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- 2:107 Tracy also described the car as parked unevenly and having the windows down. No references to any of these important matters, are to be found in the statement of Shauna, whether by way of corroboration or negation.
- 2:108 It may be, that at the time of making the statement, Shauna was suffering from severe trauma, due to the death of her mother. If that was the case, then a re-visit at a later date could have cleared up any ambiguity.
- 2:109 The Director FCSU, has expressed concerns at the standard of witness statements that his staff have received from a number of major investigations. It is essential that witness statements contain full detail including, in particular, negative detail, before accurate analysis can take place.
- 2:110 This is obviously a problem that is not particular to the Omagh investigation or indeed to the RUC. This is also an issue with Mainland Police Forces and as such should be identified as an urgent training need. It is essential in all major investigations that the SIO sets out, at initial conferences, the parameters for the content required in witness statements. The standard and contents of witness statements should be continually monitored by a supervisory officer, throughout the duration of the investigation as per MIRSAP Guidelines – Chapter II page I.
- 2:111 Further evidence to support the need for training in this important area of investigative work is the extremely low percentage of witness statements which meet the criteria laid down in R - v - Turnbull (Figure 2:3 refers).

Recommendation (60).

- (a) The SIO reviews the quality of all statements recorded during the investigation.*
- (b) The RUC Training Officer should research and address the quality of statement taking in the RUC.*

WITNESS DETAILS KNOWN BUT NOT EXPLOITED

- 2:112 One of the expressed aims of the Investigation Team was the identification and interview of possible witnesses. To this end, many press appeals were made and a reconstruction carried out. It is the opinion of the Reviewing Officer, that on many occasions, possible witness details were known but not fully exploited.
- 2:113 The following examples, illustrate where problems occurred with the investigation not including full details on the HOLMES database; or where this was done, a direction of NFA was made by the SIO/DSIO.

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- 8:4 In the weeks following the explosion, An Garda Siochana arrested a total of 18 persons in particular many known car thieves. Nothing significant was identified as a result of these arrests.
- 8:5 On 21st September 1998 a co-ordinated operation between the RUC and An Garda Siochana resulted in twelve persons being arrested (6 by RUC and 6 by An Garda Siochana), followed by a further arrest on 22nd September 2000.
- 8:6 This operation was as a result of 'E' Department intelligence contained in M1050, regarding suspects in the South Armagh/County Louth areas and An Garda Siochana intelligence in relation to 5 suspects involved in the theft of the 'bomb car'.
- 8:7 One of those, mentioned in the intelligence provided by 'E' Department, Campbell (N3234) was not arrested by An Garda Siochana until 6th May 2000, some twenty months later. It is unclear as to why there was such a delay as Campbell is sourced as the 'Officer Commanding' RIRA South Armagh. In the Conference notes, dated 11th August 1999, the An Garda Siochana agreed to his arrest².

Recommendation (158). The RUC/An Garda Siochana review arrangements in joint investigations, in relation to proposed actions/arrests being conducted.

- 8:8 All 13 persons arrested were later released without charge. However, It is significant that of the eight suspects named on 8th September 1998, five were later linked to the Omagh bombing by telephone analysis³. Intelligence was passed, to the RUC by An Garda Siochana on 6th October 1999, to the effect that Daly (N5151) and McMahon (N6632) were in the bomb car in Omagh on 15th August 1998 (M1214 refers). These persons were arrested by An Garda Siochana on 22nd September 1998 and 6th May 2000 respectively. In view of the fact that the information was obtained after the date of arrest of Daly, it appears from the HOLMES database that suspect, Daly (N5151) has not been questioned about this intelligence.
- 8:9 Up until the date of the commencement of the review, a total of 54 arrests have been carried out by An Garda Siochana and 21 by the RUC, in relation to offences connected to the Omagh bomb attack. The remaining arrests, by the RUC were made on the strength of various enquiries, in particular those relating to both the number plate belonging to the bomb vehicle and from telephone analysis. No further intelligence has been received from registered sources handled by 'E' Department and 'C' Department. The HOLMES database does not reflect if sources were re-tasked.

² See Chapter 11 Paragraph 11:8.

³ See Chapter 9 Paragraph 9:32 and Chapter 10 Paragraph 10:8.

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10. TELEPHONE ANALYSIS

- 10:1 A review of the analytical work carried, out in support of the Omagh bomb investigation, has been conducted by the Director, of Analytical Services at the Analysis Center, Stormont.

His brief from the Reviewing Officer was to focus on:

- The tasking of analysts;
- The analyst's role in exploiting the HOLMES database;
- The role of the analyst in exploiting telephone billing and cell-site records; and
- The analysis of linked incidents.

A summary of findings made by the Director, Analytical Services is as follows:

- 10:2 At the time of the Omagh bomb the RUC had no pool of trained analytical staff, to support major crime investigations. No policy, in respect of analytical support for major investigations was in place. Analytical work on the HOLMES database appears to have been carried out by Police Officer(s). A civilian analyst from the Analysis Centre carried out analytical work on the telephone material.
- 10:3 **The Deputy SIO, in particular, was keen to explore new analytical tools and techniques to support the enquiry. He was personally involved in facilitating the work of the analyst and made good use of the limited resources at his disposal.**
- 10:4 Given the scale and complexity of the investigation, it is clear that the enquiry team would have benefited from the services of at least two dedicated analysts. One could have been employed to examine and manage the telephone records and the other providing a service to the SIO and Task Force Commander, in analysing statements, messages and actions from the HOLMES database.

Recommendation (232). The Director Analytical Services should be requested to provide a 'pool' of experienced staff to work with SIO's within a framework regulated by a Service Level Agreement. HMIC and others have recommended SLA's as one way of raising the quality of internal services.

