

A Kiwi couple say they have been spied on for 30 years. **Steve Kilgallon** reports on the strange events in their lives

YOU MIGHT argue that Kate Dewes and Rob Green have had remarkably bad luck with New Zealand Post. Their collection of shredded, torn, ripped and emptied envelopes, many stamped with various official apologies for their condition, runs to more than 100 (they've kept only about half).

Or you might agree with their belief that this is evidence that, for nearly two decades, they have been under surveillance by British intelligence.

Dewes and Green say spooks have repeatedly burgled their Christchurch home and post office box; intercepted their landline calls; blocked cellphone calls; posted watchers outside their house; even slashed their car tyres (and those of people planning to meet them).

They are not your easily dismissed typical conspiracy theorists: She is a university lecturer, officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit and former adviser to two United Nations secretary-general's committees. He is a retired British Royal Navy commander.

Among their supporters are nearly 100 British and New Zealand MPs, plus other political heavyweights like Helen Clark and former British Labour leader Neil Kinnock.

But they are delusional, says New Zealand's Security Intelligence Service. SIS boss Warren Tucker, with whom they have a curious, even affectionate relationship, told them so in his last letter: "I believe you are mistaken and an explanation lies elsewhere. A traumatic episode will always have an impact on those closely involved and it is not uncommon for this to affect their judgment of subsequent events."

THE REASON Britain would have invested so much time and money in watching two such law-abiding Kiwis for such a long time is Green's late aunt, Hilda Murrell, an anti-nuclear protester who was abducted and killed in 1984, just before she was due to give evidence to a public inquiry into a proposed nuclear power station. The initial police investigation failed to unearth a felon and it was not until 2003 that a murder conviction was secured against petty criminal Andrew George, who was 16 at the time of Murrell's death.

Green always believed a group acting on the direction of British intelligence killed his aunt, in the belief she had obtained leaked documents: Either through her anti-nuclear contacts, or from Green himself, perhaps about the controversial sinking of the Argentinian warship The General Belgrano during the Falklands conflict (Green was a senior naval officer at the time, but left shortly afterwards).

After George's conviction, Green picked several large holes in the police case, compiled them into a book – *A Thorn in their Side* – and even met George in prison, where George would claim he hadn't acted alone. British MP Tam Dalyell used parliamentary privilege to claim, shortly after Murrell's death, that it was linked to the Belgrano sinking and her case has remained a cause celebre in the UK – the British tabloid the *Daily Mail* has already run an extract of a new edition of Green's book, released this month.

And that's why Green says he has been harassed ever since – because intelligence believes he still possesses papers, perhaps relating to the Belgrano. He says he doesn't, and doesn't know what they think he has.

Asked why the British could possibly still be interested, so many years later, Green says: "We have to assume someone out there has already, maybe, intercepted something, and they are trying to make sure no more comes to us, or no copy comes to us, and they are terrified about some documents out there."

He speculates that it could be something to do with nuclear power, the Falklands, or something "embarrassing" to the former Thatcher government.

Neither Green nor his wife like talking on the phone, because they expect somebody is listening. So, when they are in Auckland for a speaking engagement, we meet in a pub in Devonport.

Dewes has dismantled her

Spies, lies and murder

Story so far: A spy trail from Falklands war to New Zealand



Kate Dewes and Rob Green believe they have been under surveillance in New Zealand.



Rob Green was a British navy commander in the Falklands conflict and was close to the controversial decision to sink Argentinian warship The General Belgrano.



Green's aunt Hilda Murrell, an anti-nuclear protestor, was murdered in 1984 but nobody was charged.



Labour MP Tam Dalyell told the British Parliament Murrell was murdered for what she knew and secret documents she possessed.



Among Green and Dewes' high-profile supporters are Helen Clark, Phil Goff, Kate Wilkinson and British QC Michael Mansfield.



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KATE DEWES



So began their long and curious relationship with SIS boss Warren Tucker, who said the SIS weren't involved, offered advice, but now thinks they are merely suffering stress.



