

Statutory Report

**Public Statement by the Police Ombudsman under
Section 62 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998**

**RELATING TO THE COMPLAINTS IN RESPECT OF
THE ATTEMPTED MURDER OF MR GERRY ADAMS
ON 14 MARCH 1984**

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1.0

Executive Summary

- 1.1 Around lunchtime on 14 March 1984 loyalist gunmen attempted to murder Mr Gerry Adams and his four companions. The attack took place in Belfast City Centre whilst both parties were travelling by car along Howard Street (behind the City Hall) in the direction of Grosvenor Road.
- 1.2 Mr Adams and three others were injured. They received medical treatment at the nearby Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH).
- 1.3 The gunmen were a party of three: Person A (driver), Person B (front seat passenger) and Person C (back seat passenger). Military personnel and an off-duty police officer apprehended these men after a pursuit from Howard Street to Wellington Place. Local police then took custody and the offenders were successfully prosecuted. Each received a lengthy term of imprisonment.
- 1.4 The BBC received a coded message at 5.30pm that same day. The Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) claimed responsibility for the attack and called Mr Adams '***the Chief of Staff of the IRA responsible for the campaign of murder and therefore a legitimate target of war***'. The message also said that '***measures to protect prods are ineffective and [the] UFF would seek out and destroy members of the republican terrorist organisations***'.
- 1.5 Allegations of collusion were reported in the media. Various articles and stories have appeared over the years that have fuelled suspicion and doubt around this incident. Mr Adams made a complaint to the Police

Ombudsman following a news article on 16 December 2006 in the Andersonstown News. The allegations brought by the media formed part of Mr Adams' complaint and were therefore subject of investigation. It is noteworthy that no allegations were raised at the time of the incident and only emerged, many years later, following media speculation.

1.6 The allegations subject of investigation can be summarised as follows:

1. the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) or security forces either had prior knowledge of the attack on Mr Adams or were directly involved in the attempted murder
2. the RUC knew of the planned attack one week before its execution due to a Special Branch (SB) informant, who was involved in the planning of the operation
3. the bullets used in the incident had been doctored by the authorities in order to reduce their velocity and 'dumb them down'

1.7 Independent evidence from a ballistics expert refutes any doctoring of the ammunition. Photographic and medical evidence serves to corroborate that the bullets were not tampered with in any manner. The latter firmly demonstrates that the ammunition used had lethal potential if the shot placement had been more accurate.

1.8 My investigators interviewed all pertinent witnesses. No supporting evidence has been uncovered.

1.9 All main lines of enquiry have been exhausted and there is no evidence to support the allegations made.

2.0

Introduction

- 2.1 The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland was established by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, to independently investigate complaints relating to the conduct of police officers, and other matters which I consider to be in the public interest.
- 2.2 The Royal Ulster Constabulary (Complaints etc.) Regulations 2001 empower this Office to investigate historic complaints, which I consider should be investigated because of grave or exceptional circumstances.
- 2.3 On 18 December 2006 a letter of complaint was received from Mr Gerry Adams' solicitor. The letter refers to a news article into recent allegations that members of the RUC colluded in the attempted murder of Mr Adams in 1984. The complaint outlines Mr Adams' areas of concern in respect of the incident. However this investigation has also included allegations put forward by the media, which have been deemed to be both grave and exceptional and have been referred to by Mr Adams.
- 2.4 My investigation of these matters has now concluded and is addressed in this Public Statement.

3.0

The Attempted Murder of Mr Gerry Adams

- 3.1 On 8 June 1983 (the eve of the General Elections) Mr Adams was electioneering in the New Lodge/North Queen Street area of Belfast. An incident took place which resulted in police seizing tricolours from a number of Mr Adams' supporters. Mr Adams was arrested for disorderly behaviour and obstructing police.
- 3.2 The charges brought against Mr Adams were referred to the prosecution service, then the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). On 14 March 1984 Mr Adams appeared in Belfast Magistrates' Court in connection with these charges. Mr Adams was later acquitted of these charges. Enquiries revealed that the police file and court case papers in relation to Mr Adams' charges are no longer in existence.
- 3.3 Given his high political profile Mr Adams was aware that he may have been a target for loyalist paramilitaries. Mr Adams stated he usually avoided Belfast City Centre due to this risk.
- 3.4 On the day in question, Mr Adams requested that he remain in the Magistrates' Court over the lunchtime period to avoid entering the City Centre. This request was made to the courts via his solicitor, who is now deceased. The request was refused. There is no official court room policy but it was, and still is, common practice to clear the courts at lunchtime.

