

Justice For Willie **Summary Report**



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Disclaimer

This Summary report and the Full Witness report were both written and compiled by Ailie Wallace on behalf of the Justice For Willie Campaign Group. Both reports are intended to present the information provided to the group, in such a way that leaves it open for the reader to draw their own conclusions. Any opinions and conclusions inferred are unintentional; however they may be attributed to the group as a whole, and do not necessarily reflect the personal opinions of the author.

Objectives

The Justice For Willie group was initially formed to put pressure on the crown office, with the hope of opening a fatal accident inquiry into the death of Willie McRae. We handed in a petition with 13,000 signatures demanding a judicial review. However, we were advised by lawyers, that even in the event of a successful judicial review, there would be no legal requirement for any further inquiry. That's why we decided to launch our own investigation.

Most of the information we had about Willie's death at that time had come from press reports, news articles, and social media. There were three main points of contention for us as a campaign:

- The gun being found a distance away from Willie after he supposedly shot himself
- Willie's personal items (including his briefcase) having mysteriously disappeared. There was also an allegation of a pile of neatly-stacked paperwork being found beside the car.
- The possibility of Willie's car being replaced at the scene on the Sunday

We hoped that if evidence of foul play could be found then the only option would be for police to launch a murder investigation. The overall objective of the campaign investigation was to uncover new evidence/witnesses to this end.

From the offset, it was very difficult to verify the facts relating to the case. No original statements were available from the 1985 police investigations, and we had been made aware of several attempts to obtain this information via freedom of information requests by various interested parties. It therefore became crucial that all efforts be made to trace and re-interview original witnesses from the events of 1985. We were basically starting again with a fresh slate and an open mind.

The advantage of having an investigation of this sort is that it seeks to source tangible evidence from identifiable witnesses and strives to avoid dependency upon historical media, speculation or other unidentified or un-named sources.

Our ultimate aim was to end thirty years worth of conjecture, speculation, conspiracy theories and hearsay. We wanted to know once and for all – what really happened to Willie McRae?

Investigators

John Walker is a former Detective Sergeant with 30 years police service who retired in 2015 having worked in Glasgow CID. He has experience and training in intelligence development, surveillance, body guard duty and plain clothes pro-active policing. During his service, he was an authorised firearms officer and was a supervisor in digital media development. He is a highly experienced investigator and skilled interviewer.

John Weir is a former Detective Chief Inspector with 30 years police service. He retired in 2014 having worked in Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and Glasgow CID. He is an experienced senior investigating officer having led a number of investigations of homicide, child sexual abuse (local and international), sexual assault, shootings and cold case murder reviews. He has also investigated the misconduct of and criminal allegations against several serving police officers. He has worked in various multi-agency environments and has presented training inputs to police and other external partnerships across the United Kingdom.

Neither of our investigators has previously worked within the former Northern constabulary nor do they have any social or professional interaction with current or former officers from that force. Prior to January 2016, the investigators had no knowledge of the Willie McRae incident, and it was indeed a chance meeting with Campaign leader, Mark MacNicol, that first introduced them to the case.

Having retired from policing, the investigators have no current connection to the present Police Scotland. Similarly, the investigators have no affiliation to any newspaper or similar publications and have acted independently of any other organisation.

Background

The Justice For Willie Campaign would like to stress that the purpose of this investigation was not to find fault with any organisations or to undermine individuals. As with any investigation, there may be certain procedures, actions or non actions of persons which appear unusual or difficult to understand. In such cases, our investigators, as part of their interview strategy, would probe the evidence to seek answers in an effort to resolve any discrepancies. We do not seek to criticise anyone's actions, as we cannot comment on the conditions, challenges and demands faced by those individuals at that particular time.

We also would like to highlight that there have been huge developments in policing procedure over the past thirty years, and what may appear to be unusual by today's standards, might have been the "norm" for that time period. Indeed, our investigators believe that what the police did back in 1985 was appropriate at the time.

It could be said that there are gaps in what we could term as "expected police procedure" for forensic evidence capture, particularly in terms of the recovered firearm. However, it would be speculative to second guess why certain procedures are not explained and this would be the subject of required further investigation.

The campaign also understands that various politicians, journalists and other interested parties have attempted to obtain information relating to the Willie McRae case via Freedom of Information requests submitted to the Crown Office and Home Office. The information sought has not always been forthcoming which, of course, leaves a number of unanswered questions.

Because the campaign had only a finite amount of resources and funding, we felt the best course of action was to try to uncover new evidence relating to Willie's death, rather than spend a huge amount of time investigating the Crown Office, Home Office, or Police Scotland.

The scope of our campaign, therefore, was about starting a new investigation from scratch and re-interviewing original witnesses from the time of the incident.

Phase 1

Starting at the scene of the incident and working outwards

It was discussed and agreed by the Justice For Willie group that the investigators would initially focus upon the events of the weekend of 5th to 7th of April 1985. This would be standard procedure for any other major investigation; to work from the scene outwards and then consider other investigative options as evidence becomes available.

We hoped to be able to determine, if possible, whether Willie's injuries at the scene were more likely to be as a result of suicide or homicide. Obviously, the likelihood of suicide would negate all

other possible scenarios in terms of motive, vendetta, malice or guilty intent. If however there was evidence that indicated homicide then all other factors would come into play and be explored.

Encouragingly, many witnesses from 1985 agreed to provide information to this investigation whilst some others declined and others failed to respond to repeated requests.

Phase 2

Alleged events prior to the incident, and investigations into Willie's personal life

Phase 2 of our investigation sought to address some of the issues that were discussed among campaign group members from the outset of the investigation in relation to possible motives for Willie's death and suggestions of a conspiratorial cover up.

There were a number of threads to follow, most notably the incident at West Nile Street in Glasgow on Friday 5th April 1985, and also the possibility of Willie's briefcase containing sensitive documents. The investigators explored these reports in more detail and sought to clarify what was actually evidentially credible and what was otherwise fiction.

The investigators also assessed that it would be worthwhile to speak with anyone who may have had a working or personal relationship with Willie and who would be able to provide some insight into his thoughts, demeanour, and what business project or other personal matters had occupied him prior to his death.

Investigation Methods & Challenges

This report contains a summary of all of the evidence provided by witnesses in relation to our investigation (A full report of witness statements and transcripts is also available). The contents of this report are the result of months of research and interviews intended to clarify information and to identify previous misinformation. It is of course a matter for the reader to assess the reliability and logic of the various evidential contributions and to consider the accuracy and validity of media publications prior to this investigation.

In anticipation that some readers may view elements of this report with a degree of cynicism, given that the investigators are ex-police officers, the campaign would like to outline the methodology in the hope of convincing readers that the investigators were completely professional, independent and attempted in all cases to retain a balanced, impartial view, not swayed or influenced by external elements. Indeed, the investigators were taught from their police training that all officers must conduct their duties *“without fear, favour, malice or ill-will”* and that was the benchmark applied to this investigation. As a campaign, we are satisfied that both investigators remained focused on seeking the truth in an independent and transparent way throughout the investigation.

Where possible the investigators sought to interview each person on a face to face basis and to record their account in writing (as this is how a standard police investigation would progress), however this was not always possible due to geographical challenges and varying degrees of co-operation. It was therefore necessary at times to record witness information by email and telephone. While email and telephone interviews are not ideal, they are better than no interview at all.

Although there has been widespread media coverage of the events over the past few decades, the investigators sought to independently gather evidence directly from witnesses rather than refer to anonymous, protected, confidential sources or mere speculation as they believe that there is credibility and integrity in linking evidence directly to an identifiable source.

The investigators also sought to present witnesses with information provided to them by others so that evidence could be cross checked and validated so far as possible. Again this is routine in many investigations and affords the witness the benefit of knowing how their evidence forms the overall picture. It also means they can alter or amend their evidence if necessary, based on information gained from other witnesses. It was of course a matter for each witness to consider their own evidence and they may have chosen to maintain or alter their position as they saw fit.

All witnesses were afforded an opportunity to read and sign their statements, or in the case of email evidence, to confirm their evidence by that format. In the case of evidence provided via telephone, we did consider recording conversations but felt this to be un-ethical in the circumstances as this is not a practice that would be acceptable in police investigations for witness interviews. The names of all witnesses have been redacted in order to protect their privacy, apart from well-known figures whose names are already within the public domain. In the case of witnesses we were unable to trace, their names have been printed in the hope that they may someday be located and may be able to provide further information relating to the investigation.

Challenges / Limitations

1. Availability of witnesses

We would also like to stress that although our investigators are former police officers, any witnesses we were able to contact were under no obligation to speak to us. This was not a formal scenario where witnesses would be taken to a police station to give an interview. All of the information provided by witnesses was given as entirely voluntary.

We are disappointed that some significant people either declined to be interviewed, or avoided contact. This is regrettable, but in terms of the investigators' efforts, it was not for the want of trying. Also, a number of key witnesses are now deceased, and some were unable to be traced. This of course means that some questions simply cannot be answered.

2. Memory of witnesses

It is an obvious challenge to expect witnesses to accurately recount their evidence from 31 years ago, therefore it is understandable that some timings and recollections may seem to be "out of fit." The minutiae of clock times is key to forming a timeline of events, so if a witness was able to accurately recall an exact time that had provenance, then this was noted by our investigators. That said, where times could not be recalled by witnesses then the sequence of events in their evidence became crucially important, in other words the flow of actions in their natural context.

3. Hearsay

Some information was given by witnesses as hearsay – in other words, the witness simply repeated what they had heard from another person, and so may not be entirely accurate. Such information can be misleading, therefore wasn't recorded as part of a statement, but was noted by our investigators as "intelligence." In such cases, our investigators sought to trace and interview the original source of the information wherever possible.

4. Police procedures in 1985

Back in 1985 there were eight separate police forces across Scotland with the largest, Strathclyde, having twelve different territorial divisions each deploying some variable procedures dependent upon local demands, resources and demographics. One can perhaps imagine the challenges in trying to implement a standard operating practice at that time across Scotland whereby the dynamics of public demand in the east end of Glasgow for example are compared with policing the Highlands and Islands. The retention of documents and evidence in those days also varied across the country with different priorities given to different types of crimes and offences by each of the eight police forces.

Summary of Witness Statements

Here we have transcribed a basic summary of evidence and key facts provided by each witness spoken to by our investigators. We have also provided information of those identified by the campaign, but not spoken to, and the reason why we were unable to do so. Names and identifying information have been redacted for privacy. There is also a full report available, which contains full transcripts of each witness statement.

At the Scene

1. Tourist

It is well documented that **[Tourist]** was the person who first discovered the car at the locus. He was driving in the area with his wife, during a vacation to Scotland, when he discovered the crashed Volvo with Willie inside.

There has been significant email traffic between **[Tourist]** and Journalist, **Paul Delamore**, whereby, in relation to Willie's car, **[Tourist]** has consistently asserted that the car was at the site on the Sunday when he returned to the site to search for a lost glove.

This position has been challenged somewhat in an email dated 6th January 2015 from **Paul Delamore** who advised **[Tourist]** that documentation and Police evidence denies the car's return on the Sunday.

Nonetheless, **[Tourist]**'s response places the car on site when he searched for his glove on the Sunday and he describes that its position had slightly changed.

*Note: This information from the **[Tourist]** conflicts with the evidence provided by the on-duty police officers and the recovery team, who state that the car was removed from the site on the Saturday.*

When our investigators contacted **[Tourist]**, they presented him with information gathered from both **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]** and **[Driver's Son]** stating that they had removed the vehicle on the Saturday, and not the Sunday. **[Tourist]** responded by referring to information that he had previously passed to **Paul Delamore**.

This inquiry advised **[Tourist]** that a letter from Crown Office implied that the gun, recovered on the Sunday, was located at a point where the driver's door had been, which suggested to the investigators that the car was absent when the gun was found.

[Tourist] replied that "eye witness accounts are notoriously inaccurate and that unreliability increases over time as they reprint the incident in their minds." **[Tourist]** also added that his wife kept a diary and that the entry for Saturday 6th mentions the Volvo on site. The entry for Sunday 7th

doesn't mention the Volvo, therefore by his method of thinking, he had presumed that it was still there in the absence of her not mentioning that it was no longer there. He commented that this was a double negative.

[Tourist] stated that on Sunday 7th, he drove to the scene, saw the police at the locus and followed the drag tracks left by the car however he felt that additionally he would have required a view of the vehicle in situ to get the alignment. He further stated that to remove the car, and then return it on site "would have taken extraordinary effort and created considerable disturbance on the ground unless the vehicle was lifted by helicopter".

[Tourist] described the two attendant officers on the Sunday as being relaxed in allowing him to search for the glove and appeared surprised that they permitted him to search a potential crime scene.

