# MI5 accused of deliberately misleading UK courts over neo-Nazi informant



MI5 has found itself at the centre of a significant legal and ethical controversy as the BBC has accused the agency of "deliberately and repeatedly" providing false evidence concerning its handling of a neo-Nazi informant. This allegation, presented to a panel of High Court judges, raises serious questions about the transparency and accountability of one of the UK's central intelligence bodies.

The case revolves around the actions of a violent individual, referred to in legal discussions as Agent X, who allegedly exploited his position within MI5 to intimidate and abuse his former partner, known publicly as "Beth." The BBC's investigative efforts revealed that despite MI5's insistence on maintaining a strict policy of neither confirming nor denying the status of its agents, an officer had, in fact, breached this protocol by outright confirming Agent X's status in a conversation with a BBC journalist. Evidence supporting this claim included recorded phone calls and internal notes, which the BBC presented as proof of MI5's dishonesty.

During the recent court proceedings, MI5’s director-general, Ken McCallum, expressed an "unreserved apology" and acknowledged the severity of the situation but contrasted the BBC's assertion by claiming that the errors made were not intentional. "Everyone from the director general downwards acknowledges the seriousness caused," McCallum stated, highlighting an intent to convey that the situation arose from mistakes rather than deliberate deceit. However, this defence has been met with scepticism.

The BBC's barrister, Jude Bunting KC, argued that MI5's claims of innocence lacked credibility. He pointed out that the agency’s previous investigations into its conduct suggested "copious levels of dishonesty" and called for contempt of court proceedings against both MI5 and the individual officers involved in the misrepresentation of facts. Bunting asserted that this case marked a crucial test for the judiciary regarding the protocols and integrity of MI5, raising concerns about whether the courts had access to a complete and truthful account of events.

Adding to the gravity of the situation, the Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, has initiated an external review to ensure that such instances do not reoccur. This inquiry will explore the factors that led to the miscommunication and will attempt to ascertain whether these actions were the result of systemic failures or individual misconduct. The ramifications of this case extend beyond just MI5's credibility; they touch upon issues of judicial integrity and the treatment of victims of domestic abuse.

Recent judgments madeby the High Court have underlined MI5's failure to uphold the standards expected of it, particularly in cases involving vulnerable individuals like Beth. As the judges—Lady Chief Justice Baroness Sue Carr, President of the King's Bench Division Dame Victoria Sharp, and Mr Justice Chamberlain—deliberate on this matter, it not only reflects on MI5 but also on the broader capacities of state institutions to govern with accountability.

In her representation of Beth, barrister Charlotte Kilroy KC echoed that the threshold for contempt proceedings had indeed been met. This sentiment resonates with growing public concern over the balance between national security and individual rights. The future will reveal whether this legal challenge will lead to substantive changes within MI5 or remain a cautionary tale about the conduct of powerful state institutions.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4ge87g2lngo), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/30d966ec-16fb-416f-8556-bc297f45a78a)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4ge87g2lngo), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-spy-chief-apologises-giving-courts-incorrect-information-over-bbc-report-on-agent-2025-02-12/), [[5]](https://www.centreforwomensjustice.org.uk/news/2025/2/12/mi5-misled-multiple-courts-about-informant-who-abused-women)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/feb/12/mi5-courts-false-evidence-neo-nazi-agent-judge-rules), [[6]](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/mi5-spy-secret-service-court-b2697772.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-spy-chief-apologises-giving-courts-incorrect-information-over-bbc-report-on-agent-2025-02-12/), [[7]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/mi5-secret-service-high-court-b2696813.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4ge87g2lngo> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-spy-chief-apologises-giving-courts-incorrect-information-over-bbc-report-on-agent-2025-02-12/> - MI5's director-general, Ken McCallum, issued a public apology for providing incorrect information to London's High Court regarding a BBC investigation into Agent X, a violent right-wing extremist informant. The BBC reported that MI5 had misled the courts about its policy of neither confirming nor denying the identities of informants. An MI5 officer had breached this policy by confirming Agent X's status in a recorded phone call with a BBC journalist. Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has commissioned an external review to investigate and prevent similar incidents in the future.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/feb/12/mi5-courts-false-evidence-neo-nazi-agent-judge-rules> - A High Court judge found that MI5 provided false evidence to three courts concerning its handling of a neo-Nazi agent alleged to have attacked his partner. The case revolves around a BBC investigation into Agent X, who is accused of using his MI5 status to claim he was above the law. The government has ordered an inquiry to determine whether the false information was deliberate or an innocent mistake, as MI5 has claimed. MI5's director-general, Ken McCallum, has offered an unreserved apology to the court.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/30d966ec-16fb-416f-8556-bc297f45a78a> - MI5 admitted to providing incorrect information to the English courts in a case concerning an agent accused of domestic abuse. Director-general Sir Ken McCallum issued an unreserved apology after the BBC reported that MI5 had misled the court to protect the identity of an agent who allegedly attacked his girlfriend with a machete. Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has ordered a review into the service's actions. The domestic intelligence agency originally claimed it had not confirmed the agent's status to the BBC, but it was later revealed that MI5 had disclosed this information to a journalist.
5. <https://www.centreforwomensjustice.org.uk/news/2025/2/12/mi5-misled-multiple-courts-about-informant-who-abused-women> - Lawyers acting for the Attorney General were forced to answer questions in the High Court after it was revealed that a deputy director of MI5 made a false statement in proceedings about an MI5 recruit who terrorised his girlfriend, known as 'Beth'. MI5 has now issued an 'unreserved apology' to the BBC, accepting that three separate courts were misled by their witness, acknowledging that what happened was a 'serious error' for which 'MI5 takes full responsibility'.
6. <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/mi5-spy-secret-service-court-b2697772.html> - MI5 has been embroiled in controversy after a neo-Nazi agent, who attacked his girlfriend with a machete, was revealed to be a paid undercover agent working for the agency. When the woman took the spy to court, MI5 attempted to manage the media fallout but ended up lying to the BBC and the judiciary. The case of Agent X and the domestic abuse allegations have been a running sore for MI5 for more than four years. MI5 has now issued an 'unreserved apology' to the BBC and all three courts, describing what happened as a 'serious error' and saying 'MI5 takes full responsibility'.
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/mi5-secret-service-high-court-b2696813.html> - MI5 has been forced to admit it 'misled' the High Court during a bid to prevent the BBC from identifying a suspected Security Service informant. In 2022, the government attempted to stop the BBC from airing a programme that would name a neo-Nazi state agent who allegedly abused two women and is a covert human intelligence source. An order was made by a High Court judge in April 2022 to prevent the corporation from disclosing information likely to identify the man. However, Mr Justice Chamberlain said the BBC could still air the programme and the key issues, without identifying him, referring to them only as 'X'.