

Confidential filing

Sunday Times article on the death of Stephen Thomas Ward and his association with M15 at the time of the Profumo affair.

SECURITY

"An Affair of State" by Knightley and Kennedy

NOVEMBER 1982

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

**"AN AFFAIR OF STATE" BY PHILIP KNIGHTLEY
AND CAROLINE KENNEDY (OD(DIS)(87)24)**

The Prime Minister has seen this paper about the response of the publishers of this book to the letter from the Secretary of the Defence, Press and Broadcasting Committee.

The Prime Minister agrees, subject to the views of other Ministers, that no further action should be taken provided that there is no doubt that the reply from the publishers referred to in paragraph 3 of the officials' paper is in sufficiently reassuring tones.

I am sending a copy of this minute to the Private Secretaries to members of OD(DIS) and Mr. Mallaby.

N.L.W.

(N.L. WICKS)

20 March 1987

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Prime Minister
Security
*[Signature]*MR. BUTLER

The Prime Minister will be aware that the Sunday Times published articles about the Security Service on 21st and 28th November, based on their access to the typescript of Mr. West's book. As you know, it is clear that Mr. West had made an unexpurgated version of the typescript available to the Sunday Times. The Editor of the Sunday Times has undertaken not to publish any material excised from the book as a result of the injunction taken out against Mr. West, and not to show any of the excised material to those Sunday Times journalists who may be making inquiries. It is none the less clear that the two Sunday Times journalists concerned are using their knowledge of the excised material in pursuit of their inquiries and their approaches to the retired members of the Security Service, and they are not being too nice in the methods which they are employing to extract information from those people.

2. The article of 28th November (copy attached) dealt with the relations between Stephen Ward and the Security Service in the Profumo affair. They imply that Stephen Ward was working or at least thought he was working for the Security Service. Ward was certainly a source of information for the Security Service in their inquiries about Captain Ivanov, the naval attache at the Russian Embassy who was involved with Christine Keeler. The facts about the relationship between the Security Service and Stephen Ward were set out in Chapter 19 of Lord Denning's report of September 1963 (Cmnd. 2152); I attach photocopies of the relevant pages.

3. I attach 2 notes for supplementaries'. The first is a general note suggesting what the Prime Minister might say if she is asked in general about Mr. West's book and about the injunction taken out against Mr. West. The second is what she might say if she is asked in particular about Stephen Ward and his relationship with the Security Service.

RIA
Robert Armstrong

EXTRACT FROM THE SUNDAY TIMES DATED
28th NOVEMBER 1982

EXCLUSIVE Profumo scandal: MI5

STEPHEN WARD, the London osteopath who was at the centre of the Profumo scandal 20 years ago, was working for MI5 at the time of the affair. Former MI5 officials have confirmed to the Sunday Times claims made in a new book — that Ward was actively involved in a scheme to "entrap" a Soviet diplomat on their behalf. "He did his very best for us," said one official.

The revelations entirely alter the accepted version of Ward's role. He was portrayed at the time as a thoroughly corrupt

figure and a communist sympathiser. He was charged with living off immoral earnings and committed suicide during his trial.

The officers we have talked to now deeply regret that Ward's true role was never made public at the time and that he was driven to his death, a broken and disgraced man. "We felt very sorry for Ward," said one retired officer. "We were very cut up when we heard he was dead."

"He was a very nice, very

pleasant chap," said another officer.

The story of MI5's role in the scandal, which led to the resignation in 1963 of John Profumo, war minister in Harold Macmillan's government, is contained in a new book — *A Matter of Trust* (MI5 1945/72) by Nigel West — to be published next month. Publication was delayed when the Attorney General sought an injunction on the ground that the original manuscript contained material, leaked by former and possibly serving mem-

by Simon Freeman
and Barrie Penrose

by Simon Freeman
and Barrie Penrose

bers of the security service, which might damage national security. A number of deletions was agreed.

Although our investigation into the Profumo affair was based on the West manuscript that had been vetted and approved by Whitehall, there were signs last week that our inquiries were unwelcome. A letter to The Sunday Times from the

Treasury solicitor said: "It is being emphasised again to all retired members of the security services that they are not at liberty to give any information whatsoever to the press or to authors wishing to write about security matters. It is also being pointed out to them that if they do so, they may infringe section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911."

