

BELFAST TELEGRAPH

ADVERTISEMENT

Search Site






Advanced Search

- [niCarFinder.co.uk](#)
- [Loadzajobs.co.uk](#)
- [Propertynews.com](#)
- [Belfast Telegraph TV](#)
- [Family Notices](#)
- [Ads For Free](#)
- **Belfast Telegraph**
 - Home
 - News
 - Breaking News
 - Business
 - Sport
 - Health
 - **Features**
 - **Daily Features**
 - Food & Drink
 - Motoring
 - Books
 - Lifestyle
 - Columnists
 - Entertainment
 - Homefinder
 - Weather
 - Archive
 - Calendar 2008
 - Telegraph Travel
 - Shopping Directory
- **Inside Belfast**
 - Jobs
 - Training
 - Dating
 - Casino
 - Bingo
 - Reader Offers
 - Diners' Club
- **Services**
 - RSS
 - Media Kit
- **Other Titles**
 - Sunday Life
 - Community Telegraph

[Home](#) > [Features](#) > [Daily Features](#)

Daily Features

Whatever the result, Omagh case is historic

-  Email Article
-  Print Version
-  Search
-  +Most Emailed
-  +Most Read

Now in its fourth week, the Omagh bomb civil action is moving into a crucial stage. Lesley-Anne Henry reports

ADVERTISEMENT

Wednesday, May 07, 2008

The Omagh bomb trial is preparing to move from Belfast to Dublin next week. The ongoing multi-million pound action has already made history by just reaching the civil courts, but when it travels south of the border to hear evidence from 50 Garda officers it will make another legal first — the first time a judge from Northern Ireland has travelled to the Republic on judicial business.

Relatives of six bomb victims — Geraldine Bresline (43), Aiden Gallagher (21), Esther Gibson (36), Anne McCombe (45), Alan Radford (16) and Lorraine Wilson — are suing five men they believe to have been involved in the Real IRA bomb that slaughtered 29 people and unborn twins on a summer's day in August 1998.

No one can be jailed as a result of their action but the families hope it will help uncover the truth about what happened and give them some sort of justice.

All five defendants, Micheal McKeivitt, Liam Campbell, Colm Murphy, Seamus Daly and Seamus McKenna, deny any part in the explosion.

Last week Belfast High Court heard how Real IRA quartermaster McKeivitt, who is serving 20 years in Portlaoise Prison for directing terrorism, has effectively shunned the case. His alleged second-in-command, Liam Campbell, has also taken no interest and is the only defendant not legally represented at the civil action.

The families hope their legal team, headed by Lord Daniel Brennan, can use the civil proceedings to put as much information as possible about the attack into the public domain.

To date, the landmark trial has heard from shoppers who watched the bombers smile as they walked away from the car bomb; RUC officers who were first on the scene after the explosion; medical staff who treated the dying and wounded; telecommunications experts who traced mobile phones to the bomb cars and former detectives who quizzed Real IRA suspects. And while much of the evidence has been hard hitting, its impact has been softened because it has all been heard before — during criminal proceedings against Michael McKeivitt, Colm Murphy and Sean Hoey as well as during the victims' inquests.

But the civil action is now into its fourth week and things are starting to hot up. Yesterday's announcement on the admissibility of hearsay evidence from an FBI agent who infiltrated the ranks of the Real IRA can be seen as a significant step for the families.

After considering the 1997 Civil Evidence Order, presiding Judge Mr Justice Morgan ruled that some 2,300 emails and other documents passed between the US trucker turned spy, David Rupert, and his security service handlers could be read to the court — giving a fascinating insight into the murky world of terrorism. Although the emails were admitted to McKeivitt's criminal proceedings in 2003 much of what's coming next week has never been heard.

Speaking outside the court yesterday the families legal representatives said the real story would come out in Dublin.

Rupert worked for the FBI and MI5 from 1994 infiltrating the ranks of the Real IRA in 1997. He attended several meetings of the RIRA Army Council and gave descriptions of meetings with the terror group leader Michael McKeivitt. He took the stand in Dublin and his evidence was considered instrumental in securing McKeivitt's 20 year prison term. However, Mr Rupert is in hiding under an FBI witness protection programme in America and has been banned from giving evidence either in person or via videolink because of concerns for his safety.

Lawyers acting for two of the defendants, Michael McKeivitt and Colm Murphy, had argued that it was unfair

Don't Miss . . .

