

14. During my time as Independent Commissioner, I did not probe the issue of police suspicions regarding defence solicitors. I was simply aware that there was a friction between the RUC and certain solicitors. As mentioned previously, I pointed this out to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and indicated that the suspicions needed to be investigated. My proposal for the creation of a Legal Advice Unit would in my view have relieved the situation, as the deferral power would have fallen away, and there would be no reason for the police to take any view as to certain solicitors. I went on about the need for the creation of a Legal Advice Unit, so much that I felt I may have become rather tiresome. Although I very much enjoyed my period of office, I was saddened by the much deep rooted prejudice. One of the most interesting things about my role was my ability to influence the police in the exercise of their discretion.

#### **Rosemary Nelson**

15. I am not sure how I became aware of Rosemary Nelson. I do not recall ever speaking to her, although it is entirely possible that I may have seen her outside an interview room at the Holding Centre, Castlereagh (but certainly not at either Gough Barracks or Strand Road). I did know that she operated as a single practitioner. I thought that this was unwise. I recall that I told as many people as I could that I thought it was unwise for a solicitor to operate in a single person firm if he or she was undertaking civil liberties work, as they really needed at least one colleague to whom they could talk to regularly about any problems they were facing. I always hoped that this message would get back to Rosemary Nelson. I would have been happier, for her sake, if she had had a solicitor and partner in her firm.
16. As I have so little recollection of Rosemary Nelson, and do not recall ever having met her, my judgment in relation to her is at least one stage removed. I was aware of the police attitude towards Rosemary Nelson. Although I do not recall at what level I was aware of this, I did get the impression that there was greater hostility towards Rosemary