***Note:** The investigators later established that one of the waiting officers was **[First Officer]** who had been on site the previous day, therefore knew the location and the other most likely, but not confirmed, as **[Uniformed Officer]**, who had attended from Fort Augustus to await a search team en route from Inverness.*

[Tourist] also advised that only he attended the site on Sunday whilst his wife remained in the car. In his email dated 14th March 2016 **[Tourist]** states "If I concentrate only on my recollections, or I read any of the numerous conspiracy theory articles I can create an image in my mind of the car there with the police officers walking around. If I read through the material that you have provided I can create an equally clear image that does not have the car there."

[Tourist] also asserts that he did not see any papers or a briefcase at the scene, he also strongly challenges **[SNP Member]**'s observations of ripped up papers, a watch and a garage bill placed away from the car. He assessed that the wind force that morning on a scale of 0-10 with 0 being no wind and 10 being gale force was #1.

***Note:** the investigators later established that **[SNP Member]** had seen the torn papers and bankcards at the site after **[Tourist]** had left and indeed after Mr. McRae had been removed to the ambulance. It would therefore appear logical, due to this very short timeframe, that someone from the team who removed Willie from his car had also placed the items outside the car. This is based upon the proposal that, as they were not weighed down with a heavy implement, they would most likely have been blown about on the hillside had they been left at the site overnight rather than being found that morning in a neat pile between the times that **[Tourist]** left and Mr. McRae was taken from his car.*

[Tourist] further advised that his job required him to review Air Force proceedings and punishments and that he was well acquainted with evidence that is based upon "beyond reasonable doubt standard" and that which is "balance of probability standard". He concluded that in his mind he believes that he saw the car on the Sunday but if he were a presiding judge, he could not accept his own evidence alone as fact.

[Tourist] sent numerous emails to this investigation and below is a direct lift from his narrative about the car being present on Sunday 7th April 1985:

Vehicle Returned on Sunday:

"I cannot recall when it was first suggested that the vehicle was returned on Sunday or who made that suggestion. However, it seems like a classic attempt to bend information from several conflicting sources to produce "evidence." For the record, I have not, and still do not subscribe to the theory that the vehicle was removed and then returned. I still see an image of the vehicle in place on the Sunday and I have found at least one web article that states the vehicle was removed at midday on the Sunday. That fits nicely with the view in my memory. However, I have also just watched a documentary on the brain and how it can be misled. Essentially, a 30-year old memory is not worth the neuron it is written on. It seems to me returning the vehicle on Easter Sunday would, almost certainly, have been observed and queried unless the vehicle was drivable. In that case it could probably have been driven to the site and down the same path it took earlier without attracting much attention. If it was not drivable the choices seem to be by truck or heavy-lift helicopter. The truck option would have required something like a block and tackle to drag the vehicle from the road leaving a clear trail. The helicopter would have been seen and heard for miles. In either case a large, covert (perhaps even clandestine) team would have been required and the risk of observation and comment extremely high. What if **[Wife]** and I had returned a little earlier to see a helicopter flying towards the site with the Volvo hanging below? Even a layman would have questioned the use of a large helicopter to place a damaged vehicle off the road or a block and tackle to drag it down the hill on Easter Sunday, and to what end?

Why return the vehicle? It is much easier to conceal or distort evidence through manipulation of paperwork and false statements than to move and alter a large piece of physical evidence, and the risks are usually much lower. I understand that one theory was the vehicle was returned to get photographs. The retired officer indicated that general photographs were taken on Saturday. If so, what extra photographs would have been needed so desperately to risk returning the vehicle? Just drop the camera and claim the film was damaged seems a much easier solution."

***Note:** [Tourist] had never previously had the benefit of knowing about the information provided by other key witnesses other than occasional articles in the press and what he has been told by reporters. He had not been interviewed by the police nor provided a statement to any other investigation.*

In his e mail of 25th March he states:

"My concern is that almost everyone who has sought my input over the years had already formed an opinion and developed a bias without access to some (or any) of the facts. Conjecture, rumour and strongly held views about McRae's "murder" were unintentionally or deliberately used to frame leading questions encouraging me to assume some external agency involvement in his death. (I exclude xxxx xxxxxxxx and you from that group). As a result I am reluctant to accept "evidence" or opinion at face value".

[Tourist]'s final position is best described in his latter e mail in which he states:

"Perhaps if the detail you have included was in the public domain 30 years ago those wishing to denigrate the police would have less ammunition. I was going to say that the conspiracy theorists

would have been less vocal but, given the man and the circumstances, that was not going to happen”.

He goes on to say “ I think the logic of your argument is strong, stronger than others, so I am inclined to accept your view of events but that image in my mind [of the car on-site on the Sunday] is still quite strong”.

2. SNP Member

On the morning of Saturday the 6th of April **[SNP Member]** was a front seat passenger in a motor car heading to Skye. His friend **George Lochhead** was driving and George Lochhead’s girlfriend at the time, **[Doctor]** along with **[SNP Member]**’s wife, **Allison**, who was in the back seat. At a point in the road, above the crash site their car was waved down by a man, now known to be **[Tourist]** who told them that a car was lying further down the hillside and had someone inside it. At that time **[Tourist]**’s car was parked on the roadway his wife was sitting inside.

[SNP Member] and **George Lochhead** went downhill towards the car which was a maroon coloured Volvo. **[Tourist]** did not accompany them as he at that point got into his own car and left the scene. This left **[SNP Member]** and **George Lochhead** to check the Volvo.

When **[SNP Member]** saw the man inside the car he recognised him as Willie McRae whom he had known through the SNP. The driver’s door was still closed and the car was lying at an angle making it impossible to open the door fully. This also meant that they could not get Willie out of the driver’s side of the car.

During the interview with our investigators, **[SNP Member]** was shown a photograph of the scene taken by police on Saturday 6th of April 1985 and confirmed that it was the same car at the same location and position. **[SNP Member]** recalled that the driver’s window was either open or missing but in any case he could reach and see through it. He noticed that Willie still had his seatbelt on and is 100% sure of that. He didn’t see where the car keys were and noticed a shopping bag, papers and a briefcase lying on the back seat. He was asked about a spare wheel but saw no such item. He saw no debris or items lying immediately next to the car however he did at some point notice a small pile of what looked like torn up receipts and 2 or 3 cards that looked like bank cards lying on a piece of scrubland about 10 yards from the front of the car. He stated that they didn’t look like they had fallen or been blown there but rather they looked like they had been placed there. He stated that they couldn’t have been placed there by Willie because he was still seat-belted inside his car with no way of getting out of the driver’s door. He assessed that they may have been placed there prior to his arrival by someone else at the scene, possibly by **[Tourist]** who had been there a short time before he arrived. He also stated that he first noticed the items after Willie had been pulled from the car and was being taken up to the ambulance.

***Note:** this scenario was later discussed with **[Tourist]** who denied that he had placed or seen papers as described at the scene. This again tends to support the likelihood of the papers and*

cards having been placed at the site after [Tourist] had left the scene, but before Willie was placed within the ambulance.

[SNP Member] did not recall seeing a watch there. The only other people who were there when he was there initially was **George Lochhead** and then [Doctor] came down to try to examine Willie inside the car when he was in situ. **Allison** stayed in the car on the roadway. It would appear that one of the party must have called emergency services because [SNP Member] believes that **Allison** and [Doctor] had mobile phones at that time.

[SNP Member] thought that **Allison** may have alerted some other passing motorist to go call help, but couldn't confirm this. When [Doctor] checked Willie he was still alive and [SNP Member] presumed at the time that this was a serious road accident, in terms of Willie's injuries and his general demeanour.

A short time later a uniformed police constable [now known to be [First Officer]] arrived then a single ambulance driver. Someone, possibly [SNP Member], undid Willie's seatbelt and they tried to remove him from the car. They found it impossible to get him out of the driver's door therefore the [First Officer], ambulance man and **George Lochhead** went round to the passenger door, opened it and tried to remove him through that door. [SNP Member] remained at the driver side and tried to manoeuvre his legs out from under the dashboard and swivel them round so that they could pull him out backwards. This proved to be quite difficult due to Willie's size and the fact that the car was at a downward angle and his legs and feet were under the steering column and dashboard area.

During that part of proceedings the [First Officer]'s hat fell off and into the stream that ran under the car from the front nearside to the driver's door. [SNP Member] stated that the hat actually floated in the stream, right under the car to where he was standing. He simply picked it up and passed it back to him. He noticed nothing else in particular as he done this, but stated that he wasn't looking for anything else at that point. He was asked if there was a small waterfall and pool under the driver's door but could not recall. He was shown an official police sketch of the scene (by [First Officer] and [Traffic Officer]) and confirmed that the stream and car shown are in their correct respective places.

Once they ([First Officer], **George Lochhead** and the ambulance driver) pulled Willie out of the car they carried him up to the ambulance accompanied by [Doctor], whilst [SNP Member] remained at the Volvo. [First Officer] asked [SNP Member] to pick up any belongings that were lying about and he did so, placing them into a plastic shopping bag which was possibly the one that he had seen lying on the back seat of the car.

As previously mentioned it was at this point that [SNP Member] saw and recovered the neat pile of papers and cards some 10 yards from the front of the car. [Doctor] went in the ambulance with Willie whilst [SNP Member] went in the car with **George Lochhead** and **Allison**. They followed the ambulance to Inverness hospital to pick up [Doctor] and continue on to their hotel where they were staying. Only [First Officer] was left at the scene with the car when they had left, and he retained the bag of items that [SNP Member] had collected, including the papers and cards.

[SNP Member] could not recall whether any other police officers arrived at the scene, and he had already left the scene before the car was recovered. [SNP Member] believed that the car was

missing the front windscreen and that the back window was broken. From photographs shown numbered 9 and 10 he confirmed that this was the same car at the same scene and in the same position that he had seen it.

He described the hillside scene itself as having long grass with some bare patches and it was muddy, marshy and a stream running under the car downhill as he had previously described when the officer's hat fell into it. He recalled that the weather that day was rainy with low cloud. He assessed the wind force on a scale of 0 -10 (0 being no wind and 10 being gale force was #3. He left the scene about 11.00 a.m.

He did not remember leaving his details with the police but thinks that **[Doctor]** may have at the hospital or with the ambulance driver. He did not proactively seek an update from the hospital nor was he contacted with an update by anyone that weekend. He didn't know that Willie was dead until a Glasgow Herald journalist called him a week or so later to tell him and it was several weeks later when the police spoke to him in Dundee. He never returned to the site until around ten years later when he attended a small ceremony to erect a cairn in Willie's honour. He stated that the site of the cairn is nowhere near the actual site of the crash.

3. Doctor

At the time of the incident **[Doctor]** was a passenger in a car being driven by **George Lochhead** with **[SNP Member]** and **Allison**. She was alerted to the incident as described aforesaid by **[SNP Member]** and she attended the car where she found that Willie had a seatbelt on and that the door was wedged against the uneven ground. She checked on him through the open window. He was unresponsive with an injury to the temple. There was blood clotted in his hair and she detected a strong smell of stale alcohol from him.

The police and ambulance had arrived and Willie was removed through the passenger door, the car was partly over the stream and she remembered **[SNP Member]** picking up the police officer's hat when it fell. She stated that they all had been travelling in her car and **Allison** had remained within the car for the duration. The ambulance had a lone paramedic, so **[Doctor]** travelled in the back of the ambulance with Willie whose condition she described as 'stable' during the journey to Inverness.

[Doctor] remembered that **[SNP Member]** had shown her and the others some receipts which she thought were torn up. She was however uncertain about cards. **[SNP Member]** advised her that they were in a pile a few yards from the car but she didn't see him find them and didn't know what happened to them. She stated that she didn't remember anyone removing items from the car or from the casualty while he was moved. She did not move anything or see the receipts before being shown them by **[SNP Member]**.

She left the accident and emergency department and with the others in her group went to a hotel to stay the night. She couldn't remember at what point she found out that Willie had been found to have a gunshot wound rather than the injury having been sustained when the car left the road. The hospital didn't contact her and she wasn't asked for a police interview. She went with her friends to

Speyside the following day and stayed with friends of the **[SNP Member]**. They did not return to the site of the incident.

4. Detective Chief Inspector (DCI)

[Detective Chief Inspector] was based at Inverness when the incident occurred. Whilst off duty but on call, he received a phone call from the Chief Constable, **Hugh MacMillan**, on the evening of Saturday 6th April 1985 at around 7:20pm, informing him that Willie McRae had been removed from Inverness Hospital to Aberdeen where it had been discovered that he had a bullet wound to the head. Due to the time and failing light, **[Detective Chief Inspector]** decided to direct a search the following morning.

