

R v ATKINSON, ATKINSON & HANVEY

COMMITTAL PROCEEDINGS CRAIGAVON MAGISTRATES' COURT

COUNSELS FEES – CHRISTINE SMITH BL


These committal proceedings were in a very high profile case arising out of the murder of Robert Hamill. All the circumstances of the murder and subsequent related events are the subject of one of the reports by Judge [REDACTED] which, it is widely assumed, will lead to some form of public enquiry.

The preliminary enquiry papers comprised two large arch lever binders of statements and exhibits. The defence required a number of witnesses to go to give oral evidence at the committal proceedings. The most significant of these witnesses is Andrea McKee also known as Andrea [REDACTED]. The evidence that it was expected that she would give was indispensable to the prosecution case.

On 21 October 2003 Ms Smith consulted with Andrea [REDACTED] in Wrexham, Wales. On 27 October the witness came to Craigavon Courthouse in order to give her evidence but the case did not proceed due to factors unconnected with her. On 22 December 2003 the proceedings were due to recommence but the witness did not appear for reasons which then required detailed investigation and consideration. On 9 January Ms Smith again travelled to Wales to consult with the witness.

Ms Smith took part in two further consultations on 17 and 25 February at which the problems which had arisen in the case were considered and finally on 19 March Ms Smith appeared at Craigavon Magistrates' Court to withdraw the prosecution on instructions.

The fees requested are reasonable and are agreed on the basis that this was a very high profile case requiring very extensive preparation. There were also days set aside for the committal which were lost due to factors beyond the control of Ms Smith.



IVOR MORRISON
Assistant Director
30 March 2004