

**UNDERWORLD: BEHIND THE SCENES WITH THE NCA**

**EPISODE 3 . GUN RUNNERS**

**ELLIE** [00:00:00] I'm Ellie Flynn and this is Underworld. Behind the scenes of the NCA.

This podcast series unearths the murky world of dangerous criminals across the UK and the incredible work of the National Crime Agency to bring them to justice.

**KEVIN SOLOMONS** [00:00:23] When we looked in those bags, I thought it was going to be handguns. And when we were told assault rifles and Uzi type weapons, it was mind blowing, especially with the amount of ammunition that was accompanied with them as well. It was, it was enough to start a war, really. Goodness knows how many lives could have been put at risk.

**MIKE RYDER** [00:00:40] As we walked in expecting it to be a calm MacDonaldis, like I said, leave no ripples, all of a sudden, literally as we walked in the door, there were dads grabbing their children like rugby balls under their arms and just darting towards me, darting down to the floor. So of course, my, my personal threat level then goes through the roof. We knew our colleague was round there. We knew that's where the subject was meant to be. At which point I was drawing my handgun. As I got around the corner before bringing my handgun up, I saw the colleague on the floor had, had a strong grip of him, so we just took his arms, flopped him forward onto his face and then I arrested him for the offence he was ultimately charged with.

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:01:22] This is the largest ever seizure of automatic weapons on mainland UK. Twenty-two were assault rifles, a derivative of the AK-47 built in the Czech Republic. And nine of them were actual machine pistols. All of which are just designed for mass casualties in a combat scenario.

**ELLIE** [00:01: 44] This is the story of how an investigation into a crime family from Kent led to the eventual arrest and sentencing of five men for a combined total of 90 years, an audacious plan to import a lethal arsenal of automatic weapons from the continent across the channel and along the River Medway in Kent. And behind it all, an organised crime gang led by Harry Shilling.

Episode Three. Gun Runners

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The point where the River Medway meets the Thames Estuary near Sheerness, is a wide tidal stretch of water and at the mouth of the Medway, Sheerness Fort. On the 10th of August 2015, the Alberrina motor cruiser, made its way up the river. The boat was piloted by skipper David Payne, and it sailed from Boulogne hours earlier. Its destination was Cuxton, via an unexpected stop off in Rochester, where, unbeknown to Payne, his every move was being watched by an armed surveillance team from the National Crime Agency, including firearms officer Mike Ryder.

**MIKE RYDER** [00:02:49] Mr. Payne parked his boat up at a public mooring. Obviously, we had a good idea what might well be in there, and he walked all the way to Rochester High Street quite long and went into Wetherspoons. So we were quite busy in town just managing that, managing it covertly on foot. He powered it up and then he set off down the river to Cuxton, not turning the navigation lights on, which was very unusual so it caused a bit of a - have we had an issue here? But um, sure enough, he went back to Cuxton.

**ELLIE** [00:03:18] The story begins six months earlier. This is Paul Morris. He was a firearms commander and then later senior investigating officer on the operation codenamed Seventy.

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:03:29] March, April 2015. Kent police had intelligence around this group. It's a family based organised crime group, if you like, who have been known to the police for a number of years. And so early intelligence was they were going to engage in bringing in handguns to the U.K., which obviously sparked a lot of interest with Kent. But the group themselves were reasonably sophisticated.

**ELLIE** [00:03:52]

The group was known as the Shilling Family, with one member Harry Shilling leading the gang. Operation Seventy scaled up very quickly. Surveillance work in a pub close to The River Medway provided information that one of the gang members was searching on his phone for boats that were for sale. Case officer Kevin Solomon was involved with the deployments and the covert operation from the outset.

**KEVIN SOLOMONS** [00:04:11] We first met David Payne. It was at a pub in Cuxton where he had a meeting with one of the lieutenants. We saw him in the pub, he was with his

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partner and one of the things we identified in the pub that he was looking on his phone or on a tablet, boats, looking at boats. So again it was significant because we were thinking right, right what are these criminals up to? What are their plans? So straight away we thought, okay, this is significant. So I would say within a month we identified David Payne, which was good. And then from there then led us to the Albernina, they purchased that boat from a brokerage in Sandwich. Really our focus then became to the Albernina and any movement of that vessel.

