

South of the Border

(occasional snippets from)

Nick Must

I hate to say 'I told you so'. . . .

In *Lobster* 90 I reviewed Ben Macintyre's *The Siege*, about the Iranian Embassy siege in 1980.¹ In that I commented that, due to its 'amalgam of fact and fiction' along with an '(albeit brief) appearance of that staple of action shows – some "gun porn"', I thought the book 'reads more like a screenplay for television, which is perhaps Ben Macintyre's real intent'.

Lo-and-behold, what did I recently espy on the IMDB website? Something called *The Siege*, part written by Mr Macintyre, is in the pre-production stage!² Seeing as the currently listed cast includes the irrepressible Danny Dyer, I'll happily give it a miss when it's finally broadcast.

R.I.P. John Young

It's actually been over a year since the editor/creator of the *Cryptome* website died.³ John Young passed away, aged 89, on 28 March 2025. Since the mid 1990s, *Cryptome* documented the machinations of mainly the U.S. secret state – but any organisation that would rather keep their secrets secret was fair game to *Cryptome*.

Over the years, *Cryptome* and John Young experienced various levels of interference from the authorities – being kicked off his hosting servers, receiving intimidating visits from the FBI and CIA, and having the site's domain hacked and generally pissed about with by various nefarious techy-types.

A brief – but informative – obituary of John Young can be found on the

¹ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/90/the-siege-a-six-day-hostage-crisis-and-the-daring-special-forces-operation-that-shocked-the-world-by-ben-macintyre/>>.

² See <<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt39830674/>>.

³ The site – <<https://cryptome.org/>> – is still online, providing an archive that will be of interest to *Lobster* readers.

website of the Electronic Frontier Foundation.⁴

Being proved even righter!

The last instalment of 'South of the Border' started with an assessment of the appointment of Ms Blaise Metreweli as the new Chief of MI6.⁵ I pointed out that the government censor's pen had been active in redacting her details from the Companies House database. (She is one of a number of people who own the leasehold of a property in London's salubrious Pimlico.) At that time, the repressed information was still available through other, non-Companies House resources, such as the 'CompanyCheck' website.

Sadly, that's no longer the case, as SIS have now used their muscle to get that wiped as well. Try it and you get a '404. The page you're looking for could not be found' message.⁶ I'm pleased to say, however, that my archived version of that CompanyCheck page is still live and kicking!⁷

I wish I'd paid more attention to other similar information, because the MI6 censor has gone a little redaction-happy. I'm referring here to the details of the directorships held by her family relatives. These seem to have now also all been redacted. The good news, however, is it's quite easy to work out who it is they're trying (and failing) to hide. Take, for instance, the now dissolved Kate Metreweli Consultancy Limited.⁸ This company has one director listed – a certain 'AVAILABLE, Not' (similar to how Ms B. Metreweli's directorship is shown). It doesn't take a PhD in rocket science to work out that with a DoB of January 1974, she's an older relative of the new 'C'.⁹

Another censored, currently active, venture is Tenblue Ltd.¹⁰ This also has just one director, again a mysterious 'AVAILABLE, Not'. This company officer

⁴ <<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2025/05/memorial-john-l-young-cryptome-co-founder>>

⁵ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/91/south-of-the-border-occasional-snippets-from/>>

⁶ <<https://companycheck.co.uk/director/906995982/MS-BLAISE-FLORENCE-METREWELI/summary>>

⁷ See <<https://archive.ph/v2jTf>>.

⁸ See <<https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/08818759>>.

⁹ <<https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/08818759/officers>>.

¹⁰ See <<https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/09627303>>.

has a service address listed as just 'N1'; prior to censoring this was the full address, a well-known business centre in Islington. The censor has not only now obliterated this information but also removed the previously open data that one 'Kosten Blue Metreweli' was 'a person with significant control'.

Fear not though, fellow diggers, because, in this instance, it's LinkedIn that's your friend. Check out the page for Tenblue and you'll be able to track down Mr Kosten Metreweli, along with a profile photo that reveals a significant family resemblance to the Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service.¹¹ The fact that his LinkedIn profile remain public, with a photograph, shows that he is happy for his information to be out in the open – which proves that the censoring by MI6 is completely ridiculous.

Recommended reading

The Umbrella Man And Other Stories - What We Talk About When We Talk About the JFK Assassination by Martin Fitzgerald¹² is a bit of a mouthful – but it's also a very amusing read. We learn, for instance, that the still existent Texas Theatre cinema – where Oswald was arrested by Dallas police – has a bar that 'sells pints of Lee Hazy Oswald'. [Added emphasis.] This is not the only drinking-themed amusing tidbit: we are informed of 'Lee Harvey's, a dive bar a few miles from Dealey Plaza'. Plus, one of the author's contacts explains that the city has shaken off its 'City of Hate' nickname, telling him about 'a food blog in Dallas called City of Ate'. [Added emphasis.]

