

common knowledge shortly after arrest, either within the community or through the media.

Unfortunately just such an incident did, in fact, arise in which otherwise strong evidence of identification from a Mr Colin Prunty was jeopardised. This occurred when television footage of one of the accused, at a court appearance, was shown to Mr Prunty by members of Robert Hamill's family and following which he changed his account on identification. Other evidence available, which included police radio transmissions and police evidence at this scene, did not support Mr Prunty's account.

On considering the above matters, my own personal view was that witness identification of those actually involved was going to be crucial if there was to be any chance of a successful criminal prosecution. In that respect I considered that it was imperative that the full information was obtained from those at the scene. I continually reviewed my assessment and discussed this regularly with Detective Chief Inspector

**P39**

The strategy implemented in the early stages was that the investigation team as a priority attempted to secure evidence regarding the identity of suspects that could then have been put to these individuals during interview. The apparent sectarian nature of the assault and the allegation of inactivity by police at the scene had a serious impact on the support the police investigation received with persons from whom police were seeking co-operation. The following actions set out in the action sheets relate to the securing of just such evidence:-

- (a) A24 dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 1997 to identify possible witnesses/persons in the vicinity of the scene in Market Street.
- (b) A30 dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 1997 to liaise with St Patrick's Club re possible witnesses.
- (c) A34 dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 1997 to identify all premises in Market Street and Thomas Street with security cameras.