

SATURDAY MARCH 23 1996

Armed police in church siege

They were today playing a 'tag game' with a man - said to be armed - who has been up in a cathedral. A drama started yesterday as armed officers surrounded a man Catholic Cathedral in Kirk Road, Northampton, as a 19-year-old local man was being inside with what was said was a gun. The police said today they had no immediate plans to go into the building, where the man is believed to be alone.

Armed police
 At the present time we are sitting and waiting for Superintendent Ken

Policy right from the start operation has been to try and get the premises and intact with the man in which we have done, and try to persuade him to give himself up. The main priority is to ensure the safety of the members of the staff and the security of the premises to ensure the safety of the man himself. The police said he could not be on how long police would be required to wait. This depends on what's going on there," he said. The decision not to enter the building had nothing to do with the man's status, he said. "If it had been any other building, we would have the same policy."

Gun
 A besieged man, who has been in contact with the police on the telephone, is believed to have been involved in a domestic incident before he went to the cathedral. A number of worshippers gathered in the cathedral when the man was shot after 3pm told police they saw a gun, and officers fired. The man is believed to be in the cathedral a mile from the cathedral and is surrounded by

Man dies in shopping tragedy

A Lothian man has been killed in death at a supermarket. Shearer, 63, an HGV driver from Livingston, was injured after getting between a trailer and a truck at around noon. He was taken to the Tesco distribution centre in Dryburgh industrial

WILL MEL'S BRAVEHEART BE THE TOPS?



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TOP TORY



GOOD FRIENDS: Malcolm Rifkind, left and Robert Bell

EXCLUSIVE
 By GINA DAVIDSON

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Election

"I have known Bob a long time and he is a very responsible businessman and a man I have deep respect for," he said.

Mr Bell, who is reported to have said he would sell the guns to Hamilton again, despite the murder of 16 children and their teacher, will play a key role in Mr Rifkind's campaign at the next General Election.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
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 But the Foreign Secretary in the Capital to celebrate the Conservatives' coalition re-election win in Balerno, refused to state his views on gun law because of the public inquiry launched by the Government.
 Today Labour MP for Edinburgh South, Nigel Griffiths, said: "This endorsement of Mr Bell by Mr Rifkind is deeply premature."
 "I think that Lord Cullen should be investigating the role of all those who were supplying guns and ammunition

to this monster. Clearly the issue of the responsibility of people who sell guns has to be examined thoroughly."
 Hamilton bought his arms and ammunition from Mr Bell at his gun shop D Crockart & Son, King Street, Stirling.
 He had been an occasional customer for many years.
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 Mr Bell would not say whether the three Rem-ump pistols and the revolver found at the scene were bought from him. But he confirmed his shop had the permit to sell handguns and that Hamilton had the correct licence.
 The Cullen inquiry will start taking evidence in June.
 Lord Cullen's report will cover the events leading up to the tragedy, the licensing of guns, school security and the working of Hamilton's stand.

Edinburgh Evening News, Saturday March 23 1996 - Front-page lead (verbatim transcript)

DUNBLANE KILLER GOT GUNS FROM TOP TORY

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Quite astonishingly Robert Bell, the owner of D. Crockart & Sons gun shop in Stirling was not called to give evidence to the Dunblane Inquiry chaired by Lord Cullen a few weeks later.

At the inquiry, evidence about Thomas Hamilton's purchase of guns and ammunition from the gun shop owned by Robert Bell was given by a long term employee, 60-year old Janet Neil, whose evidence conflicted with that given in a written statement from the man known as Hamilton's father, his grandfather and adoptive parent, James Hamilton, who had said that he had never bought Thomas a weapon (See Public Inquiry transcript extract below).

Janet Neil was quite clear that she had known the Hamilton family for many years and Thomas Hamilton had been gifted his first air rifle when he was about 16 or 17-years old, by his adoptive parents.

Despite this contradicting evidence Chapter 6, of Lord Cullen's Report entitled: "Thomas Hamilton's possession of firearms and ammunition", makes no mention of this fact, which would have cast doubt on the reliability of all of the untested evidence of James Hamilton.

2.10 p.m.

