

Statutory Report

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

**THE PREVENTABILITY AND RUC INVESTIGATION OF THE
MURDER OF SERGEANT JOSEPH CAMPBELL AT CUSHENDALL
ON 25 FEBRUARY 1977**

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1.0

Executive Summary

- 1.1 Sergeant Joe Campbell was murdered outside Cushendall Police Station on 25 February 1977. A 1980 Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) investigation into the murder resulted in the charging of a police officer and a member of the public in connection with the murder of Sergeant Campbell.
- 1.2 No other persons have been arrested or charged with the murder of Sergeant Campbell. The member of the public prosecuted was convicted of withholding information about the murder while the police officer was acquitted.
- 1.3 In 2002 the then Police Ombudsman received a complaint from Sergeant Campbell's son, Joe Campbell Junior, on behalf of his mother Mrs Rosemary Campbell, concerning the circumstances in which his late father had been murdered and the subsequent police investigation. In summary, the complaints made by the Campbell family were:-
1. The murder of Sergeant Campbell was preventable had the RUC acted on reports by officers concerning the risks that placed his life in danger.
 2. The RUC failed to conduct an effective investigation into the murder of Sergeant Campbell.
 3. The Head of Special Branch was involved with the police officer acquitted in connection with the murder, in gun

running between Campbeltown in Scotland and Red Bay, near Cushendall.

4. Police suppressed information relating to the murder of Sergeant Campbell concerning the involvement of an Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) member, Robin Jackson, and consequently permitted perjury to be committed.
5. The police officer acquitted for the murder of Sergeant Campbell conspired with Robin Jackson in that crime.
6. The Assistant Chief Constable in charge of Special Branch disclosed sensitive intelligence, to the police officer acquitted, prior to the murder of Sergeant Campbell.

1.4 Further to the complaint by the Campbell family, my Office undertook a further investigation into the murder of Sergeant Campbell leading to the re-arrest of the former police officer. A file was submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) who subsequently directed there should be no prosecution in relation to the individual concerned.

1.5 The purpose of this report is to consider the actions of the RUC prior to, and following the murder, with particular reference to the allegations made by the Campbell family. My investigation was wide ranging, involving over eight hundred investigative actions and seventy-seven witness statements from members of the public and retired RUC Officers who knew Joe Campbell and the circumstances surrounding his murder. Local enquiries were also conducted and a public appeal was made which produced

some useful information. I am extremely grateful to all those who co-operated with my investigation.

- 1.6 My investigation was hampered by both the refusal of a number of retired senior police officers to co-operate and the loss of police documentation. The examination of any case going back to 1977 presents significant difficulties. Whilst I have tried to answer the questions raised by the family, the passage of time; the failure to locate / obtain information; and the unavailability of key witnesses, inevitably result in some questions remaining unanswered.
- 1.7 In considering the allegation that senior management of the RUC did not act on intelligence in their possession, my finding is that there is sufficient and reliable evidence that some senior police officers in the RUC's command structure were aware of the concerns of more junior officers within Ballymena Special Branch relating to a threat that existed to Sergeant Campbell prior to his murder.
- 1.8 I am satisfied that the intelligence submitted by junior officers outlined a specific threat to Sergeant Campbell and that the RUC failed to respond to the reports in an appropriate manner. My investigators also interviewed former army personnel who were aware of the risk to Sergeant Campbell and who passed this information on to the police in Ballymena.
- 1.9 I could find no evidence of any corrective action being taken by RUC senior management to mitigate the risks, or to undertake investigations into the information pertaining to those risks prior to the murder. Had there been some form of intervention with Sergeant Campbell, and there is no evidence that he had been

warned of the specific threat against him, such policing intervention may have led to a different outcome. The senior management response to these very serious allegations was wholly inadequate and was certainly not commensurate with the nature of the allegations or the source from which they originated.

1.10 I have therefore substantiated the complaint that police failed to act on information available to them and by doing so placed Sergeant Campbell's life in danger.

1.11 My investigation examined both the investigation that immediately followed the murder of Sergeant Campbell and the 1980 murder investigation and identified a series of significant investigative failures. These included inadequate resourcing; failure to conduct local enquiries effectively; failure of senior management to disseminate significant and relevant intelligence; loss of documentation; failure to search for evidential opportunities arising from security force records; and failures in police handling of the alleged murder weapon.

1.12 The member of the public subsequently convicted in relation to the murder of Sergeant Campbell was identified at court as a police informant who, despite significant internal RUC intelligence of his alleged criminal activity, continued to operate in that role in the period immediately following the murder.

1.13 My investigation uncovered new evidence, and had this been available at the time it could have been important in determining the culpability or innocence of those accused of the murder of Sergeant Campbell. Whilst important in influencing my conclusions in this matter, the Public Prosecution Service (PPS)

assessment was that the passage of time has made such new evidence weak from a prosecutorial perspective.

- 1.14 One of the continuing themes to emerge during the course of my investigation was evidence of the systematic destruction and / or loss of critical documentary evidence. This included not only intelligence reports submitted by RUC Officers but also a Portglenone Police Station Occurrence Book, documenting the movement of the rifle alleged to have been used in the murder; the 1977 murder investigation files; interview notes; a relevant Complaints and Discipline File and intelligence documents recovered from the home of a potential witness.
- 1.15 There is no evidence that Sergeant Campbell's family was provided with any meaningful information as to developments in the investigation and it was left to Mrs Campbell to press for information and to campaign for renewed vigour to be applied to the inquiry. That, in 1980, a new investigation into the murder of Sergeant Campbell was directed chiefly on the back of a continuing campaign by Mrs Campbell further illustrates the failure of the RUC to respond adequately to the allegations being made.
- 1.16 I have therefore substantiated the complaint that police failed to conduct an effective investigation into the murder of Sergeant Campbell.
- 1.17 It is alleged that the police suppressed information relating to the involvement of a third party and that an Assistant Chief Constable disclosed sensitive intelligence about the alleged criminal activities of a serving police officer prior to the murder of Sergeant Campbell. Whilst there is some circumstantial

material, I have found no conclusive evidence of this and can neither discount nor substantiate these allegations.

1.18 In considering the allegations that the motive for the murder of Sergeant Campbell included his knowledge that firearms were being imported by loyalist paramilitaries through the Cushendall area and that his murder involved rogue elements of the security forces, members of the UVF including Robin Jackson (now deceased) and others, I am mindful of the limited information available with the passage of time. Whilst my investigation has established some evidence that the security forces were aware of arms being smuggled into Red Bay, near Cushendall and that there is a witness statement alleging direct culpability in this regard, the overall picture is inconclusive. On the basis of the information available I can neither discount nor substantiate the allegations of a wider conspiracy into the murder of Sergeant Campbell.

