



# The Innovative Investigator

**R**etired Met Detective Superintendent Matt Bonner is using the experience he gained during an illustrious 30-year career to inform his work as Head of Investigation Technology at Black Rainbow. Here he speaks about his career highlights in policing and his current role in which he is helping launch a new product called NIMBUS investigator.

In his role as Head of Investigation Technology at Black Rainbow, Matt Bonner is spearheading efforts to launch an innovative new product called NIMBUS Investigator, which enables and empowers operational investigators to have complete control of the end-to-end investigation process. It is the latest in the suite of NIMBUS products from the UK-based technology company.

Matt is no stranger to the increasingly challenging and complex world of today's investigations, and he brings to his new role a wealth of experience working at the forefront of previous high-profile cases.

Prior to joining Black Rainbow, he served as a detective superintendent with the Met Police, where he was best known for his role as the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) in the investigation into the fire at Grenfell Tower.

## Distinguished

The four years he spent leading this complex and highly challenging investigation, that subsequently led to a public inquiry, was the culmination of a distinguished career spanning 30 years.

Throughout his career, Matt worked in many investigative roles, firstly for Hertfordshire Police and latterly for the Met, as well as contributing to the training and development of future investigators in both his force and nationally with the College of Policing.

## Career

Although Watford-born Matt completed work experience at his local police station as a teenager,

he did not harbour any real ambition to make policing a career. In fact, his career and life nearly took a different trajectory when he began training as a civil engineer.

Luckily for policing, fate took over and Matt joined Hertfordshire Police in 1991 and embarked on a career that led him to specialise in criminal investigation. During his time with the force, he worked on many specialist units investigating crimes including serious violence, robbery, and burglary.

One of his career highlights included conducting innovative work around the diversion of prolific offenders. The project now known as C2 is still run by the force. It has helped divert many of the county's worst offenders away from committing more crime. The success of the project resulted in a request from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) for him to collaborate with them as a consultant to enable them to set up a similar project.

'I am proud of my work with this project especially the fact that it still exists and is successful. The fact I helped set up a similar project in Northern Ireland is also a career highlight,' says Matt.

### Promotion

His career took a different turn in 2009 when he joined the Met Police on promotion to detective chief inspector (DCI) and worked in the borough of Brent as the DCI with responsibility for violent crime.

He then went on to join the Met's Homicide Command, where he spent the remainder of his career. During this time, he investigated more than 50 complex homicides and suspicious deaths. He spent his last four years with the force as the SIO in the investigation into the fire at Grenfell Tower.

### Motivations

Speaking to the Investigator, Matt looks back at the early motivations behind his career choices and the impact he has made during his time in policing.

'I always had a nagging interest in policing and despite



*Matt Bonner*

initially training as a civil engineer, I never really got policing out of my system,' explains Matt.

'I joined the police because I was attracted to the variety policing offered and the opportunity to make a difference.

'It is nice to look back and think that at each stage of my career, I impacted people's lives in different ways for the better although hopefully I made the lives of the bad guys, I was locking up much worse!'

### Role

Despite the fact Matt has officially left policing as an investigator, his new role at Black Rainbow has enabled him to still be involved in helping have influence on policing and the investigation process. 'When I left policing, I still had a real desire to put something back and to ensure that I used all that experience that I had built over 30 years to the benefit policing and future investigations,' he told us.

'I had been supporting training both in the Met and nationally in the last three years of my career and had intended to continue down that path following my retirement.

'However, I had a conversation with Jim and the team at Black Rainbow and they explained I would have more potential to influence the future of investigations by providing innovative technology that can help investigators make a real difference on the frontline.'

## Generation

Matt has now achieved the best of both worlds and work as Head of Investigation Technology at Black Rainbow while still also continuing to train the next generation of SIOs by working as an Associate Trainer at the College of Policing. He describes his new role at Black Rainbow as 'driving forward the development of existing products such as Core NIMBUS and Portal as well as spearheading the new product NIMBUS Investigator.

## Expertise

His work not only involves providing his knowledge and expertise of the investigation process to help shape the nature of the product, but he also gauges the views of former colleagues from across the UK to ensure that the product is what he describes as 'being created by investigators for investigators.'

He describes NIMBUS Investigator as 'offering the ability for an investigator, whether they are a missing person unit investigator, a burglary unit DC or a major crime SIO, a system that will manage to entire end-to-end investigation process including exhibit management, action management and disclosure management.'

## Feedback

Matt now heads a team of former investigators who are working full-time on the product with the help of constant feedback from colleagues.

'I see my role is in

around gathering the needs and demands of today's investigations to make sure that what we are creating can meet those demands.' says Matt

## Integrity

As a senior investigator in one of the world's most high profile and scrutinised forces, Matt is well-versed on the importance of putting integrity at the heart of every investigation, something he says that NIMBUS Investigator will help achieve.

'There is nothing more important than integrity. It must underpin everything we do and everything the user does. We want to build integrity into the system so that it will support the user to follow best practice and work to a high standard.

'In my experience, cases are not lost by investigators simply because there was never enough evidence in the first place. Where failures happen, it is often because there is a gap in integrity in the way exhibits were managed and the way evidence was obtained. So, if we hardwire integrity into the technology then it can be easily demonstrated when it is tested at a later date.'

## Feedback

He describes his 'number one driving ambition' is to deliver something that meets the needs of the end user.

'In order to do that I am always keen, happy, willing, and enthusiastic to have conversations with investigators. If someone is working in an environment where they think 'if only there was a product that would help us achieve this aim', then I'd be happy to have that conversation to understand their needs.

'I've had a varied careers and faced lots of challenges along the way but there will be people out there who have their own set of demands and challenges and I'd love them to get in touch with me to see if they are interested in sharing that information so that I can use it to take the product forward.'

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