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## 2. Privacy & Privacy Laws

*data protection  
 bill*

# Police data sold to newspapers

**Claire Cozens  
 and Chris Tryhorn**

Two national newspapers paid to receive confidential information from the police national computer, a court heard yesterday.

Articles from the Sunday Mirror and the Mail on Sunday were used in evidence against two former police employees and two private investigators charged with offences involving the sale of police information to the press.

The court was told that Stephen Whittamore, a 56-year-old private investigator with links to the national press, provided "very personal and confidential details" about a series of high-profile figures, including the EastEnders actors Charlie Brooks and Jessie Wallace; Bob Crow, general secretary of the Rail Mar-

itime and Transport Union; and Clifton Tomlinson, son of the actor Ricky Tomlinson.

Riel Karmy-Jones, prosecuting, told Blackfriars crown court in central London that Mr Whittamore had received the information "through a chain" made up of the three other defendants: the private investigator John Boyall, 52; Alan King, a 59-year-old retired police officer; and Paul Marshall, 39, a former civilian communications officer who was based at Tooting police station in London.

Mr Marshall and Mr King both pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit misconduct in a public office, while Mr Whittamore and Mr Boyall pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of breaching the Data Protection Act. All four were given a two-year conditional discharge.

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