1.19 Ultimately, I have concluded that Sergeant Campbell, a dedicated community police officer in the Glens of Antrim, and his family, were failed by senior officers of the police force of which he was a respected member.

2.0

Overview of the circumstances surrounding the Murder of Sergeant Joe Campbell and the Police Ombudsman's Investigation

- 2.1 Sergeant Campbell was posted to Cushendall Police Station in 1963. He lived in the village with his family. Over the years he developed a personal and professional rapport with many of the residents of the area. He was regarded as an effective police officer and commanded the respect and confidence of the local community.
- 2.2 At the time of Sergeant Campbell's death Cushendall Police Station operated limited opening hours between 9.00am and 11.00am and 5.00pm and 7.00pm. These hours were to facilitate members of the public attending the station whilst also providing Sergeant Campbell and a Constable, recently posted to the area, with the capacity to pursue other policing duties.
- 2.3 On 25 February 1977 Sergeant Campbell was on leave. He was later described by his family as having been out of character for a number of weeks and in a pensive mood. Two weeks earlier a telephone call had been received on an ex-directory telephone line serving Cushendall Police Station during which the unidentified caller asked that a message be passed on to Sergeant Campbell that if he didn't '**mind his own business**' he was a '**dead duck**'. On the evening of his murder he received two further telephone calls at home, the nature of which he didn't share with his family. After the second call, at about 8.30pm, he left his home to walk the short distance to Cushendall Police Station where his colleague was on duty.

Sergeant Campbell had elected to wear his personal protection sidearm, which was unusual for him.

2.4 Sergeant Campbell remained in the station talking with his colleague until shortly before 9.00pm, when the Constable finished his duties for the evening. Sergeant Campbell saw him off the premises and secured the main gates to the compound of the police station.

2.5 At approximately 9.00pm at least one shot was heard by a number of people in Cushendall and soon after Sergeant Campbell was found by a member of the public on the ground outside the main gates to Cushendall Police Station. He sustained a gunshot wound to his head and was conveyed to hospital but died without regaining consciousness.

2.6 Police commenced a murder investigation but no witnesses were identified and no other evidence which would have assisted in identifying the person(s) responsible was recovered. No one was charged as a result of this initial murder investigation.

2.7 In 1980 a new Chief Constable, in response to pressure from the family of Sergeant Campbell, ordered a new inquiry into the murder. A senior Detective Inspector from RUC Headquarters Crime Squad was appointed to lead the investigation, which quickly resulted in the arrest and charge of a serving member of the RUC's Special Branch and a civilian associate who was identified by the court as a police informant.

2.8 The police investigation also gathered evidence, much of which was aired in subsequent court proceedings, of alleged criminal

joint enterprises including armed robberies and the criminal use of firearms by the two men over a number of years, primarily in the North Antrim area.

2.9 Whilst the member of the public involved admitted and was convicted of withholding information about the murder and numerous other offences for which he was sentenced to eighteen years imprisonment, the police officer was acquitted of the murder of Sergeant Campbell and ultimately all other offences for which he had been prosecuted. The officer did not return to police duties and the other individual was released early by a Royal Prerogative of Mercy.

2.10 In 2002 the Police Ombudsman received a complaint from Mr Joe Campbell Junior on behalf of his mother Mrs Rosemary Campbell, concerning the circumstances in which his late father had been murdered. Mr Campbell also complained about the conduct of the related police investigations.

2.11 Supported by the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), British Irish Rights Watch (BIRW), Mr Campbell alleged that former senior officers of the RUC had failed in their duty to protect Sergeant Campbell and had conspired in his murder and that related police investigations had been inadequate, if not corrupt.

2.12 The concerns of the Campbell family had originated in part from allegations attributed to Mr John Weir, a former member of the RUC, convicted of the murder of Mr William Strathearn at Ahoghill on 19 April 1977. Elements of the allegations referred to the activities of the man convicted in relation to the murder of Sergeant Campbell. These allegations were summarised in a

report by BIRW, submitted to the Police Ombudsman in support of the complaint by the Campbell family.

2.13 The formal complaint from the Campbell family detailed the following allegations:-

1. Senior management of the RUC did not act on intelligence in their possession which indicated that Sergeant Campbell's life was in danger.
2. Police suppressed information relating to the murder of Sergeant Campbell, specifically concerning the involvement of a third party (Robin Jackson of the UVF) and consequently permitted an offence of perjury to be committed.
3. The police officer acquitted for the murder of Sergeant Campbell had conspired with Robin Jackson in the murder.
4. The Assistant Chief Constable in charge of Special Branch disclosed sensitive intelligence, prior to the murder of Sergeant Campbell about the alleged criminal activities of a serving officer.

2.14 Additional allegations outlined by BIRW included:-

1. The murder was preventable had the RUC acted on reports by officers attached to Ballymena Special Branch and also by Sergeant Campbell concerning the threats posed to Sergeant Campbell.

2. The RUC failed to conduct an effective investigation of the murder of Sergeant Campbell.
3. The Head of Special Branch was involved in gun running with the officer acquitted for the murder of Sergeant Campbell for the Vanguard Party between Campbeltown in Scotland and Red Bay, Waterfoot, near Cushendall.

2.15 The objective of my investigation has been to address the complaints made by Sergeant Campbell's family in order to determine whether there was evidence of criminality or misconduct by any police officer in relation to the matters raised. My investigation has made every effort to obtain all available material in relation to the murder of Sergeant Campbell and the related RUC investigations.

2.16 My investigation identified almost eight hundred investigative actions; examined a wide range of documentary evidence, including internal RUC reports and intelligence; and obtained seventy-seven witness statements from members of the public and retired RUC Officers who knew Sergeant Campbell and were aware of issues relating to the circumstances surrounding his murder. Comprehensive local enquiries were conducted in the Cushendall area and public appeals were made for information. I am grateful to all those who co-operated with my Office over the years.

2.17 The investigation of historical matters presents unique challenges to my Office. Several people who might have been able to provide evidence to the investigation are now deceased. A number of retired police officers, identified by this investigation who may have had information that might have assisted,

declined to co-operate whilst others provided valuable information and context.

2.18 As a result of these enquiries new evidence was identified, which was directly relevant to the murder of Sergeant Campbell and which had not been available to the original murder investigations and trial. Consequently, the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) was sought in order to pursue certain investigative steps governed by the Criminal Justice Act 2003, through which new legislation was introduced in respect of 'double jeopardy'.

2.19 However, it was established that the legislation did not enable the DPP to give consent for the Police Ombudsman to pursue these investigative steps. Consequently, in 2005 my Office applied to the Northern Ireland Office for amendment to Section 85 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and associated legislation.

2.20 Following amendment of the legislation, in 2007 my Office applied for the consent of the DPP to re-investigate matters relating to the murder of Sergeant Campbell. The DPP gave his consent on the basis that he was satisfied that there was sufficient new evidence to warrant the conduct of the investigation and that it was in the public interest for the re-investigation to proceed.

