



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Porter to confirm the name on a later occasion, but it seems fairly sure that it
Oxford that he was referring to.

I asked Porter whether the "jam on the cake" extended to the forensic evidence.
He said he did not know: that had not been mentioned. I decided to leave it at
that and we passed on to other things.

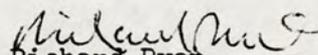
Comment

It is hard to see how this piece of information (if it were proved to be hard)
could be used, even leaving aside the question of a debt of confidentiality to
Porter. If it is true, and there is no surface reason to assume that it is not,
Oxford could simply deny any knowledge of such a conversation. If it were used,
there is no doubt that the relationship with Porter would certainly be wrecked,
and his reaction could very well have implications for relations with many of his
colleagues.

If, however, the current Appeal fails, and if there is to be a further round, it
might be considered then whether Oxford could be somehow induced to make the same
comments to someone other than Porter, in such a way as to make his remarks
usable by the appellants' Counsel.

Finally, it may be worth repeating that I did not feel I could push Porter too
hard on detail without betraying excessive interest. Also, Oxford was not in the
West Midlands Police Authority in 1974 (he was in Northumbria in 1974 and became
Deputy Chief Constable, Merseyside Police later that year); we do not yet know
how direct his information was (whether, for example, he spoke with an officer
directly involved in the Birmingham Six case at the time); nor do we know the
circumstances of his conversation with Porter. Should any further action be
thought necessary at any point in the future, it might be considered whether we
should not try to "harden" the information, initially perhaps through a further
sounding with Barry Porter.

Yours sincerely


Richard Ryan
Counsellor