He gave a briefing on Sunday morning (7/4/85) at Inverness Police Office to a number of officers who he believes included **DI John Ratter** and **DS John Cathcart** (both now deceased). Officers from Fort Augustus were instructed to assist with the search but did not attend the briefing.

*Note: this would include **[First Officer]** and possibly **[Uniformed PC]***

[Detective Chief Inspector] attended at the location on the Sunday morning. He may have also attended on the previous evening but could not affirm this.

Based on the information that he received from the hospital and the injury sustained, **[Detective Chief Inspector]** considered that Willie's death was most likely a suicide. He recalls that it may have been Detective Inspector **John Ratter** who called him from the hospital. He therefore instructed officers to look for a gun close to where the car was the previous day. The car was no longer at the scene on the Sunday however as **[First Officer]** and **[Traffic Officer]** were part of the search team and both having examined the car the previous day prior to its removal from the scene; they knew exactly where the car location had been.

[Detective Chief Inspector] assessed that the position of the gun would either be where Willie was taken from the car or where the driver's door was opened. He cannot recall the search site being taped off but recalls that it was easily identifiable due to the presence of 'plough marks' on the ground where the car had been dragged uphill when recovered.

He was able to categorically say that the Volvo motorcar belonging to Willie was not at the locus on the Sunday, and the only way it could have returned to the exact position was to have it dropped there by helicopter.

Whilst the search was being conducted by officers, **[Detective Chief Inspector]** returned to his car, which was parked on the roadway, to make a call on the radio.

Note : this was necessary because back in 1985 only radios fitted to police vehicles carried the requisite range for communication with police control, whereas pocket radios carried by individual officers did not have the required range.

Whilst **[Detective Chief Inspector]** was making the radio call, he recalled that **DS Cathcart** shouted that they had found the gun. He returned to the hillside and discovered that **[First Officer]** had lifted the gun from a pool of water directly below the driver's door of where the car had been. He was unsure whether he had instructed the officer to return the gun to where it had been found or just hold it to be photographed. He ascertained from those at the locus that where the gun was found could only have been directly below where the car door was.

[Detective Chief Inspector] did not attend any subsequent post mortem examination nor did he physically handle the gun. He believes that **DI Ratter** may have managed the hospital and post mortem procedures. **[Detective Chief Inspector]** cannot recall if the gun was fingerprinted nor can he recall if Willie's blood was checked for alcohol, although he does recall someone mentioning that there was a high blood alcohol count (he cannot substantiate this belief nor identify the source).

[Detective Chief Inspector] later made a trip to Glasgow and spoke with **[Willie's Brother]**, who was a doctor, and who informed him that Willie had not been himself and that he had been depressed and drinking heavily. He showed **[Willie's Brother]** a photograph of the recovered gun and Willie's brother positively identified it as being Willie's gun and that he had kept it in his office. As far as **[Detective Chief Inspector]** was concerned the investigation into Willie McRae's death was carried out correctly and concluded properly as a suicide.

In a later update **[Detective Chief Inspector]** stated "I have been informed that contact has been made with Willie McRae's brother, who stated that he remembered informing the police on Saturday 6th April 1985 that Willie had possession of a handgun, which he had obtained when he served in India.

Now that I have been informed of this information, I remember being made aware that evening about the gun and certainly before the search was conducted the following morning".

5. First Officer

[First Officer] is a former police constable from Northern Constabulary who was the first attending officer at the scene on 6th April and who formed part of the search team on 7th April 1985. Much had previously been published in newspaper articles about his recovery of the gun and indeed documents recovered online [see appendix in Full Report] show that he provided a measured police sketch of the scene indicating where the car was positioned and where the gun was recovered. That sketch shows the gun's recovery position as being directly under the driver's door of the car. There is also a vehicle inspection report available on line that bears **[First Officer]**'s name confirming him being present when the Volvo car was examined at the West End garage on Saturday 6th April 1985 at 15.30 hours. This was after it had been recovered by **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]** from the hillside location.

When contacted by this investigation **[First Officer]** stated that he was very reluctant to become involved mainly due to inaccurate newspaper articles that misrepresented his account of events. However he did confirm some information to this inquiry as follows:

[First Officer] claimed to have been hounded by the press just about every year on the anniversary of Willie's death and that they printed some wild accounts about what had happened. He stated that, in one of the stories they actually claimed that he was responsible for Willie's death. He confirmed that he was the first officer on the scene on Saturday morning, 6th April 1985 and recalled that other people were present but that he couldn't remember who they were.

He also confirmed that he remained at the scene until the arrival of the traffic vehicle examiner from Inverness (**[Traffic Officer]**).

In terms of the search on Sunday 7th April he confirmed that he was the officer who found the gun and that it was recovered from the pool of water where the car had previously been. He confirmed that the car was not at the site on the Sunday when the gun was recovered and that he could not remember if **[Uniformed PC]** was at the site on the Sunday. He also could not recall if the gun was photographed, albeit there are police photographs on the internet of the gun with an evidence label attached which bears his signature along with that of **DS John Cathcart** (deceased).

[First Officer] was reminded of an article printed in the Glasgow Herald in March 1995 where it said that he had stated that the gun was found "some yards" from where the car had been and asked to comment. He replied "I spoke to a journalist on the phone and what he printed was out of context it's a lot of rubbish". **[First Officer]** was also asked if his leaving the police service was anything to do with the Willie McRae incident and he replied " Not at all, I enjoyed my time in the police but I've moved on since then and I work away from home".

He stated that he did not wish further contact about the investigation.

6. Traffic Officer

At the time of the incident, **[Traffic Officer]** was a uniformed traffic patrol officer with ten years police service, stationed at Inverness Police Office. He was also a fully trained vehicle examiner and was utilised to attend the scene of road accidents to examine both locus and any vehicles present to establish the cause of an accident.

On both Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th of April 1985, he was on duty, his rostered hours being 1400 hours to 2200 hours (Back Shift).

Sometime in the morning of Saturday 6th April 1985, he received a phone call at home from the area control room to attend the scene of a serious road accident at Bunloyne.

On arrival at the locus mid-morning, **[Traffic Officer]** who was wearing a boiler suit and possibly a reflective jacket, was met by **[First Officer]**, a member of the IB (Identification Bureau) who was present to take photographs of the locus of the accident, and **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]** from the West End Garage in Fort Augustus.

[Traffic Officer] observed the maroon coloured Volvo 240 series, which had come to rest approximately 25 – 30 yards from the roadway (also identified by photographs shown to him by this

inquiry). In the presence of **[First Officer]**, **[Traffic Officer]** carried out an examination of the roadway and of the car and formed the opinion that the car had left the road and no other vehicle was involved. The injured party had previously been removed from the vehicle and taken to hospital. **[Traffic Officer]** had a brief look inside the car to recover any documentation that would indicate recent repairs, servicing or faults with the car. At this point he observed a half consumed half bottle of whisky either in the floor well or in the glove box. He had no recollection of a spare wheel or briefcase, but accepts these items may have been present.

[Traffic Officer] took detailed measurements of the locus paying particular attention to the final resting place of the car and he noted that the car was sitting over a burn, which passed underneath from its nearside to the offside driver's door. Also beneath the driver's door was a small waterfall approximately 1.5 – 2 feet in height formed by the burn running into a small pool about 2 feet in length. At that time he had no cause to search the burn, pool or other areas that were under the car.

After his examination, **[Traffic Officer]** authorised the removal of the Volvo and instructed **[Recovery driver]** to remove the car to premises at West End Garage in Fort Augustus. **[Traffic Officer]** also attended at the garage premises where at 15:30 hours he carried out a mechanical examination of the vehicle, in the presence of **[First Officer]**, and completed the appropriate paperwork [See appendix in Full report]. Once these tasks were completed late in the afternoon **[Traffic Officer]** returned home for something to eat and to dress for uniform duty.

***Note:** It is noted at this time that the police assumption was that of a serious road traffic accident rather than a gunshot injury hence there was no search for a firearm or consideration for a full forensic examination of the car.*

Whilst at home **[Traffic Officer]** was contacted by an Inspector, who informed him that it had been discovered the injured party had sustained a bullet wound to the head and that he was to attend at Inverness Police Office immediately to provide a statement to CID surrounding his involvement in the incident.

[Traffic Officer] attended at the Police office where he was met by the officer in charge of the enquiry (**Detective Chief Inspector**) who instructed him to convey him to the locus and then to West End garage to have a look at the vehicle. After this was conducted and his statement provided **[Traffic Officer]** concluded his duty for that day.

The time that he finished duty is unclear because he occasionally worked overtime on Saturdays as part of an anti-disorder patrol in the town centre.

As directed, early next morning **[Traffic Officer]** attended at Inverness Police Office where in the presence of other police officers, he was briefed by **[Detective Chief Inspector]** and informed that he was to be part of the search team, which would attend the locus. Along with the other officers he was conveyed by people carrier to Bunloyne.

***Note:** **[First Officer]** and possibly **[Uniformed PC]**, who were stationed at Fort Augustus Police office, travelled to the scene separately and arrived sometime before the search team from Inverness. This is potentially when **[Tourist]** arrived at the scene to search for a lost glove and left prior to the arrival of the larger search team.*

[Traffic Officer] reported that, on hindsight, a further briefing may also have occurred at the search site as it would make logical sense for this to happen prior to the deployment of officers.

The area was cordoned off with barrier tape in an area marked out at a point where the vehicle had left the road to a point about 15 yards beyond where the vehicle had come to rest. [Traffic Officer] strongly asserted that the car was not present on that Sunday and this supports the evidence given by [Recovery Vehicle Driver], [Driver's Son], [Detective Chief Inspector], [Friend #1] and [First Officer].

A systematic search was conducted within the marked area, starting from the lower part of the hill to a point to the left of where the car had come to rest the previous day. In line with recognized search procedures, the team walked in a straight line up towards the road combing the ground for anything which may have projected from the vehicle.

[Traffic Officer] was present when [First Officer] recovered the gun from the pool, and he confirms that the position of the gun was directly below the driver's door of the Volvo where it had come to rest the previous day. [Traffic Officer] has no recollection of any other significant items being recovered at the locus, and at the conclusion of the search he played no other part in the enquiry.

[Traffic Officer] stated that sometime last year (2015) three journalists attended at his home, unannounced, to interview him. He was shown photograph of a recovery vehicle with a maroon Volvo onboard parked on a roadway similar to the one at the crash site. He was unable to identify the Volvo as McRae's due to its sideways position on the truck. He states that he was told by the journalists that the photo was taken on Sunday 7th April at the site, and that the truck belonged to McRae and Dick (another recovery firm based in Inverness). [Traffic Officer] therefore formed a view that the car may have been driven back to the site on the Sunday after he left.

[Traffic Officer] was shown photographs by our investigators, and identified these as police photos taken from the crash scene, due to the placement of the Volvo on site, and the blue markings on each photo. [Traffic Officer] stated that no such markings were on the single photo shown to him by the three journalists. He also confirmed the authenticity and accuracy of the sketch drawing of the scene in terms of the position of the car and recovery point of the gun, which he and [First Officer] had signed [See Appendix in Full Report]

[Traffic Officer] provided an update on Sunday 27 March 2016 that the recovered car was possibly still drivable although it would appear that this was not tested. He cannot recall if the car was still in gear when he examined it but he was aware that several people were in the car to remove Willie therefore the gear stick may have been moved about to free him from the car. He disputes that the car could have free-wheeled to its resting position because the ground was littered with natural obstructions and was boggy therefore it would have had to have left the road at a reasonable speed and, as it rolled over, its momentum would have carried it further downhill (30 yards). Had it simply rolled or been pushed over, it would have stuck at the first obstruction.

[Traffic Officer] was also advised by our investigators that the three journalists who had interviewed him in 2015 had denied that they showed him any photographs of a Volvo car aboard a recovery truck. [Traffic Officer] on the other hand, maintained his previous position that they did show him a photograph.

Note: The investigators assessed that access to the interview audio tape would clear up this disparity. One of the journalists, **Paul Delamore**, had advised the investigation that access to the interview tape recording would be available. However, he later ceased all contact with the campaign group therefore the audio tape was not forthcoming. Similar agreement was made with **Severin Carrell**, one of the other journalists, but the tape was never made available to this investigation.

7. Control Room Officer

[Control Room Officer] served in both Strathclyde and Northern Police Forces. At the time of the incident he was a sergeant performing the role of duty officer within the Northern Police HQ Control room at Inverness.

He commenced duty at 13.30 hours and was briefed by the previous shift staff about ongoing incidents including a serious road accident near to the Bunloyne Dam. At that time the incident log had recorded the event as a road traffic accident. About 17:30 hours that evening he received a call from the Aberdeen Royal Hospital Neurosurgical Unit and spoke to a doctor whom he believed to be a professor in neurosurgery. At that time he was advised that Mr. McRae had been shot in the head and that the bullet was of low calibre, possibly .22.