2.21 On the basis of the new evidence obtained as part of the investigation, which had included re-arrest and interview of the former police officer who had been acquitted of the murder almost thirty years previously, a file was submitted to the PPS in relation to the murder of Sergeant Campbell. The PPS subsequently directed 'no prosecution'.

2.22 The purpose of this report is not to present my investigation into the murder of Sergeant Campbell, nor to attribute any liability for that death, whether criminal or civil. Rather its purpose is to simply consider the nature of the RUC response before and after the murder of Sergeant Campbell in order to address the concerns raised by the Campbell family.

3.0

Events Prior to the Murder of Sergeant Campbell

- 3.1 My investigation established that prior to the murder of Sergeant Campbell, senior management within the RUC had intelligence relating to a potential threat to his life. The RUC response to this information was wholly inadequate given the nature of these allegations.
- 3.2 The issues arose during the years preceding the murder of Sergeant Campbell from within a small team of Special Branch officers based at Ballymena Police Station. The unit was led by a Detective Inspector and also consisted of a Detective Sergeant and three Detective Constables. By the time the Campbell family's complaint was received by my Office all but two of the seven officers, who had at various times been attached to this unit between 1970 and 1977, were deceased.
- 3.3 One of the surviving officers, Police Officer 1, has been a principal source of evidence to my investigation in relation to how he and his colleagues came to report allegations of criminality in the Cushendall area to senior RUC management and that these activities had generated a risk of harm to Sergeant Campbell. Additional witnesses to whom other Detective Constables within Ballymena Special Branch, disclosed their concerns, which included the submission of inaccurate intelligence about Sergeant Campbell by another officer were also seen by my investigators.

- 3.4 Such were Police Officer 1's concerns regarding the threat to Sergeant Campbell that he contacted the *de facto* Head of RUC Special Branch, a Detective Chief Superintendent who was promoted to Assistant Chief Constable of Special Branch in January 1977, Police Officer 2.
- 3.5 Police Officer 1 told my investigators that between 1975 and 1976 he and a colleague had a series of secret meetings at Belfast with Police Officer 2 during which they had provided him with reports outlining their suspicions about the risk to Sergeant Campbell.
- 3.6 According to Police Officer 1 these reports eventually ***'categorically stated that Joe was to be lined up to be murdered....'***
- 3.7 Police Officer 1 explained to my investigators that concurrent with Sergeant Campbell indicating his concerns about the alleged criminal activities of a serving police officer in and around Cushendall, a subtle campaign seeking to discredit Sergeant Campbell by suggesting he was sympathetic to the activities of republican paramilitaries had begun.
- 3.8 A thorough examination by my investigators of RUC intelligence records and enquiries with numerous former police officers who worked with and knew Sergeant Campbell, evidences that Sergeant Campbell was a thoroughly professional police officer committed to the community he served and upholding law and order.

- 3.9 Police Officer 1 told my investigators that a number of months before the murder of Sergeant Campbell, he and a colleague had become so concerned for his safety that they had arranged a further meeting with Police Officer 2, at which the lack of action in respect of the escalating risk to Sergeant Campbell was raised. Police Officer 2 assured them that the Chief Constable had the matter in hand.
- 3.10 My Office spoke with the former Chief Constable who stated that he had no recollection of the Sergeant Campbell case.
- 3.11 Shortly after this meeting Police Officer 1 was transferred to a Special Branch unit in a neighbouring Policing Division. His replacement was Police Officer 3, whom he briefed on the situation regarding the risk to Sergeant Campbell.
- 3.12 A former Detective Sergeant, posted to Ballymena Special Branch after the murder, told my investigators that Police Officer 3 had told him that Sergeant Campbell was becoming so concerned for his personal safety that he had commented, ***'I'm a dead man'***.
- 3.13 Although Sergeant Campbell had insisted that he would ***'deal with the problem'*** himself, Police Officer 3 had relayed the information to a named Detective Superintendent at RUC North Region Special Branch Headquarters. This former Detective Superintendent declined to assist my investigation.
- 3.14 The evidence of this Detective Sergeant lends further support to the claim that Detective Constables attached to Ballymena Special Branch between 1975 and 1976 were making discreet reports to senior Special Branch Officers concerning a threat,

from an element within the RUC, to the life of Sergeant Campbell.

- 3.15 My investigators spoke with a Detective Chief Inspector who had been posted to Ballymena Police Station in late 1980. Upon his arrival, Police Officers including 1 and 3 had told him that they had been concerned about the risk of harm emerging from within the RUC towards Sergeant Campbell and that he had made disclosures to them about the criminal activity from which the threat to him had originated.
- 3.16 The Detective Chief Inspector's assessment of the situation had been that Sergeant Campbell had been placed in a difficult position in that he suspected senior police officers would likely have been dismissive of allegations that an element of Special Branch was involved in criminality.
- 3.17 The Detective Chief Inspector told my investigators that Police Officers including 1 and 3 told him that they had submitted intelligence to senior officers detailing their concerns regarding the risk to Sergeant Campbell. He knew that intelligence originating from Ballymena Special Branch would normally be routed to Police Headquarters through North Region Special Branch, however, the Detective Chief Inspector understood that in reporting on these matters the Special Branch Officers at Ballymena had not adhered to that process.
- 3.18 Based on the information shared with him by various Police Officers including 1 and 3, it was the assessment of the Detective Chief Inspector that senior RUC management, including the Chief Constable and Police Officer 2, knew of the

origin and nature of the risk to Sergeant Campbell but failed to respond in an appropriate manner.

3.19 The widow of Police Officer 4, a former Detective Inspector at the Ballymena Special Branch office, told my investigators that long before Sergeant Campbell's murder her husband had expressed concerns about a colleague and that his managers were aware of improper conduct but had done nothing to address the same. She was also aware that, prior to his murder, Sergeant Campbell had regularly phoned her husband and about six months prior to the murder they had met at Cushendall.

3.20 My investigators spoke to a former Military Intelligence Officer who had been posted to the North Antrim area during the 1970s. He explained that the army had also become concerned about an element of Special Branch involvement in incidents, including those involving the use of firearms, and other activities that created opportunities for paramilitaries. As a direct consequence of these concerns he and another Military Intelligence Officer from a neighbouring area had been required to provide weekly briefings to the Brigadier commanding the army in North Region.

3.21 My investigators spoke with a retired Assistant Chief Constable who had been in an administrative role within Special Branch Headquarters in the 1970's. He informed us that Police Officer 2 had outlined his concerns about the conduct of a relationship between a Special Branch officer (stationed at Ballymena) and an informant. This same former Assistant Chief Constable added that just prior to Sergeant Campbell's murder Police Officer 2 directed him to transfer the aforementioned officer from Ballymena to Belfast.