Lord Denning, who was responsible for the government inquiry into the Profumo affair, refused to comment on the fresh evidence. He

role of Stephen Ward

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Lord Denning, who was responsible for the government inquiry into the Profumo affair, refused to comment on the fresh evidence. He

said: "I would prefer to stay out of this."

Lord Wigg, closely involved at the time as Labour's expert on security, however, seemed relieved. He said that Ward had always claimed to have worked for MI5 but that there was never any evidence to support his claim.

Christine Keeler, the girl whose involvement with Profumo caused his downfall, and who has described her relationship with him in a forthcoming book said: "When Stephen told me he was working

for MI5, I just laughed I'm afraid. Ivanov (the Soviet diplomat) I remember very well. At first he was very correct towards me and then, after I had spent that weekend at Cliveden in 1961, when I met Profumo, Ivanov and I had a brief affair. It was Stephen Ward who encouraged me, nudged me towards Ivanov."

Earlier this month John Profumo said it had always been his policy not to comment about the affair.

The full story, page 5

How MI5 sacrificed S

IN THE early hours of Wednesday, July 31, 1963, a London osteopath called Stephen Thomas Ward took an overdose of Nembutal and three days later died at St Stephen's Hospital in west London. His death at the age of 50 provided yet another sensational twist in one of the most intriguing scandals that Britain has known this century.

For the previous two years Ward had been one of the central characters in the affair that took its name from John Profumo, then war minister. It was a tale of duplicity, sex in high places and espionage.

At the time, few people mourned Ward's passing. At the Old Bailey trial in July, where he had faced charges of running prostitutes (he was found guilty of two minor charges as he lay dying in hospital), prosecuting counsel Mervyn Griffiths-Jones described him as a "thoroughly filthy fellow" and as "a wicked, wicked creature".

To some it appeared that Ward was almost personally responsible for a national decline in morals that had produced women such as Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies, ruined Profumo's career and threatened the stability of Harold Macmillan's Tory government.

That view must now be seriously revised. Senior MI5 officials who have talked to us in the past two weeks have told us that for two years prior to the scandal, Ward was used by MI5 as part of their attempts to lure a Russian diplomat, Eugene Ivanov, over to the British side. That exercise contemplated "entrapment" — a delicate word for what was, in fact, a crude effort to compromise Ivanov and force his hand. Ward's contacts with call-girls such as Keeler and Rice-Davies, so vilified at the time, were the very qualities that MI5 thought valuable.

Ward himself was convinced that he had actually been recruited as an MI5 agent. But without confirmation from MI5 no one believed him.

Last week Ward's MI5 case officer, now retired, told us that Ward had "done his best" to help MI5. He said: "I felt rather sorry for the poor chap at the end of the day."

Another, more senior, retired officer admitted that it was a pity Ward's true role had not been revealed at the time. "I think that everyone involved did feel very sorry about Ward and the final outcome," he said. "Nowhere in the Denning report does it say that Ward was acting under our instructions. That is very unfortunate."

STARTLING new evidence has emerged about Britain's Profumo affair. Senior MI5 officials have told The Sunday Express that Ward, who was at the centre of the affair, was in fact working for the Russians. Ward committed suicide in 1963 after being branded as a spy. If the services had spoken up for him, he might never have been tried.

Special report by BARRIE PENROSE and SIMON DENNING

The true role of MI5 emerges from a remarkable chapter in a new book, *A Matter of Trust* by Nigel West, to be published next month.

The new evidence is important because it challenges the version of the Profumo affair given in Lord Denning's report, which has hitherto been regarded as definitive.

Denning decided that Ward (whose role is explained in the panel, left) had been a Russian sympathiser who had cultivated the diplomat, Ivanov, and then been used as a tool by the Soviets. British intelligence, said Denning, had contacted Ward and monitored his friendship with Ivanov, but had deliberately kept him at arm's length.

