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From the Balcony



A publisher's blog

By Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

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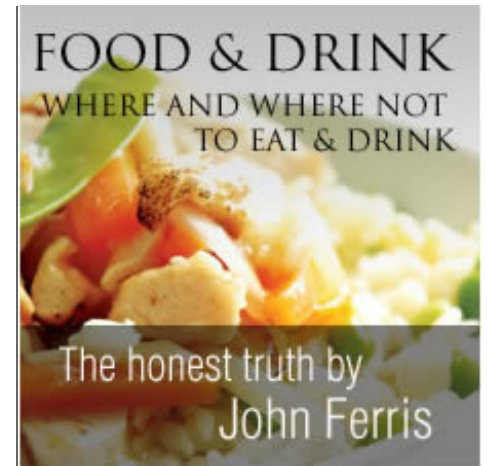
Headlines

Victims' group 'shocked' by report

By Aine McEntee

The Ardoyne Commemoration Project (ACP), which produced the highly acclaimed book Ardoyne The Untold Truth, say they're shocked by the HET report into the shooting of Barney Watt.

ACP Chairperson Tom Holland said Barney's widow, Theresa, was "understandably



shattered" by the HET's report.

"Theresa was sceptical of their intentions given that the HET were made up from serving and former members of various British police forces. State security agencies had murdered her husband then covered it up - why would similar state security agencies 35 years later be any different in their approach?" Tom Holland asked.

"Reluctantly, with more hope than conviction, Theresa eventually agreed to assist the HET in their task. Barney's memory deserved the effort.

"Theresa invited them into her home where she painfully yet eloquently described the events of that February night when her husband was killed by the British Army.

"If they say 'we're going to review your husband's case', the family automatically assume the people who murdered him are going to be questioned. That's a given. But they say they have no intention of doing that," Tom said.

The review of Barney's case has served no purpose, he added.

"What this resolution report has done is use the 1971 July 1 inquest file and padded it.

"They set the context in this report by taking a few lines out of Lost Lives which stated in February 1971 there was a British soldier killed, there was an explosion by the IRA which killed five BBC workers and there were two unarmed police officers killed - that's eight killings. Every one of those people were killed after Barney Watt.

"They're trying to say you have to understand the context, that there were eight people murdered here

"Barney Watt was unarmed. This whole thing of using Lost Lives to somehow justify that Barney's murder was alright - it wasn't. It was a disgrace."

The ACP and other justice campaign groups such as An Fhrinne and Relatives For Justice are all against the HET as a truth recovery vehicle.

The book, Ardoyne: The Untold Truth, clearly sets out the responsibilities the British Government must face up to in any truth recovery process, Tom Holland added.

"The case against the British Government, through the testimonies of the Ardoyne community, is one, of acting with impunity; two, shoot to kill; and three, collusion," he said.

"Forensic reports carried out on the body of Barney concluded there was no evidence to support the view that Barney Watt had thrown or was in possession of any type of 'bomb'.

"For the Watt family it was a straightforward case. Either the British soldiers who killed Barney were 'mistaken' or were simply just 'liars' - for Theresa the work of the HET in 'reviewing' her husband's case was as simple as that.

"12 months after their initial meeting the HET met Theresa for the second time. She was handed a 24-page 'resolution report'.

"The HET, without even speaking to the soldiers who killed Barney and completely ignoring the weight of evidence to the contrary, concluded that Barney was lawfully killed."

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