TASKING

- 10:5 Proper and effective tasking of crime/intelligence analysts, is of crucial importance, in any investigation. The SIO, needs to ensure the right questions are being asked in order to produce meaningful results.

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Recommendation (234). In cases where it is believed that telephone enquiries may be significant that a 'local' computer database should be established, to complement the existing HOLMES facilities.

- 10:11 This technique has been successfully used in at least one other high profile investigation since Omagh. The creation of such a database, is not difficult but, requires access to appropriate computer hardware/software (all commercially available) and some expert (on-call) IT and analytical knowledge.
- 10:12 Many of the telephone charts, were produced using the I2 case notebook. Some of the charts are not properly referenced, dated, titled or caveated. It is not clear, from the material examined, why some charts were produced. This makes auditing particularly difficult. A clear and consistent corporate policy on the style, format and presentation of such telephone charts, would assist the SIO and enquiry team.

Recommendation (235). The Analysis Centre should devise appropriate standards which would make future auditing and review work easier to undertake and permit work carried out on individual investigations to be compared.

- 10:13 The telephone material reviewed is voluminous. It includes many handwritten notes (including, in some cases, the recording of core data such as the results of subscriber enquiries). The maintenance of extensive handwritten material is assumed to be the result of inadequate IT skills/resources to support the investigation. Detailed analytical work is difficult, slow and (invariably) incomplete when based on such material. **The telecommunication companies, were (rightly) critical of the analytical tools available to support the Omagh investigation. IT software to manage large quantities of data and present the information quickly in a useable format is constantly improving. It is clear that the Omagh investigation was hampered in this regard from the outset.**

Recommendation (236). An examination of available IT should be conducted with a view to making suitable product(s) available to support investigations. The review of IT needs to be combined with training and development to ensure the technology is used in an appropriate way.

- 10:14 In the very early stages of the investigation, telephone enquiries were limited to checking billing records for key suspects and to eliminate lines of enquiry. It would appear, from a review of the available material, that a request for wider telephone analysis was not formally made until some months after the bombing. It is not apparent what effect this delay had, on the value or usefulness, of the subsequent work carried out.

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Recommendation (237). At the outset of major crime investigations SIO's should consider seeking expert advice on the potential value of conducting detailed telephone analysis.

- 10:15 An undated report recommended cell-site analysis to facilitate the enquiry. This is a technique for identifying the location and use of mobile telephones. It appears to have taken a number of weeks before this advice was acted upon.

Recommendation (238). The time taken to request telephone records is of critical importance². Records are not kept indefinitely and analysis is most effective when information is provided quickly and in electronic format.

The Reviewing Officer acknowledges the excellent work carried out by the Deputy SIO and his team in this aspect of the investigation. The investigation of telephone toll records is a specialist task – the team has developed considerable expertise in this regard, particularly in respect of Cross-Border telephone traffic. Clearly this is an example of **good practice** and should be disseminated to the force.

Recommendation (239). The RUC should prepare an Investigators Guide – 'Investigation of Telephone Toll Records', for distribution throughout the RUC.

GENERATION OF CHARTS FROM THE HOLMES DATABASE

- 10:16 During the investigation a series of charts were generated from the HOLMES database. It is acknowledged that the type, format and presentation of this material is largely dependent on the available software. A number of observations are however appropriate:

- The charts are referenced and the date of creation is clear. But the author name, title of the chart and the purpose of creation are difficult to determine.

Recommendation (240). All HOLMES charts should be properly labeled to include an index of icons/symbols, used in the preparation of each chart.

- Some of the charts contain far too much information and as a result are confusing (NB L382 'vehicles' prepared 7th April 11.17.59.2000). Other charts appear to have been produced without clear direction from the SIO. Each chart should have a clear focus and be produced to support a specific investigatory or operational need. All charts should be backed-up with a

² See Chapter 9 Paragraph 9:51.

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- 16:10** There is substantial evidence to support the theory that the Omagh bomb atrocity was planned and executed from the Republic of Ireland in which the majority of identified suspects reside.
- 16:11** This meant that An Garda Siochana needed to play a pivotal role in the investigation if a realistic prospect of success was to be maintained. With the incident having occurred in Northern Ireland, the RUC naturally assumed primacy in the investigation. As such the TFC and the SIO should have had the capacity to influence the course and direction of the An Garda Siochana investigation, to access relevant intelligence, suspects details, timing of arrests and consultation during and after arrest. However it is apparent the TFC and SIO were to a large extent excluded from the An Garda Siochana investigation. This is borne out by the fact that only 2.8% of all documentation contained in the Omagh database, relates to An Garda Siochana enquiries.
- 16:12** In general terms the An Garda Siochana carried out their own investigation, independent of the RUC enquiry. This is despite the fact that some 70 individuals have been arrested by the An Garda Siochana in connection with the Omagh incident. The Reviewing Officer is of the opinion that the potential for success would have been enhanced if an open and joint enquiry had been pursued. The introduction of joint force protocols to facilitate such activity in the future is, therefore essential.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

- 16:13** The Reviewing Officer fully appreciates the extreme pressures and stress the Senior Command faced in this investigation. It was the worst single atrocity of the troubles, and never before had Senior Detectives in the RUC been faced with such a massive murder investigation. The linking of suspects through telephone analysis, and identifying the apparent connection of the Omagh bombers to a number of other terrorist incidents was good investigative practice. These are examples of what could have been accomplished if sufficient resources had been available to identify and pursue all the main lines of enquiries.
- 16:14** The Reviewing Officer concludes that many of the identified opportunities within the original investigation have not been realised through a combination of the following factors:
- Lack of resources;
 - Lack of suitable MIR accommodations;
 - Untrained staff;
 - Lack of a corporate approach to the investigation;