- 3.5 At 1.20pm on Wednesday 14 March, Mr Adams left Belfast Magistrates Court, Chichester Street, along with his three co-accused. Another person collected them in a gold Ford Cortina.
- 3.6 All persons got into the above car with the intention of having lunch at a venue in West Belfast. Mr Adams sat in the front passenger seat.
- 3.7 The car travelled down Chichester Street towards Oxford Street where it turned right along Oxford Street. It then turned right into May Street and along the back of the City Hall into Howard Street.
- 3.8 At 1.30pm as the car came to a standstill in heavy traffic on Howard Street (just before the junction at Fisherwick Place), a second car, a brown Rover 2000, drew alongside and shots were discharged from that car into the gold Ford Cortina. This car contained the three offenders. Person A was the driver, Person B was the front seat passenger and Person C was seated in the back of the car.
- 3.9 Both cars at this time had been travelling in the same direction along Howard Street, towards Great Victoria Street. Four occupants in the gold Cortina car were hit by gunfire but the driver (who was also injured) was able to drive from the scene to the RVH where they all received treatment. This was less than a mile from the scene of the incident. The only occupant uninjured was seated in the middle of the rear seat.
- 3.10 The offenders' car was subsequently stopped in Wellington Place after a short chase by Soldier 1, an off-duty Lance Corporal of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR). The car was stopped in traffic and Soldier 1 got out of his own car (red ford Cortina MK4) and drew his issued firearm. Soldier 1 was quickly joined by an off-duty policeman (Police Officer 1) and a short time later by two on-duty, plain clothed, soldiers who had arrived in an unmarked lime green Renault 14 (Soldiers 2 and

3).

- 3.11 The three occupants of the brown Rover 2000, were detained very close to the scene. It transpired that Person C has received a gunshot wound from within his own vehicle during the attack.
- 3.12 All three detained suspects were ultimately convicted of the attack and received significant jail sentences. A coded message was received by the BBC at 5.30pm on the same day. The UFF claimed the shooting and named Mr Adams '***the Chief of Staff of the IRA, responsible for the campaign of murder and therefore a legitimate target of war. Measures to protect prods are ineffective and [the] UFF would seek out and destroy members of republican terrorist organisations***'.
- 3.13 Mr Adams and his companions sustained significant injuries. He received three bullet wounds whilst the driver sustained two. The passenger behind the driver sustained a number of injuries whilst the nearside rear passenger suffered three gunshot wounds.

4.0

Complaint to the Police Ombudsman

- 4.1 Mr Gerard (Gerry) Adams was elected MP for Belfast West at the General Election on 9 June 1983. He is currently a Teachta Dála (TD) and President of Sinn Féin.
- 4.2 A letter of complaint was received from Mr Adams' solicitor on 18 December 2006. A formal statement of complaint was recorded thereafter.
- 4.3 Mr Adams' allegations centred around three areas:
1. the RUC or security forces either had prior knowledge of the attack on him or were directly involved in the attempted murder
 2. Chief Constable Jack Hermon refused to acknowledge that Mr Adams had been shot during a terrorist attack and didn't issue a certificate to support Mr Adams' claim for criminal injuries
 3. RUC officers unnecessarily stopped and searched Mr Adams' visitors at the RVH, making him feel like a prisoner rather than a victim of an attack
- 4.4 Mr Adams was informed that allegations two and three were not deemed to be grave or exceptional by a previous Police Ombudsman, a requisite for investigation (see 2.2 above). Allegation one is therefore the only allegation provided by Mr Adams that was subject of my investigation. Further allegations, referred to by Mr Adams, have also formed part of my investigation.

4.5 Two news articles featured in the Andersonstown News and the Sunday World on 16 and 17 December 2006 respectively. The articles stated the following:

1. a retired RUC detective stated that the police knew of the planned attack one week before its execution;
2. British Army weapons experts doctored the bullets;
3. a SB informant was involved in the planning;
4. the informant was allegedly a highly significant member of the South East Antrim Brigade of the UFF and still lives in Northern Ireland

4.6 These allegations formed part of my investigation as they were deemed to be grave and exceptional.

4.7 Mr Adams stated that he knew he was in constant danger of harm due to his position in Sinn Féin and was on his guard that particular day. He said he would normally avoid Belfast City Centre. He felt something wasn't quite right with the entire incident and how security force personnel 'coincidentally' appeared at the scene. However it wasn't until media reports about police collusion were released that there seemed to be any evidence of this collusion. Mr Adams stated that he was encouraged by these reports in the media to make a formal complaint to this Office.

4.8 My investigation was launched on 12 September 2013.

5.0

Scope of Police Ombudsman's Investigation

5.1 The purpose of my investigation was to determine if there is any evidence of police criminality in relation to the matters raised by both Mr Adams and the media. The offences considered are:

1. conspiracy to murder or cause grievous bodily harm - was there a criminal conspiracy between police officers and loyalist paramilitaries to seriously injure or murder Mr Adams on 14 March 1984? and/or
2. misconduct in public office - did a police officer(s) wilfully neglect to perform his/her duty to minimise the risk to Mr Adams and his associates to such a degree as to amount to an abuse of public trust without any reasonable excuse or justification (in this case did any police officer know the attack was to happen and failed to act)?

