



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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THIS WEEK PROGRAMME
THURSDAY, 30 APRIL, 1992

Reporter

It's known as Ireland's paradise, Buncrana on Lough Swilly, a sleepy holiday resort in Donegal, until that is a year ago when the events of one single night would shatter its tranquility.

In a meticulously planned operation, four men broke into a house just outside Buncrana and took the family hostage. They stole the family car and drove into the town. Their mission - Execution.

Garda voice: "This man was retired for the night with his wife. He was awakened from his bed, went to answer a bang on the door when he was confronted by these armed terrorists and shot at very close range."

Amanda Fullerton: "When he was dead, somebody administered a Coup de Grace behind his ear which was two shots which, for some reason or another, was a type of victory thing."

Reporter

Eddie Fullerton was murdered by terrorists who are fanatically loyal to Britain.

Man's voice: "The Ulster Freedom Fighters admit responsibility for last night's assassination of Eddie Fullerton, who was a leading member of Sinn Fein and was responsible for"

Reporter

Sinn Fein is the political wing of the IRA. The IRA is Britain's biggest terrorist threat. It wants a united Ireland whereas Eddie Fullerton's killers want Northern Ireland to remain a part of Britain. They executed the Councillor in response to the IRA murder of a loyalist.

Man's voice: "We reserve the right to strike deep into the safe haven for Republican murderers."

Reporter

His killers had previously sent their victim a death threat written in a tarot card and there was a further sickening message later.

Amanda Fullerton: "When my dad was murdered the UFF sent another card. It just said ... I can't remember the exact wording ... but it was sarcastic remarks about the achievement of killing my father, or murdering my father."

Reporter

Already this year the number of people killed in Northern Ireland is twice that for the same period last year. For the first time since the 70s the UFF are killing more people than the IRA. Thirteen by the UFF and twelve by the IRA since January. Since killing Eddie Fullerton, the UFF vow to avenge every IRA murder and have done just that.

These killers used the cover name of the Ulster Freedom Fighters. They are, in fact, members of an organisation that's legal - The Ulster Defence Association.

Brian Feeney: "Its main function seems to be to kill Catholics and then subsequently claim that they are members of the IRA. They do kill members of the IRA but the majority of the people they kill are innocent Catholics."

Question: Do you think there is a difference between the UDA and the UFF?

Brian Feeney: "No. The same men, different balaclavas. It remains a scandal that they are a legal organisation."

Reporter

(Photographs) These men rule the UDA. Six, all powerful, Brigadiers who form an inner Council. One of them is also believed to be Commander of their military wing - the UFF, who murdered Eddie Fullerton.

Not all UDA men belong to the UFF though most support it. These men insist on being anonymous for fear of reprisal by the IRA.

The Government's broadcasting ban on groups supporting violence means that we are not allowed to hear their actual words. We are using actor's voices instead.

Man's voice: "As far as we are concerned there is a war going on here. Certainly one thing we are not going to shrink away from is the defence of our territory and our people. The people of Ulster need have no fear about the ability of this organisation to carry out that part."

Reporter

This is how the UFF defends its territory - murder on a grand scale. Their gunmen walked into a betting-shop in a Catholic area in Belfast and sprayed it with bullets. Five people were killed, fifteen injured in this massacre.

Question: Would you condemn that action?

Man's voice: "I can understand it."

Question: "You wouldn't condemn it?"

Man's voice: "I can understand it. I can understand it a lot better than maybe people on the mainland. I can understand the reason behind the murder of a Republican. I don't class it as a murder. I would class it as an assassination of the enemy."

Reporter

The UFF have a simple code - tit for tat - a Catholic for every Protestant killed. They justify the betting shop murders as revenge for the equally barbaric IRA murder of eight Protestant building workers.

Question: What right does the loyalist paramilitary organisation have to take the law into their own hands?

Man's voice: "This goes back to the Government's failed security policies. They have the will to take on the Provisional IRA and the other Republican murder gangs, then I don't feel that the loyalist paramilitaries would have to do anything."

