

Mr Junkin

**R v HOBSON  
SCREENING OF A POLICE OFFICER**

1. I have mentioned this case to you already and I now forward for your information a copy of the papers which were sent to me on 8 April 1998.
2. You will note that screening is being sought in respect of a R/Constable Atkinson. R/Constable Atkinson was a police officer who was in the landrover which was at the scene of the incident which led to the death of Mr Hamill. You are aware that allegations have been made that police did not intervene either at all or sufficiently quickly enough to prevent Mr Hamill being attacked and seriously beaten.
3. The gist of the application is that R/Constable Atkinson has expressed great concern to his superiors over his personal security. This is directed towards giving evidence in open court in the presence of the 'Hamill' family and their associates. The investigating officer into the death of Hamill, D/Inspector Irwin, feels that Atkinson has grounds for concern.
4. I find this an interesting and novel development on the issue of screening. I have not come across a case where screening has been applied for on the basis that the witness has grounds for concern about his safety arising from the presence in the court of the relatives of the victim of an attack. The usual circumstances is that the witness's grounds for fear of his safety comes from associates of the accused.
5. What does concern me is how the application for screening could be put forward to the court. Essentially any application would have to rely on an allegation or suggestion that the Hamill family and/or their associates would be capable of committing serious violence to R/Constable Atkinson. This is

\* an application which I would not like to make except on the most certain and secure evidence. I do not think at the moment that that evidence exists. There is the vague suggestion of adverse publicity associated with the particular investigation and extenuating circumstances, unspecified, relating to R/Constable Atkinson.

6. \* I think we need to tease this out further with police on the issue of how any application could be put forward. I think we need to do this even before we consider the case on its merits in the terms of the conditions and criteria set out in case law, such as R v Taylor etc, with which we are familiar. Accordingly, I have been in touch with [REDACTED] and have mentioned to him the fact that I have referred the case to you and that it is my view that you would call [REDACTED] in for a consultation of some nature. For the moment, if you agree to this course of action, I do not consider it appropriate or necessary to have investigating police at the consultation. This can be carried out at some later date.

*R A Kitson*

**R A KITSON**

Assistant Director

*M. Kitson*  
←  
we spoke. I entirely agree with  
\* above. I think both of us  
should confer, in the first instance  
with D/Sgt Harvey.  
WJ  
9/4/58.