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## No forensics taken in Hughes murder case

Andersonstown News

Damian McCarney

03/08/2007

No forensic investigations were conducted at the scene of the murder in 1991 of black taxi driver Tommy Hughes until a day after the shooting, the Andersonstown News has learned.

In Monday's edition of the Andersonstown News, we showed the unhindered view that the British army would have had from the spy post on the top of Divis Tower of the murder of Tommy Hughes in Divis Street in 1991. However, the British army did not provide any video footage or photographic or eyewitness evidence for the investigation and no-one has ever been convicted of the brutal murder of the father-of-two.

Now a former black taxi colleague of Mr Hughes has come forward to reveal the RUC did not cordon off the road where the shooting took place, possibly losing vital forensic evidence. Eddie Mallon drove past the crime scene during the course of the day and was astonished that the RUC did not cordon off the area, permitting traffic to flow freely along the same lane in which Mr Hughes was murdered.

"There were no forensics done that day, they came back the next day after the traffic had trampled it into the ground for 24 hours. Then they sealed the place off and did a cosmetic job only for about half an hour, and then they went away again.

"The examination was totally inadequate. I remember talking to a lot of the drivers after it and everybody had the same thought as me. It looked very much like a set-up, that they [RUC investigators] wanted them [UVF gunmen] to get away," said Mr Hughes.

The Hughes family is preparing to make a complaint to the Police Ombudsman's Office concerning possible collusion by Special Branch after a now-retired RUC detective told the Andersonstown News that Special Branch knew a week in advance that the UVF were planning the attack. Tommy's widow, Sharon Hughes, believes that the failure of the RUC to properly investigate the forensic scene confirms her suspicion that there was collusion in the killing.

"It just goes to strengthen everything that is being said in terms of collusion. It leads me to believe that the RUC didn't really want to find the murderer," said Sharon.

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