Reporter

Ten days ago, after the General Election, John Major gave these men responsibility for Northern Ireland.

Mates: "The resurgence of the UDA is largely because the IRA became more formidable but the Government has a security policy, one of whose aims is to defeat terrorism and we shall do that."

Question: Do you believe the loyalist paramilitaries that when they say that if the IRA didn't exist, they would stop their violence?

Mates: "Yes, I do."

Reporter

But many Catholics argue that loyalist paramilitaries never need an excuse to kill. Although UFF gunmen murder Catholics randomly, they have now developed a chilling expertise in picking specific targets - the political wing of the IRA. Four other Sinn Fein members have been executed since Eddie Fullerton's murder.

Man's voice: "The UDA would have nothing against people like that being eradicated. From a loyalist viewpoint, the feeling in the loyalist community when something like that happens, is a great joy, if the truth be told."

Reporter

One man's joy is another's nightmare. Nowhere is this more telling than in Belfast. With five colleagues dead, all Sinn Fein members are on constant alert against attack.

Gerry McGuigan: "What happened was that two men, one with ... I don't know ... it was one or two guns plus a hand grenade, try to lob the grenade through the window and fired shots into the house. I was sitting in this room, my wife and children were in bed. There was a thunderous explosion, followed by gunfire ... I'm not even sure if that was the right order, it all seemed to happen at once.

Reporter

It's the second time he has been targeted.

Gerry McGuigan: "I have taken precautions, my door is very well fortified but there is no such thing as 100% security. I am in the process of making changes on the current security I have. I have no way of knowing how long it will be before the UFF are informed of them.

Reporter

This is the Shankhill in Belfast - prime recruiting ground for the UDA. The vast majority here are Protestant and fiercely British. The paramilitaries have their headquarters above a fish shop in the Shankhill Road.

The UDA was formed twenty years ago as a civil army to protect Protestants against attack. In its heyday in 1974 it had 40,000 members and, through a strike, brought down the partly Catholic administration set up to run the province. In 1986, the UDA carried out violent protests against the Anglo-Irish Agreement which gave the Republic of Ireland a say in Northern Ireland's affairs. Nowadays, the UDA is still the largest paramilitary group in Europe with some 2,000 supporters including around 100 gunmen in a re-organised military wing.

Ken Kerr: "A younger, more hardline, element has taken over and make no secret about the fact that they have taken a few lessons from the Provisionals' book but they've learnt, I think, to be more selective in the operations that they seem to do. They now seem to have the cell system of operation off to a tee."

Reporter

The UDA's structure is loosely based on the British Army. In the past, they had notoriously close links with the security forces, after all they

have the same enemy - the IRA. But one extraordinary event has forced them to sever their army links and has created today's new breed of very British terrorists.

At the centre of the affair, a former soldier who left the army and rose through the ranks of the loyalist paramilitaries - Brian Nelson.

Brian Feeney: "Nelson was the co-ordinator of Intelligence within the UDA. All materials that came in from RUC, UDR, British Army whatever, were co-ordinated by him, compiled and put on his computer. So that he was actually involved in helping to select targets. He had the information, the files and was able to select people to be killed."

Reporter

Brian Nelson had dossiers on, at least, a thousand Republicans. In 1988, he was asked by the UDA to help plan the murder of a Catholic, Gerard Slane. He found his address in the Electoral Register.

Mrs Slane: "Brian Nelson was apparently watching the movements of my husband and probably watching our house, everywhere my husband went Brian Nelson knew his whereabouts."

Reporter

But Nelson had another role. He was working for military intelligence. He was paid £200 a week to warn his army handlers of imminent attacks on targeted Catholics. The security forces were then supposed to intervene but it didn't always happen.

Mrs Slane: "I didn't even hear glass breaking when the door was getting kicked down, I just heard these bangs, I think it was shots, and my husband was lying on the ground. There was just blood everywhere so I just ran out screaming asking for somebody to come and help me."

Reporter

Gerard Slane was one of eighteen people murdered while Agent Nelson was informing. To justify the killings, the UDA flouted confidential police and army mug shots of their victims, claiming these proved they were Republicans.