The truth is different: Ward was approached in June 1961 because British intelligence had earmarked Ivanov as a potential target for entrapment. The plan proposed to Ward, in the oblique manner favoured by intelligence officers, was this: it would be helpful if Ivanov became friendly with some of Ward's many attractive girlfriends. This would allow MI5 to exert pressure on him. From that moment, Ward was convinced that he had actually been recruited by MI5. And MI5 did nothing to disabuse him.

The plan was conceived early in 1961 when MI5 was handed a breakdown of Soviet intelligence officers posing as diplomats in London. The dossier was provided by Oleg Penkovsky, a Russian colonel who was working for British intelligence. It contained some particularly interesting snippets of information concerning Lt-Commander Eugene Ivanov, the assistant naval attaché at the Russian embassy in London.

According to West's book, Ivanov was rather more important than the ordinary run-of-the-mill intelligence officer. His father-in-law in the Soviet Union was Alexander Gorkin, chairman of the Soviet Supreme Court.

MI5 concluded that Ivanov would be a valuable defector. The Penkovsky dossier spoke about the Russian's love of parties and women and in the months that followed,

MI5 trailed him around London noting his contacts and habits.

Most of this was not revealed by Denning. His report noted only that Ivanov was an unusually sophisticated Soviet intelligence officer. "His English was reasonably good and he was able to converse easily," said Denning. "He drank, however, a good deal and was something of a ladies' man."

Ward met Ivanov early in 1961. The two became good friends and in the spring and early summer of 1961 Ivanov was a regular visitor to Ward's home in Wimpole Mews in Marylebone, London.

On June 8, K. Woods from "the War Office" invited Ward to lunch. Denning deals briskly with the meeting. It was, he said in his report, called by MI5 because they wanted to warn Ward about the



Rice-Davies: famous aphorism

"I was not a spy," said Mandy Rice-Davies, "I was a woman who had been seduced by a man who was a spy." The dangers of associating too closely with Ivanov, especially in view of Ward's own connections with well-known public figures. According to Woods's report to his superiors, the lunch was a success; Woods said that Ward had an "attractive personality and talked well."

According to Denning, as he left Ward, Woods asked him if he would be kind enough to "get in touch with me should Ivanov at any time in the future make any propositions to him." Ward also offered to help in any way MI5 thought fit.

That, at least, is the official account.

We have spoken to both Woods and other senior MI5 officers and it is clear that there was rather more in MI5's mind. Woods, who

Stephen Ward

s worst post-war scandal — the Sunday Times that Stephen was working for the security services. A social parasite. If the security services had been driven to his death.

SIMON FREEMAN

Ward has never spoken before about the case, claims his memory is somewhat hazy about some events but he says that "possibly" he may have given Ward the distinct impression that he was being recruited into MI5.

The other officers we interviewed described the approach to Ward as a "run of the mill operation". They say that although there was no fully-fledged plan as early as June 1961, the seeds were sown then. "It was simply that when we talked to Ward we discovered that there was a situation and we thought it worth letting it run," said an MI5 officer.

To a man like Ward, the move by MI5 would have quickly fuelled his imagination with fresh fantasies. He was a chronic name-dropper, often claiming close friendships with famous people who had barely met him.

Over the next month, Ward saw himself in increasingly grand terms. We asked one of the MI5 officers if Ward would have been encouraged to see himself as a patriot spying for his country. "Exactly. That is so," said the officer.

The flowering of the seed thus planted by MI5 took place on July 8 after a weekend at Ward's cottage on Lord Astor's Cliveden estate. Among the guests were Keeler, Ivanov and Profumo. Ivanov and Keeler had met before several times and until then Ivanov, according to Keeler, had always been "perfectly respectful" towards her.

Now, however, Ward began to "nudge" her towards Ivanov. She herself records the change in attitude in her autobiography, due out next year. In it she reveals that following that weekend, she slept with Ivanov and immediately informed Ward what had happened. Four days later, on July 12, Ward asked for a meeting with his case officer, Woods.

What he reported to Woods is obviously crucial, because at that point Ward would appear to have had in his possession two pieces of information of great interest to the security services: that Ivanov was now compromised and that Britain's war minister, John Profumo, was

moving in potentially embarrassing company.

