

SECRET

9th December, 1954.

Dear Kelly,

Dunbar asked me to send you a report on the attempted gun-running incident on the Tyrone/Monaghan border on Monday night.

... Here it is. This represents the position up to Wednesday evening. According to this (Thursday) morning's Press, Turner, the wounded Customs Officer, is slightly improved but still seriously ill.

Yours sincerely,

*A. J. Kelly*

A.J. Kelly, Esq., C.B.E.,  
Home Office,  
Whitehall,  
LONDON, S.W.1.

DD.

*P.S. To days I think Tavis carries a  
denial by Lee IRA of any knowledge of this  
affair. His.*

REPORT ON INCIDENT TYRONE/MONAGHAN BORDER ON THE NIGHT

OF 6TH DECEMBER, 1954

On the 6th December, 1954, four preventive officers of the Customs Service were patrolling in a car at FAVOR ROYAL, AUGHNAOLOY, COUNTY TYRONE, about 300 yards from the frontier with the Irish Republic. Their names are Wm. Keen, Douglas Thompson, Peter Hore and John Turner, all living at AUGHNAOLOY. They were travelling from the direction of the frontier when they saw an unlighted motor-van travelling in the opposite direction, i.e., towards the frontier. The driver of this van attempted to turn his vehicle but the officers prevented this by pulling their car across his path. The officers got out to question the driver and were immediately set upon by him and three other men who were also travelling in the van. A struggle between the two parties followed, in the course of which a shot was discharged from a revolver carried by one of the four occupants of the van, which seriously wounded Turner. Present evidence seems to indicate that the shot was not deliberately aimed at any of the officers. The four men escaped and ran off in the direction of the frontier leaving the van behind.

Turner was taken to DUNGANNON hospital where he is still detained suffering from a stomach wound. He is considered by the doctors to have about an even chance of recovery.

On examination, the van was found to contain the following articles:-

- One Thompson machine gun, minus the stock.
- Four rifles.
- One revolver.
- One Mills hand grenade.
- About 1,600 rounds of ammunition of various calibres.
- A number of sticks of gelignite - number uncertain - as I considered, owing to the condition of this material, that it was dangerous to handle it.
- Two overcoats and a raincoat.
- Two suitcases containing a quantity of underclothing, a towel, some blankets and a prayer book.

The weapons and some of the ammunition had been badly looked after, but were capable of use.

Ownership of the van was traced to a man named Daniel O'KANE, Striffe, Mountfield, County Tyrone. Both he and his brother Patrick were absent when their houses were visited by the police. [REDACTED]

On the afternoon of the 7th December the two O'KANE'S reported to the Civic Guard at Monaghan that their van had been stolen from that town during the preceding 24 hours. The two O'KANE'S returned to Northern Ireland this morning and were detained by the police on suspicion of having been concerned in the attempted murder of John TURNER. They have not, at the moment of writing, been put on an identification parade. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have not yet been traced. They are, no doubt, in the Republic. If they are located they too will be put up for identification.

[REDACTED]

The two O'KANE's have been charged at a Special Court at Clogher with shooting at Preventive Officer TURNER with intent to murder, and have been remanded in custody.

*W*  
Ministry of Home Affairs,  
Stormont, Belfast.  
'8th December, 1954.

February 14, 1955.

# Brothers freed in shooting charge

## NO FURTHER EVIDENCE OFFERED

**T**HE BROTHERS PATRICK AND DANIEL CRANE, of Striffe, Mountfield, Omagh, appearing on remand for the sixth time before a magistrate at a Special Court at Clogher to-day, charged with shooting with intent to murder John G. Turner, Customs Assistant Preventive Officer, at Favor Royal, Aughnacloy, on December 6, were discharged when no further evidence was offered.

When the case came up, District Inspector A. McWhinney told Mr. T. D. Elliott, R.M., that the proceedings would not occupy his time very long, as no further evidence was being offered.

His Worship—Very good. They are discharged.

Mr. Gerald Murnaghan, for accused, said that while his clients welcomed this end to the case, he would like to say that, according to his instructions, he felt satisfied that his clients would never have been convicted of the charges.

The proceedings over which neither the police nor accused had any control, had left an unsavoury feeling in the minds of his clients that they were not quite cleared of the charges.

**They had suffered a term of imprisonment, and they would like it to go out to the public that they had nothing to do with and had no attachment to people who went in for that sort of thing.**

Accused had dealings with people of every denomination and all sorts of persuasions in the course of their business as livestock traders.

### CLEARED

If these people got it into their heads that his clients had any connection with the kind of thing with which they were charged it would militate against their business. They would like, therefore, that it should be made plain that they were cleared of anything connected with the charge.

Mr. Elliott said it was unfortunate, but the police had a duty to perform and inquiries to make. There was no evidence against accused and they stood quite cleared of the unfortunate affair as far as the Court was concerned and he (his Worship) could do nothing more about it.

Accused then left the Court accompanied by their solicitor.