A British Police Chief, John Stevens, here on the left, was ordered to investigate whether the security forces had deliberately colluded with the loyalist murder gangs. His enquiries led to a series of spectacular court cases. Although, Brian Nelson, in a letter to 'This Week' maintains his allegiance lay with the army, he was still jailed for conspiracy to murder amid rumours of a deal. But in following the letter

of the law and arresting him, Mr. Steven's had alerted the UDA to a high level mole in their midst. As a result, the UDA reorganised and a more deadly and determined leadership emerged.

Man's voice: "He cleared the UDA of, what we felt, were security force elements within the organisation and we have prospered from it. So I think we should thank Mr. Steven's at the end of the day.

Reporter

Ken Kerr was part of the old guard - a former gunman and leader of the UDA in Londonderry who now claims no connection.

Kerr: "I'm a loyalist. I make no apology to anybody for being a loyalist. I have my beliefs which is that I want to keep my British way of life.

Reporter

The Fountain is a loyalist stronghold in the centre of a divided city. Fortified to keep the two communities apart, it exemplifies the loyalists belief that they're encircled by the IRA and must fight back.

Kerr: "I regard the IRA as the absolute scum of this earth. People who have no conscience, people who have no morals."

Reporter

The loyalist gunmen now taking on the might of the IRA are the very British terrorists and they've learned lessons from the Provisionals.

Brian Feeney: "The loyalists are now aware of the forensic problems that used to get them convicted in the past. Now they go out to commit murder wearing surgical gloves with ordinary gloves over them with elastic bands around their cuffs, with ear-plugs, nose-plugs and overalls.

Reporter

Apart from newly acquired expertise and a more sophisticated structure, the UFF also have a plentiful supply of weapons.

Adrian Guelke: "I woke up to find a couple of masked figures at my bedside and then I heard one of the gunmen say - that's the man - and that was the point at which I became aware that they were pointing guns in my direction. A shot was fired and I felt a pain in my side and a bit wet from blood coming out. The Ulster Freedom Fighters claimed responsibility, the Ulster Freedom Fighters is the nom de

guerre of the Ulster Defence Association and they said that I was an IRA arms dealer, that I imported arms from the Middle East and that I was a liaison officer with the IRA's European cells."

Reporter

They got the wrong man though an expert on terrorism, Mr. Guelke, is a lecturer at Queen's University. He believes he was victim of a bizarre international conspiracy set up by South Africans who were illegally supplying arms to the UDA.

These are the weapons the loyalists are using when they kill - some homemade, some stolen but hundreds like this Belgian-made 9 mm Browning pistol and this Czechoslovakian VZ58 assault rifle have been bought illegally on the international arms market. These particular guns, now in the hands of the police, were smuggled into Northern Ireland in a batch which came originally from the Lebanon.

The police intercepted at least one third of the batch and in doing so discovered that the UDA, like the IRA, had international connections.

Adrian Guelke: "The links between loyalists, paramilitaries and South Africans go back way really to the mid-1980s when a member of the UDA was sent out to South Africa to investigate the possibility of arms supplies and that came to fruition in early 1988 when a shipment of arms came to Northern Ireland, astonishingly through Israel and Lebanon.

Reporter

The police did not seize the entire shipment and weapons supplied by South Africans are still being used today. Two were used in the betting shop massacre in February. Forensic tests prove that 47 shots were fired from a pistol and an assault rifle similar to these. What's more, those same weapons had previously been used to kill three other Catholics.

The UFF has ammunition and, through racketeering in working class ghettos, extorts the funds they need for their terrorist campaign.

Brian Feeney: "They get them from clubs and pubs, from building sites and openly from extortion where they simply go to people, who are businessmen, and demand money to enable them to continue running their shops or their businesses and if they don't comply, they're injured."

Reporter

These are sites of former UDA clubs razed to the ground by the British Government who, as a priority, want to stop the flow of money to the terrorists.

The Government believes loyalist paramilitaries cream £2 million a year from the Province's ailing economy.