All this being 'further evidence of how Dallas has moved on and approached some of its history with a sense of irony'. For me, there was nothing more ironic than to read that the architect Philip Johnson's memorial to JFK – 'a big concrete square tucked around the corner from Dealey Plaza' – is 'rated 3.9 out of 5 on Tripadvisor'!

A most intriguing fact comes when the author and a companion are wandering Dallas's trendy Bishop Arts District in North Oak Cliff, and they spot a Bonnie and Clyde mural: the infamous killers (who murdered at least a dozen people) were also residents of Oak Cliff.

A genuinely light-hearted – and informative – read. Highly recommended.

¹¹ See <<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kosten/>>.

¹² <<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Umbrella-Man-Other-Stories-Assassination/dp/1837360251>>

Waiting for the guilty to die?

Continuing ripples from the use of the Military Reaction Force in Northern Ireland fifty plus years ago. Indications are that the long and drawn out process by HMG in deciding if old squaddies are going to be prosecuted for crimes they committed, is a decidedly deliberate process. They want them to die first – and thus avoid an excess of media attention on mainland UK when justice would otherwise be served for the innocent victims of the UK army's counter-terror gang.¹³

In the autumn of last year, one of four MRF soldiers at last being prosecuted for the killings they carried out in the early 1970s passed away. The *Belfast Telegraph* reported that 'murder charges against the veteran were formally withdrawn following confirmation of his death'.¹⁴ A couple of months later, and another member of the MRF being prosecuted was declared 'not fit to participate in pre-trial proceedings'.¹⁵

There can be no doubt that the MRF killed civilians, and that this fact contributed to the unit only having a brief existence. As the Operation Kenova Interim Report from 2024 states, it had been established in the early 1970s but 'Due to the MRF being involved in a number of controversial shootings . . . it was disbanded in 1973'.¹⁶ Interestingly, the Kenova Final Report,¹⁷ released late last year, restricts mentions of the MRF only to the circumstances of the

¹³ This not dissimilar to how patients who contracted HIV through intravenous blood transfusions have been denied justice. By the early '90s it was clear that infected blood had been used for about a decade and a half. But it was not until 2017 that PM Theresa May announced the setting up of an independent public inquiry. (See <<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-statement-on-contaminated-blood-inquiry-11-july-2017>>.) The compensation scheme continues to drag its feet, and the victims continue to die. A neat trick. Of course, the whole sad saga had originally come about because of the commercial nature of healthcare in the US. The blood plasma that was imported to the UK came from American health firms that had knowingly harvested their products from incarcerated prisoners and intravenous drug addicts, incentivised by payments of \$5 to \$7 a pop. (See <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/apr/27/plasma-true-story-uk-infected-blood-scandal-products>>.)

¹⁴ See <<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/courts/charges-withdrawn-after-death-of-former-undercover-soldier-on-trial-over-1972-belfast-shooting/a/112193607.html>>.

¹⁵ See <<https://www.u105.com/news/u105-news-and-sport/soldier-f-not-fit-to-participate-in-pre-trial-proceedings/>>.

¹⁶ Operation Kenova, Interim Report, page 60, line item 9.5. See <[https://www.kenova.co.uk/Kenova Report 2024 Digital \(002\).pdf](https://www.kenova.co.uk/Kenova%20Report%202024%20Digital%20(002).pdf)>.

¹⁷ See <<https://www.kenova.co.uk/FINAL%20Kenova%20Report.pdf>>.

murder of Jean Smyth-Campbell. (And it is clear, from the forensic evidence, that Ms Smyth-Campbell had not been killed by the MRF.)

The BBC Panorama episode 'Britain's Secret Terror Force' of November 2013 interviewed ex-members of the MRF who admitted they carried out numerous gun attacks.¹⁸ Ciarán MacAirt, writing in the *Village Magazine* of March/April 2022, revealed how one of the MRF's more senior members, Sergeant Clive Graham Williams, had died.¹⁹ That same article gave a name to the process HMG indulges in with these controversies: Denial ('couldn't have been British forces'), Delay ('an independent inquiry is what's needed') and Death ('oh well, nothing to see here').

Other ways of hiding the truth

A potentially interesting episode of Radio 4's The History Podcast on Operation Ajax, the 1953 coup in Iran that was orchestrated MI6/CIA – part of the current 'Invisible Hands: The American Century' strand – was victim of the BBC's seeming refusal to bite the hand that feeds.²⁰

Granted the main focus was on the U.S. spooks, but the part the UK government played was hardly mentioned. MI6 was heavily involved in not only the planning but also the financing and operational aspects of the plot. However, listening to presenter David Dimbleby, you'd think its role was restricted merely to persuading the Americans to force out Mossadegh, and that the CIA were otherwise wholly responsible.

