



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

Copy  
my notes  
huk  
23-12-96  
M. Keenan  
20/12

11 December 1996

COPY TO: ✓  
PST ✓  
PSS ✓  
MR. P TEAHON ✓  
MR. S. DONLON ✓  
MR. T DALTON ✓

Taisíre

A and X below  
are disturbing

huk

16-12-96

Confidential

Sean O hUiginn  
Second Secretary  
Department of Foreign Affairs

Dear Secretary,

The Pope - Kelly allegations

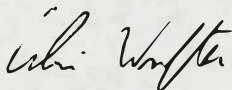
At the Embassy press party on Tuesday night (the 10th), a contact in the *Mail on Sunday*, speaking in confidence, filled in some details on the events surrounding the publication of the story "Dangerous Liaison" in the *Mail on Sunday* on 1 December.

A | There was a "precisely timed" phone call to Chester Stern, the crime correspondent whose byline appeared on the report, at 5.00 pm on the Saturday evening - just too late for the first edition but not for the subsequent print runs. There was a hurried discussion in the editorial office and, interestingly, a memo from the political correspondents stating that they could not back a decision to go with the report. The editor personally asked Stern more than once if he was being manipulated by the security services. Stern, who as previously reported has been used by those services in the past, answered that the story would stand up.

X | According to my contact, the NIO were given more than one opportunity to steer the *Mail* away from the allegations but limited themselves to an on-the-record comment from the Secretary of State: "I know nothing to lead me to doubt the statement by Senator Mitchell that neither he nor any member of his office has had any contact with Sinn Fein". When the *Mail* pressed further they were told to "read between the lines".

In a separate conversation, **Richard Ford**, home affairs editor, *The Times*, and one time Belfast correspondent and political correspondent for that paper, claimed that the allegations and the story, which he believes to be true, about IRA access to BT telephone subscriber details, have been circulating in the North for some weeks. He saw both as evidence of increased media manipulation by the security services, and, possibly, the RUC.

Yours sincerely,



Colin Wrafter  
Press and Information Officer

cc'd D Mulhall, Joint Secretary

r640mos.wpd