This is the public face of the UDA - the Cloughfin Young Conquerors - champion the cause of the loyalist paramilitaries. Such is the concern at the new sophistication of the UDA that there is a growing feeling it should be banned. Ken Kerr also parades his loyalist colours. No longer in the UDA, he's founded a new political party and is an elected Councillor in Derry.

Kerr: "We are a known people. Former paramilitaries a lot of us. We are letting the Catholic people see that there are people on the protestant side who are prepared to treat them as equals."

Question: What do you say then to those who simply see you as a political front for the UDA in case the UDA is banned?

Kerr: "We do not answer for anything and in anyway to the UDA for what we do."

Ray Smallwood: "No secret smoked filled rooms such as you have under the Anglo-Irish Agreement."

Reporter

Yet the new political party frequently uses UDA offices and here, the party's Chairman, lectures the UDA's youth wing about the political philosophy of John McMichael, a UDA hero who was Commander of its military wing. Like the party leader, Chairman Ray Smallwood is also a former UDA paramilitary jailed for the attempted murder of the former MP, Bernadette Devlin.

The UDP, as a party, has officially renounced violence but at times, its views, particularly on the IRA, still seem indistinguishable from those of the UDA.

Kerr: "I would seek and destroy as it would be the military term. I believe that these people try to call themselves an army. If they are an army then they should be ... who are at a war ... then they must accept the rules of war and the rules of war is that whenever you go into battle and you shoot at people and you blow them up, then you must expect to be shot back."

Question: But you have just renounced violence!

Kerr: "I have renounced violence but what I'm saying is that there is legitimate violence which is a violence which is there to protect the state and to protect your country. What I'm saying is that the legitimate forces of law and order should be allowed to seek and destroy."

Reporter

These children have known nothing but the violence yet appalled by massacres like that at the betting shop, they march for peace. There is increasing public demand for Northern Ireland's politicians, who

yesterday resumed talks, to agree among themselves and lay the foundations for peace.

3,000 balloons represent every life lost since the troubles began.

Man's voice: "There is a similarity between loyalists and Republican paramilitaries. Neither have any moral sense of right and wrong, let alone Christian values. Nothing justifies violence. We totally reject the militant minority that is wrecking our land.

Reporter

Now there are renewed calls for the UDA - a legal organisation - to be banned.

Brian Feeney: "The first thing that has to be done is for the Government to make them an illegal organisation, to ban them and treat them the same as any other terrorist organisation so they can't have clubs, they can't recruit members, they can't hold ballots, carry on as an organisation which can hold interviews that people can walk in and meet them and actually be talking to the people who carry out some of these killings."

Man's voice: "I wouldn't mind if it was banned. I can't speak on behalf of the other members of the UDA, but certainly from a leadership point of view, we don't think that banning us would be a big problem."

Question: Why not?

Man's voice: "Well, I mean, there are other organisations that have been banned in the past and they haven't went away and certainly the UDA will never go away."

Reporter

The new team at Stormont appreciate that fairly soon they will reconsider the status of the UDA.

Mates: "It's come up to a higher level of appreciation because there has been more loyalist terrorist violence in recent months and there are signs that it is getting more sophisticated.

Question: The UFF is widely regarded as the military wing of the UDA, why then, Mr. Mates, is the UDA not banned?

Mates: "It is from a part of the community that believe they are under threat and if they believe they are under threat, within the law, they may protest about this they may associate that's not to say that there aren't some rowdy, hooligan and possible criminal elements. But that dividing line is something that we have got to address in

deciding whether or not to allow it to continue as a legal organisation."

Reporter

Meanwhile, the war of hate escalates. The IRA attacks, the UFF extracts revenge. For thousands, like the Slanes, the human cost has already been too high.

Mrs Slane: "Four men came into my house and shot my husband in front of me and my kids. It's nothing that you're going to forget overnight, you just can't and you can't forgive the people that done it. I mean, there is just hatred in me and there always will be."

Question: Do you think that the UDA should be banned?

Mrs Slane: Yes, they definitely should be banned because they are just a pack of gangsters.