Note : Although this time is estimated by the witness it tends to fit with the time provided by the police response to a previous FOI request by **Paul Delamore** which states “ Willie McRae arrived at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary at approx. 5:10pm on 6 April 1985- the bullet was discovered shortly thereafter. There is a record of an officer being notified of the bullet at approximately 7:00pm on 6 April 1985. Therefore, police were notified of the bullet sometime between 5:10pm and 7-00pm on 6 April1985”.

The officer receiving the information at 7:00 p.m. is unidentified but could have been either an officer from Inverness by phone or by an attending officer from Aberdeen face to face.

The **[Control Room Officer]** was also advised that the victim’s condition was critical. He realised that procedures would have to be implemented to contact and brief senior officers in the Force. He therefore established, from the incident log, that the car had been recovered to the West End Garage in Fort Augustus; that Mr. McRae was still within the Aberdeen hospital; and that the officer on the scene earlier that day was **[First Officer]** who was now off duty. **[Control Room Officer]** commenced a further incident log that effectively superseded the initial log. He also began to implement call out procedures which involved a cascade of telephone calls and briefings to different senior officers across the Force, including the Divisional CID and senior management team.

[First Officer] was traced and recalled to duty at Inverness Police Office as were a number of other officers including **[Detective Chief Inspector]**. This was to facilitate a briefing and to set parameters for inquiry. **[Control Room Officer]** remained within the control room and was not present at those briefings. Major incident procedures were instigated and that included contacting the on call duty Procurator Fiscal (this person need not necessarily be the P.F. who will ultimately oversee the case

but rather is the person who is next on the 'on call' rota) and liaising with the police colleagues in Grampian to have officers attend at the Aberdeen Infirmary to secure the evidential integrity of the victim.

As each piece of information was updated, **[Control Room Officer]** and/or his team refreshed the incident log in the control room. This at that time was a dynamic paper document that could be printed, copied and provided to senior management for monitoring purposes. **[Control Room Officer]** terminated duty at some time in the early hours of Sunday 7th April 1985 and the management of the control room was passed over to the following shift supervisor who was briefed and directed to the incident log.

[Control Room Officer] became aware that Mr. McRae had succumbed to his injuries but cannot recall if it was before or after he went off duty. He recommenced duty later that day (Sunday 7th April, around 13:30 hours and took control of the incident log again. He self-briefed and also spoke to the outgoing shift supervisor. He therefore became aware that a handgun had been recovered from the accident scene. He could not personally recall what officers formed the search team but was able to state that their details would have been recorded at the time onto the incident log. He was aware that **[First Officer]** was part of that team and that he was based at Fort Augustus with **[Uniformed PC]**, however he does not recall if **[Uniformed PC]** was at the search.

[Control Room Officer] became aware that the Volvo car had been removed from the Fort Augustus garage to the police impound at Inverness at the behest of the senior officer in charge. He pointed out that it would not necessarily be that officer who would personally call the garage to arrange this but more likely that it would be delegated to a junior ranking officer as would other duties such as property recovery, contact with next of kin, forensic procedures and examination etc. He stated that at no time to his knowledge did anyone arrange for the car to be returned to the scene or taken elsewhere on the Sunday. **[Control Room Officer]** stated that he does not know where the car went after the police had completed their examination.

Due to his vast experience in control room procedures and in his role as support officer to the Chief Constable, **[Control Room Officer]** was advised of the 'files incident' information previously provided by **Donald Morrison** (Relating to an alleged previous incident involving Willie McRae in Glasgow). Our investigators specifically mentioned the radio dialogue allegedly broadcast by the Glasgow controller - "highly confidential files that were so important that they would bring the government down."

[Control Room Officer] stated "The radio terminology quoted by **Donald Morrison**, in my experience, would never be used."

8. Recovery Vehicle Driver

In 1985 **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]** was the proprietor of West End garage in Fort Augustus and operated a vehicle recovery service from those premises. On the morning of Saturday 6th April 1985, in response to a police telephone request, he and his son **[Driver's Son]** (and possibly another male

unable to be traced) attended at the scene of the crashed Volvo with intent to recover it. On his arrival he was met by two police officers and awaited their instructions.

*Note: this inquiry has established that **[First Officer]** and **[Traffic Officer]** were the two officers on site on Saturday 6th April 1985 when the car was recovered.*

At that time Willie was not at the scene having been ambulated to Inverness Hospital. **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]**, under the direction of the police, recovered the vehicle by means of steel cable and winch and removed it to his garage premises where it was stored in a covered shed. At that point the incident was regarded as a straightforward road accident therefore no requirement to preserve the vehicle forensically.

[Recovery Vehicle Driver] noted that the car was positioned approximately 30 yards down the hillside facing back towards the road and is able to confirm this distance because he used a 30-meter cable, which was almost extended fully.

Sometime later that afternoon two police officers (now confirmed to be **[Traffic Officer]** and **[First Officer]**) attended the garage to conduct a mechanical inspection of the car. **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]** in his statement had thought that one of the officers was **[Uniformed PC]** because he is a local officer who visits the garage regularly.

At the conclusion of the inspection both officers left and **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]** was later instructed by the police to remove the vehicle to Inverness impound. **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]** further stated that at some point on the Saturday afternoon a police officer, he thought to be **[Uniformed PC]**, attended the garage and told him that it was more than a simple road accident and that the police would have to go back to the locus to search for evidence. He presumed it to be **[Uniformed PC]**, because he is the local officer who attended the garage frequently in the course of his duty.

[Recovery Vehicle Driver] states that the serious nature of the incident and the evidence outstanding was not described to him. Later that week (midweek) he chance met with **[Uniformed PC]**, who confirmed that the evidence sought had been recovered; again “evidence” wasn’t specified.

[Recovery Vehicle Driver] described the car’s location on the hillside as being on ground that was uneven and boggy and he further stated, that in his experience as a recovery operator, there is no way the Volvo could have been replaced on site, other than being airlifted into place. He advised that he had no further involvement with the car, although, he had become aware through local gossip and media coverage that an Inverness company called ‘McRae and Dick’ were supposed to have recovered a burgundy Volvo from a hill side location but one that was 8 miles away from the material location and on a different mountain side.

[Recovery Vehicle Driver] was shown police photographs of the scene which included an image of a recovery truck which he positively identified as his vehicle, thereby confirming the date of the photographs as Saturday 6th April 1985 which was only date that he attended the scene, not the following day. **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]** was unaware at the time that photographs were being taken.

9. Driver's Son

Whilst obtaining a statement from **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]**, it was ascertained that his son, who was aged fifteen at the time of the accident, was also present when the Volvo motorcar was recovered. **[Driver's Son]** informed us that there was another male also present, whom he names, but unfortunately did not know his current whereabouts. **[Driver's Son]** was responsible for attaching the cable from the recovery truck to the front of the Volvo where it had come to rest.

From pictures shown to him, **[Driver's Son]** identified the position of the Volvo at the locus. He thereafter assisted his father to recover the vehicle to the West End Garage. He also stated that when the vehicle was winched up the hillside it left drag markings, which would easily identify its path and resting point. He was asked if the car was returned on Sunday 7th April 1985 and he stated that it would have been impossible as far as he was concerned, due to the bogginess of the terrain, which made it non-accessible to vehicles. He added that it was the Volvo's momentum that got it to its resting position as opposed to driving to that spot.

[Driver's Son] also told the investigators that he could remember his father **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]** telling him that the gun had been found on the Saturday.

***Note:** There is overwhelming evidence that the gun was actually found on the Sunday.*

10. Uniformed PC

[Uniformed PC] was stationed at Fort Augustus police office at the time of the incident. He was spoken to at length by telephone but was very guarded and reluctant to discuss matters. However, he stated that he did not attend the site on Saturday and that he had no knowledge of the car's return on the Sunday. When asked if he had attended at West End garage he declined to answer and stated that he would seek advice from Police Scotland before answering any further questions.

To date, he has not resumed contact with this inquiry.

***Note:** it is understood but without firm evidence that he may have formed part of the Sunday search team, arriving at the locus with **[First Officer]** and speaking with **[Tourist]** prior to the arrival of the search team from Inverness. There is no evidence from other parties that he recovered any evidence from the search. There is also no evidence that he was present when the car was examined at West End garage as his details do not appear on the inspection report. **[Recovery Vehicle Driver]** however believes that he spoke to **[Uniformed PC]** at the garage on the Sunday.*

11. Additional witness

[Additional Witness] got in touch with our campaign following an appeal for witnesses. He was driving in the Scottish Highlands with his then girlfriend on Saturday 6th April 1985 when at around

10:00am he passed the crash site. He stopped his car and looked downhill towards the maroon Volvo which was about 30 yards away and was surrounded by a group of people between 2 and 5 in number. He asked the group if they needed his help and they replied that they were waiting for an ambulance to arrive. He got back into his car and continued on his journey.

Others identified by the investigation:

Tourist's Wife

John Weir spoke to her by telephone. She told him that she knew nothing about the incident, and that he should speak to her husband.

Allison

Ex-wife of the **SNP member**, who arrived in the same car as the SNP member and doctor. **Allison** remained in the vehicle at the top of the embankment, while the SNP member and the doctor attended the scene. We were unable to trace her, despite help from her former husband. Her surname has been redacted in order to preserve the anonymity of the SNP Member.

George Lochhead

The **Doctor's** former partner, and also part of the group who arrived in the car. We were unable to trace him.

Ambulance Driver

The driver who transported Willie McRae from the scene to Inverness hospital. Declined to be interviewed.

John Ratter (deceased)

Detective Inspector who supported the original investigation and who listed Willie's property when it was recovered from the scene. He may have attended at the hospital and at the consequent post mortem examination. He also may have managed the forensic examination of the gun; however this is conjecture as he was unable to be interviewed by this investigation.

Note: From past police experience it is routine for the Detective Inspector to be called out initially and take charge until more facts are known and then, if appropriate, the Detective

*Chief Inspector would also be called out. This would explain why **John Ratter** became involved at an earlier stage than **[Detective Chief Inspector]**.*

John Cathcart (deceased)

Also worked on the original investigation, and believed to be the firearms officer who would have processed the gun at the scene. This is further evidenced by John's signature which is on the label attached to the gun and can be seen in police photographs online.

Michael Nisbett

Another driver from West End Garage, Fort Augustus, who may have also attended the scene. Current whereabouts unknown.

Relating to alleged incident in West Nile Street

1. Donald Morrison

Donald Morrison is a retired Police Officer, having served for 26 years in Glasgow as a uniform constable, predominantly in the city centre area but with duties also in the outlying areas of Glasgow. He had no formal surveillance training or CID training but stated that on some occasions he supported CID and was asked to take up observations at crime “hot spots”. He had previously provided a signed affidavit to the campaign outlining his knowledge of Willie McRae and specifically his sighting of and dealings with Willie on Friday 5th April 1985.

Donald describes that he was in uniform foot patrol unaccompanied on West Nile Street, Glasgow that afternoon. His shift pattern was 0800 hours to 1600 hours with his lunch break at 12:30 hours. At around noon, whilst walking northwards on the east footpath, he saw Willie’s car parked on the roadway facing south. There was no sign of Willie at that point. Donald also observed two men standing across the road from Agnews off-sales ahead of him. He describes that the men were looking across at the off-sales in an overt and suspicious manner.

Donald formed the opinion that these men were surveillance officers, but not from his division, and that they were watching Willie. Willie emerged from Agnews off-sales carrying two bottles of whisky and a packet of cigarettes. Willie had to enter his car via the roadway and by inserting the key into the lock therefore; Donald held one of the whisky bottles to assist him. Willie patted a briefcase on the passenger seat and said "I’ve got them, I’ve got them" several times. Donald did not ask Willie what he meant nor what was in the briefcase. Donald noted that the two men were still watching and he facilitated a U-turn by Willie to leave the scene.

***Note:** Donald was asked why, as a serving officer on duty, he would facilitate the “exit” of a man whom he suspected was the target of a surveillance operation and replied that he didn’t know.*

According to **Donald Morrison**, both "surveillance" men rushed northwards towards their waiting cars, and then recklessly pursued Willie’s car through red traffic lights and to the endangerment of pedestrians. Donald found this to be very suspicious and believed that he would not see Willie alive again. Despite his observations and concerns for Willie’s safety, he decided not to approach the men to determine their identity or purpose, nor did he radio the office to seek assistance. He explained that he did not radio for help as he didn’t know the registration number of Willie’s car (although he did know the colour, make and model of his car). He advised this inquiry that he could not actually confirm the status of the two men and that he regretted not taking action at the time.

