

FROM: ANTHONY LANGDON
24 JULY 2000

cc.



or

HOLAB



HAMILL

This note records my meetings with the Chief Constable and the chairman of the ICPC in Belfast last Friday (21 July). I am also taking the opportunity to note more generally how far I have got with this exercise, and how I envisage it shaping up.

Meeting with Chief Constable

2 This was a meeting of around 45 minutes with nobody else present. Much of it was on similar lines to what you recorded in your minute to Mr Lindsay of 12 June, though the big difference since then is, of course, that a criminal investigation is now in train. [The critical date for the new investigation is 20 June, when Andrea McKee made a new statement to the police. Mrs. McKee had originally made a statement saying that she had been staying with her husband in Reserve Constable Atkinson's house on the night of the Hamill murder, and confirming that it was her husband Michael who had from there telephoned the home of the murder suspect Allister Hanvey. In her 20 June statement Mrs McKee - who had by then been separated from her husband for about a year - said that neither she nor her husband had been at Atkinson's house on the night in question, and that the story of Michael McKee making the phone call had been invented following an approach from Atkinson.]

3 I generally found the Chief Constable in a pretty defensive and critical mood. In particular-

he commented that Hamill's death could well have been caused by his own family cradling his head in a way that led to oxygen starvation;

although he accepted that Hamill's death had resulted from the beating, he thought that the connection was indirect, and that it might well not have been possible to sustain a charge of murder if the issue had been tested at trial

he thought it was noteworthy that it was Hamill's sister rather than his partner who was making the running, and that the sister (Diane) had her own agenda to discredit the RUC

he believed that the ICPC were largely motivated by desire to improve their image before they were disbanded.

4 As regards the allegation that the police deliberately stood by while the beating took place, the Chief Constable said that there was 'no shred of evidence' to support that view. He thought that the fault was of the police on the spot simply misinterpreting a row that had broken out in a fast-moving situation. He believed that the view of the judge in the Hobson trial was correct, and that the incident had

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