5.2 My investigation team interviewed all pertinent parties where possible. Various forms of documentary material were obtained, including press articles and other information in the public domain. Enquiries were made with the Public Prosecution Service (PPS), the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Intelligence both prior to and following the attack was requested from both police and military. All sensitive material was reviewed by investigators.

- 5.3 The investigation of historical matters presents unique challenges. We interviewed witnesses who were members of the public, those who were convicted for the attempted murder, ex-military involved in the incident and retired police officers. Several people who may have been able to provide witness evidence to this investigation are now deceased, including Mr Adams' former solicitor and Police Officer 1 at the scene where the gunmen were apprehended.
- 5.4 This report examines the available evidence in respect of concerns raised and details my findings and conclusions.

6.0

The RUC Investigation

- 6.1 The shooting incident was reported by a member of the public to the police at 1.29pm and a log was commenced. This log details the initial actions taken by police.
- 6.2 Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCO), photography and mapping were tasked within a short period of time. Car check points were put in place at a number of junctions and witness enquiries were carried out by police immediately following the incident.
- 6.3 The gold Ford Cortina, which was parked outside casualty at the RVH, was preserved for forensic examination. Police also recovered the brown Rover 2000, traced the owner of the car and requested forensic examination.
- 6.4 Police apprehended and detained Persons A, B and C in the brown Rover. An ambulance was tasked to take Person C to the Belfast City Hospital with police escort. All three were subsequently interviewed at length and charged in respect of the incident.
- 6.5 Two other men were detained initially on suspicion as being involved. However they were later released after their alibi accounts were confirmed.
- 6.6 A 999 call was received from a 'young boy' at 3.39pm stating '**Tell Gerry Adams we'll get him again**' before ringing off. The call was traced to a coin box in Royal Avenue near Donegall Street.

- 6.7 A complaint was made against police by a victim in the gold Ford Cortina in relation to false arrest and assault by police. The background to this matter was that police had initially followed the gold Ford Cortina into the RVH. One man covered in blood was seen to run into a room in the RVH. Police forced their way into this room, searched all three persons therein, and released them immediately. This complaint was to the RUC in 1984 and did not feature in my investigation.
- 6.8 The police crime file in relation to the shooting has been located and examined by my investigators.
- 6.9 The RUC case file details that the shooting incident occurred in Howard Street, Belfast. The occupants of a brown Rover 2000 saloon car opened fire on another car, a gold Ford Cortina, which contained five male persons. Both cars at that time were travelling in the direction of Great Victoria Street. Four occupants of the gold Ford Cortina were hit. They drove directly to the RVH for treatment. The only person not injured was the middle rear seat passenger.
- 6.10 The police file continues that Soldier 1 witnessed the shooting. He followed the offenders and managed to detain Persons A, B and C as the car stopped in Wellington Place. Their car had been stopped in traffic and Soldier 1 got out of his own car and drew his issued firearm. Soldier 1 was quickly joined by an off-duty policeman (Police Officer 1) and a short time later by two off-duty soldiers (Soldiers 2 and 3).
- 6.11 My investigators have carried out enquiries that have revealed both Soldiers 2 and 3 were actually on duty, albeit in civilian clothes.
- 6.12 Person A and Person B were arrested and taken to Castlereagh for interview. Person C was detained in Belfast City Hospital with a gunshot wound to his hand, apparently self-inflicted during the initial shooting.

- 6.13 Three weapons and seven rounds of ammunition were recovered by the police:
1. .45 Colt pistol
 2. P38 Walther pistol
 3. 9mm Walther pistol
- 6.14 No shots were discharged by the security forces during the incident. The persons detained were believed to be Ulster Defence Association (UDA) members. Twelve empty cartridge cases were found at the scene in Howard Street. Forensic examination revealed that six were from the Walther P38. One 9mm bullet found at the scene was also fired from the Walther P38. It is believed that the other 9mm Walther pistol had not been fired.
- 6.15 The gold Ford Cortina car was examined by SOCO. Nine strike marks were found and five bullets recovered.
- 6.16 Due to the lack of policy logs recording the rationale for decisions made, further enquiries were made with the RUC officers who undertook the investigation.
- 6.17 There are limited case papers available. It is possible that, due to the passage of time, papers viewed do not equate to a full RUC investigation crime file.
- 6.18 A Detective Inspector, identified from the RUC case file, was the Officer in Charge of the investigation. He will be referred to as Police Officer 2. The Investigating Officer, a Detective Sergeant, will be referred to as Police Officer 3. Both police officers were based at Queen Street Police Station at the time of the incident and both have since retired from the RUC.

