

MICHAEL FRANCIS: SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

January 1991:

Michael John Francis, a man with an extensive criminal record who had collaborated with the police since 1980 as an agent provocateur and informant on major criminals, was approached by Detective Superintendent Jim Davis of the Serious Fraud Office. Francis had known Davis since 1980. Davis outlined a scheme to Francis, who at that time was living under the assumed name of David Kent and was in breach of two police bails of which Davis was aware. He was to approach AN with the proposition that, for £3.5 million, AN would receive back his passport, also requirements on reporting to the police would be lifted, and AN would be greatly assisted with his case. If Francis were successful, Davis promised him £500,000.

The explanation given to Francis for this proposition by the SFO was that AN was standing in the way of certain political issues and that, although the SFO had caused the collapse of PPI, they could not substantiate the charges they had contemplated at that time and therefore this scheme was to assist AN leave the country. Francis was not all enthusiastic about participating in the SFO's plan; but on voicing his reticence he was informed by Davis that if he did not co-operate he would be "put away for years". Francis then requested additional confirmation from higher authority. Davis arranged a meeting at Elm Street with John Knox a Deputy Director of the SFO. Knox confirmed all Davis had said, including the remuneration of £500,000 if Francis was successful.

That same month, Francis approached Wendy Welsher for help with the scheme. Welsher had known Francis (under the name of Michael Adams) since 1985 or 1986, during which time she had discussed many business proposals with him. Her expertise was in timeshare developments in Turkey and Spain and, as the AN family were interested in timeshare projects in Turkey and Northern Cyprus, she was an ideal person to make an approach to them. After hearing an explanation of the scheme, she asked to meet Jim Davis for further confirmation of the role she was expected to play. On meeting Davis, she was shown his warrant and business cards. He asked for her bank account and credit card details... She was also made to understand that the SFO had run into trouble with the case.

April 1991: DSC Tom Glendenning.

Michael Francis was introduced to detective Chief Superintendent Tom Glendenning by Jim Davis at the Grosvenor Hotel in London to discuss progress concerning Wendy Welsher. On the instructions of Davis, Francis opened a Swiss bank account in Zurich.

End April/Early May 1991: MI6.

Francis was asked to go to the fifth floor of New Scotland Yard to meet Tom Glendenning and Derek Maynard of MI6. Francis perceived that the purpose of the meeting was to assure Maynard that he and Welsher were the right people for the job and to monitor the current situation.

July 1991:

At a prearranged meeting, Michael Francis met Jim Davis and Andy Barnes in Zurich where Barnes informed Francis that he was carrying £100,000 in his briefcase, which he had obtained from Wendy Welsher a few days earlier. He went with Francis to a bank to deposit the major part of the money. Barnes took £10,000 in cash.

Between July and October 1991 there were many conversations between the police, Welsher, Francis, Jim Davis and Andy Barnes. There were also various meetings between Welsher and Bilge Nevzat concentrating on timeshare proposals and the status of feasibility studies.

July 1992: Leighton's "The Sisters".

Wendy Welsher was asked to meet Andy Barnes and Jim Davis at a prearranged time outside Bonhams, the fine art auctioneers in Knightsbridge. By telephone they had told her they would hand her the painting "Sisters" for entry into a forthcoming auction in two or three months' time. She had been given written authority to handle the picture by the AN family and, on entering Bonhams, she asked to see the gentleman she had been told to meet.

Bonhams accepted the painting to be entered into a sale with other Leightons. Welsher received a receipt for £400,000 representing the insurance value with the information that a Director of Fine Arts would like to meet her and would contact her in due course. In a few days' time she was contacted by a lady called Caroline from Bonhams who said they were absolutely delighted with the picture and had entered it into the forthcoming sale. But the following day Welsher received a telephone call from Michael Francis who told her to collect the painting from Bonhams to meet him in Paris with it. Welsher felt very suspicious about this request and called Andy Barnes of the SFO for confirmation.

