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### News

# Parents of murdered Army agent demand face-to-face with spymaster

Sunday, August 05, 2007

By Chris Anderson

The parents of a young republican murdered by Army agent Freddie Scappaticci's notorious IRA unit are demanding a face-to-face meeting with the spymaster at the heart of Britain's dirty war.

Irene and Pat Dignam believe their son John, who was himself an Army agent inside the IRA, was sacrificed by the Army's secretive Force Research Unit to protect its more important spy - west Belfastman Freddie Scappaticci, aka agent 'Stakeknife'.

The Portadown couple have written to Des Browne, the Secretary of State for Defence, asking him to arrange a meeting with Brigadier Gordon Kerr, the man who headed the FRU in the late 1980s and early 90s.

The Dignams also want assurances that the high ranking British Intelligence officer will be made available to be interviewed by the PSNI and Police Ombudsman teams investigating their son's murder.

Father of two, John Dignam (32) was abducted along with fellow Provos Gregory Burns and Aiden Starrs in June 1992. All three were interrogated for a week before being shot through the head. Their bodies were later dumped on border roads in south Armagh

At the time, the IRA said the trio had admitted being MI5/Special Branch agents and of involvement in the murder of Portadown woman, Margaret Perry.

But Pat and Irene Dignam claim their son was deliberately sacrificed by the FRU to protect the identity and role of Scappaticci, a leading figure in the IRA's ruthless internal security unit.

Scappaticci is believed to have carried out numerous murders while leading a double life as a torturer in the IRA's so-called 'nutting squad' and a paid agent with the Force Research Unit.

Pat Dignam said: "We have been told John was deliberately sacrificed to protect Freddie Scappaticci.

"I want to look Gordon Kerr in the eye and ask him who the FRU was protecting."

Irene Dignam said she was optimistic Des Browne would respond positively to their letter.

"He is a former NIO Victims Minister and should understand how we feel," she said.

"I want Des Browne to give me his personal assurance Brigadier Kerr will be made available to both the Police Ombudsman's and the Historical Enquiries Team's investigations into Johnny's murder.

"That's our bottom line."

Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan is carrying out a McCord-style investigation into allegations of collusion in John Dignam's murder.

The PSNI's Historical Enquiries Team has told the family it will start a review of the Dignam case within the next three to six months.

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