Denning records that Ward passed on three straightforward pieces of information to MI5: Keeler had met Ivanov at the Ward cottage; she had also met Profumo; and Ivanov had questioned Ward about an important security matter involving the United States' intentions to arm West Germany with atomic weapons.

Denning concluded that Keeler had "never become Ivanov's lover", and that the security services had no need to be alarmed at that point by Profumo's involvement. He did not believe there had been a great risk to national security.

In the light of the new revelations about Ward's exact role, this conclusion would appear to be inadequate. It is almost certain that Ward, who had, after all, more than fulfilled MI5's expectations by compromising Ivanov, would have passed on the fullest details.

And if he did so, then one question about the whole Profumo affair that continues to nag some experts on the period will have to be answered: if MI5 knew all along about Keeler's true associations with Ivanov and Profumo, why did they not act sooner?

Our security contacts are, inevitably, cautious about the meeting. Woods told us simply that he could not remember all that Ward told him. "He may have told me that Ivanov had slept with Keeler," he said. "I can't be certain."

The other MI5 officer, however, commented: "Ward always reported developments. My recollection is that he was too anxious to inform us what was happening."

Over the next few weeks the scandal began to break, and MI5 realised they were involved in a highly embarrassing position. Ward found himself increasingly isolated. His meetings with Woods petered out. "We had no idea we were going to burn our fingers in this way," said one official. Ivanov was tipped off and left the country after the scandal broke.

Ward tried desperately to enlist MI5's support as the affair began to explode in his face, but found none. We asked the MI5 officer if they could have found means of confirming that he had been working for them. "Yes," he said, "Ward might be alive today if that had happened. We didn't expect the final outcome and we were very cut up when we learned he was dead."

* *A Matter of Trust (MI5 1945-72)* by Nigel West. Published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson: £8.95.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SECURITY SERVICE IN 1961 AND 1962

(i) The Service find out about Ward

243. It was on 20th January, 1961, that Stephen Ward first met Captain Ivanov. Their friendship developed rapidly. The Security Service soon got to know of this friendship and desired to know more about it. On 8th June, 1961, (four weeks before the Cliveden week-end), an officer of the Security Service went to see Stephen Ward at a restaurant in Marylebone. His report said this:

"Ward, who has an attractive personality and who talks well, was completely open about his association with Ivanov. Despite the fact that some of his political ideas are certainly peculiar and are exploitable by the Russians, I do not think that he is of security interest [that means he was not considered a danger] but he is obviously not a person we can make any use of." Ward took the Security Officer to his mews house where "he introduced me to a young girl, whose name I did not catch, who was obviously sharing the house with him. [This was probably Christine Keeler.] She was heavily painted and considerably overdressed and I wonder whether this is corroborating evidence that he has been involved in the call-girl racket."

244. The security officer added in the report:

"As we were saying good-bye, Ward asked whether it was all right for him to continue to see Ivanov. I replied there was no reason why he should not. He then said that, if there was any way in which he could help, he would be very ready to do so. I thanked him for his offer and asked him to get in touch with me should Ivanov at any time in the future make any propositions to him."

(ii) 12th July, 1961—Ward tells them of Ivanov's Request for Information

245. Four weeks later there was the Cliveden week-end, and it came immediately to the notice of the Security Service. On the Monday following the Cliveden week-end, 10th July, 1961, Stephen Ward telephoned the security officer and asked to see him. It must be remembered that the security officer had asked Ward to tell him of any propositions that Ivanov made to him. The security officer saw Ward on Wednesday, 12th July, 1961. *Stephen Ward then told the security officer that Ivanov had asked him to find out when the Americans were going to arm Western Germany with atomic weapons.* It is to be noted that Stephen Ward was quite open about this to the security officer. The security officer told Stephen Ward that he should make no attempt to fulfil Ivanov's request "and if by chance he obtained any such information through the indiscretion of any of his influential friends, he should on no account tell Ivanov".