Note:** The account provided is from Donald only and could not be corroborated by any other source. As Donald did not officially report the incident there is no police “incident file”. Donald was later asked to provide contact details for the Agnews staff member, **[Off-licence Manager]** who is his relative. He refused to do so claiming that **[Off-licence Manager]** and his family are scared of “special forces”. He did however advise that **[Off-licence Manager]

did not come out of the shop at the time of this incident therefore could not corroborate any of Donald's account.

Donald Morrison stated that he did radio in for a registration check on one of the surveillance vehicles, and that the registration was returned as "no trace."

Donald also provided information about suspected surveillance on Willie by Special Branch and MI5, however, he personally had never been so advised by his police supervisors and, as he had no relationship with either organization, he would not be positioned to confirm this.

In a separate incident, **Donald Morrison** recalled a police operation where police officers broke into Willie's office premises to remove files. He stated that a police general radio message was broadcast, detailing "**secret documents that would bring down the government.**" Donald stated that these secret documents were recovered by **PC David Phinn** and **[Police Officer #2]** who subsequently removed files to the police office where they photocopied them.

Donald did not personally see the recovered documents and cannot affirm their content. He also stated that he had overheard a police radio message confirming that Special Branch were following Willie McRae's car some time before the events in April 1985. **Donald Morrison** further claimed that **PC David Phinn** was nominated for, or had actually been awarded a Chief Constable's Commendation for the recovery of the "secret files".

***Note:** Donald Morrison provided a list of names of several police officers who had reportedly taken part in the "confidential files" operation, or who had worked at the same police station at that time and who would be able to back up his story. We spoke to a number of these witnesses, and nobody had any knowledge of the events. In a further statement from Donald Morrison, he provided us with more names, but the Campaign decided to stop pursuing this line of enquiry since we could find no corroboration for Donald's story. Since the campaign had limited resources, it was agreed they would be better directed elsewhere, as even if we did somehow manage to show that Willie's files had been taken, this does not prove he was murdered.*

2. Off-licence Manager

[Off-Licence Manager] was based at Agnews Off-sales in West Nile Street, Glasgow, where Willie is alleged to have visited on Friday 5th April 1985. He is also the cousin of **Donald Morrison**.

He states that on the morning of 5th April 1985, Willie entered the shop and bought two bottles of Islay Mist whisky, and some cigarettes. He said that Islay Mist was the only brand Willie ever bought. **[Off-licence Manager's Wife]** was also working in the shop at that time.

[Off-Licence Manager] did not go outside after he had served Willie, and did not see anything relating to the alleged car chase. He told us that he was fed up being pestered for information about Willie McRae.

3. Police Officer #1

[Police Officer #1] stated that he had no knowledge of either the “surveillance” or “files” incidents. He knew **Donald Morrison** but didn’t work closely with him. He also knew **P.C. Phinn** who he did work closely with and in fact partnered him on several occasions. He further stated that the radio terminology cited by **Donald Morrison** was “very unlikely and extremely doubtful.”

In terms of his assessment of **Donald Morrison** as a colleague he stated that he found him to be a “Walter Mitty type of character who would simply make up stories or exaggerate the truth”.

He also had no knowledge of **P.C. Phinn** receiving a Chief Constable’s commendation and added “**Donald Morrison** was a real busy body who liked to know everything that was going on. If he thought that **Davy Phinn** or anyone for that matter knew about secret files that threatened the government then he would have pestered the life out of them for the story.”

[Police Officer #1] served in the police from 1977 to 2005 entirely in Glasgow.

4. Police Officer #2

[Police Officer #2] is a retired Detective Chief Inspector having served for 30 years in Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and other places across the region. He joined the police in 1971 and retired in 2001. Between 1975 and 1980 he served as a detective constable in Glasgow city centre and although he knew **PCs David Phinn** and **Donald Morrison** to see, he had never actually worked with them. They were never part of his department or shift pattern group.

[Police Officer #2] was advised of the information provided by **Donald Morrison** in terms of the break in to Willie’s office and the allegation that he and **David Phinn** responded and removed the files for copying. He staunchly denied that such an event occurred during his time serving there and affirmed that he had never at any time worked with **David Phinn** nor did he attend at Willie’s office premises. He actually dismissed the idea as “utter nonsense.”

He was also asked to offer his view on **Donald’s** version of the terminology used in the radio broadcast and replied that it was completely contrary to police procedure and very unlikely. As he was not present when the message was passed this information is not included in his statement.

5. Police Officer #3

Police Officer #3 stated that he had no knowledge of the “files incident” and added that, if such an event had occurred then it “would have been the talk of the office.” He had no knowledge of **P.C. Phinn** receiving any form of commendation and when asked if he knew the whereabouts of officers provided by **Donald Morrison** he stated “he appears to name officers that he worked with in late 1989 onwards and brought them forward to an incident in 1984”.

[Police Officer #3] was a police control room officer for about 4 years and stated "there is no way that a controller would broadcast details about 'information so sensitive or important that it would bring the government down'." He added, "this just would not happen in the police."

[Police Officer #3] knew **Donald Morrison** very well and travelled with him to work. He stated "he was a real gossip who could not keep his mouth shut. If he had seen anything suspicious in West Nile Street he would have been telling us all about it and asking everyone what was going on".

[Police Officer #3] also knew [Off-licence Manager] very well and stated "if anything had happened on Friday 5th April 1985 then [Off-licence Manager] would have told me about it."

[Police Officer #3] states that he was and remains a staunch republican Nationalist who shared his views with **Donald Morrison**. He states "if he (**Morrison**) suspected any sort of campaign against Willie McRae in 1985 he would have discussed it with me."

6. Police Officer #4

Police Officer #4 was presented with the allegations made by **Donald Morrison**, and said that he doubted most of what is said in **Donald's** statement. Firstly, he pointed out that the whole point of plain clothes police officers carrying out surveillance is to blend in. They would not have made any gestures or made themselves known. He also doubts the whole break-in scenario at Willie's office, and said that it "beggars belief." Finally, he points out that **Donald's** story about the car registration plates coming back with "no trace" is false. **Police Officer #4** was actually Chairman of the ACPO PNC Vehicle Working Group, and he points out that all vehicles must be registered on the system. In the case of police or surveillance vehicles, it would return a result of "blocked" rather than "no trace."

Police Officer #4 explained that he'd known **Donald Morrison** for over 30 years. He said "Donald was a character in the police. He is in my opinion an attention seeker, he was always looking to get the attention of the senior management of the Division, washing their cars, buying them lunch (at his expense) and running personal errands for them. He was also, in my opinion, someone who couldn't be trusted & I don't mean that in a dishonest sense, but in the sense of he would do anything to enhance his own profile often at the expense of others. He would in effect "fire you in" if it got him some kudos."

He also added "Whilst he is a likeable man, he is in my opinion a "Walter Mitty" character who is capable of doing what he can to enhance his credibility or put him in the limelight for that fifteen minutes of fame."

7. Police Officer #5

[Police Officer #5] served for 31 years in the police between 1955 and 1986 entirely in Glasgow. According to **Donald Morrison** (in an email to John Weir) [Police Officer #5] was the driver who escorted the Police Superintendent to Willie's office during the "files incident".

[**Police Officer #5**] stated that he had no knowledge of the “files incident” or that **P.C. Phinn** ever received a commendation. He stated that he knew **David Phinn** very well but had never heard of him receiving such an award.

He further stated that he had known **Donald Morrison** very well and described him as “completely unreliable and a fantasist”

He also advised that he had no knowledge of the surveillance incident in West Nile Street on 5th April 1985.

8. Communications Officer

Donald Morrison had identified [**Communications Officer**] as one of the 2 female controllers who broadcast the “files message”. The other female controller is deceased.

[**Communications Officer**] worked as a civilian in the control room between 1980 and 1985. She has absolutely no knowledge of the “files incident” and found it difficult to believe that such terminology was broadcast across a police radio system to all officers. She advised that any incident of a serious or sensitive nature would not be broadcast verbatim and instead a senior officer would be messaged to phone the control room for a private briefing. She described **Donald Morrison** as “a bit of a character” but that she did not know him that well. She further stated that she had no knowledge of **P.C. Phinn** receiving a Chief Constable’s commendation.

9. Archivist

The Archivist is the current archivist and records keeper at Police Scotland. She and her team have access to all records of commendations and awards issued to past and present police officers.

She stated that, at **John Weir**’s request, she and her colleagues carried out extensive searches of computer and microfiche files but found no trace of a former police constable **David Phinn** being nominated or awarded a commendation.

Others identified by the investigation:

Off-Licence Manager's Wife

She was also working on Friday 5th April 1985). Her husband would not permit our investigators to speak with her.

PC David Phinn (Deceased)

Efforts were made to trace his wife but were not further pursued due to sensitivity around David's death.

PC James Harris (Deceased)

Named by Donald Morrison in his statement

PC Ian Neil

Named by Donald Morrison in his statement. Unable to trace

PC Alan Ogilvie

Named by Donald Morrison in his statement. Unable to trace

PC Alistair McPhee

Named by Donald Morrison in his statement. Unable to trace

People who knew Willie personally

1. Solicitor #1

Solicitor #1 was initially reluctant to discuss anything relating to the Willie McRae case due to all the "nonsense" that had been printed over the years relating to the circumstances of Willie's death.

[Solicitor #1] had known Willie for a number of years, as they were colleagues together at Levy and McRae. He described Willie as a heavy drinker who suffered from depression.

He was also the legal representative of Willie's brother, and was present when **[Willie's Brother]** met with the Crown Office to discuss Willie's death, and also when **[Willie's Brother]** was given access to the files on Willie's death. **[Solicitor #1]** read the files and reports personally, and is 100% convinced that Willie had committed suicide. **[Solicitor #1]** also stated that he did know of reasons why Willie may have wanted to kill himself, but was unwilling to discuss them with our investigators.

[Solicitor #1] did not know specifically what papers were in Willie's briefcase when he was found, or what business he might have been working on that weekend. It could have been court paperwork, political documents, or client notes. **[Solicitor #1]** was not prepared to divulge any information from specific case files that Willie might have been working on at that time.

As far as **[Solicitor #1]** is concerned, the police investigation at the time was appropriate and conducted properly, and anything printed in the press suggesting that Willie was murdered is mere speculation and conspiracy theory.

2. Friend #1

[Friend #1] first met Willie McRae in the late 1960s through family connections from up north in Uist. He came to know Willie as a strong passionate Scottish Nationalist who was proud of his roots and his country. He described him as a very intelligent man who went out of his way to help people and he did a lot of work whilst serving in India to help under-privileged children and adults to better their education and employment prospects.

During the early 1970s, (February & October 1974) Willie was standing for the Ross and Cromarty election and at that time **[Friend #1]** did a bit of driving for him and they both socialised together. **[Friend #1]** stated that Willie was a very clever man who never bragged about what he done for himself or what he had done for others, he was a true gentleman who devoted himself to his legal work and to his political work. In his personal life he was quite a private man who was happy in his own company but also enjoyed the company of others.

[Friend #1] was aware of rumours over the years about Willie's sexuality, probably because he was single but was able to absolutely confirm that Willie gave no indications that he was anything other than heterosexual and spoke of relationships that he had had with women whilst overseas.

[Friend #1] was asked about Willie's drinking habits and he stated that he was a whisky drinker exclusively. He did not tend to drink any other spirit or beer. His favourite brands of whisky were Islay Mist which was an unusual blend of malt whiskies and Glenmorangie single malt. If he was having a dram in his office or with some friends or colleague he usually had a half bottle of Grouse or Bells. He never had those brands in full bottle size, always a half bottle size. **[Friend #1]** described Willie as a moderate to heavy drinker "depending on how you would class it".

[Friend #1] was asked if Willie had ever discussed suicide with him and stated "I am not for one minute suggesting that Willie was contemplating suicide or that he was hinting about it but he was such an experienced and clever man that he once said to me that if someone was going to kill themselves by shooting themselves then the sure fire way to do it would be to place the muzzle of the gun under their chin and shoot upwards through the mouth because that's where the soft tissue is and it would offer less resistance than bone or skull for example. I knew that he liked nothing better than sitting in his cottage in Dornie with a glass of Glenmorangie and his cigarettes in front of a real peat fire. He once said to me 'If things ever got too much for me, you will find me here in my armchair with an empty bottle of Glenmorangie and a cigarette in my hand'. I just took that comment as a bit of humour. There is no way that I would interpret that remark as anything other than a bit of banter between friends".

[Friend #1] stated that he first heard about Willie's death when his father phoned him on Sunday 7th April 1985 at around 10:00am. His father advised him that Willie was dead, that he had been shot and that his car was found on a road that he was very familiar with.