- 6.19 My investigators interviewed and recorded a statement from Police Officer 2. He stated he was not aware of the police or security forces anticipating the attack on Mr Adams or his associates, or of any intelligence about the planning, commission or aftermath of the offence.
- 6.20 Police Officer 2 recalled the incident as it was high profile at the time but he had no detailed specific recall of events and stated that the investigation was run on a day to day basis by Police Officer 3. He stated that at the time of the incident he had a professional relationship with SB but acknowledged that as a Detective Inspector he may not have been aware of all the intelligence concerning investigations he was working on.
- 6.21 Police Officer 2 recalls that three offenders were apprehended and convicted. He stated that the case was straightforward and as stated in the prosecution file. Police Officer 2 stated he was not aware of any other issues with this investigation and did not suspect any interference.
- 6.22 My investigators interviewed and recorded a statement from Police Officer 3. He was questioned about his knowledge of and involvement in the case. His role involved suspect interviewing and case preparation. He prepared the evidential report to the DPP dated 7 July 1984. This officer was further questioned with regards to information referred to within the RUC file in a memo relating to further potential suspects.
- 6.23 The memo dated 2 April 1984 refers to an anonymous phone call to a CID office in Newtownabbey. The caller had claimed two other men, in addition to those detained, were involved in the Adams shooting. The caller said Person D 'fingered' Adams and his co-accused as they left court, and Person E was to pick up the weapons at the big clock. The report was endorsed for the attention of the Detective Inspector at

Queen Street Police Station, stating Person D is in custody at Castlereagh and there should be liaison to interview him while he is detained. A handwritten submission, to CID management, was completed by Police Officer 2 to confirm that enquiries had been made in respect of Persons D and E with a negative result. When interviewed by my investigators, Police Officer 2 confirmed he made that submission. He could not remember specific events or individuals but stated the matter must have been dealt with as he had endorsed it as such.

- 6.24 Information from the PSNI relays that Person D was arrested on 4 April 1984. It was alleged that on that day, along with Person F he attempted to aid the escape of Person A from Bangor Court House. Person D was again arrested in July 1984 for UFF/UDA activity. He was questioned in respect of the attempted escape from Bangor court house and in relation to the attempted murder of Gerry Adams and his associates. He denied any involvement in the Adams shooting. There was insufficient evidence to charge in relation to either offence.
- 6.25 No evidence has been found to link Persons D, E and F, or anyone else, to the attempted murder of Mr Adams and his associates.
- 6.26 Police Officer 3 stated he was not aware, nor did he ever become aware, that the police or security forces were anticipating the attack on Mr Adams and his associates. No intelligence about the planning, commission or aftermath of the offence was ever brought to his attention. He denied any knowledge of the above memo and does not recall if any action was taken with regards to the information contained therein.

6.27 Police Officer 3 stated he investigated the attempted murder of Mr Adams and was sure that the three offenders were 'caught red handed' and were prosecuted in line with his prosecution file.

7.0

Actions undertaken by the RUC and security forces

- 7.1 My investigators conducted a review of all available RUC documentation relating to the subsequent murder investigation.
- 7.2 My investigation has not been able to determine RUC police resources allocated to the original investigation. However as an attempted murder, it may not have been allocated the same resources as a murder case. Police standards today dictate that the Senior Investigating Officer's policy decision log would detail the resources employed.
- 7.3 The murder investigation appears to have been largely in the hands of Police Officer 3, the Detective Sergeant. He was supported by SOCO, photography, mapping, and other RUC officers. It is known that the investigation utilised the predecessor to FSNI, the Northern Ireland Forensic Science Laboratory (NIFSL).
- 7.4 Given the allegations aforementioned, my investigation has centred upon the initial actions taken at the scene, the accounts given by those in authority at this time and whether information/intelligence concerning the shooting was known to police before or after the incident.
- 7.5 **The Offenders**
- 7.6 The RUC case file shows that Person B pleaded guilty to the attempted murder of Mr Adams and related offences. He was sentenced to a

lengthy term of imprisonment. Person B was interviewed as a witness by my investigators and provided a statement about his involvement in the attack on Mr Adams.

- 7.7 Person B fully admitted his participation in the attempted murder and also being a member of the UFF, the military unit of the UDA, at the time of the attempted murder. However, he stated he had no part in the planning of the operation.
- 7.8 Person B stated that he thought Mr Adams was at court on Tuesday 13 March 1984, and he went there with his accomplices at that time but they didn't see Mr Adams. He stated that media reports informed them that Mr Adams would be there the following day so the three of them went down again on Wednesday 14 March 1984.
- 7.9 Person B stated he intended to shoot Mr Adams at a nearby public house and there was no intention to shoot from one car to another. However they saw Mr Adams in the car and decided to shoot there and then. Person B believed they had killed Mr Adams and the other occupants of the car.
- 7.10 Person B then recounts his driver, Person A, turning a corner and as they did so he saw what he thought was a police car behind them due to blue flashing lights (*Soldier 3's car was using blue flashing lights*). Person B alerted the others and stated Person A stopped the car immediately and tried to run off. He describes realising it was the military that stopped him and stated they were arrested at the scene.
- 7.11 Person B, after serving half of his custodial sentence, alleged that when he came out, Person G informed him they had been set up. Person B stated that he started to believe that and began to question if his gun had been underpowered, he stated '*it was all bang and no bullet*'.