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:04:55] David Payne himself lived on a boat on the river. So again, that provided a few challenges to be able to control that safely and covertly. The yacht they were buying was quite substantial and would be happy going across the channel or further down in Europe. So, it made sense it was going to be most likely France, Belgium, maybe the Netherlands.

**ELLIE** [00:05:12] By now, the Operation Seventy team believed that the gang planned to import a haul of weapons from somewhere in Europe. From that moment, the 38-foot vessel, the Albernina, was the centre of attention for NCA surveillance officers working around the clock.

**MALCOLM SMITHERS** [00:05:27] I would have everything at my disposal. So, we had a particular obs van that was kitted up with nine cameras, microphones, and it just looked like a works van.

**ELLIE** [00:05:37] This is surveillance officer Malcolm Smithers, he would go on to play a key role in the operation.

**MALCOLM SMITHERS** [00:05:42] You could drive that anywhere. We had cameras on the roof, so he went into a car park. You could park anywhere in the in the car park and get a sort of control over anyone like in a supermarket car park. You know, I could park the van at one end and sort of control a car coming in. Someone then getting out the car, going into the shops. Then your foot units would follow them in, but then I'd take control again, coming over. And when you got control, so you're the eyeball, you're on the radio and you control the radio.

**KEVIN SOLOMONS** [00:06:17] A lot of David Payne's associates were working hard on that vessel, I think, they had to do something to the hull. When that was complete then, we

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saw them take it out to sea and we thought things are building up significantly now, so we need to get all our ducks in a row, so to speak.

**ELLIE** [00:06:39] If the gang were planning to import a haul of weapons, then protecting the public, while taking measures to protect the NCA team, was critical. At the same time, officers needed to collect evidence of the crime that would hopefully support a successful prosecution.

**MALCOLM SMITHERS** [00:06:55] The works van was deployed in several places. We were down at Sandwich. There was a lovely spot in a municipal carpark. There was a couple of spaces that gave us a really good view of the boat where it was moored up in Sandwich. So that would be our mobile sort of OP. So, it's a mobile observation post. Put that in and then get comfortable, get in the back or be in the back before and get driven in and then left and then I'd get control of the boat for the day so we can monitor all the comings and goings and if anything happened we'd press record and just get video of meetings.

**KEVIN SOLOMONS** [00:07:27] Everything is significant, every observation, if somebody is on their phone, it could put them at a place at a certain time because post-arrest we will look at the billing and with that billing, it's got cell site information and we can say, well, there's a high probability that person was the person with that phone.

**ELLIE** [00:07:46] By now despite all the covert work and intelligence, the Operation Seventy team were facing more questions than answers. When David Payne left the Marina, and headed out towards the channel, officers still didn't know whether it was a dummy run—or the real thing and that meant deploying officers in case the boat returned, loaded with illegal firearms.

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:08:07] Interestingly enough, on the date when they returned in the , Albernina, David Payne was travelling alone on the yacht. We didn't know that he'd return alone. There wasn't a clear intelligence picture about which country he was going to or really what the commodity was on that day. We just knew that from interpreting the movements, behaviour, that there was criminal activity happening over that period. It looked very much like it was a criminal run. It was still unclear what that commodity was in that yacht on that return trip, so, we had to deal with it as if it was going to be firearms of the highest threat. And at any point of that journey, there had to be clear contingencies in

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place that if we needed to intervene, make arrests or seize those firearms, that we could do it safely. Whether that was going to be on the continent, whether that was going to be as it was arriving in the UK. You're talking about, you know, effectively a motor cruiser with one individual's known, David Payne, he's on there, what if he comes back with other people? How do you deal with that yacht safely on the water, in a harbour, in a marina? There are all the plans that are in place that the, the NCA covert armed capability is trained to do day in, day out. Covertly deal with individuals in a car on a road who basically have access to a firearm.

**ELLIE** [00:09:24] The team had to be ready to go at a moment's notice with no knowledge of what was being stowed below deck in the Albernina's hold.

**KEVIN SOLOMONS** [00:09:30] We didn't know where, we didn't know when and we didn't know kind of what the commodity was, essentially. And initially we thought it might have been handguns. But, you know, these kind of criminal groups, there's drugs, there's weapons, there's anything associated with that. So, we've got to be very mindful and open and open minded about what their criminality is actually focused on.

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:09:50] All those threats were live, which they could have done. And, you know, we needed to keep an intelligence base and intelligence overview to try and understand what they were going to be doing because that would then inform how we were going to respond.

