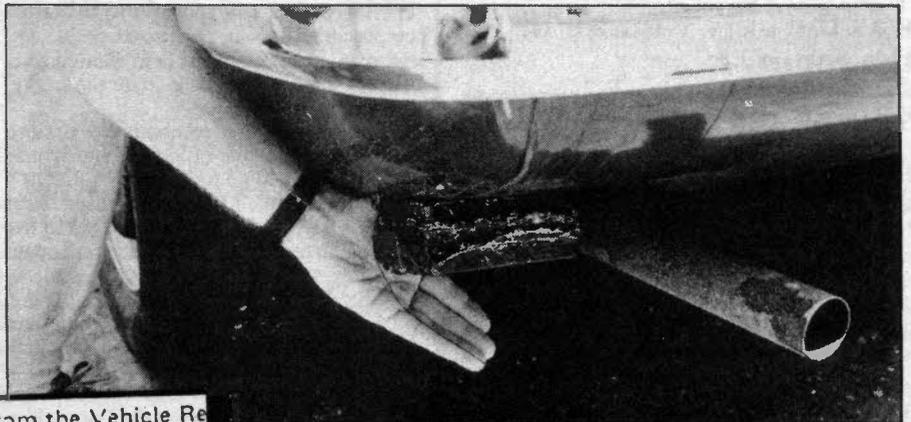


BUGS THAT BLEW THE COPS AWAY

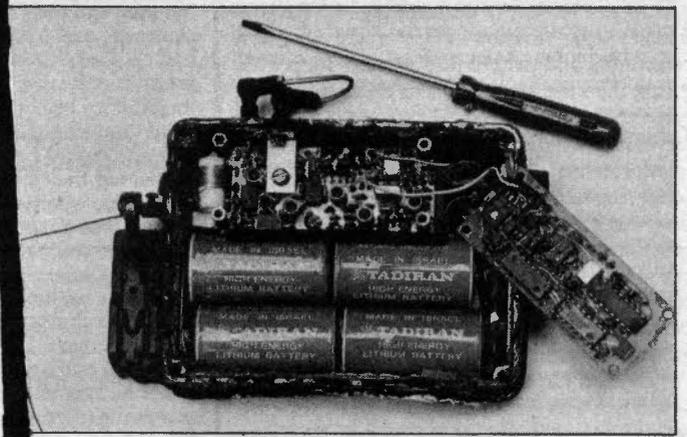


The information shown below is an extract from the Vehicle Registration mark
 CGT 238X
 Receipt of the prescribed fee is acknowledged.

Name and address of keeper at date of event

RECEIVER FOR THE
 METRO POLICE DIST U13729
 TINTAGEL HOUSE
 ALBERT EMBANKMENT
 LONDON SE1 7TT

Date of event: 21 04 84



Government car tracking bug (above right) is easily planted on a car, and is held in place by strong magnets. Most of the inside space (below right) is used for batteries, the rest for sophisticated electronic timing and transmitting circuitry. An unmarked Fiat van (above left) containing the police tracking equipment was spotted by one of the targets last year: we traced the van to the police (below left).

Two incidents have come to light that show a collapse in controls over police surveillance techniques. DUNCAN CAMPBELL reports. *Research: Patrick Forbes*

A SOUTH LONDON BUILDER this week plans to sue the police for wrongful arrest after the dismissal of a case in which he was followed, bugged and then framed on a van robbery charge. Two detectives who had been due to give evidence against Colin King themselves appeared at Bow Street Court this week facing charges of conspiracy to rob and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. Other officers involved in the King case have been suspended from duty, or are under investigation, for possessing stolen heroin.

King was acquitted of conspiring, in September 1984, to rob a security van. The acquittal came two weeks ago at the Old Bailey, after prosecuting counsel withdrew from the case. Although Scotland Yard was apparently content to proceed, a second, hastily summoned prosecutor quickly noted that 'difficulties may arise . . . [we] have to face the fact that certain officers are charged with serious offences'. The Crown then withdrew all charges.

King claimed in court that the charges had

been a 'fit-up', engineered because of his acquaintance with co-defendant Charles Wilson. Last November, the two Flying Squad detectives who had interviewed him were filmed by Granada TV's *World in Action* planning a robbery themselves. Following the programme, Detective Sergeant Kenneth Day and Detective Constable Richard Chapman were suspended from duty and charged.