Green met and married New Zealand anti-nuclear protestor Kate Dewes and moved to New Zealand where he alleges a three-decade campaign of harassment, involving threats, break ins, surveillance and stolen mail by British intelligence began.



As if we would make it up. Who would make this up? I wouldn't put my reputation on the line, and nor would Rob

Kate Dewes

cellphone, and at first suggests I do the same with mine, but relents. Later, jokingly, she turns to my phone and says, "Are you listening?" They are adamant their watchers will know we are meeting. And so, with an incongruous soundtrack of Seal and Robbie Williams on the pub stereo, they lay out their case in the manner of rather careful lawyers.

"We are sick of it," Dewes says, as they steadily stack up examples of events which could be easily explained as coincidental – although the sheer volume of them tests that belief. There is not just the missing and tampered mail (even material Dewes posted to herself from England, but which

GCSB responses "nonsensical"

THE Government Communication and Security Bureau denies it has changed its policy to issue a blanket refusal to anyone who asks if they are among the 88 New Zealanders illegally spied upon – despite admitting it in a letter.

People who have asked the spy agency if they are among the 88 identified by a government report have been met with a "neither confirm nor deny" response, which the Green Party says is a "completely inadequate" given the government's conclusion GCSB had acted illegally.

Kate Dewes and Rob Green, former Green MP Keith Locke and Auckland University law professor Jane Kelsey are among those who have asked if they are among the 88. All were rebuffed. Dewes and Locke have lodged formal complaints with the Privacy Commissioner.

Dewes asked the GCSB in June 2012 if it held a file on her and was told it did not. She wrote again this May,

arrived empty or damaged), but the five break-ins where nothing was taken and the suspicious movements of strangers around their home (they have five signed

after the revelations about the 88, to ask the same question. In reply, GCSB director Ian Fletcher wrote: "Since the response to your last request (dated 20 June 2012), GCSB has changed its policy on responding to requests. As such... GCSB can neither confirm nor deny the existence or non-existence of the information requested."

Despite Fletcher's apparent admission, a spokesman denied any policy change or that all applicants were receiving the same reply: "Each response depends on the individual request. Requesters can ask for responses to be reviewed through the usual channels of the Ombudsman or the Privacy Commissioner, or through the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security."

Locke said first telling Dewes they had no file, then refusing to say even that was a "piece of bureaucratic idiocy". He hasn't asked for his own file nor if he was currently being spied

witness statements, one from a senior military officer, to these incidents), the continued failure of cellphone calls and emails, and Dewes' computer apparently being

upon, but merely a yes-no as to whether he was among the 88. He says the "neither confirm nor deny" answer was thus "nonsensical".

Kelsey received a near-identical letter to Dewes on May 15. She said an appeal to the Privacy Commissioner would be a "waste of time" given the elongated process she went through in 1999 to secure a heavily-redacted version of her SIS file.

Green said he took GCSB's rebuttals as a tacit confirmation he and Dewes were in the 88. "They will never say that they have [files] and we should not have any illusions about this process: it is a farce, pretending to be accountable when they are not."

Green Party intelligence spokesman Steffan Browning said the GCSB's first reply to Dewes couldn't be trusted, and "to now say 'neither confirm nor deny' is a meaningless statement - it's inadequate." The Privacy Commission and the SIS wouldn't comment.

tampered with. It doesn't appear the most sophisticated surveillance, but they say that's because the British want them to know they are not off the hook.

Indeed, Tucker told them back in 2009 it couldn't be the SIS surveilling them because they would not be so ham-fisted. "They keep saying they are not doing it to us. But if they are not, who the hell is, that's the question," says Dewes. Their conclusion is thus the British – nobody else would have the resources nor motive to monitor them so closely.

It has not distracted them from their long campaign for a review of the Murrell case, nor their work for the Peace Foundation Disarmament and Security Centre, which they jointly run from their Riccarton home. Instead, they use what Green calls low-level techniques: He carries no cellphone, sensitive material is handwritten, not stored on computer, they don't talk openly at home for fear of bugging devices. When they travel, they never advertise their plans and don't stay in hotels or hire cars.