- 3.22 Another retired Assistant Chief Constable, Police Officer 5, also told my investigators that Police Officer 2 had told him about the aforementioned improper relationship. As a result, in his role as Deputy Head of Special Branch, he had travelled with Police Officer 2 to outline concerns about the improper relationship issues to the Divisional Commander at Ballymena Police Station. Following that meeting the transfer of the Special Branch Officer was confirmed. The retired Assistant Chief Constable stated that he had no recollection of Police Officer 2 mentioning the intelligence reports submitted by junior Special Branch officers concerning the threat/risk to Sergeant Campbell. The detail of these meetings and reason for transfer were not disclosed to the 1980 murder enquiry led by Police Officer 6.
- 3.23 The evidence indicates that from the early 1970s a number of Detective Constables attached to Ballymena Special Branch had developed suspicions in respect of the criminal activity of a colleague and that latterly their reports had highlighted concerns they had in respect of the risk to Sergeant Campbell. By 1975 they had been reporting those concerns to senior Special Branch Officers, including their Detective Inspector, the Detective Superintendent of North Region Special Branch and the Head of Special Branch, the latter of whom told them that the matter was with the Chief Constable.
- 3.24 There is no evidence that the reports of the junior officers, were acted upon by these senior officers.
- 3.25 It is therefore my finding that information regarding the risk to Sergeant Campbell's safety was reported to senior officers both locally and at RUC Headquarters. Those officers failed to

adequately respond to the identified risk and did not implement viable measures to mitigate or reduce the threat/risk to Sergeant Campbell.

4.0

The 1977 RUC Murder Investigation

- 4.1 My investigation was unable to recover the file relating to the original police investigation of Sergeant Campbell's murder, which Police Officer 6 confirmed he had not consolidated with his subsequent investigation in 1980. Consequently, assessing the rigour with which the original investigation was pursued has been hampered.
- 4.2 Something of an insight was provided by Police Officer 5. He told my investigators that he had visited Ballymena Police Station on the day following the murder and had been ***'struck by the lack of resources being utilised for the investigation. Also there was no intelligence available or information being provided as to who was responsible which is something I would have expected from such a small community as Cushendall'***.
- 4.3 My investigation has examined the historic intelligence held by the PSNI in respect of the murder of Sergeant Campbell and also found no material of any value.
- 4.4 Accounts provided by a number of former police officers and comprehensive enquiries by my investigators at Cushendall do however, indicate that following an initial visit by senior detectives from Police Headquarters, a small number of speculative arrests and property searches were conducted and limited local house to house enquiries undertaken by mainly Ballymena based police officers.

- 4.5 Forensic records document that an examination of the murder scene established the likely trajectory of the bullet which struck Sergeant Campbell. It was assessed that the shot had been discharged from an elevated position some thirty metres from the gates of the police station using a high velocity firearm.
- 4.6 In the absence of any investigative leads identified by the murder investigation team, the inquiry was quickly scaled down with police assuming that the murder had been perpetrated by republican paramilitaries, despite the absence of a statement by any such organisation, who were normally quick to claim responsibility for attacks on security forces.
- 4.7 There is no evidence that Sergeant Campbell's family was provided with any meaningful information as to developments in the investigation and it was left to Mrs Campbell to press for information and campaign for renewed vigour to be applied to the inquiry.
- 4.8 In the absence of records relating to the conduct of the 1977 police investigation, my investigators undertook extensive house to house and other enquiries at Cushendall and made appeals for information both locally and through the media. This was for the purpose of both assessing the effectiveness of the enquiries conducted by the RUC between 1977 and 1980 and identifying potential witnesses and/or information which might assist my investigation.
- 4.9 These efforts by my investigators revealed significant shortcomings in the effectiveness of enquiries conducted by the RUC in the area of Cushendall, particularly around the

availability of evidence which might have proven valuable to the murder investigation but which was not identified by the RUC.

4.10 My investigation established that on the evening of the murder a number of social events had taken place in the village, including a 'bingo night' at a hall in the village. A local resident who had given his wife a lift from their home, near Cushendall Police Station, to the hall at approximately 8.45pm, returning home within fifteen minutes, recalled seeing a man standing a short distance from the police station on both parts of his journey. During their local 'house to house' enquiries police did not call at the home of this witness. Indeed my investigators found many instances in which enquiries were not made with members of the Cushendall community who lived near the murder scene.

4.11 These potential witnesses included a member of the public who had seen a man repeatedly on the outskirts of Cushendall during the weeks preceding the murder and again on the evening of the murder. Two further witnesses told my investigators that they had had separate encounters with a man on the outskirts of Cushendall on the evening of the murder. By the time my investigators spoke with the witnesses, time had eroded the probative value of this evidence. It is clear, however, that had police identified these witnesses at the time of the murder investigation their accounts may have been of significance to those enquiries.

4.12 The RUC investigation conducted during 1977 failed to exploit the evidential opportunities which were available from local residents of Cushendall resulting in potential evidence, which may have served to identify suspects, being undermined by the passage of time.

4.13 These investigative failures were exacerbated by potentially unfounded assumptions as to who had been responsible for the murder; a failure in the dissemination of intelligence; inadequate resourcing of the inquiry; and an absence of meaningful engagement with the Campbell family, all of which collectively contributed to an ineffective investigation.

5.0

Information known to the RUC in the aftermath of the Murder of Sergeant Campbell

5.1 My investigation identified evidence that between 1977 and 1979 further information concerning the suspects for Sergeant Campbell's murder was received by the Chief Constable and other senior officers attached to Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Headquarters and Ballymena Police Station. There is no evidence that this information was shared with the original murder investigation or that robust action was taken to address the concerns raised by some junior RUC officers.

5.2 My investigation identified information from three principal sources:-

1. Information arising from the police investigation of an incident at the home of the Honorary West German Consul to Northern Ireland.
2. Enquiries by the RUC Complaints and Discipline Department.
3. Intelligence emanating from Ballymena Police Station.

5.3 **Incident at the home of the Honorary West German Consul**

5.4 Whilst investigating an incident at the Ballymena home of the Honorary West German Consul which occurred on 7 September 1977 during which armed intruders fled after discharging a

firearm, Police Officer 6, then a Detective Sergeant attached to RUC Headquarters Crime Squad, obtained information during an interview undertaken at Castlereagh Holding Centre.