- 7.12 Person G was spoken to by my investigators. He stated that he did not tell Person B he had been set up but would not provide a statement to that effect.
- 7.13 The RUC case file shows that Person A pleaded guilty to the attempted murder of Mr Adams and related offences. He was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment on 22 March 1985. Person A was interviewed by my investigators and asked to provide a statement about his involvement in the attack on Mr Adams and his associates on 14 March 1984.
- 7.14 Person A refused to provide a statement but gave an account of his involvement. Person A stated he believed the attempt on Mr Adams' life was planned very close to the date, if not on the date, of the actual attack. He stated he did not plan the attack but was an experienced taxi driver who knew Belfast well and was therefore the designated 'getaway driver'. He stated he could not name the UDA Commander at that time.
- 7.15 Person A stated that the three men went to do the job unsupported and he cannot assist with where the guns were obtained.
- 7.16 Person A stated they had hoped to shoot Mr Adams as he left court, in the car park, but describes Mr Adams being surrounded as he left court and proceeded to his car. Person A stated he then followed Mr Adams' car, going through a red light to catch up.
- 7.17 Person A was asked whether he thought the guns were tampered with and stated that he did not fire his weapon but no one else said anything was wrong with them at the time.
- 7.18 Person A was asked if he thought there was any collusion in the murder attempt on Mr Adams and he denied it as far as the three individuals in

the car were concerned.

7.19 The RUC case file shows that Person C pleaded guilty to the attempted murder of Mr Adams and related offences. He received an extensive term of imprisonment. Person C was murdered by a rival faction on 1 February 2003 (Lost Lives 3689 refers).

7.20 Enquiries with those convicted did not ascertain who planned the operation and did not implicate any other person in the attempted murder.

7.21 **The Victims**

7.22 Enquiries have been made with the two other living occupants of the gold Ford Cortina. Only one was able to assist the investigation due to the other's poor health.

7.23 The remaining victim (Person H) was interviewed by my investigators. He cannot be sure but stated he and his co-defendants may have appeared in court the previous day also. Person H supports Mr Adams' view that both he and his co-defendants were at risk in Belfast City Centre. He stated that any republican would have been at risk but that their risk was amplified given the high profile of Gerry Adams and the publicity surrounding the court case.

7.24 Person H relates what happened as per Mr Adams' account. He relays that after the shooting he directed the driver to keep moving as the car was beginning to slow and he was concerned. He directed the car to the RVH and ensured the Sinn Féin office was informed to provide security at the hospital in case there was a further attack.

7.25 Person H details that police interaction with him at the hospital was terrible. He details that he did not cooperate with the police investigation

partly due to this earlier treatment and partly due to the fact that the nationalist community did not cooperate with the RUC.

7.26 Person H has suspicions about collusion but admits he has nothing to base these on.

7.27 **The Security Forces**

7.28 Soldier 2 was a Corporal, part of 177 Support Platoon, 175 Provost Company, Royal Military Police (RMP). He was with Soldier 3, also a Corporal, and a trained close protection driver in the Royal Corps of Transport, 26 Squadron. These two soldiers were on-duty but in civilian clothes when they assisted in the arrest of Mr Adams' assailants just after the attack.

7.29 Soldiers 2 and 3 are no longer serving in HM Forces. They were both formally interviewed by my investigators.

7.30 Both soldiers report having legitimate army business in Belfast City Hall that day not connected to the incident being investigated. This has been verified by other witness accounts. Their business was part of planning and carrying out reconnaissance for an operation later that week at the City Hall.

7.31 Both soldiers report this type of planning was common practice when preparing a job of this nature. Both soldiers were equipped with a 9mm Browning.

7.32 Although their car was equipped with a military radio, it was not used during or after this incident. Any notes made at that time or shortly after have not been located.

7.33 Soldier 2 went into the City Hall for a short meeting whilst Soldier 3 remained with the car in the City Hall car park. They left the City Hall

about 1.30pm to return to Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn.

