

RESTRICTED

FROM: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE
24 November 1997

- cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - 0
- PS/Mr [REDACTED] (B&L) - 0
- PS/Mr [REDACTED] (B&L) - 0
- PS/PUS (B&L) - 0
- Mr Steele - 0
- Mr [REDACTED]
- Mr [REDACTED]
- Mr [REDACTED]
- Mr [REDACTED]
- Mrs [REDACTED]
- Mr [REDACTED]
- Mr [REDACTED]
- Mr [REDACTED]

Mr [REDACTED] - 0

MEETING WITH THE HAMILL FAMILY - MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER

The Secretary of State was grateful for your submission of 21 November which provided briefing for her meeting with Diane Hamill in relation to the death of her brother Robert. This took place yesterday afternoon in Parliament Buildings. Present with Ms Hamill were her sisters - Fiona, [REDACTED] and Riana, also [REDACTED] of the CAJ and Father [REDACTED] Mr Steele, you and I were also present. The family were restrained but plainly determined to pursue the case.

2. The Hamill family presented a petition with 20,000 signatures calling for a suspension of the police officers who were at the scene at the time of the murder and the setting up of an independent enquiry to investigate the incident. They also made the following points:

- there was a lack of forensic evidence because the arrests did not take place for a number of days;

RESTRICTED

- the RUC press office had issued an "untrue" press statement following the murder;
- they understood that the police concerned were on sick leave or had claimed for shock following the incident;
- the charges against the five accused had been dropped and a judge was said to have sympathised with them and not with the family;
- on the night of Robert's murder, the police landrover was captured on a video camera as it sat outside some building society premises in Portadown;
- the delegation hoped that the inquest would not take as long as others - it was said that the inquest on [REDACTED] who was killed in 1990, had still not been held.
- Diane Hamill has made a complaint against a WPC over a further allegation of the RUC mishandling a situation (when she was verbally abused by a male in Portadown);

yet they had been told there was no video evd

3. The Secretary of State, in response, said that the RUC investigation into the police action in relation to the assault was being supervised by the ICPC Deputy Chairman, [REDACTED]. It had not been completed, although it was at an advanced stage. She would find out how this now stood, whether the officers had been suspended and if not, why not; she would also seek answers to the other questions, including why it took so

39282

Dropping charges -


RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

long to collect forensic evidence. She commented that she did not think it appropriate for a judge to sympathise with the accused in the way described and undertook to ask about the DPP's view that there was insufficient evidence to proceed with the charges in all but one of the cases.

4. The Secretary of State apologised for not getting back to the family earlier. However, she said would seek answers from the Chief Constable, and if necessary the DPP, on the points raised and try to get back to the family within the next two (or about three) weeks. She invited Diane Hamill to come back in relation to her outstanding complaint and also after the ICPC report had been received. She made the point that it would have been helpful if all those who witnessed the event (including members of the family) had made a statement about it. Having shown the Secretary of State the five or six folders containing the petitions, the Hamills took these away again.

5. I would be most grateful if you would follow this up as quickly as possible and ensure that there is a draft response for the Secretary of State's signature in the timescale agreed.



Private Secretary

RESTRICTED