Barnes confirmed that the request was correct. So the following morning Welsher collected the painting from Bonhams, put it in the boot of her car, drove through British Customs and Passport Control and French Customs and Passport Control, and met Francis at a hotel at Charles de Gaulle airport outside Paris. There she handed over the painting. Later she was to discover that the painting had been entered on the Stolen Arts Register.

August 1992:

Welsher met Michael Adams [Francis] and Andy Barnes in Zurich. She handed over the £11,000 Bilge Nevzat had given her for architects' fees to Barnes. The next morning Barnes and Adams banked £10,000 in Switzerland, Barnes kept £1,000.

August 22, 1992: Francis arrested.

Michael Francis was arrested by the police at the Penta Hotel and taken to Gatwick Police Station. In his briefcase the police found, amongst other things, a brochure depicting arms that were for sale. As a consequence, he was arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. A few hours later he was interviewed by anti-terrorist branch officers. During the interview Detective Chief Superintendent Tom Glendenning arrived and told him that if he cooperated any possible charges against him would be dropped. A few days later he was taken to the Crawley Magistrates Court and remanded in custody to Lewes Prison.

End September 1992:

One of the Governors of Lewes Prison informed Michael Francis that he had received a telephone call from George Ness, Commander of the Organised and International Crime squad of New Scotland Yard, to the effect that a team of officers from the SFO would be taking him out of prison within the next few days. They requested Francis' co-operation, in return for which the charges against him would not be processed, other than the passport and driving licence irregularities.

October 1, 1992: Francis released from Lewis prison.

Detective Chief Inspector David Watson, Andy Barnes and several other police officers accompanied Michael Francis out of Lewes Prison. He was taken to Crawley Police Station where a tape recording was made and he read a statement written by the police incriminating AN in a plot to pervert the course of justice. It cited Justice Tucker, Anthony Scrivener QC, Assistant Commissioner Wyn Jones as co-conspirators. The statement also accused AN of having "salted away" 750 million Deutschemarks, being involved in arms and drug deals, and a number of other matters.

October 1992:

During October both Welsher and Francis were taken to South Woodford Police Station where further tape recordings were made. A couple, called Tom and Teresa Oliver, also became involved at this juncture.

October 23, 1992:

Francis appeared at Crawley Magistrates Court, on charges relating to the passport and driving licence irregularities. He was given bail with one of the stipulations being that he should not leave the country.

October 26, 1992:

Francis flew to Zurich under the instructions of and with Jim Davis to retrieve incriminating tape recordings of Jim Davis, Andy Barnes and Tom Glendenning, plus a brief recording of a business discussion with Asil Nadir relating to timeshare. Jim Davis also gave him a brown A4 envelope which contained the original documents, given to him by Wendy Welsher, which Bilge Nevzat and Safiye Nadir had signed regarding the timeshare. Francis placed the envelope in a safe deposit box.

October 29, 1992:

Francis re-appeared at Crawley Magistrates Court, on the charges relating to the passport and driving licence irregularities, where it was arranged, between the Metropolitan Police and the Magistrate, that he would be given a fine and all further and outstanding charges dropped.

October 30, 1992:

Together with Jim Davis and Andy Barnes, Francis flew back to Zurich to collect the documents given to Francis on the 26th along with the painting "Sisters" by Lord Frederick Leighton and non-existent recording of Asil Nadir that Francis had told Barnes and Francis he had. Francis was "unable" to retrieve the items so Davis and Barnes returned to the UK empty-handed later that day. Francis stayed on in Switzerland on pretext of trying to obtain the items. Although Francis told his handlers that he would return to the UK on the 5th November, with the items, he stayed out of the country for three months.

End of February/March 1993:

Francis returned to the UK where he was contacted by Glendenning and Barley and coerced into fabricating evidence to implicate Asil Nadir, an Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police: Wynn Jones, the senior Defence Counsel: Anthony Scrivener Q.C. and the trial judge: Mr Justice Tucker in Perverting the Course of Justice charges, involving the documents signed by Bilge Nevzat and Safiye Nadir and the painting "Sisters" by Lord Frederick Leighton.

November 17, 1993:

Michael Francis swore his affidavit in Cyprus.