- 7.34 Both soldiers state that the incident happened by '*pure chance*'. Soldier 2 describes noticing '*the velocity, the movement of the bullets, about 30 metres in front*'. Soldier 3 refers to a '*brown Rover 2000 and gold Cortina ahead, side by side swerving, being driven erratically*'.
- 7.35 Soldiers 2 and 3 decided to chase the car as it turned right onto College Square. If the assailants had gone straight forward on the Grosvenor Road into West Belfast, Soldier 2 stated they may have stopped pursuing them due to safety issues at that time.
- 7.36 The soldiers became aware of a red Ford Cortina MK4 close behind (Soldier 1) and thought it was connected with the incident. Soldier 2 put the blue flashing lights and sirens on but the sirens failed to work.
- 7.37 At Wellington Place, Soldiers 2 and 3 saw the assailants' car draw left, the doors open and men emerge in an apparent escape attempt. The gunmen tried to look '*nonchalant and innocent*' as if they were part of the shopping crowd. However Soldier 2 noted that there was '*something funny*' about their appearance. This is supported by the assailants' accounts to the RUC at the time when they referred to altering their appearance.
- 7.38 Soldier 2 refers to a male (Soldier 1), dressed in civilian clothes holding what Soldier 2 refers to as '*a big shiny gun that looked like a Magnum*'. Soldier 1 got out his ID card very quickly and shouted 'UDR'. Soldier 2 stated he was very close to shooting him up to that point.
- 7.39 Soldier 3 describes seeing three men standing in suits and overcoats - one had white surgical gloves on with blood on them. He stated he told them to go on the ground and covered them with his firearm there for what seemed like five to ten minutes.

- 7.40 Soldier 3 at first thought Soldier 1 was a terrorist and stated he was worried because they seemed to be outnumbered.
- 7.41 The assailants did not struggle. Police took custody of them upon arrival. The gunmen were unknown to both Soldiers 2 and 3. Their identities only became known post-incident.
- 7.42 Whilst in the police station a CID Inspector informed Soldier 2 that Mr Adams from Sinn Féin had been shot. Soldier 3 stated that he did not know Mr Adams had been shot until he returned to the army compound at Lisburn.
- 7.43 Both Soldiers 2 and 3 gave statements to the RUC at that time. They state their accounts were not influenced by anyone. They had no further dealings with the case thereafter. Neither was called to give evidence at court.
- 7.44 Soldier 2 stated that he knew Mr Adams' court case was going on from media reports and that this was the second day of the court case. He had to be aware of any potential issues that could influence the planned event at the City Hall.
- 7.45 Person B stated that they (the gunmen) went to the court the day before (Tuesday 13 March 1984) but Mr Adams did not come out of the court so they returned the following day. However Mr Adams recalls that the attack occurred on what was the first day of the court case.
- 7.46 Neither Soldier 2 nor 3 noticed anything suspicious before the incident.
- 7.47 Soldier 3 stated he was later informed by another soldier that there had been a motorbike at Grosvenor Road close to the M1 with a 'team' that were to ensure the killing was a success. Soldier 3 could not recall the name of the soldier who supplied this information. There is no other

information to support this account.

- 7.48 Police Officer 1, a Constable from Donegall Pass Police Station, was off-duty in plain clothes at the time of the incident. He arrived at the scene seconds after Soldier 1 had stopped the Rover car. He recognised one of the men who ran from the Rover car as being Person A. He also recognised the injured man in the rear seat as Person C.
- 7.49 From the RUC file Police Officer 1 stated he found three pistols in the Rover car which he handed to a SOCO. Unfortunately Police Officer 1 died prior to my investigation commencing.
- 7.50 At the time of this incident Soldier 1 was a Lance Corporal in the UDR. He was interviewed by my investigators and provided a statement.
- 7.51 He detailed his intended route that day was to a DIY shop on Great Victoria Street to collect a de-humidifier before travelling on to the UDR Barracks at Malone Road. He was due to start work around lunchtime that day.
- 7.52 Soldier 1 agreed to give his brother (Person I) and his brother's friend (Person J) a lift into town. Both Persons I and J were present in his red Cortina when shots were fired. Police obtained a statement from both these persons.
- 7.53 Soldier 1 relates that he thought the bullets were aimed at him and that he was under attack. The brown Rover 2000 passed him on his right hand side in Howard Street. Soldier 1 noticed a man in the back of this car holding up a gun.
- 7.54 Soldier 1 decided to give chase and eventually blocked the Rover at Wellington Place using the parked City buses to do so. Soldier 1 did not see the victims' car at any stage.

- 7.55 Soldier 1 recognised two of the gunmen; Persons A and C. He knew these people by sight and knew of their involvement with paramilitaries. Person C also recognised Soldier 1 and told him he had shot himself. Soldier 1 offered him appropriate medical advice but continued to hold the scene for what seemed to him to be four or five minutes before the arrival of Soldiers 2 and 3.
- 7.56 Soldier 1 details that Police Officer 1 was behind him whilst he dealt with the gunmen and had been there before Soldiers 2 and 3 had arrived. Soldier 1 recognised Police Officer 1 from his comings and goings at Queen Street Police Station.
- 7.57 Soldier 1 stated that he was not aware Mr Adams was involved in the incident until he arrived back at Queen Street Police Station, after the incident, when he provided a statement to police. He stated his account was not influenced by any other person.
- 7.58 Soldier 1 had no further dealings with police regarding this incident and was not called to give evidence at court.
- 7.59 Soldier 1 stated he was on high alert due to on-going risks to the UDR and did not notice anything suspicious that day until the shots were fired. He stated he was not involved in or aware of any collusion with the authorities. He was not aware of the allegations in the press.
- 7.60 **Forensic Enquiries**
- 7.61 The RUC investigation included extensive forensic and scientific evidence. This evidence was gathered from various locations including the suspects' car, the victims' car, the victims, the footpath where the gunmen were apprehended, the gunmen and an address linked to the gunmen.

