

Chief Constable as to why it had taken so long to re-start everything. I met Mr. McGrory and he showed me correspondence which showed that he had been putting pressure on at very high political levels to try and drive the investigation forward and it was his view that because of that McBurney identified his so called strategy regarding the McKee's. I asked Sir Ronnie by letter, page 14379, what was the influence and he replied, page 14378, that McBurney had come to him and said, 'there is a window of opportunity here following the separation of the McKee's to go for this again'.

35. When you put dates around this strategy it just doesn't make any sense at all. The McKee's had separated in September 1999 and although Michael was in the South of Ireland Andrea was available in Wales. How could he be certain in 1997 that the McKee's would split up? McBurney waited a huge length of time before taking any action in the hope that the false alibi would be exposed during the inquest and the Hobson trial. My view is that McBurney was wholly incompetent at conducting this type of inquiry with so many contentious strands to it. I also believed the murder investigation was poorly resourced. Until DCI K was appointed and put new impetus into the inquiry it would not have gone anywhere.
36. In the final part of my report, there are no recommendations. If Mr. McBurney had still been serving there would have been misconduct recommendations regarding his handling of the investigation for neglect of duty, primarily lack of supervision and failing to keep records.
37. Michael Irwin had not been a Detective Inspector for very long and he made every earnest effort to investigate the murder of Robert Hamill. He went to great lengths to secure evidence and identify those who had assaulted Robert Hamill. I felt that Irwin found himself in an extremely difficult position and uncomfortable about what he was being asked to do and just felt he had to do so, in respect of Andrea McKee, because he was given an order. I did not think there was sufficient evidence to discipline him.