



Star Wars?

I was recently talking to a chap at a social event who was berating the fact he had 20 days annual leave left but couldn't take time off until the end of February because, according to his boss, there was too much work on.

He went on to say that during the summer his doctor had ORDERED him to take two weeks off as he was suffering from stress. I asked him what he did for a living and he replied that he was a detective inspector.

Is this typical for inspecting ranks? It would seem so, according to *Exploring the Myths*, a survey recently published by The Metropolitan Inspectors' Branch Board.

The plea from us is that you complete the survey but, more importantly, from today you start to accurately record ALL the hours you work. This will give us the evidence we need to present to Tom Winsor during his review.

That survey revealed horrendous working practices, with typical weekly working well in excess of 60 hours. Officers were owed rest days and annual leave which, due to their high volume, they will probably never be able to take.

Rachel Cerfontyne, an IPCC commissioner, recently voiced her concerns over inspectors' workload following an investigation into the killing of Arsema Dawit. She said that inspectors interviewed as part of the investigation had an almost unimaginable volume of work, creating a risk of cases falling through the net.

All this is happening now. What is going to happen in the near future, with the real prospect of a cut in inspecting rank numbers from Regulation A19 and a freeze in promotion processes? What about the cuts in

the superintendent rank numbers? The work that they do will surely not be done by a more senior officer so it will cascade down to our rank. More work then, with fewer and fewer inspecting ranks to carry out that work.

One of the biggest findings of the Met IBB survey was the disparity between the hours worked by officers and what was actually recorded. If senior managers look at the hours recorded by inspectors and the majority show eight hours a day, it is not difficult to imagine them wanting to squeeze a bit more out of them. If the truth is that inspectors are working 12, 14 and 16 hours a day then we can put forward the 'more work with less officers' argument more effectively.

Tom Winsor is leading the review into pay and conditions and he only deals in facts. We therefore need to supply him with those facts.

The ICC will shortly be carrying out a national survey of our members to establish the different working practices across the country in respect of working conditions. The plea from us is that you complete the survey but, more importantly, from today you start to accurately record ALL the hours you work. This will give us the evidence we need to present to Tom Winsor during his review.

Why the title Star Wars? The badge of rank for inspecting ranks are the Bath Stars and this could be one of the biggest fights we will ever have. May the force be with you!

*Geoff Stuttaford,
ICC deputy general secretary*