**KEVIN SOLOMONS** [00:10:02] There was one, I think like a dry run beforehand, but the main one, so he comes back across the channel. Hearts are racing a bit. We now believe this is the importation of firearms. So because of that, we've got a firearms capability employed with us, now, with the AOU in a MAST configuration, the mobile arms support to surveillance, unarmed surveillance officers. But the MASTs were in place in order to effect any potential arrests. Boat comes in. David Payne exits the vessel. I think he meets up with his partner and somebody else. They go for a meal and a drink. It's like they're very calm about what was going on or something. So obviously our focus is 100% on that boat.

**ELLIE** [00:10:44] David Payne finished his drink and his meal, and made his way back from Rochester High Street, to the Albernina — all the time unaware that the NCA officers were keeping a close watch.

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**PAUL MORRIS** [00:10:55] As it turns out, and local residents will know, although the Medway's navigable most parts of the tide, you know, you have to be aware of the tide depending on where he was going to go next. And as it turns out, he was waiting for higher water before he could then move that boat further down the Medway.

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:11:12] He docks next to his boat. Once it's there and moored up, the report from the surveillance team is actually he's meeting others. There's two houseboats, for want of a better word. One belongs to him. There are some associates they were with. They seemed quite relaxed, the Albernina was left almost empty. As you would imagine, he's come back from a trip, he's meeting up his mates and they're having a few beers and once again this is the information, the boat's moored up. They're there. Do you take action now? If we were to take action now, what would that look like evidentially? And what is the threat picture like? Have we got control of it?

**ELLIE** [00:11:48] The Albernina, now fully loaded with a haul of lethal firearms, was docked in a marina on the Medway. The weapons on board could have been unloaded by the organised crime gang and moved on to the next stage of their journey. But the NCA still needed to build an evidential case to link David Payne to Harry Shilling. For that reason, they made the strategic decision to sit it out, keep a watch on the boat — and wait.

**MALCOLM SMITHERS** [00:12:10] So I get rid of the vehicle, walking across three or four fields down to the towpath. And there was a little opportunity to get up onto the towpath behind another bush drop down into this hedge, which we'd hollowed out without being seen from the boat.

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:12:27] There was enough control to allow us to continue to see what was going to happen, because one of the key challenges here, here was that Harry Schilling, as we said, had been very sensible in the way that he'd been leading the enterprise. So we actually during that whole period now, we couldn't evidentially link Harry Shilling to that boat, be very difficult in a court to to show his connection to David Payne and even a bigger gap between evidence of linking that that commodity, those firearms to Harry Shilling. So if you take action to remove the threat and take the guns away, Harry Shilling and the key members of the gang would still be at large. They've got access to firearms. They would just turn around and carry on another run until they were successful, you know, as they do with

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with drugs and other commodities. So it was really important to have the evidential threshold against Harry Shilling and secure the guns themselves to have that proper protection of the public and future victims going forward.

**ELLIE** [00:13:25] Surveillance work continued around the clock. For Malcolm Smithers and his colleagues, the observation point in the hedge by the river was perfect.

**MALCOLM SMITHERS** [00:13:34] Classic textbook deployment, as it were. This hedge was just there. It was like dead ground between the towpath and the riverbank, so you sort drop down near the waterline and it was this big bush and hedge and we snuck in the back there and created a nice little hide and it overhung the riverbank. So we had a, a covered aperture, there was three of us in there because the risk assessment was done that we'd have to have our own weapons in there as well, including the G36, which was the assault rifle. It was manned for 24 hours a day. And we took over from the night shift at seven in the morning. I think our O.P. was about 80 metres from the subject's boat on the other side of the bank, but there was a concern that if it all went wrong, they might jump off the boat, swim to our side of the river, and of course they could be armed with whatever. We didn't know what they were importing at the time. Our risk assessment was quite high, so we had body armour, weaponry...

**NARRATOR** [00:14:31] Any surveillance operation carries a huge level of risk. Malcolm was well prepared, but there was still the possibility that the hide could have been discovered by a member of the public or one of the gang members.

**MALCOLM SMITHERS** [00:14:43 ] That's always a concern. You're always worried about your cover, behind. The cover was really good. Once we were in, we weren't viewable from any any side. But they were making so much noise on the other side of the bank anyway, and they were always drinking beer. They got the music going on. They weren't really aware of what was going on around.

