

A chronology of the John MacLennan affair.

THE death of Inspector John MacLennan in January has caused a great stir in nearly every level of Hongkong society, and over the months following his death accusations and counter accusations have flown to and fro between interested parties.

Yet over these same months, perspectives may have been lost and issues may have become clouded in the minds of those following the case.

The following is a summary of events that have come to light since the inspector's unfortunate death.

November 4, 1978: John MacLennan was sacked from the police force and given one month's salary in lieu of notice.

November 28, 1978: Urban Councillor Elsie Elliott writes to the Governor on behalf of Mr MacLennan. The Governor replies that he is looking into the matter.

December 4, 1978: Mr MacLennan reinstated in the police force.

October 1979: Howard Lindsay, Crown counsel in attorney-general's department approached by Inspector Michael Fulton, who told him that for a period of about one year he had been providing information to the police Special Investigations Unit (SIU), but that recently he had been asked to set up a fellow officer, John MacLennan, but that he had refused to do so and that he was worried about his future in the force. Mr Fulton was subsequently summoned and told that senior police officers were aware of his allegations, and that they would see to it that his future in the force was not damaged, as well as promising that he would be subject to less pressure in the future.

November 22, 1979: Mr Lindsay meets the A-G and tells him of the allegations in person.

December 1979: Mr Lindsay meets the A-G again, who says that he will only take action if an official complaint is made to Capo.

January 15, 1980: John MacLennan found dead in his Homanin flat with several bullet wounds. Police decline to say how many wounds. Police spokesman says there is a strong possibility that it is suicide.

January 16, 1980: Post-mortem performed on the body of John MacLennan. Urban Councillor Elsie Elliott calls for an independent inquiry into the death of MacLennan.

January 22, 1980: Mr MacLennan cremated.

February 1, 1980: Coroner orders inquest into the death of John MacLennan, but date not fixed.

February 6, 1980: Inquest date set for February 20.

February 11, 1980: Inquest postponed for a week to allow Mr MacLennan's parents to attend the hearing.

February 27, 1980: Inquest postponed again until February 29.

February 29, 1980: Inquest postponed yet again until March 3.

March 3, 1980: Inquest opens. Counsel for the police, Andrew Hodge says the commissioner of police has instructed him to investigate MacLennan's death extensively to uncover any possibility of wrongdoing, and that the police chief wanted every aspect of case to be made public. The inquest revealed that MacLennan had died as a result of five bullet wounds in his chest.

March 12, 1980: Jury delivers an open verdict.

March 25, 1980: Elsie Elliott renews her call for an independent inquiry into the death of MacLennan.

May 8, 1980: British Members of Parliament Robert Parry and Robin Cook write to minister of state at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to ask for a new inquiry into MacLennan's death.

May 20, 1980: Michael Fulton files complaint to Capo.

May 22, 1980: British MP Dennis Canavan quizzes Secretary of State Peter Blaker about MacLennan and the SIU in Parliament.

May 23, 1980: Attorney-General John Griffiths announces that after a long look at the facts there is no reason to reopen the inquest he said there was overwhelming evidence that MacLennan committed suicide.

June 1, 1980: Jury foreman Tony Pannell writes that he is not satisfied with the A-G's statement concerning the jury's verdict, itemising the evidence point by point and casting new doubts on the handling of the case.

June 2, 1980: A-G refuses to comment on the statement by Tony Pannell. He said that he might reopen the case if new evidence came to light.

June 3, 1980: Tony Pannell calls for the release of 40 statements, that were not allowed in court as they were considered irrelevant by the coroner.

June 4, 1980: Prostitutes from Tsimshatsui come forward to say that Mr MacLennan was a regular customer of theirs, so regular that he was allowed to pay by cheque.

June 5, 1980: One of Mr MacLennan's friends in the force comes forwards to say that Mr MacLennan was liked and respected in the force, and expressed surprise at the allegation that he was a homosexual and the idea that he had committed suicide.

Elsie Elliott questions the A-G's statement, pointing out that the test to determine whether or not Mr MacLennan had powder burns on his hands would have cost only \$20. Mrs Elliott suggests that this test would have been fairly conclusive in determining if Mr MacLennan killed himself. A-G issues a statement saying that he must be trusted to do his job, or he should not remain in the post.

June 6, 1980: Police spokesman Ted Taylor, writing on behalf of the commissioner of police, says that he cannot answer questions concerning the death of Insp MacLennan.

June 7, 1980: Hongkong Bar Association issues a statement in general support of the A-G, stressing that he must be trusted.

Henry Henry

MacLennan

9 July 1980

June 9, 1980: Police and A-G decline to answer questions put to them on the subject of MacLennan's death, including press inquiries and public questions from Elsie Elliott.

June 13, 1980: Mr MacLennan's parents plead with the Government to hold another inquiry to clear their son's name. Mr MacLennan's mother reveals that all MacLennan's personal effects have not been returned to them.

June 16, 1980: Police refuse to comment.

June 17, 1980: Elsie Elliott reveals that A-G knew of a set-up plot against Mr MacLennan in November 1979.

June 18, 1980: Elsie Elliott calls on Commissioner of Police Roy Henry to speak up on the matter of the plot and Mr MacLennan's death.

June 19, 1980: A-G denies that he has evidence that homosexuals are holding high positions in the Government, and dismissed reports that a police inspector had been asked to frame a colleague, all in a long statement that was drafted as a reply to allegations by Elsie Elliott. Peter Blaker, Secretary of State in Britain gives full support to the A-G in Hongkong.

June 27, 1980: Elsie Elliott announces that she has sent information to a top pathologist in London so that he can examine the case.

June 29, 1980: Howard Lindsay, writing from abroad, reveals the name of the inspector said to be involved in the set-up attempt of John MacLennan, and

confirms Elsie Elliott's story about the set-up. Inspector named is Michael Fulton.

July 1, 1980: British magazine Private Eye alleges that pressure from Hongkong was the reason or Minister of State Blaker's support for the Hongkong A-G.

July 2, 1980: Inspector Michael Fulton speaks out and confirms that he was asked to set up John MacLennan by members of the SIU. He also states that he has never denied this. Mr Henry and Mr Griffiths remain silent over the issues growing round the death of John MacLennan.

July 3, 1980: Jury foreman Tony Pannell calls for the A-G to resign because people are losing confidence in him. Elsie Elliott repeats her call for a new inquiry into Mr MacLennan's death, and Government says that there will be no fresh inquiry.

July 4, 1980: Chairman of the Hongkong branch of Justice, Ian MacCallum calls for a full judicial inquiry into Mr MacLennan's death. Private Eye says Mr MacLennan qualified for the Guinness Book of Records in shooting himself five times with a large calibre revolver.

July 7, 1980: Elsie Elliott announces that she is willing to help raise funds to sue the A-G and the chief of police. Police say that the missing items from Mr MacLennan's personal effects are waiting to be picked up.

July 8, 1980: Police say the Capo investigation is filed and a report has been sent to the Umelco police group.