In Pictures:

Bertie at the Boyne



Taoiseach's last day spent with Big Ian at Boyne centre

Devolution: one year on



Exclusive poll: crime, health, Executive and Ulster's future

In Pictures:

Belfast Marathon



15,000 pairs of feet pound the city's streets for annual run

In Pictures:

Viking Race



Bank holiday fun at the boat race charity event

Ones to watch



Our guide to this year's summer blockbusters

Grand Theft Auto



All you need to know about the gaming sensation

In Pictures & Video:

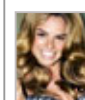
2008 Business Awards



Belfast Telegraph's glittering gala ceremony

In Pictures:

Undie-cover Agent



Agent Provocateur's revealing lingerie launch

City reviews



Read your entries in our city guides competition

to admit the hearsay evidence without having an opportunity to cross-examine.

But the judge ruled it was in the interests of ensuring a fair trial for all the parties to admit Rupert's evidence.

He told the court: "Conscious of my obligation to ensure a fair trial for all of the parties I consider that this is properly achieved by permitting the plaintiffs to admit the evidence and applying the appropriate safeguards contained within the 1997 Order."

Meanwhile, the widespread publicity surrounding the civil case has also attracted some criticism for the families involved. But Godfrey Wison, whose daughter Lorraine died after being evacuated from an Oxfam charity shop into the path of the bomb, has hit back and said it was his duty as a father to join the action.

He said: "It's a struggle to get up and deal with it every day. It never entered my mind to withdraw from it. When we had questions to ask the solicitors, and doubts we had, we never considered ever removing ourselves from it.

"I wouldn't be worldly wise of the law but when a solicitor approached me to say look, there is a strong case for a civil hearing, £1 wholeheartedly went along. Because when a young girl has been destroyed and nobody is doing anything about it, then I think if, as a parent, I don't stand up and be counted, what sort of a father am I?"

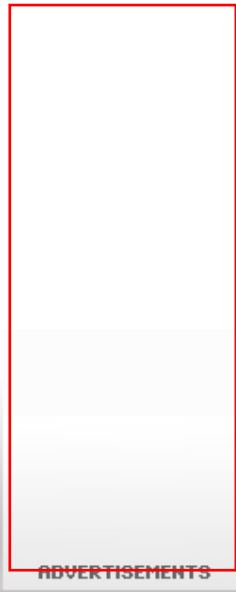
"It breaks my heart that I called her out of her bed at half eight in the morning to go to do charity work. If I had known what I was getting her into. When I think of what happened and me waking her out of a sound sleep, it tears the heart out of me. To think I should have locked the room and kept her in it rather than waking her to send her to her death."

More articles in Daily Features

- [Have any of us in Northern Ireland done it Sinatra's way?](#)
- ['Racing paralysed me but I'll never give up'](#)
- [Belfast Marathon: The race of our lives](#)
- [Addicted to sex?](#)
- [Josef Fritzl: The making of a monster](#)

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISEMENTS








ADVERTISEMENTS

World in Pictures

- 2008**
- [January](#)
- [February](#)
- [March](#)
- 2007**
- [Jan & Feb](#)
- [March](#)
- [April](#)
- [May](#)
- [June](#)
- [July](#)
- [August](#)
- [September](#)
- [October](#)
- [November](#)
- [December](#)

Video

- Video: Titanic town**
 Ship's Belfast beginnings celebrated in exhibition
- BT Woman of the Year**
 Applauding Ulster's most exceptional women
- Omagh blaze tragedy**
 Special report on Northern Ireland's worst house fire
- Belfast Telegraph Property Awards**
 Celebrating excellence at the inaugural awards gala
- Best view in town**
 Special multimedia report on Belfast Wheel

In Pictures . . .

News
[Paisley quits](#)

[Victoria Square](#)
[Building collapse](#)
[Ulster Fry event](#)
[The Twelfth](#)
[Bull Run](#)
[Award-winners](#)
[Flooded Ulster](#)
[Sunny Northern Ireland](#)
[Devolution Day](#)
[Assembly Elections](#)
[Maze tumbles](#)
[Blair quits](#)
[Last watchtower](#)
[Carrick-a-rede](#)

Events

[Sexiest women](#)
[St Patrick's Day](#)
[Derry Xmas](#)
[Boss is back](#)
[Xmas: what a turn on](#)
[Property Awards](#)
[50 Cent](#)
[Enrique Iglesias](#)
[Halloween](#)
[Fantasy Fest](#)
[Rolling Stones](#)
[Oxegen 07](#)
[Beach Party 07](#)
[Balmoral Show](#)
[Razorlight](#)
[St Patrick's Day](#)
[Mardis Gras](#)
[Justin Timberlake](#)
[Brit Awards 07](#)

Sport

[N Ireland v Georgia](#)
[Spain 1 Norn Iron 0](#)
[Win over Denmark](#)
[Windsor win](#)
[Golf: Rory McIlroy](#)
[British Open](#)
[Copa America Final](#)
[N Ireland v Sweden](#)
[Six Nations](#)
[World in Sport](#)