This is complete bunk, as repeated academic studies have established. Those, possibly including Mr Dimbleby, who would like to educate themselves as to the reality of the situation might – and this is merely a for instance – familiarise themselves with chapter 2 ('Unseating Mosaddeq', by Fakhreddin Azimi) and chapter 4 ('Britain and the Overthrow of the Mosaddeq Government', by William Roger Louis) of the 2004 Syracuse University Press publication *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*.²¹

In his section of that book, Fakhreddin Azimi describes the agitators thus:

¹⁸ BBC programme page at <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03jprmx>>.

¹⁹ See <<https://villagemagazine.ie/infamous-death-squad-killer-dies-2/>>.

²⁰ <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m00300gx>>

²¹ Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne (eds.), *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004).

The primary Iranian component of the operational core of anti-Mosaddeq activities consisted of the Rashidian brothers (Asadollah, Saifollah, and Qodratollah), dedicated SIS agents. . . . They collaborated extensively with the British embassy's intelligence-gathering and operational networks²²

That seems unequivocal to me. Plus, the CIA's own assessment of the coup, written in 1954, lays out where the money to pay for everything was coming from: a smidgen over 50% from the US and a smidgen under 50% from the UK.²³

It is interesting to note that the motivations of the two instigators – Britain and America – were very different. For Britain it was, undoubtedly, the access to oil (which Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh had restricted by nationalising the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company).²⁴ The British knew that the oil threat was less of a problem for the Americans and, instead, manipulated Eisenhower by talking up the Soviet threat.²⁵ And, in the end, did it actually achieve the aims of the Western governments? As William Roger Louis says in his chapter of 'Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran':

From the vantage point of half a century later, the CIA MI6 operation appears to have been basically misguided—indeed disastrous—because it strengthened the shah and led not only to dictatorship but to revolution.²⁶

The comparative openness of the CIA makes it embarrassing that 'the British

²² The Rashidian's contact at MI6 was Norman Darbyshire, a figure about whom little is still known. See e.g. 'Written out of the history books': the British spy who planned Iranian coup - by Julian Borger for the *Guardian*, 15 August 2023 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/15/written-out-the-history-books-the-british-spy-who-planned-the-iranian-coup>>.

²³ See the final paragraph on page 3 of the PDF at <<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB28/appendix%20B.pdf>>.

²⁴ Drilling for oil in the North Sea didn't start until the mid-1970s. (See <<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/oillives/about/nsoghist.shtml>>. The U.S. Had been exploiting oil on its territory for more than a hundred years before that. (See <<https://time.com/4008544/american-oil-well-history/>>).

²⁵ The MI6 Head of Station in Tehran, C. M. Woodhouse, travelled to Washington very soon after Eisenhower's electoral victory in late '52. According to a 1988 assessment by the 'History Staff' of the CIA, 'Woodhouse met with State and CIA officials and argued that political conditions in Iran made that country subject to a serious Communist threat. He did not stress the oil issue.' (See <<https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/the%20central%20intelligence%20%5B15369853%5D.pdf>>).

²⁶ See footnote 21.

state. . . still refuses to discuss its role to this day'.²⁷

Gor Blimey, Guv!

Most Lobster readers will likely have heard of Susie Wiles the (at time of writing!) White House Chief of Staff for Donald Trump. It is perhaps less likely that you'll have heard of Sergio Gor, the administration's previous 'Head of Personnel' and current Ambassador to India.²⁸

Gor has had an interesting journey up the greasy pole of politics. One of his early tasks was working as an aide, alongside the repulsive Stephen Miller,²⁹ to assist the rise of Republican nut-job Michele Bachmann.³⁰ During the hiatus between the first and second Trump terms, he set up a publishing company – Winning Team Publishing – with Trump's son, Don Jnr.³¹ What is, perhaps, most interesting about Mr Gor – and he has done much to hide and/or obscure this fact – is that he was actually born in the Soviet Union.³² Curiouser and curiouser....

²⁷ 'How Britain Crushed Democracy in Iran', *Tribune* magazine, 19 August 2023 <<https://tribunemag.co.uk/2023/08/how-britain-crushed-democracy-in-iran>>.

²⁸ He has been referred to as 'the most powerful man you've never heard of'. See <<https://www.occrp.org/en/news/exclusive-top-trump-advisor-sergio-gor-was-born-in-the-soviet-union>>.

²⁹ See <<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/2026/01/stephen-miller-trump-white-house/685516/>>.

³⁰ For a sample of her distasteful opinions, see <<https://www.mediaite.com/media/tv/michele-bachmann-calls-for-ethnic-cleansing-in-gaza-they-need-to-be-removed-from-that-land/>>.

³¹ It's 'a boutique house that has published a handful of books, including some coffee table books by [Don Snr]'. See <<https://thedispatch.com/article/a-loyalists-loyalist-in-charge-of-personnel/>>.

³² 'He was born Sergio Gorokhovsky on November 30, 1986, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, which was part of the Soviet Union at the time. (See the link in footnote 28.)