The police tracking bug was discovered under King's Rover car last September after his exhaust started leaking. It is a sinister looking black painted box, measuring about six by four inches, from which a black aerial wire dangles. There is a switch and an 'alarm' connection. But King did not know what it was and left it in his living room.

He was arrested in Sidcup High Street on 4 October, while driving to the bank with takings from his wife's shop. At first, he thought he was the victim of a robbery. An unmarked Cortina suddenly pulled in front of him and armed men leapt out. One pointed a gun at him. As he tried to reverse, a second car cut off his escape. More

armed men emerged, surrounding him. It was only after he had been dragged from the car and forced to the ground that the men informed him that they were police officers. Then they handcuffed him.

The police claimed that he and Wilson had possessed shotguns and had planned a security van robbery. But the critical evidence — guns found in a derelict van and a scrap of paper — was, the defence claimed, entirely fabricated; nor did the prosecution choose to present this evidence in court. During the course of the case King discovered that his house and movements had been under surveillance throughout much of last September.

IN A SECOND Old Bailey trial which finished on Wednesday, a West London man, Dick Trump, had also been put under intensive surveillance and had found a police bug under his car. The device was passed to the *New Statesman* for analysis in May 1984, but before we could write about this Trump was accused of armed robbery a month later. At the Old Bailey this week, he was found guilty, and sentenced to life imprisonment — with the judge recommending he serve a minimum of 20 years. Trump claims that, after the robbery took place, the police (who had by then stopped watching him) returned to their observation

posts and quickly had him 'fitted up' for the crime. Forensic evidence was, he claimed, planted by the police.

Unlike Colin King, Dick Trump had been previously involved in crime. And his co-defendant in this week's trial, Alan Byrne, has long been a major police target. In April 1984 Trump went to his solicitor, after experiencing high and obvious levels of police surveillance. Plain clothes officers were regularly hanging around his house, while others set up observation from a nearby high council block.

In the presence of his solicitor Trump photographed a blue Fiat van, which had been following him. It was parked a hundred yards from his house. No one was visible inside the van, registration number CGT 238 X.

The van sports large and prominent wing mirrors, which probably conceal special directional aerials for a tracking system. We have since traced the ownership of the Fiat van; it is registered to 'the Receiver of the Metropolitan Police'.

A few months later, King later heard about Trump's discovery, and realised that the black box in his living room might be another bug. It was passed to the *New Statesman*.

THE CAR TRACKER sticks to the target vehicle with powerful magnets. It transmits on a frequency of about 81 MHz — in a band which is controlled by the Home Office and reserved exclusively for police, fire service and the Customs. Inside the bug, movement detectors automatically switch it off to save power if the target vehicle is stationary for more than a quarter of an hour. It then sends pulses once a minute to tell listeners it is still operating.

Using Israeli-made long-life batteries, the bug can operate continuously for between 24 and 48 hours. Inside the tracking vehicle, a concealed display shows the bearing to the target vehicle being followed.

The secret tracking transmitters are made by a small Hampshire firm, Micromill Electronics, which specialises in making equipment solely for intelligence use. Company directors of Micromill, until recently called Datacom Design, refused this week to take calls from the *New Statesman* to discuss their products. Micromill Electronics is based at the Old Flower Mill, Emsworth, Hants. The devices are also sold by a second company, Griffiths Communications, of High Wycombe, Bucks.

We have been given details of conversations Micromill/Datacom held with a private detective agency who wanted to purchase a vehicle tracking system. A salesman explained that their sales were:

very much in the hands of the Home Office. We have to get approval before we can even mention equipment like that, or describe it. All our products attract this difficulty. We have always dealt with a 'sheltered' market and not gone out into the public market.

But he acknowledged that the company produced the tracking system. Complete with spares and receiving equipment for the surveillance van, it would cost about £4,500, he said.

THE WAY IN WHICH CHARGES were bought against both King and Trump

highlights the dangers of the new police technique of intensively 'targeting' people they believe to be involved in crime. Both men were arrested and accused after they had found the bugs. The similarity of the two cases demonstrates also that the police fail to distinguish between targets with current involvement in crime and those either with a past background in crime, or those against whom no such allegation could have stood up to scrutiny.

Ironically, government rules on police electronic surveillance have recently been made laxer. Announcing what he chose to call 'more detailed and rigorous' procedures, Home Secretary Leon Brittain last December

published new 'guidelines on the use of equipment in police surveillance operations'.

