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Lindy McDowell: A horror story that will haunt the IRA forever

Saturday, 15 November 2008

Murder never lies. It's an old expression we use in these parts to reassure ourselves that one day — even somewhere well down the line — truth will out.

And OK it's maybe not an expression that has had a lot of relevance during the dark decades of the Troubles when

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murderers all too often escaped justice.

What are these?

But it was the one that sprang to mind this week watching those bleak, silent pictures of heavy digging equipment gently skimming layer after layer from the butter-soft bogland of the Wicklow Hills.

It is in this godforsaken place what is described as “the partial remains” of what is believed to be one of the Disappeared has been found.

To be precise what they have found is a boot, a sock and a human foot.

It is such a poignant, literally pathetic detail. Yet another heart-wrenching detail in the story of the Disappeared — one of the most shocking and shameful episodes in our history.

You look at those pictures of the workers straining for further evidence of “human remains” on a hillside where a young lad was buried by his killers as callously as someone would bury a dog or dump rubbish and you wonder about the depths human beings can sink to.

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You think about the boy's last hours, his last moments.

And you think about his family (and all the other families of the Disappeared) who must so often have tortured themselves over that too.

You think of all those years, all those families have been kept in the dark. Yearning for some information. Longing for the chance to give a son or a father or a mother a Christian burial.

You think too of the self-serving statements issued by the IRA down through the years attempting to justify the brutal murder of what were in a number of cases obviously vulnerable people.

In the case of the young lad whose remains are believed to have been found this week, the Provos said they were questioning him about taking weapons from an IRA arms dump. He was killed, they maintain, during a struggle.

So in their terms it was his fault he was there. And not their fault that he was murdered.

It is reported that it is not new information but new techniques being employed by the dedicated team of searchers that has led to the latest breakthrough.

But republicans still want to claim credit. We are seemingly expected to commend his killers for “helping” — after 27 years — to locate the burial sites. Gerry Adams for example, says he “welcomes” the news adding: “It is also evidence that republicans continue to work diligently on this important issue.”

“Continue to work diligently on this important issue?.”

It's the sort of officialese you expect from a DRD press release attempting to explain why their glitter wasn't out last night.

The pictures from that bleak Wicklow hillside speak more starkly and with more compassion of the real human tragedy.

In their final moments the Disappeared were powerless and terrified. But their story will haunt the republican movement forever.

Murder never lies.

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 Lindy,
When will we see the day that you write about a taxidriver, or a boy courting a protestant girl, murdered by loyalists just because they are catholics??

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