- 5.5 At that time police maintained logs of interviews conducted at Castlereagh Holding Centre. On each occasion that an individual was arrested and interviewed, the log personal to the interviewee would be updated to reflect the timing of the interview, the police officers involved and a brief summary of the subject matter covered. A summary of this interview was absent, the corresponding entry reading, ***'interview notes mislaid. No details of interview available'***.
- 5.6 The information was, however, made subject of a confidential report which was forwarded to a Detective Chief Superintendent, now deceased. My investigators recovered a copy of this document which Police Officer 6 told my investigators he understood had been submitted to the Chief Constable of the RUC. The report was submitted by Police Officer 7, a Detective Inspector also attached to RUC Headquarters Crime Squad.
- 5.7 This report detailed how relevant information regarding the incident had been passed to the Detective Inspector in charge of Ballymena Special Branch. The information had led to the recovery of a Walther pistol used in the crime and which was forensically linked to other serious crimes. Information obtained by Police Officer 6 and his detectives also led to recovery of a number of sub-machine guns, rifles and a large quantity of ammunition, some of which was similarly linked to serious crime.
- 5.8 When questioned about related criminality in the North Antrim area, the individual subject of the interview at Castlereagh had

said that he had been instructed that ***'if shootings were ever mentioned to me to refer to 'Headquarters'.***

5.9 The information supplied from this interview should have assisted the CID operations in the North Antrim area including the investigation of Sergeant Campbell's murder.

5.10 **Enquiries by RUC Complaints and Discipline (C&D)**

5.11 My investigation established that in October 1977, prompted by the report from Headquarters Crime Squad, a Superintendent attached to the RUC Complaints & Discipline Department was directed by the Chief Constable to conduct a confidential enquiry into allegations of criminality by an element of Special Branch in the County Antrim area, including bank and post office robberies.

5.12 The Superintendent, who conducted his investigation between October 1977 and March 1978, subsequently recorded a statement in which he detailed his enquiries. The statement recorded that ***'there was specific information available regarding those responsible for Sgt Campbell's murder'***. It is noteworthy, however, that the officer recorded that the individual interviewed at Castlereagh Holding Centre had told him that Police Officer 6's CID team had accused him of the murder.

5.13 As the Superintendent is deceased I have been unable to definitively establish from where he obtained the specific information about the murder of Sergeant Campbell.

- 5.14 The Chief Superintendent of the Complaints & Discipline Department during late 1977 and early 1978 refused to engage with my investigation.
- 5.15 My investigation confirmed that the papers relating to this Complaints & Discipline Department inquiry have been lost, destroyed or otherwise misappropriated. In fact, a former senior Special Branch officer told my investigators that he had tried to access these papers in or around 1982 but was informed they had already been lost by that time.
- 5.16 Police Officer 6 told my investigators that he had ***'expected the allegations made (by the individual interviewed at Castlereagh) would return to CID for investigation and was surprised the matter was referred to C&D. At that time other serious allegations of criminal activity by police officers were always passed to CID for enquiries with C&D responsible for simple disciplinary matters. I was also surprised that (the C&D Superintendent) took a withdrawal from (the individual interviewed) but never spoke to him about his enquiries'***.
- 5.17 Police Officer 6 also told my investigators that he, when leading the 1980 murder investigation, did not recall seeing the statement authored by the Complaints & Discipline Superintendent, adding that such a statement would have been ***'significant'*** to the enquiries he would subsequently undertake in relation to the murder of Sergeant Campbell.
- 5.18 It is worthy of note that Police Officer 6 maintained contact with the Castlereagh interviewee for an indeterminate period following his interview in 1977.

5.19 **Intelligence from Ballymena Police Station**

5.20 My investigation identified evidence that between 1977 and 1979 further information concerning the murder of Sergeant Campbell, had been received by the Chief Constable and other senior officers attached to Special Branch, CID Headquarters and Ballymena Police Station.

5.21 Following receipt of information from a member of the public in the Glens of Antrim, during the summer of 1977 a local police officer had passed information to Ballymena Special Branch and the Ballymena Police Station Collator*.

5.22 The information prompted the Collator to complete a record dated 6 August 1977 (a copy of which my investigation retrieved from PSNI Headquarters), which he forwarded to his managers. This document linked a named individual to a Cushendall bank robbery in early February 1977. The Collator concluded his report by stating, ***'there is a link between the Cushendall bank job.... and the murder of Sergeant Campbell at Cushendall on 25.2.77'***.

5.23 The Collator told my investigators that the contents of his report and other crimes in the area were discussed in the presence of the Ballymena Divisional Commander. He added that, ***'since I submitted that report I have been expecting someone to come and see me about the contents especially during the investigation of Joe Campbell's murder. To this day no-one has contacted me at all until I was recently visited by investigators from the Police Ombudsman's Office'***.

* The collator was a police officer responsible for the collection and distribution of intelligence relating to criminal activity in the Ballymena Policing Division.

- 5.24 When my investigators put the Collator's information to Police Officer 6 he informed us that the information would have been of significance to his investigation of the Sergeant Campbell murder – confirming that it had never been shared with him.
- 5.25 In a statement to my investigators, Mrs Campbell described how in the spring of 1979 a uniformed Inspector attached to Ballymena Police Station had paid her a visit. During conversation about the murder of Sergeant Campbell, the Inspector had indicated that he was aware of certain matters relating to the murder that were ***'worse than the death itself'***.
- 5.26 Shortly afterwards Mrs Campbell attended another meeting with the Inspector, who on that occasion was accompanied by the Complaints & Discipline Department Superintendent who had earlier conducted enquiries into revelations made by the individual interviewed by Police Officer 6 and his colleagues at Castlereagh Holding Centre. During conversation the officers alluded to the involvement of a police officer, whom they did not identify, in the murder of Sergeant Campbell. My investigators met with the Inspector and he explained that at the request of the Divisional Commander at Ballymena, he had met Mrs Campbell twice, on the second occasion accompanied by the Superintendent.
- 5.27 In the absence of any further communication or apparent progress in the murder investigation, in late 1979 Mrs Campbell secured a meeting with the Chief Constable of the RUC. The meeting was arranged by a police welfare officer who is now deceased.

- 5.28 During the meeting with the Chief Constable, Mrs Campbell was told that two police officers* had been questioned about the murder of her husband but had been cleared of involvement. Mrs Campbell was, however, frustrated by what she perceived to be police inaction and/or indifference in respect of the murder and continued her campaign for the murder of her husband to be properly investigated
- 5.29 Following the appointment of a new Chief Constable, in January 1980, Mrs Campbell again raised concerns regarding the circumstances of her husband's murder. This led to the Chief Constable directing that a new murder investigation be commenced.
- 5.30 My investigation found no evidence that the intelligence relating to the murder of Sergeant Campbell originating from Ballymena Police Station in August 1977, or information arising from police enquiries involving the individual interviewed at Castlereagh in September 1977 and the related investigation by the Complaints & Discipline Department was shared with police officers responsible for investigating the murder of Sergeant Campbell.
- 5.31 No rational explanation has been identified which could explain the continued failure by RUC Special Branch, specifically the Head of that Department, to disseminate relevant intelligence to the RUC murder investigation. The failure to disseminate this intelligence did, however, contribute to a prolonged delay and undermining of the investigation and the prompt examination of who murdered Sergeant Campbell.