Previous guidelines, issued in 1977, had said that 'the covert use . . . of transmitting equipment (including tracking devices) requires the authority of the chief officer . . . this authority should not be delegated'. Now, only a Chief Superintendent, not a Chief Constable or Commissioner, need approve such operations.

The Home Office rules for such cases is being challenged this week by Labour MP Harry Cohen, who has asked the Home Secretary to investigate by whom and why the buggings of King and Trump were authorised. He has also asked the Home Secretary to collate and publish figures on current use of bugs by the police. □

VICTIMISATION

'TAKE NO PRISONERS'

The media may have forgotten, but only four months ago the miners were still on strike. For 671 men, reports JOHN ROSE, there is unfinished business

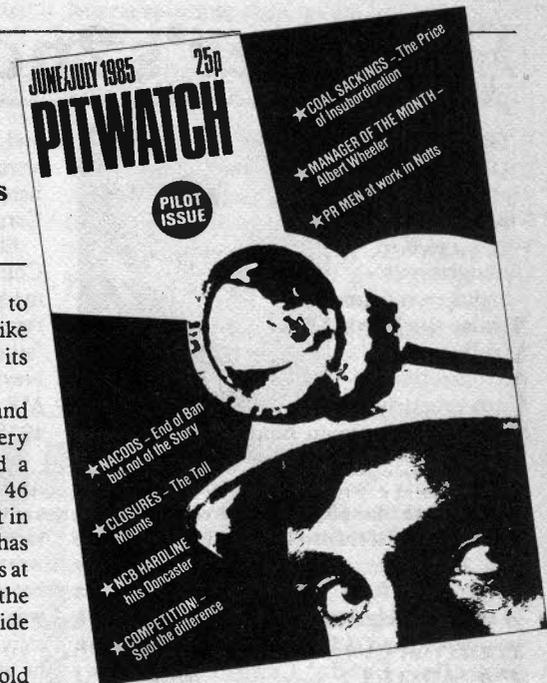
THE NATIONAL COAL Board's refusal to reinstate men sacked during the miners' strike is being used as a warning to all miners that its word is law.

Not one of the 202 sacked miners in Scotland has been reinstated. At Monktonhall Colliery 87 per cent of the workforce have signed a petition calling for reinstatement of their 46 sacked colleagues, the highest total at any pit in Britain. A similar petition at Bilston Glen has collected 1,200 names. Union representatives at Monktonhall have been threatened with the sack for collecting for victimised miners inside the pit.

Mick McGahey, Scots miners' leader, told the Scottish Area conference of the NUM that the unjust sacking of the miners should go before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasburg. He said he would delay his retirement by two years because of the plight of the sacked men. The conference supported a call for a demonstration in Glasgow on 29 June to keep the issue in the public eye.

There are 160 sacked miners in Yorkshire, and at the Yorkshire miners' gala last Saturday, all the main speakers, Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn, Rodney Bickerstaffe of the public employees' union NUPE and Jack Taylor, leader of the Yorkshire Area NUM, referred to the sacked men.

'We've got to keep faith with these lads,' said Jack Taylor, who has been the butt of some criticism for not doing enough for them. (There was a renewed strike at South Kirkby when four more miners were sacked for alleged 'gross industrial misconduct' — saying 'scab'). The Yorkshire Area leadership persuaded the men to return to work on the grounds that negotiation was the only way to win reinstatement. But there is a strong feeling in Yorkshire, as in Scotland, that the NCB no



Launched this week, *Pitwatch*, a new support bulletin, will keep an eye on the NCB

longer takes negotiation seriously.)

Some of the sacked miners marched to the gala as a contingent: men like Ray Morris, treasurer of the South Yorkshire winders branch, sacked summarily for allegedly shouting 'scab' during the strike, (NS 12 April). Ray described how the sacked men are trying to maintain their morale: 'We try and meet regularly and keep in touch with everyone. But the process of trying to get our jobs back seems painfully slow.'

Some sacked miners are marching from Scotland to London to make their case and they arrived at the Yorkshire gala last Saturday. And this week, former activists from the support groups launched *Pitwatch**, an eight-page journal which will attempt to monitor NCB policy in the pits.

MEANWHILE, the NCB defended its hard line on the sackings at the House of Commons

*available from 9 Poland Street, London W1.