[Friend #1] immediately drove up to the site and arrived sometime between 1p.m. and 2p.m.

He took photographs of the site where the car had previously been and could identify the site easily because of the drag marks of the tyres where the recovery truck had pulled it up the hillside. He assessed that it would have been about 30 yards down the hillside.

He stated that it did not look to him as if Willie's car had left the road on a bend because the roadway above the hillside is fairly straight. He therefore speculated that, if no other car was involved, then Willie must have been distracted, perhaps by a dropped cigarette or something in the road that caused him to momentarily lose his attention. He further stated that it was a road that Willie had driven dozens of times so there were no surprise bends or anything like that.

[Friend #1] provided **John Weir** with copies of the photographs that he had referred to and confirmed that the Volvo car was not present during the time that he was there.

***Note:** The photographs referred to are available in the full report.*

[Friend #1] later learned later that Willie's car had been taken to premises owned by an Inverness garage called McRae and Dick. He couldn't recall who told him and suggested that it may have been Willie's business associate, **Ronnie Welsh** or **[Willie's Brother]**. **[Friend #1]** travelled to Inverness and saw the car in their yard. He stated that it was not fenced in a compound or anything, it was just sitting there. He was 100% certain that it was Willie's car because he saw the registration number and had previously driven that car dozens of times. This was about 3 or 4 weeks after Willie's death that **[Friend #1]** saw the car in McRae and Dick's yard.

[Friend #1] was asked if he knew whether [Willie's Brother] or Ronnie had arranged for the car to be taken to that yard and he stated "I honestly don't know, it's possible that once the police were finished with it they contacted [Willie's Brother] but more likely Ronnie, to have it removed for insurance assessment and they may have moved it to McRae and Dick's yard at the behest of the insurance company, I honestly don't know and I am only speculating. You should try to trace and speak with Ronnie Welsh or [Willie's Brother]".

When [Friend #1] saw the car at McRae and Dick's he stated "it was not on a trailer or ramps or anything like that, it was simply parked in their yard but I did recall seeing what looked like a spare wheel on the back seat".

[Friend #1] also mentioned that he remembered Ronnie Welsh talking about a road accident that Willie was involved in prior to the events of his death and that another car was involved.

3. Solicitor #2

[Solicitor #2] was contacted initially to trace the whereabouts of Ronnie Welsh, a former colleague and close friend of Willie.

It became clear that [Solicitor #2] had some knowledge of Willie's professional life and habits. He stated that he had served an apprenticeship under Willie at his office in Bath Street, Glasgow in the late 1970s and that Willie had supported Ronnie Welsh in his quest to become a lawyer. He knew nothing of Ronnie's whereabouts but advised that Willie was a heavy drinker who suffered depression at times. In the workplace Willie would have a regular supply of Glenmorangie malt whisky (*Note: not Islay Mist*). He described Willie as "unpredictable" and "a nice man".

4. Solicitor #3

[Solicitor #3] also served a legal apprenticeship under Willie in Glasgow and described him as a heavy drinker and staunch Nationalist who was a member of the SNP. He further advised that Willie's specialism was corporate law and conveyancing, not at that time criminal defence work or court work. He rarely left the office and if he represented a client he would direct one of his colleagues to attend court on his behalf to honour that representation.

[Solicitor #3] was aware from newspaper articles that Donald Morrison had provided information to the press and had claimed to know Willie from court attendances. [Solicitor #3] had found this strange as he had seen Donald Morrison at court on a few occasions but, according to his recollection, Willie was never at court. He provided further comment about Donald Morrison's claim that Willie only drank Islay Mist whisky. He stated "I also read that Donald Morrison claimed that Willie only drank Islay Mist whisky, that is nonsense. I worked with Willie from 1975 to 1979 in one

capacity or another and I know that he drank Glenmorangie malt whisky”

[Solicitor #3] was advised that a bottle of Glenmorangie had been recovered from the Volvo car and he stated “I am not surprised because that is the whisky that he preferred to drink; he was also a heavy smoker”

[Solicitor #3] had no knowledge of the contents of Willie’s briefcase on Friday 5th/Saturday 6th April 1985.

5. Willie's Brother

[Willie's Brother], at the time of the incident, was Willie's next of kin. Initial efforts to interview him proved challenging and his wife had advised our investigators that the family had found it difficult to cope with the attention over the past three decades.

In a further discussion with **[Friend #1]**, our investigator **John Weir** ascertained that **[Willie's Brother]** had advised the police that Willie had owned a gun and that this information was given prior to their search to recover it on Sunday 7th April 1985. A further statement was taken from **[Detective Chief Inspector]** who confirmed this information.

On Friday 24th June 2016 **[Willie's Brother]** was contacted and interview via telephone call. He was advised of the nature of the investigation and was very helpful in providing information pertaining to the events of the material weekend. He advised that, on receipt of the news of the car crash he had attended at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary on the date of the incident where he later was advised of the gunshot wound to Willie’s head. At that point, whilst in Aberdeen, he told the police there that Willie owned a handgun. He provided a statement to the police at that time and is adamant that it was prior to the search on the locus on the Sunday morning. At some time either on the Sunday or possibly the day afterwards, he was physically shown the recovered gun by the police and identified it as Willie’s gun. He recognised the gun because he had actually taken the gun from Willie some years earlier and had kept it himself for about a year. He later returned the gun to Willie.

He stated that “Willie was an alcoholic but he was always in denial about it” and would never accept that he had a problem even though the family and his friends would have known. He also advised that Willie suffered from depression at times due to things just getting on top of him and him finding it hard to cope. This was partly due to him being so busy and being involved in several matters in his professional life.

[Willie's Brother] advised that the police had returned all of Willie’s recovered personal effects to him, except the gun. He was able to recall receiving a bottle of malt whisky, brand unknown and a briefcase containing papers. He described the papers as “nothing untoward or sinister in the paperwork, it was nothing that seemed unusual or special”. **[Willie's Brother]** could not recall whether or not he had assisted the police in authorising removal of the Volvo after the police had completed their search and examination of it. He stated “I was his next of kin so I possibly did but honestly can’t recall. It was so long ago, I’m sorry”.

He was asked about his relationship with the Inverness police and stated "The police up in Inverness kept me informed of their investigation and I have to say that I think they did a thorough and professional job".

6. Female Neighbour & 7. Male Neighbour

Willie's neighbours are husband and wife and at the material time they resided next door to Willie. They had no knowledge of his habits or lifestyle. The **male neighbour** could recall a fire at some point but was unable to remember any further details.

8. Friend #2

Friend #2 first met Willie McRae in 1948 as a solicitor. They had a number of professional dealings together and later became friends. **[Friend #2]** describes himself as "a good friend, but not a close friend.

[Friend #2] remembers an occasion where Willie had been discussing two new partners at his firm whom he had taken on as his protégés. They eventually forced Willie out of the company, and Willie was very upset about it.

[Friend #2] also remembers seeing Willie shortly before his death, when he visited him at his office. He says "I can't remember where it was, it wasn't where his original office was. The office was in a state of disarray, there were papers right around the room scattered everywhere. He had an assistant with him; I think it was **Ronnie Welsh**, whom I thought was rather odd."

He also added "It was very distressing to see Willie, he looked disturbed and was vague and had lost his train of thought, he couldn't concentrate on anything and was very hesitant speaking. I suspected he had been drinking; I think he may have been alcohol dependant, I was shocked and disturbed by his demeanour. He was certainly different then than he had been in previous years, there was a notable deterioration. That was the last time I saw him."

9. Friend #3

[Friend #3] agreed to be interviewed regarding the content of a self-penned open letter, which was published on the Scotland U.N. Committee website. He made it clear to our investigators that they were to focus on the content of the letter only, particularly the references to Willie McRae and to an

incident involving damage to his own car on the A77 Road between Ayr and Glasgow. He also stated that after the interview, he would never discuss the McRae case again.

[Friend #3] describes an incident when he was driving on the A77, when his car spun off the road. He phoned Willie McRae, who advised him to take the car to the police in Glasgow, where it was discovered that there was a bullet hole in the car. The police advised that the bullet was probably from an illegal deer poacher on Fenwick Moor. Willie McRae had promised to follow this up with the police on behalf of **[Friend #3]** but nothing more ever came of the incident. **[Friend #3]** believes this incident highlights the political atmosphere in Scotland prior to Willie's death, and indicates the possibility of state-sponsored murder.

[Friend #3] states that he did not believe that Willie had committed suicide, because Willie was due to give a speech the following weekend at **[Friend #3]**'s daughter's wedding. Apparently Willie had been looking forward to the event.

[Friend #3] provided a number of reasons why he believed Willie had been murdered, which he had learned from various sources that he had read. These included Willie having been shot twice behind the ear ("the classic SAS kill") and the gun having been found 40 feet away from Willie's car. **[Friend #3]** was unaware that Willie had owned a gun.

Note: Our investigation has established that Willie was only shot once, from his own gun, and that the gun was found directly underneath where the car had been.

[Friend #3] states that he spoke with Willie on the morning of Friday 5th April, and believes that he may have been the last person to speak to Willie before he died.

*Note: Willie possibly spoke to **Donald Morrison, [Off-Licence Manager]** and his neighbours before he left Glasgow for the highlands. This means that **[Friend #3]** was not the last person to speak with Willie McRae.*

During the discussion with **[Friend #3]**, Willie is reported to have said "I've got the buggers. They're going to bury the stuff where the sand never dries."

[Friend #3] states that Willie "was of course talking about the ongoing debate about the disposal of nuclear waste. Willie liked to talk in riddles." **[Friend #3]** also explains that the place where the sand never dries is a reference to Applecross.

[Friend #3]'s open letter concludes by saying that "Willie McRae was a great patriot and that is how he should be remembered."

Note: When this witness was made aware of outcomes from this investigation in relation to the position of the single gunshot wound and the location of the gun's recovery by police he stated that this information would cause him to reconsider his original position around his assessment that Willie was 'murdered'.

10. Friend #4

[Friend #4] and her husband (now deceased) knew Willie McRae for about 50 years. Her husband was first approached by Willie back in the late 1950s early 1960s and was asked if he wanted to work as a lawyer with him, which he accepted. He worked his way up to become a partner at Levy & McRae.

[Friend #4] and her husband were so friendly with Willie that their three sons referred to Willie as "Uncle Willie." **[Friend #4]** describes Willie McRae as a very hard-working man who would rarely attend big social functions. Instead, he would often work late, and drank whisky in his office.

[Friend #4] reports seeing a change in Willie's demeanour around the late 1970s, early 1980s when she first noticed he was becoming depressed. Around this time Willie McRae was ousted from the firm by the other lawyers, which **[Friend #4]** believes might have been because of Willie's behaviour or his drinking. Willie was also convicted of drink-driving, which **[Friend #4]** says had a huge impact on his independence and reputation.

Friend #4 recalls an incident during the early 1980s when her husband received a phone call around 9pm and said that he had to go and see Willie immediately, because something was wrong. Her husband did not return home until the early hours. When **[Friend #4]**'s husband arrived at Willie's house, the door was unlocked so he let himself in. He found Willie sitting with a gun in his hand. Willie said that it was all too much for him, and asked **[Friend #4]**'s husband to give him one good reason why he shouldn't kill himself.

[Friend #4]'s husband managed to talk Willie down and get the gun away from him, which he hid somewhere in Willie's house.

[Friend #4] states that neither she, nor her husband knew that Willie had a gun, and it was a real shock to both of them. They had known that Willie was depressed, but not that he was suicidal. **[Friend #4]** thought it might be dangerous for her husband to go back to Willie's house again. She never saw Willie again after that.

After **[Friend #4]** learned of Willie's death in 1985 she always believed it to be suicide rather than murder. She states that she is fed up with all the conspiracy theories and just wants Willie's memory to be left in peace.

11. Friend #5

[Friend #5] is the son of **[Friend #4]**. He would often visit Willie McRae as a child, and referred to him as his "Uncle Willie."

[Friend #5] describes Willie McRae as "a very happy, kind and generous man" who was always good fun. He wasn't aware that Willie had any problems until one night when **[Friend #5]**'s father (now deceased) rushed out to Willie's home in the middle of the night, after receiving a disturbing phone

call from Willie McRae. This was when **[Friend #5]** was aged around 12-14, and **[Friend #5]** can't ever remember seeing Willie again after this incident.

[Friend #5]'s father later told him what had happened - when **[Friend #5]**'s father arrived at Willie's address, he found Willie sitting with a gun to his head, threatening to shoot himself. Willie was drunk and upset, but **[Friend #5]** does not know why he was upset.

[Friend #5]'s father was able to talk Willie down and remove the gun.