"Gun Review" then covers the whole spectrum of shooting as a sport, does it? - More than "Target Gun" does, yes.

No re-examination.

JANET NEIL (60), Sworn:

EXAMINED BY MR. BONOMOY: I think you are the Manageress of D. Crockart & Sons in King Street, Stirling? - Yes.

How long have you been employed by that company?
- 42 years.

I take it you started more or less just after leaving school? - When I was 17.

What is the general nature of the business? - Clothing, fishing and shooting. It is a country sports shop. Retail.

I think the shop is registered to sell firearms and ammunition by Central Scotland Police? - Yes.

Did you have a previous family connection with the business? - Yes, my father was the manager for 50 years.

I think since 1984 the shop or business has been owned by Mr. Bell? - Yes.

But you are the person who had and has principal direct dealings with firearms transactions? - Yes.

Does the shop stock handguns? - No.

Has it ever stocked handguns? - No.

Does the shop sell handguns by request?
- By request, yes.

And/

And do you get many orders for handguns? - No.

Over the years have you had many and it has dropped off or has it been a steady flow? - No, approximately six in 42 years.

What about handgun ammunition? Do you stock that? - Very, very little. Maybe one box of just two sizes.

Prior to March 1996 did you have many customers for handgun ammunition? - Very few.

How many in fact? - I don't know. Maybe two or three. Not much more.

And one of these was Thomas Hamilton? - Yes.

How long had you known Thomas Hamilton? - From a very early age. I would think maybe 16 or 17, maybe a wee bit younger.

How did you first come to come across him? - I think he bought an airgun. His parents bought an airgun when he was very young. Well, not very young. A teenager.

We have heard a statement from his grandfather who really was known as his father that he had never bought him any form of weapon. How clear is your recollection of that? - I really can't remember. It is a long time ago.

I appreciate that. That is why I ask. Are you able to say that he actually had a gun bought at that time? - I am quite sure he an airgun. Quite sure.

And that it came from your shop? - Yes.

Have you any idea when he first bought handgun ammunition from you? - No. Not without looking at the records.

Well, I wonder if you could now look please at Production FA3 which in the volumes should be D24 L. Now, is that a firearms certificate in the/

the name of Thomas Hamilton issued in February 1977? - Yes.

And on that are there recorded transactions in ammunition? - .22 only. Target pistol ammunition. It just says 1,000 .22.

Well, let's take this in stages. Do you have Table 2, ammunition? - Yes.

And is that table complete in fact? Is it filled up by ammunition transactions? - Yes.

And in there does your company's name appear a number of times? - Yes.

And are all the transactions relating to .22 ammunition? - Yes.

Now, does that help us to determine when Mr. Hamilton first dealt with you in the purchase of ammunition? - Yes.

When was that? - The 14th March 1977.

Can you tell that by the signature on the right-hand side? - Yes.

Because the company name is not there but is Currie the name of one of the staff? - It is one of the assistants, yes.

So from the 24th (sic) of March 1977 you had dealings in the purchase of ammunition? - Yes.

Did you ever sell firearms to Mr. Hamilton? - Yes.

When was that? - Do you mean a rifle or a handgun?

A gun or a rifle? - I have sold him a rifle and two handguns.

Do you remember what the handguns were? - One was a 9 millimetre Beretta and the rifle was a .223... I don't know the make. Sako I think it was.

Have you also bought firearms from Mr. Hamilton?/

Hamilton? - Yes, we bought a .223. The three items he did buy from us were special order for him.

Yes, but did he ever sell any to you? - Yes.

Do you remember what he sold to you? - I think it is in my notes if I can read it.

Well, it might help if I give you another Production. Can you look at FA18 which is D35 L. Now, that is another firearms certificate? - Yes.

And do you have there a record of any transactions with a gun? - Yes, I bought from him a .27 Sako bolt action rifle and a .22 Browning rifle.

When did you purchase these from him? - 26/10/84.

Both of them on the same date? - Yes.

And does that certificate also show that you sold him a .223 Browning rifle? - Yes.

When was that? - 7/12/84.

Now, I think thereafter you regularly sold ammunition to him, is that right? - Yes, for about another year or two years.

