

Howard Shaw

A distinguished and unblemished member of the MET (the UK police), Howard Shaw served for 30 years, with 15 years of his service at the Scotland Yard Fraud Squad. Throughout his career, Shaw received numerous commendations and awards, including from the judiciary. Shaw was the first whistleblower to successfully bring a whistleblowing detriment employment tribunal case against the MET.

In 2008, Shaw blew the whistle about three separate instances of wrongdoing. He disclosed that a work experience intern was appointed to a sensitive area that required stringent security checks. Shaw pointed out that the appointment was nepotistic. He disclosed that an external consultant was improperly appointed, allegedly due to the consultant's friendship with a Deputy Assistant Commissioner. The consultant was paid at a significantly higher rate than the prevailing rate for such work. Shaw also blew the whistle on a Detective Inspector, for inappropriately accessing the MET's computer system to gain access to interview questions for a role the inspector was applying for at the PCeU (the UK's Police Central e-Crime Unit). This essentially amounted to cheating on a test essential for career progression.

Shaw's disclosure was in the public interest for a number of reasons. Most significantly, his role was in counter-fraud and he exposed at least three types of corrupt and fraudulent behaviour in the unit responsible, in part, for the prevention of such digressions. The police should be held to a higher standard than the general public as they have extensive powers of the State, and those within the police who are charged with countering dishonesty and fraud should be held to an even higher standard. Shaw's disclosure ensured that this was the case.

Shaw suffered significant retaliation as a result of his disclosures. Shaw was dismissed, just two years out from retirement, for an unrelated claim made against him — a claim subsequently found to have been falsified. He took his case to the UK's Employment Tribunal and succeeded after a two year series of contested hearings. The Tribunal found that senior officers had lied in testimony and conspired to destroy Shaw's career.

Although Shaw was suspended with pay, he suffered considerable isolation and felt desolate. Shaw borrowed money, secured against his house, to pay his lawyer. His final legal bill amounted to £25,000. Shaw suffered for six months with stress related illness and was ostracised by his peers. Had he been sacked, or resigned, Shaw would have forfeited 28 years of pension savings. Living in crisis 24 hours a day and constantly discussing the situation put his relationship with his partner under severe strain. The desperate nature of the situation, and his resultant suffering, was all consuming and Shaw was unable protect his children from the negative personal fallout of his public interest disclosures.

As stated above, Shaw's case was the first successful whistleblowing detriment employment tribunal case against the MET. He has become a role model for those



speaking truth to power. In doing so, Shaw risked his career, his family, and his financial and personal wellbeing.