

Telephone
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ANNIE FLANAGAN OBE MA
CHIEF CONSTABLE



BROOKLYN
KNOCK ROAD
BELFAST
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BT5 6LE

Our Ref: COM SEC 01/541/52

12 September 2001

OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATION RELATING TO THE OMAGH BOMBING

I refer to your letter of 10 September 2001 and our discussion with the Ombudsman on that date, of matters referred to therein.

As I emphasised at our meeting there is no question, nor will there be, of material not being disclosed.

ACC Raymond White will reply in detail to your letter to him as soon as he has collated the necessary information to give a comprehensive response.

Signature

FLANAGAN
Chief Constable

David Wood Esq
Director of Investigations
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
New Cathedral Buildings
St Anne's Square
11 Church Street
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BT1 1PG



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With reference to the "vigorous pursuit" of the review documentation, this was requested only on Wednesday 5th September with the relevant intelligence section made personally available to you by the Chief Constable on the 7th September and the complete document provided immediately upon your subsequent request. It was not in the gift of my Liaison Officer to provide this earlier as he had not had sight or possession of same. I do not therefore accept the allegation that it is "obviously questionable if we would ever have known such intelligence was received by the RUC, which is the key to the enquiry we are conducting". I have to say that misunderstanding of what your Team actually wanted arose as a result of the wording of your written requests. My understanding was that it was the allegations of 'Fulton' which were being investigated, and to which the murder review had little relevance.

~~In any case a report was made in September last year by the then D/Inspector i/c Omagh, D/Inspector [redacted], which explains the actions taken on receipt of that information, which while only briefly summarised in the review document, are more fully expanded upon in this letter.~~

In relation to the reassurance you seek in respect of intelligence concerning Omagh, the three Regions have each, independently, re-visited their records. As an extra assurance measure, however, the Intelligence Management Group at Brooklyn have been asked to check all records for August 1998, a task which involves studying over 3000 documents, and which has not yet been completed at the time of writing. I will, of course, apprise you of the result on receipt, which will be as soon as practicable.

I am content, on this occasion, for the purposes of securing the confidence of the Ombudsman on this issue, to facilitate access by Martin Bridger to the system onto which documents received from Crime Branch were input.

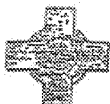
~~With regard to recommendations 181 and 182 in the Murder Review, the former was personally addressed with Martin Bridger on 11 September by D/Superintendent McArthur and which included a written report. Further developments include statements pertinent to this issue from the day of the bomb and which are being forwarded separately. The latter I deemed to be discharged on the forwarding of the report of ex D/Inspector [redacted] under signature of ex D/Chief Superintendent [redacted] who was then Deputy Head of Special Branch.~~

In relation to the issue of placing some key facts into the public domain, I trust that following our meeting of 11 September with the Chief Constable and the Ombudsman, that any plans so to do have now been postponed until your investigation has progressed to an appropriate point.

With regard to the 12 questions posed concerning information flow, the following is pertinent:

- Fulton*
1. It is agreed that the CHIS met on 5 occasions between 5 June 1998 and 12 August 1998 and passed information as recorded on the contact sheets.

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George Cross

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SIR RONNIE FLANAGAN OBE MA
CHIEF CONSTABLE



BROOKLYN
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Our Ref: COM SEC 01/541/52

20 September 2001

Dear Nuala,

REMOVAL OF SECRET MATERIAL FROM HEADQUARTERS

We spoke briefly yesterday by telephone about a request from members of your staff to remove secret Special Branch material from this Headquarters.

You are, of course, aware of the arrangements that have been put in place for your staff to have accommodation here at Headquarters and unrestricted access here to any material they require. I consider it a most significant departure from anything that has ever previously happened to allow such material to actually be physically removed from here.

You will understand for reasons that I need not fully elaborate herein, that in order to discharge my responsibility to protect, amongst other things, the originators of intelligence, that I must control the product. Please therefore outline in detail what material you would seek to have removed and why, so that I may give further consideration to the request.

~~In the absence of some unanswerable reason for actual removal to allow processes which cannot~~
take place within this Headquarters I have to say I am reluctant to authorise removal, for example, on the grounds of greater convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

R FLANAGAN
Chief Constable

Mrs Nuala O'Loan LLB (Hons)
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
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Our Ref: COM SEC 01/541/52

9 October 2001

OMAGH BOMBING INVESTIGATION

I refer to a letter from Martin Bridger to D/Chief Superintendent [REDACTED] which, although dated 21 August 2001, must actually have been written on 21 September 2001.

I have considered the requests in the letter extremely carefully including having taken legal advice on my responsibilities under R.I.P.A.

In this context I do not consider it appropriate that any of the secret material referred to be removed from this Headquarters or that it should be scanned onto a lap top computer. As we have done to date all material requested will be supplied for examination by your colleagues here so that whatever processes they wish to apply (whether analytical or scientific etc) can be conducted here.

If the premises currently provided are deemed in any way less than adequate please have Martin contact [REDACTED] and I am sure that bigger or different premises can be provided by [REDACTED] even if at the temporary inconvenience of 'E' Department staff.

I regret that I cannot afford D/Superintendent [REDACTED] to act as liaison officer at this stage. I will of course ensure that D/Inspector [REDACTED] remains available in that role.

Signature

R FLANAGAN
Chief Constable

Mrs Nuala O'Loan LLB (Hons)
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
New Cathedral Buildings
11 Church Street
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22/07/2001 0055 0222
SIR RONNIE FLANAGAN OBE MA
CHIEF CONSTABLE

REF: COM SEC 01/541/52

17 October 2001

OMAGH BOMBING INVESTIGATION

I refer to previous conversations between us and between David Wood and me in relation to access to SB material by Mr Anthony Hyland, Mr Neil Thomas and Ms Jo Graham as well as that already offered to Martin Bridger and Investigator 1

Having consulted Mr David Veness, Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service and particularly because I am so anxious on behalf of Omagh relatives to have this matter expeditiously concluded, I am, in this instance, prepared to take the wholly exceptional step of extending access to your three additionally above-named colleagues notwithstanding that they are not yet 'developed vetted'.

I have also pressed, on behalf of the RUC, the Permanent Under Secretary and the person in charge of vetting in London to expedite proper clearance of your staff, to hopefully avoid future delays if similar circumstances arise.

Signature

R FLANAGAN

Chief Constable

Copy to D/Chief Superintendent Flanagan to note and afford agreed access to:

Mr Bridger

Mr Investigator 1

Mr Hyland

Mr Thomas

Ms Graham

Mrs Nuala O'Loan LLB (Hons)
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
New Cathedral Buildings
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