**ELLIE** [00:15:01] Meanwhile, Mike Ryder and the team that monitored David Payne in Rochester were stood down. The following morning, they were back in place at the marina.

**MIKE RYDER** [00:15:10] It was a quick turnaround and again, we have to manage that as firearms officers. Obviously, some of the decision firearms officers have to make is

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absolutely critical. So next day deployed again also in the command car for the armed surveillance. I remember the day drifted on a bit with them doing what they were doing and then ultimately being parked up nearby with the control, being with the covert officers on the other side of the river.

**MALCOLM SMITHERS** [00:15:34] I think there was a suspicion that it was all going to happen about two, three o'clock in the afternoon for some reason. But it all started happening at midday. And the night before I'd got hold of a video camera, a Sony 9000 or something, it was brand new, straight out the box, framed the shot and then commentate on what we were seeing.

**KEVIN SOLOMONS** [00:15:52] There's Malcolm on the other side of the water looking at the vessel. Then suddenly the white van pulls up next to the vessel alongside it. There's all these heavy bags being unloaded off the vessel and being put into this white van.

**MALCOLM SMITHERS** [00:16:02] So we're painting the picture with the movements. You know, male A's now gone downstairs, male B's gone downstairs, the subject had gone away and then come back with the van. And then you just paint the picture. The van's coming back. It's pulling up next to the boat, subject boat. They're moving something. They're struggling with something. Oh, it's a suitcase. It's a big blue suitcase with an extendable handle. There's now two of them are now trying to lift this suitcase into the, off the boat, onto the side, onto the dock and into this van. And they're struggling.

**MIKE RYDER** [00:16:41] So we're listening to that commentary coming from the bushes. And er, I do remember, you know, listening to it as we do all the time, and then all of a sudden it was, you know, these individuals, including Payne, placing on blue gloves, they're really struggling to get this suitcase off the boat up to the quayside towards the van. I remember sort of sharing a comment with a colleague that I won't repeat language wise, but it was, I think they're in a bit of trouble here now.

**MALCOLM SMITHERS** [00:17:05] They're struggling so much that these rubber gloves are just ripping straight away. So that was obviously their, their forensic strategy gone straight out the window. So their DNA will be all over these bags, so I'm painting that picture as well. The firearms commander would always jump in and put something out to his team because



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we're on the same channel. So you've got to be mindful of how many people are on this channel. This was getting crunchy now.

**MIKE RYDER** [00:17:29] So a number of cases were coming out all wearing blue gloves. That took quite a while, actually. But of course, that's when your adrenaline's going up because, you know, it's on here.

**KEVIN SOLOMONS** [00:17:39] This is definitely on. So, state green, which means surveillance mode. No decision has been made to arrest. State amber is a decision has been made to arrest. And then just before the arrest goes in, it's then state red and that's when you hear state red, you think, puts chills down my back anyway.

**MIKE RYDER** [00:17:57] So eventually the doors closed and obviously Payne drives away up a rickety lane towards an A-road or B-road. But the MAST team at that point are already being given authority that he wasn't going to leave that lane. So, sure enough, the MAST team rolled in with their four cars, box that in. I arrive shortly after. Payne was arrested and I think just one case was glanced into just to get an idea what we're dealing with.

**ELLIE** [00:18:30] The operation to seize the illegal cargo had been a huge success. 22 AK47 type weapons and 9 Skorpion machine pistols as well as more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition were recovered. Arrests were made, but it wasn't over yet.

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:18:46] Albernina was still in place. Harry Schilling was unaware that David Payne had been arrested. He was unaware the guns had been, had been seized. And then we had an intelligence feed that Harry Schilling and others were mobile in a car. So basically the core of the team that dealt with David Payne and seized the firearms and the ammunition then regrouped back into cars, back into a covert platform and went forward to go and locate Harry Shilling.

**MIKE RYDER** [00:19:13] We knew it was time critical. We didn't at that point know what they were doing there, but we knew we needed to get them in custody because if they got wind that this had been taken out, I think they had the intelligence to realise if they were linked to it, it's twenty, thirty years, so they would have been gone. So it was time critical. So we had the full armed surveillance team, MAST team move from, from that location to Orpington at high speed, to say the least, to get control. Obviously that's authorised when needed. They

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do, they do have blue lights fitted and sirens. They are covert vehicles. We can warn the public we're there and make ground safely when needed.

