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Date: 14 October 1998

#### **APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF CONSTABLE - MERSEYSIDE POLICE**

The Merseyside Police Authority around 1.00.p.m. yesterday, unanimously agreed to offer the post of Chief Constable to Mr Norman Bettison, currently Assistant Chief Constable in West Yorkshire. I was present throughout the selection proceedings and concur with the Authority's decision, since I believe that Mr Bettison was just ahead of any other candidate.

After the usual arrangements for a medical, re-joining Members of the Authority for a buffet lunch and briefing session with Sir James Sharples, he left Merseyside HQ at around 7.30.p.m. At 8.00.p.m. he was contacted by a Superintendent from Merseyside, who said that Radio Merseyside were posing questions about his role in the "Hillsborough Affair". This was also taken up by the Liverpool Echo (probably publishing tonight) and the Daily Post.

The attached is a Press Statement which Mr Bettison has prepared as a response to the accusations made against him.

I am informed that the Merseyside MP, Maria Eagle, has previously made allegations that a small Working Group of which Mr Bettison was a member (in the aftermath of the Hillsborough Disaster) was responsible for peddling sinister propaganda - presumably countering allegations made by families of the deceased.

Mr Bettison robustly rejects these allegations and says he was merely part of a small Working Group which was looking at

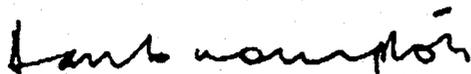
- What actually happened in the Ground (from a Police perspective).
- Safety of the Ground issues.
- A full review of policing football in South Yorkshire.

Mr Bettison was present at the match in an off-duty capacity and later went to a local Police Station and set up a Missing Persons Bureau. He had no role in the operational decision making at the Sheffield Wednesday Ground.

I believe this attack on Mr Bettison's professionalism and his capacity to act as Chief Constable of Merseyside is vindictive and cruel.

I have just learnt that the headline in the Liverpool Echo today may say "He Must Go".

I see no reason whatsoever why this appointment should not stand and although I am sympathetic to the plight of bereaved families, this type of orchestrated attack does them no justice and I repeat it is vindictive and vexatious.



HM Inspector of Constabulary



# WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE

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Wednesday 14 October 1998

## STATEMENT FROM NORMAN BETTISON THE HILLSBOROUGH DISASTER

I was a Chief Inspector in the Headquarters Personnel Department of South Yorkshire Police at the time of the Hillsborough disaster. I was not involved in any of the pre-planning or the policing of the match itself. However, I was there as a spectator, having bought a ticket for a seat in the South Stand, adjacent to the Leppings Lane end. Along with thousands of other spectators I saw the tragedy unfold.

I left the ground at 3.25pm and drove to the nearest police station in Hammerton Road to put myself on duty and help in any way that I could. Many people, who left the football ground and were looking for friends and relatives, were arriving at the police station and I was given the task, helped by a group of other officers, of taking details of people who had become separated at the ground. We eventually opened a boys' club next door to the station for people to wait. I went off duty at 8am the next day. That was the extent of my involvement on the day of the disaster.

I returned to work as normal on the Monday. A few days later I was assigned with other officers to a unit which was set up under a Chief Superintendent and two Superintendents. The unit was tasked with looking at what had happened on the day of the disaster, making recommendations about the policing of the remaining football matches at Hillsborough before the end of the season and reviewing policing arrangements for football at Hillsborough and other grounds in South Yorkshire the following season. The unit also liaised with and passed information to West Midlands Police who were undertaking the formal and independent police investigation into the disaster.

After the immediate work of the unit was complete, I was given a specific role to monitor the public inquiry and the inquest and brief the Chief Constable on progress.

No-one who was at Hillsborough on that day, myself included, can fail to have been touched by the tragedy. I do not share the suffering of the bereaved families but I do share some of the horror of that fateful day. Those who lost loved ones at Hillsborough will have my deepest sympathy for ever.

ends

**NEWS RELEASE**