*The two police officers to whom the Chief Constable referred are believed to have been John Weir and William McCaughey, members of the RUC who were arrested in 1979 and subsequently convicted of the murder of William Strathearn at Ahoghill on 19 April 1977.

6.0

The 1980 RUC Murder Investigation

- 6.1 In 1980 Police Officer 6, then a Detective Inspector attached to the RUC's Headquarters Crime Squad, a CID unit which specialised in the investigation of the most serious terrorist crimes. He told my investigation that having been assigned responsibility for taking a **'fresh look'** at the murder of Sergeant Campbell he commenced a new inquiry on 7 July 1980.
- 6.2 Police Officer 6 started his investigation of the Sergeant Campbell murder by reviewing the investigation papers corresponding to the enquiries conducted immediately after the murder, which he believed had been led by Police Officer 7, though the latter officer disputes that he led the first investigation.
- 6.3 Police Officer 6 told my investigation that he had found it strange that there had been no claims of responsibility from republican paramilitaries for the murder; that if such organisations had been involved there had been no attempt to shoot Sergeant Campbell's colleague; and that there had been no spent bullet cartridges at the crime scene as it was unusual for paramilitaries to gather up spent ammunition. On the basis of this and his analysis of other shootings and acts of criminality in the Ballymena area, Police Officer 6 became suspicious that **'something was fishy and not right'**.

- 6.4 Equipped with these suspicions and conscious of suggestions that an element of Special Branch had been involved in serious criminality in the North Antrim area, Police Officer 6 made enquiries with a number of Detectives attached to the Ballymena Special Branch. On the basis of disclosures made by these officers to Police Officer 6 he gathered information concerning the involvement of an element of Special Branch in 'bogus operations', including shootings at RUC and UDR patrols. He concluded that, ***'this sort of behaviour seemed to be considered acceptable by Special Branch....to promote the status of informants'***.
- 6.5 Police Officer 6 said that he was not otherwise provided with any intelligence which might have assisted in identifying those responsible for the murder of Sergeant Campbell.
- 6.6 Police Officer 6 told my investigators that in 1980, satisfied that sufficient local enquiries had been undertaken by police immediately after the murder of Sergeant Campbell, he had decided not to re-visit the original investigation.
- 6.7 The decision by Police Officer 6 not to review enquiries undertaken by police immediately following the murder was flawed. The new investigation presented police with an opportunity to identify and address, albeit belatedly, failures during the previous three years.
- 6.8 Local enquiries in the Cushendall area may well have resulted in Police Officer 6 identifying witnesses to events on the night of Sergeant Campbell's murder, who later provided evidence to my investigation in respect of a key suspect's movements.

- 6.9 Further evidential opportunities were missed by failures in the 1980 investigation associated with the handling of a high velocity rifle reasonably suspected to have been the murder weapon. In particular, a former RUC Reserve Constable, now deceased, provided evidence to my investigation in relation to the movement of the weapon, including an associated documented record, contained within a Portglenone Police Station Occurrence Book, which was found to be missing by my investigation.
- 6.10 A further evidential opportunity was missed by the failure to conduct enquiries with the security force personnel deployed to vehicle checkpoints and other security duties immediately after the murder of Sergeant Campbell. This line of enquiry was not considered by the 1980 murder investigation but my investigation secured evidence from a former soldier, who had resourced one of these checkpoints, concerning the movements of a key suspect.
- 6.11 Police Officer 6 did tell my investigators that during the course of his investigation Police Officers including 1 and 3 had disclosed to him that they had been submitting intelligence reports about the potential risk to Sergeant Campbell prior to his murder. He said, ***'apparently they weren't getting very far with them. I was led to believe that reports.....were going straight to Headquarters, bypassing everybody.....I understand the reports went back to the early 1970s up until the time of the murder. I did not ask for the reports because I was a DI (Detective Inspector) and these reports were in the hands of the ACC Special Branch and the Chief Constable and to be honest I am not sure I would have got an honest reply if I***

had asked for them. I went straight to the sources of the reports, (including Police Officers 1 and 3).....These reports went straight to (Police Officer 2, Head of Special Branch)'.

- 6.12 During the murder investigation, led by Police Officer 6, a search was carried out at a premises linked to one of the suspects. RUC intelligence documents were recovered during that search but were not secured by the investigation and were subsequently 'lost'. The 'loss' of these documents was also subject of an investigation by my staff but it could not be established who was ultimately responsible for the failure to secure the documents.
- 6.13 Police Officer 6 told my investigators, ***'I formed the view that in this case SB had been caught out by their failure to act on the intelligence reports the officers had submitted'***.
- 6.14 The murder investigation led by Police Officer 6 did result in charges, trial and the acquittal of a suspect. The Castlereagh interviewee was convicted of withholding information in respect of Sergeant Campbell's murder and other charges. He received a significant prison sentence but was released early by a Royal Prerogative of Mercy.
- 6.15 A number of junior Special Branch officers, including Police Officers 1 and 3 did take their concerns to a member of the Social Democratic & Labour Party (SDLP), Sean Farran. They alleged that the RUC had failed to properly act upon the

information they had received prior to the murder. Mr Farran asked the RUC if they were in possession of the information provided by these officers only to be informed by the police that they had no such information.

7.0

Allegations of a wider conspiracy in the Murder of Sergeant Campbell

7.1 During the latter stages of his fourteen year term of imprisonment for the 1977 murder of Mr William Strathearn at Ahoghill, Ballymena and following his release from prison in 1992, Mr John Weir engaged with a number of investigative journalists examining allegations of collusion between members of the security forces and the mid-Ulster UVF, notably Robin Jackson, now deceased.

7.2 One of these journalists who was seen by my investigation had a record, purporting to have been made in December 1992, in which he summarised Mr Weir's allegations at that time in relation to the murder of Sergeant Campbell; ***'Jackson wascontacted through two Armagh Special Patrol Group members of his gang, Const. William McCaughey and Sgt. John Weir (who) had been involved in Jackson's operations since at least 1975. In February 1977 (a member of Special Branch) contacted McCaughey to arrange for Jackson to assassinate a Catholic RUC Sergeant, Joe Campbell, in Cushendall.....Jackson agreed to do the hit, it is said, on condition he was given the gun by Special Branch. Sgt Campbell was murdered because he was on the trail of a Special Branch/Army Operation.....which had involved(mounting) pseudo IRA attacks, but had degenerated tothe private benefit of those concerned'***.

