



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive



Mrs. Nuala O'Loan

### **Police Ombudsman — is Nuala O'Loan fit for the job??**

**Some recent events have caused many to ask questions about the suitability of Nuala O'Loan holding the office of Police Ombudsman once more. She comes from a very active nationalist background with its traditional Irish unity agenda. Her husband is an outspoken member of the SDLP who sits as a councillor on Ballymena District Council.**

**Her youngest son, Kieran, was recently cautioned about his behaviour by the police.**

**The manner of the arrest of a retired police officer, by those acting on Mrs. O'Loan's orders, has cast further doubt on her suitability for an office that demands political impartiality as its key criterion.**

Ian Paisley Jnr has raised legal matters surrounding the issue with the PSNI Chief Constable.

Mr. Paisley says he was concerned that proper procedures may not have been followed within the Police Service after a caution was issued to 18-year-old Kieran O'Loan in July. The DUP Assemblyman believes the incident should have been reported to the Director of Public Prosecutions to consider bringing criminal charges because of the comments allegedly made by the Police Ombudsman's son.

Sources in Ballymena say Kieran O'Loan was spoken to by members of a police Tactical Support Group, who were on duty in the town to assist local police in keeping rival factions apart before the annual Somme Commemoration parade.

The incident occurred in the mainly Nationalist William Street area just before 3 o'clock on Saturday, July 1, before the Orange Parade assembled. Security sources say two members of the Tactical Support Group accompanied by a community police officer were subjected to a torrent of verbal and sectarian abuse in the William Street area, before the parade took place, and they then spoke to Mrs. O'Loan's son about his conduct.

The PSNI confirmed that an incident involving police officers occurred. "A youth was cautioned about his behaviour at William Street on July 1," a spokesman said.

### **Chief Constable**

Ian Paisley Jnr said that he intended to raise the circumstances of the caution incident with the Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde.

"I am concerned that there may have been inadequate action by the Police Service in relation to this matter and I shall raise that with the Chief Constable.

"My understanding is that if remarks of a sectarian or racial nature are uttered, that a report must be forwarded to the Public Prosecution Service for consideration as to whether a



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criminal prosecution should be brought. I do not believe that that procedure was followed in this case and I want to know why.

“In other circumstances, it may be a proper case for the Police Ombudsman to probe but, in these particular circumstances, I hardly imagine that the investigation of such a complaint should be undertaken by Mrs. O’Loan for obvious reasons.”

There is no doubt that were it a Protestant woman who occupied the position of Police Ombudsman and a member of her family was involved in such activity, then the howls for her resignation from the republican and nationalist politicians would be absolutely deafening. It would especially be so if her husband were a DUP politician!!

### **Another matter**

Another issue which is proving contentious is the manner of the arrest of a retired police officer by members of the ombudsman’s staff.

Police Ombudsman investigators who questioned an ex-detective as part of a widening inquiry into alleged security force collusion with loyalist paramilitary killers wanted publicity without any hard evidence, it has been claimed.

### **Detained**

After retired Sergeant Johnston “Jonty” Brown was released without charge, Democratic Unionist MLA Ian Paisley Junior hit out at the decision to detain him as he stepped off a plane at Belfast International Airport. Brown was one of three former officers questioned about alleged attempts to pervert the course of justice. They were held in the latest phase of a major probe by ombudsman Nuala O’Loan’s team into how the RUC handled the hunt for the Ulster Volunteer Force murderers of Raymond McCord Junior.

But after Mrs. O’Loan’s staff arrested Mr. Brown and two other ex-CID men, only to let them go without charge, Mr. Paisley launched an attack on how the operation was carried out. The Northern Ireland Policing Board representative claimed: “These were stage-managed show arrests of a number of former police officers.

In particular, to arrest one as soon as he got off an aeroplane, and for the media to be at the house of another officer, was nothing short of scandalous.

When the police go to arrest prominent republicans, prominent loyalists and other criminals, no such media circus is there spectating. The fact that no charges have come from the investigation of these officers demonstrates how little evidence the ombudsman had at her disposal.

If the ombudsman wanted to carry out this investigation and make these arrests, then those former officers should have been treated like others and invited to a station for questioning.”

Before going on holiday, Mr. Johnston Brown had contacted the police and offered to make himself available at any time. His offer was not taken up!