(iii) Ward Claims Friendship with Mr. Profumo

246. Ward told the officer that Ivanov had spent the last Sunday at Ward's country cottage on Lord Astor's estate. There had been quite a party of celebrities there disporting themselves in the swimming pool, including

Mr. Profumo, the Secretary of State for War. Ivanov had been much amused by their antics. Christine was there. (Ward explained that Christine was the young girl who lived in his house.) Ivanov was undoubtedly attracted by Christine. After the bathing party, Ivanov had taken her back to his (Ward's) house and they had drunk between them two bottles of whisky. Ward claimed that he and Mr. Profumo were quite close friends and that Mr. Profumo visited him at his London house. The security officer summed up his opinion of Ward in these words:

"I do not think he is a security risk in the sense that he would intentionally be disloyal, but his peculiar political beliefs, coupled with his obvious admiration of Ivanov might well cause him to be indiscreet unintentionally."

(iv) The Service think that Mr. Profumo should be Warned

247. The Security Service followed up this information in two ways. First they wanted to get more information about Ward's establishment and about Christine. So on 31st July, 1961, they asked the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police to make inquiries. On 8th August, 1961, Special Branch reported to Security Service that Christine could not be identified and that inquiries revealed nothing to the discredit of Ward. The address was in a respectable neighbourhood where any openly unseemly conduct would soon come to police notice. Secondly, the Security Service thought it would be wise to warn Mr. Profumo to be careful what he said to Ward; because Ward was voluble and indiscreet and might easily pass on to Ivanov any information which Mr. Profumo might let fall. Further, a thought occurred to the Security Service that, perhaps with Mr. Profumo's help, it might be possible to get Ivanov to defect. Mr. Profumo might be a "lead-in" to Ivanov. The Director-General carefully considered what to do. He felt that he could hardly approach Mr. Profumo direct on the matter. So on 31st July, 1961, he spoke to Sir Norman Brook about it. Sir Norman was the Secretary of the Cabinet and was in a position to speak to a Minister on it. He did speak to Mr. Profumo (I have dealt with this in an earlier chapter—paragraphs 33–35).

(v) Mr. Profumo is Warned

248. It has been widely assumed that the Security Service knew that Christine Keeler was having an affair with Mr. Profumo and Captain Ivanov at the same time: that they reported this to Sir Norman Brook; and that their object was that Sir Norman should acquaint Mr. Profumo with the danger in the situation. If the Security Service had had such knowledge I should have thought it was one of those matters of extreme delicacy where they might approach the Prime Minister direct: or, if they had reported it to Sir Norman, I would have thought that Sir Norman should have reported it to the Prime Minister. In failing to do so, he would have made a mistake, as Lord Radcliffe said in a television interview. But I am satisfied that the Security Service did not know that Christine Keeler was having an affair with Mr. Profumo or even with Captain Ivanov. They knew she was Stephen Ward's mistress in the house, that was all. Their two purposes at this time were (1) to warn Mr. Profumo to be careful what he said to Stephen Ward, and (2) to see if there was a 'lead-in' to Captain Ivanov. It would hardly seem to need the intervention of the Prime Minister for these purposes.

249. It has been said that the Security Service ought to have done differently. They ought to have set a watch on Ward's house or got permission to tap his telephone calls: for they would then have discovered that Mr. Profumo was having an affair with Christine Keeler at Stephen Ward's house and that Captain Ivanov was often at the house too. But I am satisfied that this criticism is mistaken. The Security Service knew all that they needed to know about the Ivanov-Ward relationship: and it would not have increased their knowledge to set a watch on Ward's house. They knew that Ivanov was a Russian Intelligence Officer. They already had from other sources information as to Ivanov's visits to and relations with Ward. They knew also that Mr. Profumo was on occasions visiting Ward's house. They acted on that information by having Mr. Profumo warned. I do not think the Security Service should be blamed for not doing more.