And if you look please at what I think is DHE29. This is another continuation of the firearms certificate, is that right? - Yes.

And there are three sales of ammunition on it in respect of your company? - Yes.

When was the last one? - 16/2/96.

Sorry, I will rephrase that question. When was the last one in 1987? Is it not on that form? - No.

Can you help me with the front of that again please? Can you help me with the front of that again please? Can you give me the date on the front of the certificate? - 14/2/95.

Well, /

Well, just keep that one with you just now please and can you have in front of you FA27 which is D50 L. Does that record ammunition transactions up to 1987? - 1986.

What is the last one in 1986? - 2/10/86.

Do you remember that there were transactions in 1987 terminating on the 22nd October 1987 and that there was then a gap until 1995? - Yes, we never seen him for all that time. He was never in the shop.

So from the 22nd October 1987 until 1995 you didn't see him? - No.

Now, if you go back to the one that you had a moment ago which was DHE29. Are there three ammunition transactions on that form? - Yes.

What is the date of these? - 22/9/95, 12/2/96 and 16/2/96.

Are these three occasions on which you sold ammunition to Mr. Hamilton? - Yes.

What did you sell on each of these occasions? - In September I sold him .357 Norma.

How many? - 50. On the 12th February I sold him 200 9 millimetre Luger and on the 16th February we sold him 400 9 millimetre Luger.

Now, you must have a fair experience of dealing with customers like Mr. Hamilton who want to buy ammunition on a regular basis, do you? - Yes.

When you see their certificates, these people who do target shooting, when you see their certificates do they have a maximum amount of ammunition they can purchase and a maximum amount that they can hold? - Yes.

Is there a sort of standard quantity or do you get a feel for what might be a standard amount that is permitted to be held and purchased? - Well, I mainly deal with rifle ammunition, mostly sporting, and very few handguns so I don't really deal a lot with the amounts that they could have with/

with handguns.

Do they get a lot more for handguns than for rifles? - I deal with so few.

Well, you can see what is on that one? - Yes, I know.

I mean, what are the limits for Mr. Hamilton? - Mr. Hamilton was allowed to hold 1,500 in his possession and he was allowed to buy 1,000 rounds.

That is of what? - That is all the different.....each one that he held, each rifle.

How many types of ammunition? - Five.

So he could hold five times 1500 rounds? - Yes.

Now, do people with rifles get that sort of permission?
- No.

What sort of average do they have? - Normally maybe 500 to possess and 200 or 300 or buy.

In the case of rifles, do they have different types of ammunition and can hold 500 of each type? - No.

Just usually one type? - No, they can buy different types as long as it is the same calibre. They can buy high velocity or hollow point or solid but only one amount of 500.

And would they have 500 for each of these or would the total have to be 500? - The total would be 500.

That is the sort of normal certificate for a rifle shooter?
- Yes.

The 1,000 means, this is in Mr. Hamilton's case, that that is what he could buy on any one day? - On any one day.

So I suppose he could come back on the following day and buy another 1,000? - Yes.

And/

And over the two days he would have bought 2,000? -
Yes.

Is there any way you would know whether he had got
rid of the other 1,000 or at least 500 of them so that he fits within the
limit? - No.

Is there any system for checking? - No.

Now, I wonder if you would look please at DCFA85
which is also in volume D99 L? - Yes.

2.28 p.m.

Do you recognise that document, Mrs. Neil? - Yes.

What is it? - It is a note from Tom Hamilton asking us to try and get him this ammunition.

What is it? - 1,000 rounds of 9mm Luger full jacket round nose.

9mm Luger full jacket round nose? - Yes.

And 7.5 G -- what does that mean? - It must be a reference.

And 116 GR. -- does that mean anything? - That is the grain of the bullet.

Is that a light or heavy bullet? - In handguns, I really don't know much about ammunition for handguns.

Now, did you get the thousand rounds for him? - No, it was discontinued -- we phoned up about it and it was discontinued.

Now, did Mr. Hamilton speak to you about his attempts to check whether that ammunition was available? - Yes.

