

# I fear for my life, says renegade MI6 spy

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**Sunday May 16, 1999**

Renegade former MI6 agent Richard Tomlinson broke cover from his hideout in northern France last night to say he feared for his life after being blamed by the Government for publishing on the Internet the names of more than 100 spies.

Speaking to The Observer, he denied he was responsible and insisted the disclosure of his alleged role in the scandal was an attempt by MI6 to discredit him.

Tomlinson, who was sacked in 1995, said his solicitor was due to apply for legal aid on Friday to begin two claims of compensation against the Government. 'Now I have been discredited and branded a traitor I have got no hope of getting legal aid,' he said.

'I would be happy to fly to London tomorrow and be prosecuted if I could get bail. I don't want to spend 11 months on remand in Belmarsh before the trial.'

Tomlinson has said he would be happy to hand over his computer and files to investigators so they could check for evidence.

His denials will be dismissed by many in intelligence circles who say he has long threatened to publish such a list, and the details that appeared on the Californian website have Tomlinson's fingerprints all over them.

But the former agent said: 'MI6 have gained everything and I have lost everything. I know my denial sounds a bit thin because I have threatened to do this before. But all those things were just pissing around. I clearly wanted to worry them but my clear objective was to get them to talk to me so I could get my freedom of travel back.'

Tomlinson has been living in exile in Geneva since last April. He claims he has seen only a handful of 117 names on the list and all have 'been blown' anyway. 'It mystifies me why MI6 gave the list credibility. If they were really worried about the safety of their agents they could have denied it.'

Tomlinson was sacked by MI6 for being 'unsuitable'. He unsuccessfully tried to take MI6 to an industrial tribunal to get redress, claiming he had been unfairly treated. In 1997 he was jailed for breaking the Official Secrets Act after threatening to publish a book.

He has implicated MI6 in the death of Princess Diana and has talked of a plot to assassinate President Slobodan Milosevic.

The former MI6 agent was involved with a secret plot to sell chemical weapons to Iran during the early 1990s, which Tomlinson alleges was sanctioned by a senior Tory Minister.