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:19:50] The automatic number plate readers were showing that the vehicle associated to him was going to towards Orpington and that actually was going into the trading estate where there was a DIY store. As the firearms officers turned up, they're obviously covert, there were a number of vehicles and the car is identified parked directly outside the DIY store.

**MIKE RYDER** [00:20:136] We found a vehicle linked to this OCG parked up in a disabled bay. They need arresting and they're here. So we got control of that car employing foot units. Sure enough, they had spotted coming out Homebase a load of kit and equipment under arms and two of them, Harry Schilling and a guy we later knew to be Defraime walked over to an Audi that was parked. I think one had opened the door to the vehicle, was loading in stuff they'd bought at Homebase. I think the other one was stood nearby potentially on the phone. They'll just see a few normal cars roll past from the car park and then all of a sudden, the doors are open and you're looking at nine to twelve armed officers descending on those two people within a matter of seconds. There'll be lots of pointing of firearms, directing them to get on the floor, close that car down very quickly.

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:21:12] We've recovered a phenomenal amount of guns safely. No shots fired. David Payne's been arrested safely. The boats have been secured. So that's almost like two strikes without any sort of major ripples out into the community, without other criminals being aware of what has happened and then being able to redeploy and still safely go forward to identify and arrest Harry Schilling. Yes, it's pretty unique in my operational experience of thirty years.

**ELLIE** [00:21:39] By now, David Payne - the skipper of the Albernina - and Christopher Owen who had helped unload the weapons, had been arrested. And at a suburban DIY store, Harry Shilling and his co-conspirator Michael Defraime, who was Shilling's man in Europe, were taken by surprise while shopping for tools to help them bury the weapons. But NCA officers soon realised a third man was missing from the scene.

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**KEVIN SOLOMONS** [00:22:01] CCTV in the Homebase identified there's a third. Where is he? So we searched the area. And in McDonald's — is Richard Rye.

**ELLIE** [00:22:11] Richard Rye was Shilling's trusted lieutenant and NCA officers now had to act fast and detain him

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:22:05] Now we need to conduct an armed foot strike on the third person in a busy McDonald's. The CCTV shows an officer has gone in on the search for Richard Rye, identifies Richard Rye sat in a window with a long cardboard box in front of him. So the officer doesn't know what is in that box, is waiting for support before he takes action. But before his support comes in, Richard Rye goes to leave the McDonald's with the box so that the officer takes independent action in McDonald's on Richard Rye and is then quickly supported by a couple of more covert firearms officers.

**MIKE RYDER** [00:22:49] It was busy when I got there. We arrived, it's an L-shaped McDonald's. He's quite a big guy compared to Richard Rye. So he decided just as he was about to leave. He just grabbed hold of him in a in a headlock and just grabbed him down to the floor. And the bit that I'll always remember is he didn't look at us like "oh no, I'm going to be arrested now". He looked at us and he raised his hands as if to say, "Please help me." We just took his arms, flopped him forward onto his face, and then arrested him for the offence he was ultimately charged with.

**ELLIE** [00:23:22] Operation Seventy now moved into a different phase of the investigation. Houses, properties and cars was searched for further evidence and inside the vehicle parked at Homebase were two mobile phones that would prove to be critical of the eventual court case.

**KEVIN SOLOMONS** [00:23:36] We later found out that those phones were specially encrypted phones called PGP, which stands for pretty good privacy. The problem is getting into it. There are failsafes. So if you go into the phones and you don't give the right password, it'll clear all the information on that and we don't want that. One of the phones went off to our partners at the Metropolitan Police - think that was Defraine's phone. The evidence that came from that, it was a game changer for us because it showed the inner workings of their mind and now on the clock, myself and a colleague just after Christmas, flew out to Ottawa and we had support from our partners in the RCMP, the Mounties, and

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they were able to extract data from Harry Shillings' phone. And again, this was the golden nugget. It really was. You know, I was with my colleague. We've got them, you know, it's evidential. The evidence was damning.

**ELLIE** [00:24:33] That evidence included a text message from Shilling that declared "We now officially gangsters", and another from Defraime claiming that they were "Proper heavy and armed to the teeth". Paul Pantry started as an investigator and firearms officer on Operation Seventy. But then he was part of the case team that took the job to court as disclosure officer. After months of operational work, the focus turned to thousands of pages of evidential material. Every detail was scrutinized. To have come this far, only to lose the case on a technicality would be devastating for the Op. Seventy team and the NCA. For the defence, the barristers would be looking for any chink in the armour. That meant the Paul had to be on his game in the weeks leading up to trial and once the court was in session.

