

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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ARMAGH RELATIVES

UNSOLVED UVF MURDERS
ARMAGH TYRONE 1990-1994

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INTRODUCTION

The Armagh Relatives is a non-sectarian organisation made up of families drawn from both sides of the community in counties Armagh and Tyrone who have lost loved ones at the hands of a small group of UVF killers operating (primarily) out of Portadown, Co Armagh, throughout the period 1990 - 1994. The organisation was formed in June 1994 by Mathew McShane, his wife Maria and sister-in-law Paula McGuigan from Keady, Co Armagh following the murders of 17 years Mr Gavin McShane (son to Mathew and Maria) and his school friend Shane McArdle at a taxi office in Armagh city a month earlier. Since then 27 other families have joined.

The aims of the organisation, which meets monthly at an Armagh hotel, is to bring pressure to bear on the RUC (by providing as much evidential information as possible) to bring criminal charges against those responsible.

The number of unsolved murders carried out by as few as six people now stands at almost 40. The Armagh relatives are determined to ensure that this situation will not be forgotten in the mists of the history of the Northern Ireland Troubles.

The Portadown UVF, which calls itself the Mid-Ulster Bde. is headed by a Portadown loyalist called Billy Wright. A married man - but now separated - in his mid 30's, and dubbed King Rat by the media, Wright has sprung to prominence in Northern Ireland in recent times following a number of notorious interviews he gave to the media boasting of his paramilitary activities. His chief Lieutenants - gunmen who carry out the murders - are Alan Oliver (30), Portadown, Mark Fulton (Mid 30's) Portadown, Laurence Maguire (31) Moira, (now in prison) Joe Brown, Lurgan and a 28 years old Portadown man called Weathered.

There is incontrovertible evidence that Billy Wright has planned and supplied weapons for most of the unsolved murders documented in this dossier. Yet he has never been charged with murder. Apart from a brief period of incarceration on the

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word of a supergrass in the early 80's Wright has been free to roam the streets of Northern Ireland.

The Armagh Relatives acknowledge that the RUC Serious Crime Squad has tried hard to catch Wright, but failed to come up with the evidence that will bring him to book. Wright is a smart terrorist.

In this dossier reference to the political (or paramilitary) affiliations of any of the victims (Protestant or Catholic) of the Portadown UVF is deliberately omitted. The Armagh relatives is not involved in politics but it is only interested in seeing those who murdered their loved ones brought to justice.

It is unprecedented (or almost) even in Northern Ireland, that one person could organise the murder of up to 40 people with impunity.

July 1995

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OCTOBER 1990

Denis Carville (19)
Lurgan, Co. Armagh.
6th October 1990. UVF/PAF.

Denis Carville a 19 years old youth was shot dead by a lone gunman while sitting in his car with his girlfriend at Oxford Island beauty spot on the shores of Lough Neagh on the 6th Oct. 1990. The murder was claimed by the PAF a cover name used by the UVF from time to time since the early 70's.

The murder was carried out by the Portadown unit of the UVF headed by Billy Wright. It's believed that on this occasion the shooting was in fact done by Wright himself. His back-up team was most probably Tony McNeill (who usually drives Wright) Mark Fulton and Alan Oliver, all from Portadown.

A car was later found burnt out near Portadown. Despite intensive police enquiries no one was ever charged.

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JANUARY 1991

Jervis Lynch (26)
Magheralin, Co Armagh.
5 January 1991. UVF.

Jervis Lynch a 26 years old factory worker from Magheralin, Co. Armagh, was shot dead in the sitting room of his home on Saturday evening 5 Jan. 1991 while watching television. He had just returned from work and was alone in the house at the time, other members of his family having gone to evening Mass. The gunman entered through an unlocked door and shot him while he sat in an armchair.

The murder was organised by Robin Jackson (The Jackal) and Billy Wright and the shooting was carried out by Mark Fulton, a leading Portadown gunman who has operated for Wright for a number of years. Fulton is a nephew of Billy Fulton, a former leading UDA commander who operated around Portadown in the 70's. He died of a heart attack in 1988.

Fulton is a married man (now separated) who lived for a time in Brownstown in Portadown. Nowadays, he hangs around flats in the Corcraine area and is often seen driving Wright around. They frequently visit the Shankill together.

In his mid to late 30's Fulton is known to have boasted after the Lynch killing that Jackson (the Jackal) "cannot complain now" about the "lack of activity". A reference to Jackson's impatience to "get going" after the murder of his brother-in-law, Roy Metcalf by the IRA a short time earlier.

Involved in much activity under Wright for a number of years Fulton is believed to have drifted into drugs in the period before the cease-fire.

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March 1991

John Quinn
Dwayne O'Donnell
Malcolm Nugent
Thomas Armstrong
Cappagh, Co. Tyrone.
3 March 1991. UVF.

On Sunday March 3 1991 John Quinn (23), Dwayne O'Donnell (17), Malcolm Nugent (21) and Thomas Armstrong (50) were shot dead by gunmen in the village of Cappagh in Co. Tyrone.

Quinn, O'Donnell and Nugent were shot in a car outside a pub while Armstrong was shot through the window of the pub.

The Murders were carried out by the Portadown UVF, lead by Billy Wright. It's reliably believed that Mark Fulton and Alan Oliver from Portadown were the gunmen involved. It's believed Wright was also in the vicinity at the time. It's also reliably understood that a local man with UDR connections, in Cappagh was involved in setting up the attack.

No one has ever been charged.

