



The Editor
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Dear Editor

PPS CRITICISM WAS UNFOUNDED AND ILL- INFORMED

On Wednesday 30 May Fionola Meredith questioned why the developments in the medical evidence that led to the stopping of the prosecution of David and Sarah Johnston were not foreseen and suggests that this evidence should have been more thoroughly scrutinised.

Ms Meredith does not appear to have taken account of the fact that one important witness made disclosures for the first time at trial. This, coupled with concessions made by another in cross examination that were wholly inconsistent with previous statements, including those made after consultation, made a material difference to the viability of the prosecution,

If, as implied by Ms Meredith, the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) engaged in cross examination of witnesses behind closed doors, it would leave prosecutors open to accusations by defendants of evidence tampering and by victims of only pursuing those cases that pose the least risk.

The PPS is further accused of issuing statements which are, "self satisfied, pompous, paternalistic and arrogant". Such language is unnecessary and not particularly helpful to anyone involved in this tragic case.

Had Ms Meredith taken the time to contact us, as others did, she would have been given all the information she needed to write an informed and balanced article.

It should be acknowledged that we have in this society a fair and mature justice system that allows for criminal prosecutions to be halted on the rare occasions when the evidence changes or fails to meet the required standard during the course of the proceedings. We would be in a very sorry state indeed if those in the PPS who carry out these responsibilities with great care

and professional integrity were to feel compromised by such unfounded and unbalanced commentary.

Yours sincerely

Barra McGrory QC
Director of Public Prosecutions