



## News Release

30 March 2012

### **PPS STATEMENT: R-v- MCCONVILLE AND WOOTTON**

The PPS hopes that today's verdict will bring a measure of comfort to Kate Carroll, the widow of Constable Stephen Carroll. She has demonstrated such courage and dignity in the aftermath of her husband's cowardly murder and throughout the trial process.

The verdict in this case serves to put other prosecutions such as that in Massereene in context. Like Massereene this was a complex case which involved difficult issues of forensic and circumstantial evidence. In both cases the Court rejected a defence submission at the half way stage that there was insufficient evidence to allow the trial to continue. The difference here is that the court was satisfied of the guilt of both accused to the high standard required namely proof beyond a reasonable doubt. That was because of the opinion which the Judge formed as to the strength of the evidence. However, the strength of the evidence will inevitably differ from case to case no matter how thorough the police investigation has been.

It is easy, on occasions, for some to criticise an acquittal as failure or to make a reference to the costs of a trial and then to argue with the benefit of hindsight that a prosecution should not have been brought. The important point is that the people of Northern Ireland should be reassured that, in this case and in other cases such as Massereene, the prosecution was properly brought.

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