Friend #5 also mentions he was aware that Willie had a drink problem and he'd had drink-driving convictions.

Others identified by the campaign:

Ronnie Welsh

Ronnie is known to have worked with Willie in the late 1970s to mid-1980s within his Glasgow Office and it is believed that he was a solicitor in Willie's firm. It is very possible that, as Willie was a single man and not believed to have been in a relationship at or shortly prior to the time of his death, **Ronnie** was regarded along with **[Willie's Brother]**, as Willie's next of kin. In any case it would seem reasonable that he would at least have handled Willie's business affairs on occasions that Willie was unavailable. This is speculative but is based upon information from **[Friend #1]** that he thinks that it was either **Ronnie Welsh** or **[Willie's Brother]**, who advised him of Willie's car having been taken to the McRae and Dick garage in Inverness sometime after the police had recovered it. It is also supported by information from **[Solicitor #2]** and **[Solicitor #3]** who state that Willie and **Ronnie Welsh** were very close friends and colleagues.

Our investigators made significant efforts to trace **Ronnie Welsh** for interview and in spite of dialogue with his former legal colleagues and friends his whereabouts were unknown. However as a result of the campaign publicising a desire to trace him, a potential address was forthcoming and information provided that **Ronnie Welsh** was living with his son. That address was telephoned and a man identifying himself as Andrew Wilson answered the call. When the investigator asked to speak to **Ronnie Welsh**, Andrew asked what it was about. This seemed an unusual request from a landlord about a private call to a guest. The nature of the inquiry was guardedly explained and Andrew stated that he was aware of the campaign and Willie's death. He stated that he would pass the caller details to "Ron" for a requested call back, however this call back never materialized. It is notable that he acknowledged Ronnie Welsh as "Ron", a houseguest at that time. A further call to "Andrew Wilson" a week later resulted in him stating that **Ronnie Welsh** had indeed lived there but had moved on to an unknown address 3 or 4 weeks earlier. Mr. Wilson also denied being **Ronnie's** son and advised that he was not likely to be in contact with Ron again. It is therefore possible that **Ronnie Welsh** may now be known as **Ron Wilson** and is actively avoiding contact as he does not wish to be associated with this or any future inquiry about Willie McRae.

Former Politician

The Former Politician is a retired lawyer and SNP Politician who submitted queries to the Crown Office regarding the Willie McRae case. It has been suggested that she had hoped to clarify certain anomalies relating to the case. We contacted her son, who stated that although he had very little knowledge or involvement in the enquiry he would speak with his mother to assess her recollection. He consequently advised that his mother, now in her 80's and in a care home, had no recollection of her list of questions nor did she have any information to progress the enquiry. For that reason we have redacted their names from this report.

Additional / Miscellaneous Witnesses

1. Private Investigator's Ex-Wife

[Private Investigator's Ex-Wife] was married to a man called **Iain Fraser** (now deceased) who was a former police officer and who had left the police service and had become a private investigator. She informed our investigators that she had known her former husband for many years prior to them marrying in 2000. She further stated that **Iain** had at some point told her that he had been commissioned by an unknown client with a Newcastle accent to take observations on Willie whilst he was attending an event in Edinburgh. The following is an extract of her e-mail correspondence.

“The bare bones are that **Iain** was contacted by phone and given an itinerary of Willie's movements over a specific fairly short period, his remit being to keep him under surveillance and report his movements during that time. His payment came via a PO box arrangement”. **[Private Investigator's Ex-Wife]** further stated that **Iain** did not know the identity of the client. This same information is also provided as hearsay by **Donald Morrison** (who also knew Iain Fraser) and states that Iain Fraser told him the same story.

[Private Investigator's Ex-Wife] further advised that she had spoken with **[Driver]** who had told her about him seeing a Volvo car, similar in appearance to Willie's, that was parked on a verge or forestry track next to the roadway near to the crash site on the night of Friday 5th April 1985.

[Private Investigator's Ex-Wife] stated that she had never actually met Willie McRae and as far as she was aware neither had her late husband **Iain Fraser**.

*Note: All of the information provided by **[Private Investigator's Ex-Wife]** was told to her by others therefore it is difficult to establish its accuracy or validity.*

[Private Investigator's Ex-Wife] admits in her email, “It is speculation and anything I add can only be precisely that, as even any information I've been told is no more than hearsay”.

2. Nurse

[Nurse] was identified to the investigators as a male nurse who was on duty at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary when Willie was admitted there on 6th April 1985. Efforts to trace him for interview were unsuccessful however he was in fact interviewed at some point on behalf of the campaign by lawyer Hugh Fraser and Journalist **Paul Delamore**. Hugh Fraser has kindly provided salient points as follows.

“I did meet with **[Nurse]** in Aberdeen (with **Paul Delamore**), the nurse in charge of Ward 40 when McRae was admitted at about 8pm on 6 April.

I do not have a statement but from my notes the only matters which I noted as of potential relevance were:-

- 1) McRae was in a mess when he arrived; in his own pyjamas, long un-kept hair and feet and lower legs black from proximity to smoke/fire
- 2) He was advised by the consultant neurosurgeon that the x-rays showed a bullet in McRae's head, and that the neurosurgeon advised the police. This was about 8pm that evening.
- 3) McRae's life support was switched off in the early hours of 7 April with the permission of his relatives".

***Note:** The description of Willie's feet and lower legs may have been as a result of the house fire on Thursday 4th April 1985. Whilst this information was not obtained by the investigators, the campaign felt the information was still relevant for inclusion as it was provided by Hugh Fraser, a campaign member.*

3. Driver

Statement 1

***Note:** Again, this information was obtained informally by lawyer Hugh Fraser and Journalist Paul Delamore during a meeting at the Willie McRae crash site in 2015. Efforts to trace **[Driver]** for interview revealed that he had moved to India and that his potential return to the UK was unknown.*

Our investigation was advised that **[Driver]** was driving near to the scene late on Friday 5th or early Saturday 6th April whereby he saw a vehicle similar to Willie's car parked at the roadside with both doors open and no sign of any occupants. A short time prior to this, on the same stretch of road, he reports being passed by a Land rover being driven suspiciously.

Once **[Driver]** had heard of Willie McRae's death he telephoned Kyle of Lochalsh police station to report what he saw, but was told at the time that his evidence was not relevant.

Statement 2

***Note:** UPDATE: We eventually tracked **[Driver]** and interviewed him in June 2017. His Statement (Statement 2) has been updated in the Full Witness Report.*

4. Hitchhiker

[Hitchhiker] got in contact with the Justice For Willie campaign via the website, as he believes he may have hitched a lift with **Donald Morrison** en-route to Skye in the summer of 1990/91.

While he was hitchhiking he may have been wearing a t-shirt with the slogan "Who killed Willie McRae?" on the front. This prompted a discussion during the journey about the death of Willie McRae. **[Hitchhiker]** also requested to stop for a brief visit at the Willie McRae cairn during the journey. **Donald Morrison** agreed to wait.

They stopped in Kintail where Donald was staying, and had a cup of tea. Donald offered to give **[Hitchhiker]** a lift the rest of the way to Skye.

Donald Morrison mentioned two things that struck **[Hitchhiker]** as being strange. Firstly, Donald is reported to have said that a high-ranking police officer involved in Willie McRae's death took early retirement after Willie died, and that Willie was involved with a group or organisation in Edinburgh. However, **[Hitchhiker]** says that **Donald Morrison** did not explain this any further. **[Hitchhiker]** further informed this investigation that Donald Morrison had admitted being a policeman or ex-policeman, which the Hitchhiker could not possibly have known previously. When asked about this event Donald Morrison denied that it occurred.

[Hitchhiker] has always thought the discussion to be very strange, which is why he got in touch with the campaign.

5. SNP Supporter

An **[SNP Supporter]** made contact with the campaign via email. This was in relation to a letter he received from Willie McRae dated 29th June 1984.

Willie had requested in the letter for **[SNP Supporter]** to make enquiry about a local resident to his area. The letter suggested that Willie wanted to know everything about the man and his association with the Boys Brigade. **[SNP Supporter]** doesn't recall sending a written reply to Willie, although he is positive he would have spoken to Willie about it verbally. He did not carry out any enquiry at this time into the man and thought no more of it.

[SNP Supporter] referred to a press article from about a year ago, where it mentioned that Willie McRae may have had details about a paedophile ring. This is what made him think about the letter received from Willie because it mentioned the man's association with the Boys Brigade and **[SNP Supporter]** had an awareness that over the years there has been suspicion with men associated with boys associations such as those. He therefore suspected that the content of the letter perhaps had something to link with that article. He however didn't think that the content of the letter merited contacting the police. He advised that the information he had about Willie's death was only what he had read in the press.

6. MacRae & Dick mechanic #1

We spoke with the current service manager at McRae & Dick garage, Inverness, to find out if there was any possibility of a second tow truck being involved in the removal/replacement of Willie's car. The service manager, who was not yet born in 1985, had no knowledge of the Willie McRae investigation, or the recovery of a Volvo motor vehicle.

7. MacRae & Dick mechanic #2

We spoke to another garage worker at McRae & Dick, Inverness with 45 years' service. He advised that in 1985, McRae & Dick operated a recovery service from Inverness and the now deceased Eric Turner was the recovery driver. He also advised that, had Eric been involved in the recovery of Willie McRae's car, it would have been the subject of workshop discussion. He had no knowledge of the car's recovery.

Others identified by the Campaign:

Eric Turner (Deceased)

He was the tow truck driver for McRae & Dick in 1985. Deceased 5 years ago. His wife is also deceased.

John Finnie, MSP

It was discussed previously and indeed it is reported via The Scotsman newspaper dated 5 April 2015 that **John Finnie MSP**, a former Northern Constabulary police officer, may have information regarding the movement of the Volvo on the weekend in question.

According to journalist **Paul Delamore**, **John Finnie MSP** has an ex-police friend who claims the car was returned to the crash site on the Sunday. During this investigation Paul Delamore refused to discuss the potential identity of the police source and would not confirm that he personally had spoken with **John Finnie MSP**.

John Finnie MSP has failed to respond to several requests to discuss, and hung up when investigators called.

Paul Delamore

Journalist who was involved with the campaign initially, however ceased contact when we challenged him because we felt he had deliberately misled the campaign.

Severin Carrell

Journalist and colleague of Paul Delamore. He admitted “doorstepping” [Traffic Officer] and interviewing him on tape but denied that he had shown a photograph of a Volvo aboard a recovery truck or advising [Traffic Officer] that the car was Willie’s and the truck was McRae and Dick’s vehicle. He promised to make the audio tape available to this investigation but failed to do so in spite of repeated requests. He declined to be interviewed unless we were going to provide him with an exclusive story.

Conclusions

From the Scene

1. The distance of the gun from the car

Based on witness statements, our investigation is able to conclude that Willie's gun was retrieved from a pool of water directly below where the car had been; **not** a distance of several metres away as has been previously reported in the press. The gun was identified as belonging to Willie, and the single bullet which shot Willie was found to have been fired from the same gun. While this does not prove murder or suicide, it makes the suicide scenario much more likely than it would have been if the gun was found a distance away from where Willie supposedly shot himself.

2. The neat pile of paper with a watch on top

Rumours regarding a pile of papers with a watch placed on top, near to Willie's car have been widely circulated. The tourist who discovered the accident scene saw no such papers, and the SNP member who also arrived at the scene can remember seeing these papers as Willie was being transferred from the car into the ambulance. He does not report seeing a watch placed on top. The logical inference is that the papers were removed from the car at the same time as Willie, and were placed there by a member of the recovery party. It does not make sense that a neat pile of papers would have sat overnight without blowing all over the hillside.

3. The car being returned to site on the Sunday

In 2015 an article appeared which claimed to have solved the Willie McRae case. Within the article it is suggested that the car was returned to the site on the Sunday. This was not a new theory, but one that had been circulated for many years previously. The article is entitled “[The Truth about activist Willie McRae’s death](#)” by The Scotsman / *Scotland on Sunday*.

This article prompted our investigators to dedicate time and resources to following through on any leads with this regard. However, we found no evidence of the car being returned to the site on the Sunday. The only witness who reported seeing the car on the Sunday was the tourist who returned to the site to search for a lost glove. He admits that after the elapsed time of 30 years, this memory of the car being there may be inaccurate. Several other witnesses have suggested that due to the

terrain of the hillside, the only way to get the car back in situ would be to airlift it there. Due to the logistics of this and the number of people being involved, it seems an unlikely scenario.