- 7.62 Items submitted for forensic examination included: three pistols, magazines etc found in the Rover car; items of clothing from the accused including surgical gloves and sunglasses; clothing from the four injured parties; spent bullet heads, bullet fragments and bullets; substances from the scenes and items from the suspects' car and an address linked to them.
- 7.63 All of the items were submitted to NIFSL.
- 7.64 My investigators have obtained and examined the forensic file in relation to this case. The exhibits were managed appropriately. A list of original exhibits currently available was created.
- 7.65 The ballistic forensic material was made available to a new forensic service provider by my investigators. LGC Forensics was the service provider requested to review all the forensic ballistic evidence to explore whether it was feasible that the ammunition was interfered with prior to the offence. This was carried out independent of FSNI.
- 7.66 An experienced and highly qualified forensic expert from LGC examined the available exhibits at the FSNI laboratories.
- 7.67 The forensic expert is the lead Firearm and Toolmark Examiner with LGC Forensics and he has provided in excess of five thousand statements in relation to forensic firearms, tool mark examinations, crime scene reconstructions and firearms related post-mortem examinations.
- 7.68 He examined the information supplied by my investigators including the medical evidence, scene plans and photographs. He was given access to ballistic forensic material. The forensic expert stated the following – ***'on examination of the fired components, no evidence was found of any defects or evidence that they had been tampered with, they appeared to be commercially loaded ammunition which functioned***

as expected'.

7.69 He went on to interpret the photographic evidence and stated '***that the terminal capabilities of the ammunition were compatible with commercially loaded .45 auto and 9x19mm calibre ammunition. I have not observed anything to suggest that velocities had been reduced***'.

7.70 The forensic expert makes it clear and refers to the medical evidence '***that both the .45 Auto and the 9x19mm calibre ammunition used in the incident had lethal potential***'.

7.71 **Open Source Material**

7.72 My investigators have carried out numerous enquiries with regards to information released over the years by the media and other literary sources. Having spoken to various journalists and others there is no evidence to support these claims.

7.73 Not all lines of enquiry could be followed through to completion due to journalistic principle, including sensitivities such as source protection. However, areas which were explored more thoroughly have not advanced the allegations made.

8.0

Information/Intelligence

- 8.1 There is no intelligence to show that the police were aware of a planned attack on the Complainant. Those involved in the shooting were all arrested very quickly after the incident by security force personnel who arrived at the scene.
- 8.2 Intelligence suggests the planning was done by the UDA. There is no evidence to suggest that there was any intelligence available to the RUC that could have prevented the attack.
- 8.3 There is no police record of relevant surveillance being conducted on Mr Adams, his associates, those arrested or others named in intelligence (post-incident) as being involved in the planning.
- 8.4 The *Andersonstown News* suggests that an informant known as the 'Cat' who was a military commander of the South East Antrim UDA provided intelligence to his RUC handlers a week before the murder plot to kill Mr Adams.
- 8.5 My investigation found no evidence to corroborate the Andersonstown News article.
- 8.6 The investigation has examined this allegation and I conclude that there is no evidence that the RUC was told about the attack by any individual prior to the incident.
- 8.7 There is post-incident intelligence (October 1984) to suggest that Person

L was actively engaged in the planning and organising of the murder bid, although he took no part in the commission. The intelligence also suggests he supplied the weapons.

8.8 Some members of the UDA hierarchy were named as sanctioning the attack.

8.9 There is no evidence that suggests an informant was involved in the attack.

8.10 I have reviewed the available intelligence and noted three reports that between them identify Persons K, L and M, and an unidentified UDA commander from Rathcoole as being involved in the sanctioning.

8.11 This intelligence was received subsequent to the attack and the charging of the three assailants. The intelligence does state that the attack was sanctioned by the UDA hierarchy. However, the intelligence was not shared with the investigating officers and as a result there was no further enquiries made in respect of the planning and sanctioning of the attack. Those responsible for the planning and sanctioning of this attack have not been brought to justice.

8.12 The Weapons

The weapons recovered from the gunmen at the scene of their arrests were:

Weapon 1

.45 inch calibre ACP (automatic Colt pistol) FMAP (Fabrica Militar de Armas Portatiles), Argentinean made, serial number 55188.