What did he say to you? - He seemed to think that the company had the ammunition in stock, and when we telephoned for it they said it was discontinued.

Now, would you look please at DC/FA86, which is DI00L? Is that another note from Mr. Hamilton? - Yes.

Addressed to you? - Yes.

What does it say? - "Mrs. Neil, please supply 200 rounds of Winchester X3574P .357 Magnum JHP, 10.3 gram".

Did you actually get that note? - He brought that note in to me.

And/

And what did you do about that? - Well, we phoned up a company to see if they had it and they didn't have it, they would have to order it.

And did you get it for him? - Yes. It is still in the shop.

And when you indicated you didn't have it readily available, what did he say to you? - Just to order it for him.

Did he at any stage say he had got some elsewhere?
- Yes.

What did he say about that? - He just said he would buy elsewhere just in case there was any delay in us getting it.

And was that all in January? - That was all in early February.

Did you learn in January or February that he was buying a gun? - Yes.

What did he tell you about that? - I wasn't there the day he ordered it. He just came in and asked to get a price for a handgun.

And did you get it? - We got him a price.

Did you get the gun? - We got the handgun, yes.

And did you sell it to him? - Yes.

What was it? - A .357 Magnum.

That is a Smith and Wesson revolver? - Revolver, yes.

And how much was it? - We charged him £410.

How did he pay for that? - He paid by cheque. He paid for it before we got it.

Now, would you look please at DC/FA/91, which sorry, is D102L? Is this another note from Mr./

Mr. Hamilton to you? - Yes.

And what did he request this time? - He asked for us to buy the 750 rounds of Norma ammunition for a 9mm, 125 grain.

Well, does that refer to 750 rounds? - Yes. He had telephoned a company and they said they had 900 rounds left, and we were to get him 200 rounds on, for him to try it, to get their grouping. And when he got them, he said he would let me know the next day if he wanted the remainder of what the company had in stock.

It was 950, so that is the other 750? - Yes.

And did he order the other 750? - Yes.

And did you get them for him? - Yes.

And did he get them? - He got 400 of them.

How did you find Mr. Hamilton in his dealings with you? - Very quiet, polite. He always knew what he wanted. He always came in with his notes, exactly what I had to order.

Anything about him that ever gave you cause for concern? - Not really, no.

Did you ever find out why there was this gap between 1987 and 1995? - No. I never asked him. He never really spoke about his life in any way. We just took it he was buying elsewhere. We are a bit more expensive than some other places. We don't do mail order, and I took it that was the reason.

In recent years has mail order been a growing way for people to acquire guns and ammunition? - Yes.

Has that affected your business at all? - Yes, it did, yes.

CROSS-EXAMINED BY MISS DUNLOP: I wonder if I could just ask you about periodicals. Do you stock gun magazines? - Years and years ago. We/

We only kept one.

Which one was it? - The Gun Review.

And do you know if Mr. Hamilton read that magazine?

- Yes, he ordered it.

CROSS-EXAMINED BY MR. JONES: Mrs. Neil, you have said that you took it that between 1987 and 1995 Mr. Hamilton was buying elsewhere. Could you look again at the certificate that you had and just tell us whether there is any record on the firearms certificates of any purchases from anybody other than you between 1987 and 1995? - That is up to 1984 on that one -- do these certificates all follow each other?

MR. BONOMOY: Sir, it may be that the question caused some confusion. I wasn't meaning to suggest for a minute that Mr. Hamilton was purchasing ammunition commercially by mail order. I think Mrs. Neil's assumption was that he was buying elsewhere. But there is, I can assure Mr. Jones, no evidence in any of the documents to suggest Mr. Hamilton bought ammunition commercially between October 1987 and September 1995.

LORD CULLEN: Does that clear the point?

MR. JONES: It does, sir. I just wanted to get it into the record that according to the Firearms Certificate there is no record of commercial purchases between these two dates.

LORD CULLEN: Yes. I think that was my impression -- so I don't think we need to trouble the witness with the question any more.

No re-examination.

JAMES O'HANLON GILLESPIE (38), Sworn:

EXAMINED BY MR. BONOMOY: I stay in Stirling.

Do you have a business? - Yes.

What/



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