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MARCH 1991

Mobile Shop.
Eileen Duffy
Caitriona Rennie
Brian Frizzel
Craigavon, Co. Armagh.
28 March 1991. UVF.

Eileen Duffy (19), Caitriona Rennie (16), Brian Frizzel (29), all from Drumbeg Estate, Craigavon, Co. Armagh were shot dead by a gunman at a mobile shop van on the estate on 28 March 1991.

Eileen Duffy was employed part-time on the van while her friend was visiting her "for company" at the time. Brian Frizzel had gone to buy cigarettes when the gunman struck. The van used was hijacked in Lisburn and was later found burned out at Mountain View Estate in Lurgan.

The murders were claimed by the PAF a cover name used by the UVF since the early 70's.

On March 29 1995 James Harper from Portadown was sentenced to life for his part in the murders. During interrogation Harper admitted driving the gunman to the scene and taking part in burning the van afterwards. Harper also named Alan Oliver from Portadown to police as the gunman but refused to sign a statement to that effect. He also told police he was recruited into the UVF by Billy Wright.

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In court the Lord Chief Justice Sir Brian Hutton, reading from police notes, named Oliver as the gunman. He also named Billy Wright - both by his correct name and by his nick name (King Rat) - the UVF ringleader.

In Nov. 1992 William Robert Abbott and Anthony Noel Clarke both from Lisburn were each sentenced to five years for hijacking the van. Both men, who are not out, have said they had no idea the van was to be used in such an attack.

The MOBILE murders were organised by Robin Jackson, and Billy Wright, Jackson known as the Jackal, who operated as a leading UVF gunman in the 70's was originally Wrights mentor but retired from terrorism following his imprisonment in the late 70's. However, following the murder of his brother-in-law (Roy Metcalf) by the Provisional IRA in the early 80's Jackson resumed his activities.

It's reliably believed that Jackson was behind (as well as Mobile Shop) the attack on SF Councillor Brendan Curran and the murder of Jervis Lynch in Magheralin in Jan. 1991 as well as Sam Marshall in Lurgan in March 1990.

However around three/four years ago Jackson and Wright fell out resulting in Jackson moving his activities form Mid Ulster to Belfast.

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NOVEMBER 1991

Dessie Rogers (43)
John Lavery (27)
Fergus Magee (28)
Lurgan Co. Armagh
14 November 1991. UVF.

Dessie Rogers, John Lavery, and Fergus Magee, three factory workers from Lurgan at the Hyster factory in Portadown, were shot dead as they knocked off the late shift a short distance from the factory on 14 November 1991.

Gunmen in military style uniforms and waving red torches stopped a line of cars as they emerged from the factory. Rogers and Magee were shot dead in a hail of bullets in the second car which was driven by Rogers. Lavery, who was driving the car immediately behind, attempted to reverse away and was shot dead. The car used was earlier purchased in Lisburn. It was found burned out a short distance away. In Oct. 1992 a Portadown man, Vicky Ahtty, was charged with involvement in the Hyster murders and was later convicted.

According to reliable sources, connected to the UVF, the gunman who killed all three was Mark Fulton, from Portadown. It's also said that Wright was present and was standing behind Fulton when he opened fire. Following the shootings, rumours circulated that Robin Jackson's 21 years old son, who worked at the factory, passed information about the victims. This has now been largely discounted as it's reported that Jackson's son is "good living" and has not - as far as can be ascertained - been involved in terrorism.

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JANUARY 1992

Jack McKearney (69)
Kevin McKearney (32)
Moy, Co. Armagh.
3 January 1992. UVF.

Kevin McKearney a 32 years old butcher from Ballymackelduff, the Moy, Co Tyrone, was shot dead on 3 January 1992 as he worked in the family butcher's shop in the Moy. His 69 years old Uncle John McKearney was seriously injured in the attack and died later in hospital. A ten years old girl, sitting in a car outside, was also injured.

In Oct. 1992 26 years Vicky Ahtty, was charged with involvement in the McKearney murders but as a subsequent court trial, (at which Ahtty was convicted of involvement in the Hyster Factory murders) he was acquitted.

The murders of the McKearneys was organised by Billy Wright and reliably believed to have been carried out by Alan Oliver. It's not known who else was involved but it's highly probable that Ahtty was there.

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MARCH 1992

James Gray (39)
Keady.
4 March 1992. UVF.

James Gray a 39 years old father of five children from Fairgreen, Keady, Co Armagh was shot dead in the cab of his lorry on 4 March 1992 at Cornascreibe between Portadown and Markethill. Shortly after 9am two gunmen, who'd been lying in wait in bushes, fired a number of shots killing Mr Gray almost instantly.

The victim had earlier delivered a load of stones for his employers, Clady Quarries, to a development in Portadown and was returning for a second load. It's understood he replaced the regular driver at the last moment on the route.

The murder was claimed by the UVF. It's accepted Billy Wright was in charge of the operation and the gunman was a hitman from Lurgan - possibly Joe Browne a son to Joe Browne an old UVF man from Lurgan. Other names linked (but by no means confirmed) to the murder are Robin King Lurgan (Jailed for his part in the Shield's murders) and a guy called Kerr from Lurgan. While this Lurgan unit is known to have worked for Wright it's also had close links to Robin Jackson (the Jackal) and another old UVF hand from Lurgan, but now living in Portadown, called Philip (Shilly) Silcock. The notorious UVF gangster, R.J. Kerr, from Portadown, has also been mixed up with this gang.

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