

Further, in a statement from the lead Forensic Scientist, Denis McAuley, he stated that similar devices had been used by terrorists in Northern Ireland. He went on to describe, from previous experience, the make-up and components of the device, as used by terrorists previously.

Reference:

Statement of Denis McAuley (S2032) [INQ012120]

Coupatan Timer Factory Markings and Forensic Strategy

Para. 230 **1. Is the reference to the report a reference to the December 2001 report of Baroness O'Loan?**

[now 232] **2. Is it the position that no attempt had been made by the RUC/PSNI or (so far as known) AGS to identify such links prior to the summer of 2002?**

3. If no such attempts had been made, why not?

4. If such attempts had been made, when and with what outcome?

Upon careful reflection, the wording of paragraph 232 in the original SOE Statement, in terms of the forensic strategy, could have benefited from additional clarity.

An early line of inquiry was to examine all previous Real IRA incidents, to include liaison with SIOs of all Real IRA incidents in South Region, North Region and Belfast. The purpose of this line of inquiry was to collate all relevant incidents, intelligence, suspects, arrests, charges and forensic details of devices. This line of inquiry was completed on the 18 November 1998, and collated in a series of sensitive summary reports available to the SIO of the Omagh Bombing. These included a further statement and supplementary report in relation to similar incidents by the Lead Forensic Scientist, Denis McAuley.

At an early stage of the Omagh bomb investigation, lines of inquiry were raised in respect of linked incidents that occurred prior to the Omagh bomb. There were 25 SIO Policy decisions in respect of linked incidents. The original investigation potentially linked 18 terrorist attacks to the Omagh bombing.

In March 2000, the RUC commenced an internal review of the Omagh investigation under Detective Chief Superintendent Brian McVicker.

The McVicker report was completed on 27 November 2000. It resulted in a new forensic approach.

As part of his review, in September 2000, Detective Chief Superintendent McVicker had asked Dr John Davidson, a forensics expert, to carry out a review of the scientific aspects of the Omagh Bomb.