(vi) **Suspicious Grow about Ward**

250. From November, 1961, to May, 1962, many people were beginning to be suspicious of Stephen Ward. At a party at the Soviet Embassy, he seemed very much at home. In talking to patients he was obviously sympathetic to the Communist régime. Several thought that he was a security risk. Reports began to come into the Security Service: and also to the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police, who passed them on to the Security Service. Stephen Ward got to know that he had been reported as a suspicious character. So he himself approached the Security Service—no doubt so as to get in first. On 28th May, 1962, the security officer saw him again. He was the same officer who had seen him previously. He reported that,

"more than once Ward assured me that if Ivanov ever attempted to make use of him for any illegal purpose, or if he showed any inclination to defect, he would get in touch with me immediately . . . my impression of Ward remains the same . . . he is in my opinion basically a decent fellow despite the fact that he has accepted as true much of the propaganda pumped into him by Ivanov.

I do not believe he is a Communist but there is no doubt that he holds queer opinions about Russia's aims in international affairs. I do not believe that he would wittingly be disloyal to this country but at the same time I recognise that he might well do considerable harm without intending it. One of his very obvious faults is that he talks too much."

(vii) **The Foreign Office is Warned**

251. The Security Service followed this up by making sure that the Foreign Office knew about Ward. On 12th June, 1962, they wrote to the Foreign Office and also saw them; and warned them that Ivanov was a member of the Russian Intelligence Service and that Ward was both naïve and indiscreet.

252. A few months later reports began to come in to the Security Service, too, about Ward's immoral activities. On 4th October, 1962, they were informed that, "From what I hear of Ward and his dealings with women and his enormous circle of friends, I strongly suspect that he is the provider of pokies for rich people."

253. Then came the Cuban crisis. The Russians were carrying nuclear arms to Cuba and the United States were about to intercept the ships. The critical days were from Wednesday, 24th October, 1962, when the Russian ships were heading for Cuba until Sunday, 28th October, 1962, when they turned back. During this time Ward made frantic efforts at Ivanov's request, to get the United Kingdom to intervene. He wanted Her Majesty's Government to take an independent initiative and summon a summit conference.

(viii) **Ward is not to be Trusted**

254. By this time the Foreign Office were becoming very suspicious of Ward and asked the Security Service for information about him. On 2nd November, 1962, the security officer (the same one who had always seen Ward) told the Foreign Office that he

"has a number of titled and influential friends and patients, including several members of the Cabinet. It was this fact which led us to pay some attention to him because we felt he might acquire delicate information from them which would find its way to Ivanov. Ward is a talkative extrovert; he looks upon Ivanov as a real friend; he is also a man of few morals and is said to have provided some of his influential friends with highly satisfactory young mistresses. It is not easy to assess Ward's security reliability but we believe he is probably not a man who would be actively disloyal but that he is so under the influence of Ivanov that it would be most unwise to trust him."

255. It is quite plain to me that throughout 1962 the Security Service were keeping a close watch on the activities of Ward and Ivanov and were keeping the Foreign Office very properly informed on the matter.



NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

I am aware of the book to which this Question refers.

As a result of discussions following the granting of an interim injunction in proceedings based on breaches of confidence brought by the Attorney General on behalf of the Crown, the author agreed to remove from his book certain material the publication of which would have been particularly damaging to national security. The injunction was discharged subject to a Court Order under which Mr. West undertook not to publish that material.

The discussions to which I have referred were not concerned with the accuracy or otherwise of the book, and the decision to agree to the discharge of the injunction should not be taken as implying that the book is to be regarded as an authoritative or accurate account of the matters which it purports to describe. I do not intend to comment or answer questions upon the subject matter of the book.

Nor should the Government's decision be interpreted in any sense as ~~a condonation of~~ ^{in my} ~~of~~ the writing and publishing of works of this kind. Their publication is in my view damaging to the national interest.

If there were evidence to justify a charge under the Official Secrets Act, it is for the Attorney General to decide whether to institute proceedings. All present and former members of the Security Service have been reminded of their obligations of discretion and confidence.



NOTES FOR SUPPLEMENTARIES

As Lord Denning made clear in his report, Stephen Ward was a source of information to the Security Service about Captain Ivanov, the Russian naval Attache at the time. Lord Denning had access to all the papers and other information in this matter. The facts about the Security Service dealings with Mr. Ward were fully set out in Chapter 19 of Lord Denning's report, and there is nothing to add to that account of the matter.