Dr Josh P Davis,
Reader in Applied Psychology
Department of Psychology, Social Work and Counselling
University of Greenwich
London, SE9 2UG
j.p.davis@greenwich.ac.uk
+44(0)20 8331 8859

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Detective Chief Inspector Mick Neville (retired Jan 2017)

Professional Membership: The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences (CSFS)

I have been employed at the University of Greenwich since 2008. Relevant to this application, my PhD was on the "*Forensic Identification of Unfamiliar Faces in CCTV Images*" (Goldsmiths, University of London, 2007), and as a consequence was aware from about 2006 of some of the changes to the management procedures for CCTV images being led by Detective Chief Inspector Mick Neville (as he was then) within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). However, I did not meet Neville in person until 2010 when we first discussed our still ongoing collaborative programme of research between the MPS and the University of Greenwich.

Neville's primary legacy at the MPS has been the professionalisation of the management systems for CCTV images across London. These systems have been described as the Third Forensic (after DNA and fingerprints)[1], and Neville attempted to set up a system of procedures for CCTV evidence that best follows the protocols in place for these other forensic identification disciplines to ensure the highest reliability of the evidence. Embedded in these protocols is the understanding of the necessity to protect against the scourge of forensic science community – cognitive and confirmation biases. Many of the procedures are now followed by other police forces across the UK.

Neville's work started with the introduction of *Visual Images, Identifications and Detections Office* (VIIDO) units across the London Boroughs. At all stages of the process, technical training is now provided to ensure that VIIDO officers are best able to retrieve, process and distribute images for identification and crime scene analyses purposes. This may seem simple, but it was groundbreaking work and probably means that the systems now in place are the most likely in the world to result in the identification and subsequent charging/sentencing of any suspects depicted. For instance, in terms of retrieval, there is a massive variety of different CCTV systems, and each requires a different method in order to securely download, and store (mostly) digital images.

Neville also created a *Central Forensic Image Team* (CFIT), at one time based in New Scotland Yard (now Lambeth), to ensure the extraction of the highest quality images from CCTV footage of any crime scene, so that when distributed, identification likelihood is high. CFIT also organises publication of images in various internal and external media outlets, while keeping full records of any identifications made, while ensuring that all suspect images are stored on a central database – FILM, which allows officers to easily search images to match up those depicting the same person committing different crimes.

Finally, Neville set up *Area Identification Teams* (AIT) whose role is to ensure that officers most likely to be able to identify suspects are able to view images relevant to their own knowledge (e.g. crime type, geographical area). They are given regular time out of their normal duties for this purpose, and the AIT officer is on hand to ensure that viewings are conducted in a manner that conforms to the strict rules embedded in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE, 1984) Codes of Practice: Code D – which are designed to reduce the risk of

[1] Evison, M. P. (2014). The Third Forensics: Images and allusions. *Policing and Society: An International Journal of Research and Policy, 1*, 1-19. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2014.895347

evidence contamination and miscarriages of justice. The AIT officer can also take an immediate witness statement thus streamlining the process and ensuring the highest probity of evidence in court.

The officers given time out of their duties in this manner to identify suspects have been labelled *super-recognisers* by the MPS and I have worked closely with Neville in this area, generating worldwide media interest. This research started in 2011, when, because CFIT started keeping comprehensive records, it became apparent that a small group of about 20 officers were making a substantial proportion of all identifications from CCTV. Most were cognitively tested in April 2011 – with many found to have highly superior face recognition ability. There abilities came to her fore following the London Riots of 2011 with a now expanded group of super-recognisers making approximately one-third of the 4,000 rioter identifications from CCTV. Neville was instrumental in creating a defined pool of super-recognisers following the riots, and the system of super-recognisers being regularly visited by AIT continues to this day.

Neville was also instrumental in creating a full-time *Super-Recogniser Unit* in May 2015, made up of about half a dozen officers, whose role is primarily to identify suspects, and by searching the FILM database, to build up a portfolio of images from different crime scenes that can provide evidence of continued wrong-doing in court. Of importance to forensic science, blind review of evidence is conducted by independent super-recogniser(s), in order to follow best forensic practice. Since the creation of the super-recogniser pool and the super-recogniser unit, thousands of suspects have been identified per annum, and other worldwide police forces have visited London to learn how they could adopt these highly successful systems. Neville's innovative work has had international impact.

Neville has also publicised this work in the worldwide media and has given presentations to security, legal, policing, IT and forensic science professionals. In May 2014, the MPS, with Neville as lead was awarded European Commission funds for the LASIE project, as part of a 8,000,000 Euro 18-partner European-wide consortium (with the University of Greenwich) to further improve the manner in which digital evidence can be processed by police forces.

As a member of NVVIS (National Video and Voice Identification Strategy Group) Neville was also instrumental in updating the PACE Codes of Practice for identification procedures (Code D). He was also a member of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) CCTV Working Group and the ACPO Identification Working Group, demonstrating that his practical experience of working within the MPS was utilised to set policy.

In summary, Mick Neville may not meet the usual criteria for Professional Membership of the CSFS in terms of academic qualifications. However, he has exceptional managerial experience of developing policy and implementing standards in forensic practice – one of the criteria listed on the website. He had always tried to ensure that the MPS's CCTV procedures should be closely guided by forensic science and other types of empirical evidence, and therefore I have no hesitation in recommending him to your society.

Best wishes

Josh Davis