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Funny old game

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At this time of year the other tradition, apart from the lawsuits after the office party, is the regrettable increase of reported domestic violence incidents. The tensions around Christmas time, coupled with too much drink, often sees 24/7 officers stretched to capacity trying to deal with all those afternoon and evening calls on 25th.

These are the very officers whose views the Police Minister, Tony McNulty, so swiftly dismissed in a recent edition of the ITV *Tonight* programme, highlighting Federation research about the increasing demands on frontline uniform and CID officers.

The strain of a Minister under the spotlight was very clear; ridiculously suggesting the views of the Federation and the frontline are different. Does he not realise that frontline officers actually elect Fed reps? On Mr McNulty's logic, I assume the views of his government do not represent the views of those who elected them to power?

However, over the last month we've witnessed a different type of tension with a media frenzy focus on just one man. One burning question was debated on every radio and television channel; one issue has dominated the pages of all our daily newspapers. Despite all the negative press and calls for his resignation everyone kept asking - will he stay, or will he go?

His leadership was called into question and his communication skills were criticised. But one specific issue dominated. No-one was disputing that the shooting was, at the very least, inaccurate, if not disastrous. The marksmen came under the spotlight. Could anything have been done to prevent the situation?

There were rumours that he had lost credibility amongst his own troops, with many close to him appearing to brief a hungry media, eager to stick the knife in.

This was not so much an issue for the whole team; more a witch hunt for their leader. The clock could not be turned back, and everyone agreed lessons must be learned.

However, there was a feeling that this was not just one isolated mistake, but a catalogue of errors that had taken place over the last few years. Finally it was left to others to oust him from his position. And so we bid farewell to England manager Steve McClaren.

What. Surely you didn't think I was referring to?
It's a funny old game, eh?