

SUMMARY

- 1 Mr Hamill died as a consequence of a head injury that followed an alleged assault on 27 April 1997.
- 2 The clinical picture was of a severe diffuse brain injury with coma from the time of injury and persistent coma until Mr Hamill's death.
- 3 CT scanning ante-mortem and examination of the brain post-mortem demonstrated no evidence of intracranial haematoma, no evidence of brain swelling or brain oedema nor any evidence that Mr Hamill died of a "pressure" death.
- 4 Histological examination of the brain showed no evidence of hypoxic ischaemic damage in neuronal structures that would be subject to such damage.
- 5 Histological examination of the brain demonstrated a diffuse axonal injury (a shearing injury to white matter tracts) widely distributed throughout the brain; in some areas that damage was thought by Professor Crane to be extensive.
- 6 Such a diffuse axonal injury, widespread and in parts extensive, would typically be associated with high velocity road traffic accidents where there are severe and abrupt acceleration/deceleration forces.
- 7 Such a pattern of injury does not usually follow a simple assault where a punch leads to the patient being knocked out briefly.
- 8 In my opinion Mr Hamill's head/brain was subjected to such significant forces that it caused the sort of severe axonal injury that is normally associated with high velocity road traffic accidents.