Although there was no trace of the weapon being used in shootings before the attack on Mr Adams, it is linked to a find of spent bullet cases on 11 February 1984 at Carnmoney Hill, Newtownabbey.

- 8.14 My investigators discussed the find of spent bullet cases with representatives of the Weapons, Explosives and Research Centre. It was explained that paramilitary groups often test-fired weapons before using them in attacks, and such a find was consistent with that use.
- 8.15 The ACP FMAP pistol was disposed of to Weapon Control on 7 November 1988, and because it was unusual, authority was granted for it to be retained in a reference collection at PSNI Seapark. This was the only example of the ACP FMAP that had ever been seen at Seapark.
- 8.16 Weapon 2
9mm calibre Walther P38 semi-automatic pistol, serial number 488E.
There is also no trace of it being used in shootings before the attack on Mr Adams, but it too can be linked to the find of spent bullet cases on 11 February 1984 at Carnmoney Hill, Newtownabbey. The Walther P38 was disposed of to Weapon Control on 7 November 1988.
- 8.17 Weapon 3
Walther PP 9mm calibre short semi-automatic pistol, serial number 45901.
Forensic tests show it was stolen from a police officer in Bangor 10 years before, on 10 May 1974. There was no trace of it being used in shootings before it was seized on 14 March 1984. Forensic examination also indicated it was not fired during the attack on Mr Adams.
- 8.18 Ammunition Find at Carnmoney Hill
UDR records from 11 February 1984 show that as a result of a planned search, A Company, 10 UDR search team located what was believed to be a training range on Carnmoney Hill. They reported plenty of improvised targets in the area, some of which had been shot at over a

period of time. They recovered one live 9mm round and a number of 9mm and .45 inch calibre empty bullet cases. The 9mm and .45 inch empty bullet cases were later forensically matched with the ACP FMAP and Walther P38 pistols used in this incident.

8.19

There are no RUC/PSNI records of any tampering or covert alteration of the weapons used in the attack on Mr Adams.

9.0

Conclusions

- 9.1 The three offenders responsible for the attack were apprehended close to the scene and a successful prosecution was delivered that resulted in significant prison sentences. This was an open and shut case for the RUC. The evidence was compelling and did not depend on intelligence gathering. The gunmen were caught red-handed and it does not appear that any main line of enquiry was missed by the RUC enquiry team at that time.
- 9.2 The allegations subject of investigation are outlined in section one and can be summarised as follows:
- 9.3
1. the RUC or security forces either had prior knowledge of the attack on Mr Adams or were directly involved in the attempted murder
 2. the RUC knew of the planned attack one week before its execution due to an SB informant, who was involved in the planning of the operation
 3. the bullets used in the incident had been doctored by the authorities in order to reduce their velocity and 'dumb them down'
- 9.4 All pertinent witnesses have been interviewed and have provided no supporting evidence to give any weight to the allegations made.
- 9.5 Security force personnel have provided accounts as to why they were present at the scene. These accounts have been supported by

independent witnesses. Although there are inconsistencies in accounts, these are minor and do not impact on the overall evidential picture or proving/disproving the allegations at hand. Furthermore inconsistencies are common where there has been no conferring and also in older cases.

- 9.6 It is noteworthy that no witness claims that they were aware of or that they questioned if the weapons or ammunition used in the attack had been tampered with at the time of the incident. Indeed it was only many years later (2006) following media speculation that concerns were raised by Mr Adams. There is no evidence to support this claim and enquiries with the media, where the speculation was born, have not been successful.
- 9.7 Independent evidence from the forensic scientist expert I commissioned confirms that there was no doctoring of the ammunition. He stated that: ***‘on examination of the fired components, no evidence was found of any defects or evidence that they had been tampered with, they appeared to be commercially loaded ammunition which functioned as expected’.***
- 9.8 He went on to interpret the photographic evidence and stated that ***‘the terminal capabilities of the ammunition were compatible with commercially loaded .45 auto and 9x19mm calibre ammunition. I have not observed anything to suggest that velocities had been reduced’.***
- 9.9 He makes it clear and refers to the medical evidence ***‘that both the .45 Auto and the 9x19mm calibre ammunition used in the incident had lethal potential’.***
- 9.10 The medical statements highlight the impact of the bullets with the ability to both enter and exit the body in different areas. This in turn highlights their potential to cause lethal injuries if the shot placement had been more accurate. This evidence does not support the allegation that the bullets

used by the loyalist gunmen in this case were interfered with.

- 9.11 All main lines of enquiry have been exhausted. Both the forensic and medical evidence are overwhelming and convincing of the fact that neither the weapons nor the ammunition were tampered with before the attack occurred and there is no information to support the allegation that police had prior knowledge of the attack on Mr Adams.
- 9.12 There is no evidence of any criminality or misconduct by any police officer.
- 9.13 The allegations made by Mr Adams and others have not been substantiated.

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