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## **THE POLICE ARREST**

**TUESDAY 26 APRIL 2005**

My fourteen year old son Ben suffers from the neurological disease ME/CFS, World Health Organisation classification ICD-10 G93.3 and has done since the age of ten.. It has ruined his life and he has been unable to attend the school that he loves on a regular basis for nigh on four years. Our lives have been ruined by this disease.

On the morning of Tuesday 26 April I got up at around 8.30 am. My son, who is ill from ME/CFS, did the same, slowly and gently as he is ill. At around 9.00 am the door bell of our flat rang most forcefully. I thought it was possibly the postman and went to answer the door in my pyjamas/night wear. On my doorstep were four police officers who demanded entry – three men and one woman. I was really shocked and taken aback. I could not understand what these officers wanted with me.

I brought the police into my home as they demanded, into the sitting room, and asked what all this was about. The spokesperson of the four police officers, who subsequently transpired to be TDC MacDonald, said that they had come to arrest me and take me down to Southall Police Station. I was literally stunned. This is 9.00 am in the morning, with my ill son in his room and both of us in our pyjamas. The police attitude was threatening and frightening.

I asked “Arrest me, what for?” MacDonald said that they had come to arrest me for harassment. “Harassment? Harassment of whom?” I asked.

“Jane Colby of TYMES Trust and others” replied MacDonald.

“What is all this about? What others? ” I asked.

“Many others” replied MacDonald “including one international complaint. Please come with us now, I have come to arrest you and take you down to the police station immediately. ”

I asked the officers was it really necessary to have FOUR of them come to arrest a woman who lives on her own with her sick child? How intimidating and upsetting this was? How it could serve to compromise the already fragile health of my child? The woman answered that it was necessary for her to be there. From the three men, answer came there none.

I told the officers that I wanted to phone my solicitor right now. They refused to allow me to do this and said that I could call my solicitor down at the police station. I then pointed out that I could not leave my sick son on his own. The woman officer asked if I could not get a friend round to look after him. I demurred. I had no friend to look after my son at such short notice and also, the child suffers from a neurological disease and there was no way that I could leave him at that time! The police were very, very keen that I come with them straightaway and clearly not at all pleased that Ben was with me

and that this posed difficulties for them in regard to their attempt to remove me immediately from my home.

MacDonald then instructed the other uniformed male officer to go and look for Ben, I guess to check out that he was at home with me as I had stated. I gestured down the hall towards Ben's bedroom, where I thought he was. Ben told me later that he did not realise the police were in the flat at this stage and that he was in the bathroom having a wash and so on. The bathroom door was closed but is never locked. The policeman started to open the bathroom door. Ben told him that he was in the bathroom and closed the door. The policeman told Ben to get dressed and get his clothes on. Ben said OK and shut the door again. The policeman then tried to force the bathroom door open to get at Ben. Ben put his hand there to stop the policeman trying to force his way into the bathroom and said that he was getting dressed. After a few seconds, the policeman let go of the door and Ben was able to close the door, wash and get his clothes on. Ben is a fourteen year old child suffering from a very serious neurological disease. How DARE the police behave like this towards a sick child?

The police were very insistent that I leave my home now and wished to arrest me right then and there. I refused to go down to the police station with the officers and leave my sick child on his own. The police said that possibly they could be compassionate (this was a word that they kept on using) and that I could attend the police station tomorrow or the next when they would arrest me. They would have to see.

The three male police officers left the sitting room and went into my bedroom that also doubles as my office, without my permission. I was left in the sitting room with the woman police officer. She told me that the officers were being compassionate (all four of them against a woman and her sick child). When I realised that the police had gone into my bedroom without my permission, I went in there and asked them what they thought that they were doing? They answered that they had to make a call. Meanwhile they were looking around my office/bedroom.

The police said that they would have to take my computer and they needed my permission to do it. I asked what would happen if I did not give my permission? MacDonald stated that if I refused to give this permission, they would call Social Services to come and look after my child, arrest me and remove me from my home immediately and take my computer anyway. This was really, really nasty threatening stuff.

I asked the police when I could have my computer back as I needed it for work. They replied that they did not know. That it would be up to the Crown Prosecution Service as to whether they decided to prosecute me or not, then they would see. I asked if I could please copy my Contacts File from my computer as I could not earn a living without it. MacDonald agreed but cautioned me in a threatening manner not to wipe anything. I asked Ben to help me do this as I don't have the technical skills for this action. Ben helped with all four officers piled into my bedroom watching.

I was shaking and scared. Ben too. I asked how the police could behave in this way to a Mother and her sick child? Had they no concept of how upsetting and frightening this was, especially for Ben, with four police officers piling into my flat? The woman police officer said that I should not talk about this as it might upset Ben. Not talk about this?

With four police officers in my flat threatening to take me away? With my sick child in the very room?

Eventually MacDonald agreed that I could attend Southall Police Station with my solicitor when proper arrangements had been made for Ben. He left me his name, the other officer's name (I presume the one in uniform, not sure.) The details that he wrote down for me were his own name, TDC MacDonald and DS Bunkall, Southall CID, 0208 346 2008.

Ben unplugged my computer. The fat police officer in civilian clothes took it.

MacDonald forced me under duress to sign the note in his book that stated I had agreed voluntarily that they could take away my computer.

The police then left. I telephoned Saunders & Co.

This has been a horrible experience for both myself and Ben.

**Jane Bryant**  
**26 April 2005**