspector Maloney at Lancashire Police H.Q., saying that when he sent details of his meetings with Melanie Hardy through to police, the name of Derek Zissman had come up in connection with Peter Martin and that Zissman acted for Oyston. Murrin asked to know when some tapes were going to be returned to him. Murrin had written to this officer in 1992, drawing Zissman's name to his attention.

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