The couple first met in 1992 and the apparent mail tampering began – Green sent Dewes the transcript of a British television documentary on potential safety risks of British nuclear submarines and it arrived with key pages removed.

Dewes' SIS file, which she obtained after a dogged pursuit in which the service first denied its existence, then apologised for

mislaying it during computerisation of old card files, shows they were already aware of her from her involvement in various peace-protest groups. She believes Green was under surveillance after leaving the navy shortly after the Falklands.

Dewes and Green married, and Green emigrated to Christchurch in 1999, taking up New Zealand citizenship. Once together, they believe the British interest grew.

They have long had powerful allies. Dewes has involved two serving prime ministers – she recalls a conversation with David Lange in 1993, and also raised concerns with her friend Helen Clark in 2005, who offered police protection.

A campaign continues in Britain for a commission of inquiry into the Murrell case, led by human rights barrister Michael Mansfield, who tells the *Star-Times* he has no doubts of the couple's claims.

"In my view, the evidence amassed by Rob and Kate about interference with their communications is compelling," Mansfield says. "They are highly intelligent and experienced individuals who are not given to flights of fancy or self destruct."

Mansfield says he believes they remain a target because of the need to continue the cover-up of Murrell's death – and points to recent revelations undercover British police had the family of murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence under surveillance. He also compares Green and Dewes to Edward Snowden, Julian Assange and Bradley Manning: "Truth seekers are always targeted themselves... revealing malpractice rarely leads to prosecution of the perpetrators but rather the whistleblowers."

Two veteran Labour MPs, Austin Mitchell and Jeremy Corbyn, have also been steadfast supporters and organised Parliamentary Early Day Motions to support the call for an inquiry and highlight new forensic evidence in Green's latest edition of the book.

The most recent, on July 3, timed to publicise the book, attracted 36 signatories. A similar petition in the Scots Parliament attracted another 26.

In New Zealand, former Labour leader Phil Goff has done something similar, with 50 Labour, Maori, Green and United Future MPs signing a motion which supported the British campaign for a commission of inquiry.

Goff says Green has mounted a "persuasive case" that Andrew George did not kill his aunt. And he has no doubts about the couple (as a minister, he appointed Dewes to an advisory committee). "They are certainly not inventing it [the mail tampering]: They have clear evidence. The interference has been done in a way to perhaps send them a message. But I've no idea who might be involved. They are sensible people, not prone to conspiracy theories or paranoia."

Green and Dewes also spoke at the select committee hearings into the GCSB bill; they were on immediately before Kim Dotcom ("We nodded. He knows who we are.") and see parallels between their case and his: Green says Dotcom was a victim of a cultural cringe attitude towards assisting the Americans, and they face the same approach with the British. He says it was fantastic he could testify before Prime Minister John Key: "One of those rare moments where New Zealand is a shining light of democracy and accountability."

But then he says New Zealand appears at best powerless, at worst collaborationist, in spying by an ally on their soil.

Green told the committee they should install a truly independent panel to vet who is spied upon, and include as a member someone who has had that experience. It would, he says, prevent "political" spying on "people because they are left wing and democratically promoting different views to government; we are a democracy. It should be confined to people who are a risk to the nation, not politically embarrassing".

AN UNSIGNED file note from papers they have obtained from SIS says, "I am unpersuaded by claims of harassment. The 'targets' are amateurs whose researches would seem unlikely to have caused any concern in official circles and the claimed actions are of a nature most unlikely to have been perpetrated by any agency of the state. The evidence of victimisation is far from convincing. The events in Christchurch... we deem capable of innocent explanation." Green is convinced this approach has been adopted by SIS because of pressure on them by the other members of the Five Eyes – the US, Britain, Canada and Australia, who share intelligence – because New Zealand has had a more liberal approach to public information over spying.

Green and Dewes know what people will think. "As if we would make it up," Dewes says. "Who would make this up? I wouldn't put my reputation on the line, and nor would Rob."