- 7.3 My investigators met with Mr Weir and recorded a comprehensive statement from him, in which he explained that he and other police officers had become associated with Robin Jackson's UVF gang during the 1970s, leading to their involvement in loyalist paramilitary activity, including the murder of William Strathearn, for which they were arrested in 1979.
- 7.4 Mr Weir alleged that whilst in Crumlin Road Prison, Robin Jackson had admitted to him that he had been involved in the murder of Sergeant Campbell.
- 7.5 It is noteworthy that John Weir gave evidence to a judicial inquiry into the 1974 Dublin and Monaghan bombings, convened by the Irish Government and led by Judge Barron. The Inquiry formed the following views of John Weir's evidence; ***'Bearing in mind that Weir was an active member of the security forces and that his allegations relating to the period from May to August 1976 have received considerable confirmation, the Inquiry believes that the evidence overall is credible. Some reservation is appropriate in relation to his allegations against police officers having regard to his possible motive in going public and also in relation to his own part in the offences which he relates'***.
- 7.6 Shortly before his death from illness, my investigators met with William McCaughey, who denied having any knowledge of the murder of Sergeant Campbell and was generally dismissive of John Weir's allegations, other than to confirm their relationship with Robin Jackson and allude to the latter's involvement in the murder of William Strathearn. It is noteworthy that during the trial of John Weir in 1980 police were asked about why loyalists,

including Robin Jackson, had not also been the subject of investigation for the murder of William Strathearn.

- 7.7 Relying on a named source, BIRW alleged that prior to the murder of Sergeant Campbell, a Special Branch Officer who was subsequently implicated in the murder, had received a telephone call from the Assistant Chief Constable in charge of Special Branch (Police Officer 2), advising him that Sergeant Campbell had submitted information to Police Headquarters in relation to allegations of that officer's criminality.
- 7.8 The same source is alleged to have told BIRW that police officers, including Police Officer 2 were involved in smuggling firearms for the Vanguard Party from Campbeltown in Scotland to Red Bay, a short distance from Cushendall.
- 7.9 According to the account, provided to BIRW, Sergeant Campbell's knowledge of this importation of firearms to Northern Ireland by loyalists and wider acts of criminality created the motive for his murder.
- 7.10 This individual made further allegations concerning the staging of bogus firearms and explosives incidents and the supply of firearms by an element of Special Branch in the North Antrim area during the 1970s. In one such incident shots were discharged at three uniformed police officers at Craigywarren, Ballymena on 22 July 1974. Two of the officers sustained serious injuries but survived.
- 7.11 My investigators have confirmed that on 16 February 1976 a firearm alleged to have been used in the shooting was surrendered to an RUC Special Branch Inspector by another

Special Branch Officer. The Inspector had the weapon forensically examined as a result of which a link with the shooting was established. The officer, however, chose not to act on information that a named Special Branch informant had been involved in the incident, and instead retained the weapon until the 1980 police investigation of the murder of Sergeant Campbell when he surrendered the firearm to Police Officer 6.

7.12 BIRW also provided information that Detectives investigating the murder in 1980 had been told of Jackson's involvement with an unidentified member of the British Army in the murder of Sergeant Campbell but had directed the witness involved to leave this out of his statement.

7.13 My investigation spoke to a former senior army officer who confirmed that during the 1970s he had participated in a joint services operation aimed at preventing arms importation through Red Bay, Waterfoot, near Cushendall.

7.14 The information provided by BIRW and other evidence, collectively caused the Campbell family to suspect that the murder of Sergeant Campbell had been motivated by his knowledge of the activities of an RUC, Security Force & loyalist paramilitary unit, which involved the importation of firearms through the Cushendall area.

8.0

Investigative Findings

- 8.1 **Allegation 1:** Senior management of the RUC did not act on intelligence in their possession which placed Sergeant Joe Campbell's life in danger.
- 8.2 I believe there is sufficient, reliable evidence that senior police officers throughout the RUC's command structure, including the Detective Inspector in charge of Ballymena Special Branch, the Detective Superintendent at North Region Special Branch Headquarters, the Head of Special Branch and quite probably the Chief Constable, were aware of the documented concerns of Detective Constables within Ballymena Special Branch relating to the threat/risk to Sergeant Campbell. I am satisfied that the intelligence submitted by the junior officers outlined a specific threat to Sergeant Campbell but that the RUC failed to respond to the reports in an appropriate manner. I have therefore substantiated this allegation.
- 8.3 **Allegation 2:** The murder (of Sergeant Campbell) was preventable had the RUC acted on reports by officers attached to Ballymena Special Branch and by Sergeant Campbell concerning the risk to himself.
- 8.4 My investigation has established that intelligence reports from officers attached to Ballymena Special Branch which indicated a direct threat to Sergeant Campbell were not acted on by various levels of management within the RUC. There is less evidence of Sergeant Campbell having submitted such reports.

8.5 Had senior management of the RUC ensured an appropriate response to the intelligence, which they had received concerning these alleged acts of criminality in the North Antrim area, I believe that the policing response which would have followed, particularly that relating to the threat to Sergeant Campbell, would almost certainly have prevented his murder. There is no evidence that Sergeant Campbell received any warning. I have substantiated this allegation.

8.6 **Allegation 3:** The RUC failed to conduct an effective investigation of the murder of Sergeant Campbell.

8.7 My investigation identified the following failures in the RUC investigation and handling of intelligence between 1977 and 1979 in relation to the murder of Sergeant Campbell:-

1. Inadequate resourcing of the investigation.
2. An assumption was wrongly made that republican paramilitaries were responsible for the murder.
3. Failure to conduct effective local enquiries following the murder resulting in potential key witnesses not being identified.
4. Failure of RUC senior management to ensure early dissemination of intelligence received prior to the murder from Police Officers including 1 and 3.
5. Failure to maintain effective communication with Sergeant Campbell's family, as a result of which Mrs Campbell was

placed in a position in which she felt it necessary to mount a campaign for progress and information.

6. Failure by Special Branch to ensure that intelligence received from the Collator at Ballymena Police Station was provided to the murder investigation.
7. Failure by the Divisional Commander at Ballymena to ensure that intelligence generated from within his Division was acted upon.
8. Failure of RUC senior management to ensure that effective enquiries were conducted in respect of information provided to the police in September 1977.
9. The loss of original interview notes relating to enquiries with a member of the public at Castlereagh on 30 September 1977.
10. Failure of RUC management to ensure that effective enquiries were conducted in respect of information received by the Complaints and Discipline Department between October 1977 and March 1978.
11. Loss of the file relating to enquiries by the Complaints & Discipline Department.