Our investigation found a number of inaccuracies within the article, which we feel were **deliberately misleading**. Firstly, we discovered that the "previously unseen police reports" mentioned in the article do not actually exist. Secondly, the quotes attributed to the police officer at the scene were not gathered directly from him, but rather were lifted from a [previous article](#) in the *Glasgow Herald* in March 1995. Our investigators were able to track down the police officer in question [**First Officer**], who said that the quote about the gun being several yards away was printed out of context, and was "a lot of rubbish."

4. The recovery of Willie's personal belongings

It has also been widely reported that Willie's personal belongings were never recovered from the crash site, which has fuelled the idea that Willie's killer may have removed them from the scene. Several witnesses can confirm that a gun and a briefcase were indeed recovered. The gun was likely destroyed and the briefcase and contents were returned to **Willie's brother**.

Contradictory Information from Paul Delamore:

In the interest of clarity and transparency, the Campaign felt it necessary to include this additional section detailing our experience and interactions with Journalist, **Paul Delamore**.

Prior to the involvement of the investigators in the case, the campaign was provided with information directly from **Paul Delamore** and from his newspaper reports and, understandably, his input influenced our campaign.

Paul Delamore wrote two previously published articles on Willie McRae:

["The Truth about activist Willie McRae's death"](#) *The Scotsman*, 5th April 2015 – co-written by Paul Delamore and Steven Semple.

and

["Revealed: key evidence missing on mysterious death of SNP activist Willie McRae"](#) *The Sunday Herald*, 3rd of April 2016, co-written by Paul Delamore and Judith Duffy.

In the first article the following claim was made:

"The mystery surrounding the death of SNP activist Willie McRae 30 years ago has been **solved** after an investigation by *Scotland on Sunday*."

The article also includes the following points:

1. According to [Tourist] the car was present at the scene on both days and his wife can corroborate this.

- 2. A quotation from the [First Officer] states that the gun was found "some yards away" from Willie McRae's car.**
- 3. Previously unseen police reports show that Willie McRae's car was returned to the crash site on the Sunday.**
- 4. Two separate vehicle recovery teams claim to have removed Willie McRae's car from the site.**

However, our investigation has found no evidence to back up the claims from the article.

1. In **[Tourist]'s** evidence to the investigators he states that his wife remained within their car on both days up on the roadway and did not attend the Volvo. **[Tourist]'s wife** may potentially have had sight of the Volvo on the Saturday from her vantage point up on the roadway but there is no evidence that she actually spoke to **Paul Delamore** or emailed him to comment on this. **Paul Delamore** is therefore second guessing what her evidence should be or, instead is accepting her evidence from **[Tourist]**, on behalf of his wife, which is nothing more than hearsay.

2. In relation to the quotes attributed to **[First Officer]**, who allegedly stated that the gun was found "some yards away" – this part of **Paul Delamore's** story is a direct lift and regurgitation of another article that appeared in the Glasgow Herald on the 28th of March 1995 by an entirely different reporter. The 2015 article strongly implies to its readers that **[First Officer]**, had provided this account directly to **Delamore** and **Semple**. However, **Paul Delamore** has advised this campaign that he has in fact never interviewed **[First Officer]**. It is therefore not a direct quote, and accordingly **Paul Delamore** cannot possibly be positioned to vouch for its accuracy.

Our investigators, however, *were* able to speak directly to **[First Officer]**, who stated that he has been pestered by the press over the death of Willie McRae almost every subsequent anniversary since the incident in 1985. He further stated in relation to the 1995 article from The Herald, that he had a very short conversation with a journalist who took what he said in relation to the gun, and printed it completely out of context. He described the quote about the gun being found away from the car as "a lot of rubbish".

3. With regards to Paul Delamore's report that previously unseen police reports claim that the police returned the Volvo motorcar on the Sunday, this is simply untrue.

When challenged about this by Mark MacNicol in May 2016, Mr Delamore admitted that it was untrue and blamed the editorial team at the newspaper for publishing the falsehood out with his knowledge.

Given that his article was published in April 2015 and that Mr Delamore, knowing that the information was incorrect, had attended campaign meetings where the investigators were present in early 2016, he perpetuated the false information and did not seek to correct it until challenged in May 2016. **For over a year our campaign was misled to believe this falsehood.**

In a separate issue, **Paul Delamore** alleges that **MSP John Finnie** has details of a former high ranking police officer who states that the car was returned on the Sunday. Again, this is hearsay unless **Paul Delamore** can produce the actual source of the allegation. However, he has refused to do on several occasions. Similarly, John Finnie has refused to respond to the campaign regarding this matter.

4. Finally, the mention of two different breakdown companies claiming that they both separately removed the Volvo Motor Car from the crash site has been subject of inquiry by the investigators. It appears irrefutable that the West End Garage removed the car from site on the Saturday for inspection.

In his statement, **[Traffic Officer]** states that **Paul Delamore** and 2 others attended his house unannounced and showed him a photograph of a Volvo aboard a truck and that they told him that this was a MacRae and Dick recovery truck (not West End Garage) that replaced the car on site on the Sunday. The journalists actually advised **[Traffic Officer]** that MacRae and Dick staff confirmed this information to them.

Paul Delamore and one of the other journalists simply deny this occurrence and have advised the campaign investigators that their own interview with **[Traffic Officer]** was audio recorded. However, in spite of agreeing to do so, they have failed to produce any such recording as evidence.

Our investigators attended at McRae and Dick and ascertained that surviving staff from 1985 have absolutely no knowledge of this Sunday occurrence.

The main points of contention can be summarised as follows:

- There is no police document stating that the car was replaced on the Sunday and **Paul Delamore** knew this in 2015 yet never declared the inaccuracy to the campaign until May 2016.
- **[First Officer]** was never interviewed by **Paul Delamore** and his article reference was lifted directly from a report from 20 years earlier by another reporter. **[First Officer]** claims the information printed is untrue.
- There is no evidence that **[Tourist]**'s wife spoke to or communicated with **Paul Delamore** directly therefore his claim that she corroborates **[Tourist]** is concerning. **[Tourist]** stated to the investigators that his wife remained within their car up on the road and never on either day attended at the Volvo. Her sighting of the Volvo on either day is unknown.
- **[Traffic Officer]** states that **Paul Delamore** and 2 other journalists showed him a photograph of a Volvo, side on, aboard a recovery truck and that they told him that the photograph was taken on the Sunday (7/4/85) when the car was returned to the scene. **Mr Delamore** and one of the other journalists contest this account.

The campaign feel that it is vitally important that this information be brought to the attention of the wider public. We did present our findings to **Paul Delamore**, who claimed that the inaccuracies within the article were due to an oversight by editors at *Scotland on Sunday*, and that the matter was out with his control. He stated that if the article was misleading then "c'est la vie."

Even if this was the case, that the discrepancies were a genuine oversight, the fact is **Paul Delamore** knew that the article was deliberately misleading, and did not convey this knowledge to the campaign for over a year, allowing us to waste time and money investigating this angle. This untruth also perpetuated the belief that the police had replaced the car to 'cover up' some misgiving.

When confronted with these findings **Paul Delamore** broke off all contact with the campaign, stating "professional reasons/incompatibilities."

From West Nile Street Incident / Confidential Files

1. No records or memory of "confidential files" incident

Our investigation found no official records of the "confidential files" incident, whereby files were reportedly removed from Willie McRae's premises by police and photocopied. **Donald Morrison** reports that **PC David Phinn** received a police commendation for his part in this operation, yet there is no record of this. We spoke to several witnesses and colleagues from within the same police division as Donald Morrison at that time, and nobody can remember the incident, or **PC Phinn's** commendation.

2. Police officers named by Donald Morrison fail to back up his story

During our investigation of this incident, **Donald Morrison** was asked to provide a list of police officers who were present either at the break-in, or at the office when files were copied, or at the premises when the files were returned to Mr. McRae. He provided a list of 11 former police officers whom he claimed could corroborate either the files incident or the surveillance incident or perhaps both. Our investigators interviewed a number of the "Morrison witnesses" with consistent negative outcomes. The campaign group made the call to suspend the remaining list and to focus on other witnesses who may lead to fresh evidence. The witnesses we did speak to all described **Donald Morrison** as someone who liked to gossip and make up stories.

3. Unlikelihood of radio broadcast

Donald Morrison alleges that a radio message was broadcast saying that police had found in Willie's possession "files so sensitive that they could bring the Government down." Of all the police officers, communications officers and other witnesses we spoke to, everyone agreed that this sort of message would simply not be broadcast by police as it breaches police protocol.

4. No other witnesses to West Nile Street car chase

Donald Morrison claims that two men followed Willie McRae from West Nile Street in Glasgow, yet we could find no other witnesses who saw this. The **Off-licence Manager** who had served Willie had no knowledge of any car chase. Furthermore, Donald claims that he requested a trace for the registration number of one of the vehicles and it came back as "no trace." We spoke with an expert witness who informed us that this would not be the case, and a trace result of "blocked" would be returned for any type of police or surveillance vehicle.

5. The actions of Donald Morrison

The actions of Donald Morrison on the Friday 5th April are unexplained, and Donald Morrison himself is unable to provide any reasons why he acted in the manner he did. Firstly, he claims to have facilitated a U-turn for Willie McRae in West Nile Street – if this is true then it would be an admission by an ex- police officer that he knowingly subverted an ongoing police surveillance operation by allowing the escape of the target. Also, Donald Morrison did not radio for assistance and did not report the matter as a formal. As it was not formally reported, there is no paper trail of the alleged incident.

From those who knew Willie McRae

The conclusions we can take from friends and colleagues of Willie McRae are limited, as they can only give us some clues as to his general mood and demeanour prior to his death. Things we can confirm are –

1. Willie drank several brands of whisky

Donald Morrison and [**Off-licence manager**] suggested that Willie drank only Islay Mist whisky. Several people have attested that Willie also enjoyed Glenmorangie, and also kept Grouse in his office. This does not really clear anything up, apart from the rumour that the bottle of whisky recovered from Willie's car was not his usual brand. From what we know, Willie liked to drink several different brands of whisky. There is also intelligence that cannot be confirmed that Willie had called into an illicit off-sales known as the Garry Inn in Invergarry en-route to Kintail on the Friday night and that he bought the Grouse and Glenmorangie there. The premises have since been demolished and witnesses were not traced. This information was provided by a sourced believed reliable and accurate.

2. Willie may have been depressed and/or an alcoholic

Several witnesses report that Willie suffered from depression and also was a heavy drinker. This does not necessarily mean he killed himself. Some friends report that he seemed to be suicidal and on a downward spiral, while others say that he would never have committed suicide and seemed to be in great spirits. It is understood that, at the time of the incident, Willie had previous convictions for drink driving as well as a pending case for the same offence.

3. Willie's belongings were, in fact, returned and briefcase papers examined

Willie's Brother, is able to confirm that a briefcase of paperwork was indeed returned to him as part of Willie's personal belongings which were recovered from the scene. **Willie's Brother**, along with a solicitor, looked through the contents of Willie's briefcase and found nothing of significant value among the paperwork. The gun would have been detained (and probably destroyed) by police, since Willie did not hold a licence for it.

Additional statements / Miscellaneous

The witnesses in this section of the report provided lots of information relating to the Willie McRae case, however none of the information could be factually checked or could lead to a significant breakthrough in determining whether Willie's death was murder or suicide.

1. Lots of Hearsay about what Willie may have been involved in prior to his death

Different witnesses have reported different things that Willie was involved in, ranging from investigating paedophiles to the dumping of nuclear waste. Other witnesses suggest that Willie may have been under surveillance for a time. We were unable to verify any of this information. Our campaign investigators are well acquainted with surveillance and targeting of individuals and they cannot rule out the possibility that Willie was of significant interest to the authorities, probably due to his strong position on nuclear waste disposal, for example. However the very nature of surveillance and intelligence gathering is "secretive" with, at that time, very little records kept in terms of authorisation for such actions. Today these matters are very strictly controlled but no evidence of such activity exists from 1985.

Murder or Suicide?

The findings of this investigation are intended to be presented in such a way that is unbiased and allows for open interpretation of the facts and witness statements.

Of course, there may have been missed or indeed limited forensic opportunities at the material time, but as a campaign we feel there is little worth in dwelling on this. It is all too easy to look back critically at police procedures of 1985 with the knowledge that we have now. At the time of the incident, Northern Constabulary was a single force of eight across Scotland and may have had less opportunities for dealing with such incidents. The passage of time since the event and varying policies around evidence disposal/destruction has meant that documents and other evidence from the original investigation are unlikely to be recovered. Therefore, our investigators could only work with what available evidence or witness testimony still remains. It should also be remembered that our investigators had no statutory power or authority to compel witnesses to speak up and it was their patient persuasion that prompted witnesses to assist this investigation.

That said, the investigation has found no credible evidence of homicide, or that any other person(s) were with Willie as his car left the roadway.