**PAUL PANTRY** [00:25:21] I'm at the Old Bailey, I was listening to every word that was said in the trial to make sure that it was consistent with what I thought our prosecution case was and what I thought the defence case was. Because if anything came out in the trial that was different to that I then had to sort of reappraise all that material I knew about in the light of something that's been said and the pressure builds and builds as you get closer to the sort of finish. You may have protected the public from those 31 firearms, but the second part of the job was protecting the public from the people who wanted to bring those in and what they wanted to do with them and would they try and do that again. You've basically got to take them to court and put them in front of a judge and jury and let the jury decide on the facts.

**ELLIE** [00:26:04] After all the hard work, the arrests at Cuxton Marina and Orpington and inside the MacDonald's would all come to nothing if the defendants walked away from court. As in every operation, the main bulk of the work was done. Weapons were seized and secured. Lives were undoubtedly saved. But what happened next to the defendants was in the hands of the judge and jury of the most famous criminal court in the world. A long, slow process that took seven weeks.

**PAUL PANTRY** [00:26:34] You know, you've been in that courtroom for weeks on end. You've seen it all come and go. And eventually the defence case has been put. There are no more witnesses. The judges summed up the evidence and the jury was sent out. And

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you're waiting. So suddenly there's nothing to do. So we're sitting around the Old Bailey in various places, and eventually you get the sort of nod that the jury are coming back in.

And in that moment, the tension in the room is palpable. You've obviously got the defendants in the dock. This moment is going to define their lives. They're either going to be found guilty or not guilty. This, this is playing out in front of you and from a personal point of view, I'm thinking this is, you know, probably going to define my career. The next few seconds, how this plays out and the foreman of the jury will stand. There'll be a few questions, backwards and forwards. "Have you reached a verdict?" And essentially that classic moment where they give the verdict and the release of tension in the room. It is huge.

**ELLIE** [00:27:37] Judge Marco Topolski, QC sentenced the gang to a combined total of over 90 years. In his summing up, he told them: "The sad truth appears to be that you gave no thought to nor cared about the potentially devastating harm that could have been caused." It's eight years now since that tip off from Kent Police, but the result of that work through the spring and summer of 2015 lives on. Lizzy Tickle told us how things have changed over the past decade.

**LIZZIE TICKLE** [00:28:07] I don't think there's many people in the agency that won't know about Op 70. It's something that took the kind of full range of NCA capabilities and targeted it on some individuals who had the potential to cause serious harm to the UK and UK citizens. So absolutely, it's something that resonates, I think, even with new officers now.

**ELLIE** [00:28:28] Most of those who worked on the investigation have moved on to new roles in the agency. But for Paul Morris, Operation Seventy was an investigation that he and his colleagues would never forget.

**PAUL MORRIS** [00:28:38] The collaborative approach taken because it's such a challenging issue that no one agency can deal with it. You've got Kent Police, Border Force help with some of the waterborne support, NCA operationally could deal with it. Our intelligence partners could deal with it. And actually seeing that all working positively for this sort of result. Yes. You know, for me, it's sort of a once in a lifetime job. And for a lot of the officers

involved actually using their skills and their knowledge to the good of a live operation like this is yeah, again, pretty unique.

**LIZZIE TICKLE** [00:29:11] The calibre of the weapons that this OCG was attempting to import was obviously very significant in terms of the threat that they represented. We do not want to see Skorpions on the streets in the UK. So that goes back to making sure that as the NCA, we're looking across the threat and saying what is the vulnerability? What can we do to target those people that are trying to import them. But take that step back, make sure we're looking internationally, make sure we're looking at that step before to prevent them from ever reaching the UK in the first place.

**PAUL PANTRY** [00:29:41] All the work I've done before, all the investigations I've been involved in, almost sort of led up to the moment where we're able to use those skills to, from an operational point of view, stop military grade firearms reaching the streets of the UK. And to take a complex case like that under the glare of publicity and scrutiny through the Old Bailey and to come out the other side, having done a great job, having done what we set out to do, the satisfaction was was huge in that moment. But then I think the next day we were straight on to the next bit of work and you don't know where that piece of work is going to take you. You don't really ever know what the what the next day will bring in this job.