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A pity about the police [1]

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Police are said to be 'puzzled' that John Darwin's sons, Anthony and Mark, have decided to take legal advice and speak to them only through a lawyer. It is 'very strange' said a police spokesman.

Strange? You must be joking. It's perfectly sensible.

John Darwin went missing a few years back after supposedly taking his canoe on the sea in North-East England. His sudden re-appearance this month led to his (and his wife's) arrest on the suspicion that his disappearance was in fact a deliberate attempt to escape his debts. Police want to interview the sons as possible witnesses.

Well, either they knew about it, or they didn't. Either way, if I was them, I'd do the same and call the lawyers. I was brought up to trust the police as my friend. The Yorkshire Ripper enquiry - where information was kept on file cards rather then computers, and the police interviewed the guilty man nine times without figuring he had anything to hide - made me realize they were incompetent. More recently, their arresting folk on terrorist charges for cycling on a footpath or shouting at the Home Secretary made me realize they couldn't be trusted with the huge power politicians had voted them. And their willingness to charge someone with kidnapping who had made a citizen's arrest of a window-smashing thug made me realize that they were only interested in getting easy convictions so that they could meet their Home Office targets.

'Ask a policeman' I was taught. Now I wouldn't even ask them how to cross the road, never mind give them my name and address. Their brand has been polluted. Pity - it's not their fault. It's the rotten public-sector system they work under, and the political targets they have to work to. Sad.

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