

the statements of Tracey Clarke and Timothy Jameson. DI Irwin may have taken the view that the other persons named in the statements were not involved in as direct a way as those persons listed. It would be left to DI Irwin to make a decision as to which persons mentioned were relevant. I suppose it highlights the point that, if there had been a coroner's officer, this task could have been delegated to that officer to chase up. Since I was working unsupported as a single coroner, it was not a task that I could have done. Obviously DI Irwin thought that there was no need to contact more than the persons named in his letter of 16 September 1999; you would have to ask him for the reasoning behind that decision.

17. On 9 September 1999, I instructed [REDACTED] QC to advise on the inquest. I have used Mr [REDACTED] a great deal in inquests over the years. He is very up to speed with coronial law and practice and also the sort of issues that arise in controversial inquests. My letter of instruction is at pages 00376 to 00377. I received his advice on 30 September 1999, which is at pages 00369 to 00371.
18. I remember finding myself faced with a dreadful dilemma: whether I should either hold the inquest in a simplified form, concealing the evidence of Tracey Clarke and Timothy Jameson, or, alternatively, whether I should inform the Hamill family's solicitors of the gist of their evidence, knowing that, given both witnesses' fears for their personal safety, this would then inevitably cause great difficulties in the holding of an inquest. The problem concerned transparency of process and decision-making.
19. In respect of Tracey Clarke and Timothy Jameson not being prepared to give evidence, Mr [REDACTED]'s advice effectively says that I should not just accept the opinion of the police officer, but needed to be personally satisfied that the witnesses had grave and genuine fears for their safety. It is correct to say that, in the summary at paragraph 6 of his advice, Mr [REDACTED] advised that I had little choice but to hold an inquest in this case. At the time I agreed and, in the absence of a criminal trial where all the facts were explored, I took the view that an inquest should be held.