8.8 Similarly I have identified serious flaws in the murder investigation conducted during 1980:-

1. The integrity of the investigation was undermined by:

- a. Failure to acknowledge the inquiry was from the outset in possession of information that a named individual may have been involved in the murder, and;
 - b. Failure to record and retain police intelligence records found at the home of a member of the public and which may have provided important lines of enquiry for the murder investigation.
2. Continued failure by RUC senior management and Special Branch to disseminate relevant intelligence.
 3. Continued failure to ensure effective local enquiries at Cushendall.
 4. Continued failure to search for evidential opportunities from security force records arising from their response to the murder.
 5. Failures in relation to the police handling of the alleged murder weapon, including the loss of a Police Occurrence Book, which allegedly contained a crucial record in relation to the handling of the alleged murder weapon shortly before the murder.

8.9 Collectively these failures not only ensured an ineffective investigation of the murder of Sergeant Campbell, but have, over a prolonged period of time, served to undermine the integrity of the police response to the crime both within the police force and in the eyes of the general public. I have substantiated this allegation.

- 8.10 **Allegation 4:** Police suppressed information relating to the murder of Sergeant Campbell, specifically concerning the involvement of a third party (Robin Jackson of the mid-Ulster UVF) and consequently permitted perjury to be committed.
- 8.11 John Weir has made a statement to my investigation alleging that Robin Jackson told him that he had been involved in the murder of Sergeant Campbell. The integrity of successive police investigations of the murder of Sergeant Campbell was compromised by failures in the dissemination and handling of intelligence.
- 8.12 Whilst I have grave concerns as to the potential involvement of other parties in the murder of Sergeant Campbell, my investigation has not identified sufficient corroboration of the allegations, made principally by John Weir, to enable me to reach a definitive position on this allegation.
- 8.13 **Allegation 5:** A police officer conspired with Robin Jackson to murder Sergeant Campbell.
- 8.14 The extent of the failures by RUC senior management, Special Branch and those RUC investigators involved in the murder enquiries are such that much of the investigative activity associated with this tragic event has been corrupted.
- 8.15 I cannot, however, reach a reliable determination on the basis of the uncorroborated evidence of John Weir that a police officer conspired with Robin Jackson and others, in the murder of Sergeant Campbell.

- 8.16 **Allegation 6:** The Assistant Chief Constable in charge of Special Branch, disclosed sensitive intelligence which may have informed a motive for the murder of Sergeant Campbell.
- 8.17 This allegation refers to a named Assistant Chief Constable, now deceased, who commanded the RUC Department with responsibility for Special Branch prior to Police Officer 2.
- 8.18 Had the RUC properly retained these documents I may have been in a position to reach a determination in respect of this allegation, however, the failure of the RUC to do so, which in itself is a matter of the utmost concern, has prevented me from reaching a determination.
- 8.19 **Allegation 7:** The Head of Special Branch was involved with a named police officer in gun running for the Vanguard Party between Campbeltown in Scotland and Red Bay near Cushendall.
- 8.20 While conscious of evidence that the security forces did conduct operations in the area of Red Bay in relation to alleged 'gun running', I have found no evidence or intelligence of the involvement of police officers in such activity, as alleged by John Weir. I am, however, mindful that some relevant intelligence was destroyed or concealed. On balance, I am again unable to reach a determination in relation to this allegation.

9.0

Conclusions

- 9.1 I am satisfied that a significant threat to the safety of Sergeant Campbell had emerged prior to his murder and that the nature of that threat was known to some senior police officers. These alleged activities caused junior Special Branch officers attached to Ballymena Police Station to eventually become so concerned that they reported their suspicions directly to Police Headquarters including, as time progressed, a specific reference to a threat to Sergeant Campbell at Cushendall.
- 9.2 In his capacity as the operational Head of Special Branch, Police Officer 2 received these reports and told the detectives involved that the Chief Constable was aware of the information. Whilst I cannot be sure, it appears unlikely in these circumstances that the Assistant Chief Constable who had overall responsibility for the RUC's Special Branch and Criminal Investigation Department prior to late 1976 would not also have been briefed on the information.
- 9.3 It is my assessment that some senior police officers attached to Special Branch, and quite possibly other members of the RUC senior command team failed in their duty over a prolonged period of time to robustly respond to intelligence reports, originating from within Ballymena Special Branch, which included an alleged threat to Sergeant Campbell.

- 9.4 The failure of Special Branch, to disseminate the highly relevant intelligence, had a profound and adverse impact on the RUC murder investigation and the lives of all parties involved, particularly of course the Campbell family. This inaction resulted in a delay of more than three years before any semblance of a proper investigation began.
- 9.5 In view of the repeated opportunities presented for the dissemination of the intelligence it is difficult not to conclude that the material was deliberately withheld from police officers investigating the murder.
- 9.6 I do not believe that it was a coincidence that, following the appointment of a new Chief Constable of the RUC in January 1980, a fresh investigation into the murder of Sergeant Campbell was directed, albeit chiefly on the back of a continuing campaign by Mrs Campbell.
- 9.7 On the face of it the 1980 murder investigation conducted by Police Officer 6 went to great efforts to gather sufficient evidence to prosecute those suspected of the murder of Sergeant Campbell. His investigation was, however, undermined by a number of critical factors both within and outside his control. His decision not to re-visit local enquiries prevented identification of a number of witnesses living locally at Cushendall, who were seen by my investigation and who may, even in 1980, have provided significant assistance to his investigation.
- 9.8 The intelligence reports, recovered by Police Officer 6's investigation, may have assisted in supporting or disproving the

allegation regarding suspects for the murder. That they simply evaporated after being seized again points to a deliberate act.

9.9 The failure to disseminate intelligence; a denial by the RUC in the early 1980s that such intelligence existed when the issue was raised by a political representative; and the more recent confirmation, to my investigation, that such material is not held by the PSNI, leads me to the conclusion that the material was most likely wilfully concealed and/or destroyed.

9.10 In considering the allegations that the motive for the murder of Sergeant Campbell included his knowledge that firearms were being imported by loyalist paramilitaries through the Cushendall area and that his murder involved rogue elements of the security forces, members of the UVF and others, I am mindful that my investigation has established that relevant intelligence material was concealed or destroyed; that the investigation of Sergeant Campbell's murder was undermined from the outset; and that my investigation has received witness accounts that suggest such a wider conspiracy, including military operations to counter such gun smuggling. If these suspicions are incorrect they have been allowed to flourish because of the policing failures outlined in this report. On the balance of evidence available to me, however, I cannot exclude the presence of at least some elements of these allegations.

9.11 I am satisfied that some police officers at the most senior levels of the RUC failed to respond to intelligence from their own officers concerning allegations which put Sergeant Campbell at a risk of harm. This failure was perpetuated by what I have concluded can only have been the wilful concealment of the

material from detectives investigating the murder in 1977 and 1980.

- 9.12 The inadequacies of those investigations further undermined the prospect of effective investigation of the murder of Sergeant Campbell and promoted an atmosphere of suspicion in which allegations of a wider conspiracy, whether correct or incorrect, have subsequently thrived and the family of Sergeant Campbell have been failed.

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