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29 JAN 1999

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AN RÚNAÍOCHT ANGLA-ÉIREANNACH
BÉAL FEIRSTE

ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT
BELFAST

Mr McCarry
Not-Passed on to the Taoiseach
Overtaken
29-1-99

Secure Fax: 1666 SF

DATE : 27 January 1999 **NO. OF PAGES (including this one):** 2

Rec'd 5.05pm

TO: Colm O Floinn
Anglo-Irish Division

cc GI Section

FROM: Val O'Donnell

Copied directly to Sec General T.Dalton, Dept. Of Justice , Equality and Law Reform

Subj. : Death of former IRA man at Newry , 27/1/1999

1.Radio reports on news at 1pm. that the family of the man whose body was found this morning near Newry, have said that he was a former IRA man who has written about his life and dealings with the IRA and the security forces. The RUC are not naming the man yet.

2. Further reports on the news say that body was found at Doran's Hill outside Newry around 6am this morning; the head injuries were so severe as to make identification difficult. According to the radio reports , the Police had originally believed that the man was a victim of a hit and run accident, based (the reports said) on the discovery of glass from a car in the vicinity.

3. We asked the other side for information. They said that SPOB had no further information at that stage (3pm.), beyond confirming the finding of the body.

4.We learned in confidence later --though not through official channels--that the dead man is former IRA member **Eamonn Collins** (who by a bizarre coincidence was the subject of a press item in to-day's Irish News. Copy attached).

5.Radio reports throughout the afternoon said that ,

" the police are still investigating the circumstances of the death"

6. The other side came back to us at about 4.30pm.to say that the police would shortly release the victim's name and that a post-mortum was due to take place to-night.They said that the police would not be making any further statement about the death , until after the post-mortum.

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THE IRISH NEWS

Wednesday January 27 1999

Blow for mother of man shot by guards

By Jonathan Turner

THE mother of a north Belfast man murdered by two British soldiers stormed out of a meeting with Armed Forces Minister Doug Henderson last night after he said the killers would remain in the army.

Jean McBride, whose 18-year-old son Peter was shot in the back by two Scots Guards in September 1992, said Mr Henderson had tried to justify his murder.

Now the McBrides' supporters are threatening to increase pressure on the British government and the army by taking the case to the European Court of Human Rights.

Scots Guards Mark Wright (25) and James Fisher (30) were convicted of Mr McBride's murder and lost two appeals before being released on the word of Secretary of State Mo Mowlam.

Despite repeated pleas from Mr McBride's family, they were allowed to remain in the army because of what the Ministry of Defence described as "exceptional circumstances".

Last night, Mrs McBride said: "He just tried to justify my Peter's murder.

"He said they were loyal to the army and I just thought, I'm not listening to any more of this."

Clearly outraged, Mrs McBride added: "I said to him as a mother, you're talking about the sentence they served, well I'm serving a life sentence and I did nothing wrong.

"My Peter's children are doing a life sentence and they did nothing wrong. My husband's health is bad, my health is bad, so don't tell me about being loyal or serving their country.

"The whole thing is madness."

After Mrs McBride left, Peter's father and uncle continued to argue with Mr Henderson, accompanied by Paul O'Connor of the Pat Finucane Centre.

Mr O'Connor added that the case would now be brought before the European Court of Human Rights.

"We will be taking this campaign as far as we can now. This meeting was totally unsatisfactory."

A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence said Mr Henderson had explained the "exceptional circumstances" which applied to the guardsmen.

The minister said: "In meeting with the McBride family, I wanted to provide an opportunity for them to explain their concerns to me personally. I hope that the meeting was of some help to them in understanding the army's handling of the guardsmen who so tragically killed their son in 1992."

In reaching its decision to allow the soldiers to remain in the regiment the board said:

- the security situation in the area of the incident at the time was tense and the guardsmen's unit had suffered a recent fatal casualty.
- the guardsmen had shown contrition for their action, which they admitted was an error of judgment.
- that they had paid the price for their action with a lengthy prison sentence during which time their behaviour had been exemplary.
- they showed continued loyalty to the army and had previously unblemished military records.

Sinn Fein's Gerry Kelly claimed the meeting once more showed British arrogance and contempt for Irish life.



● ANGRY... Jean McBride

Victims slam IRA man over public profile

By Martin Anderson

FORMER IRA member Eamonn Collins says he will "seriously consider" dropping out of the public eye following reports that the family of one of his victims is furious at his high media profile.

The children of Ivan Toombs, a UDR soldier who was murdered in 1983 after being fingered by his then work colleague Collins, say they want new laws introduced to stop former paramilitaries "cashing in on their crimes".

Mr Toombs was targeted from information provided by Collins while working at Warrenpoint Customs and Excise depot. He was gunned down as he sat behind his desk in the depot.

Eamonn Collins, who in 1986 published the book Killing Rage, about his experiences in the IRA, said he could understand the feelings of the Toombs family.

"He has a point when he says it brings the grief back, but I never set out to promote myself," he said. "I was sought out by journalists because the book was different than many others.

"If it is genuine that making comments about the peace process hurts the Toombs family then I will cease doing that.

I certainly don't want to bring any more grief to those people.

"But I think they have to face certain realities that there are hundreds of people who have been involved in political violence who have been released over the past 30 years - and Northern Ireland is a very small place."

Mr Collins also denied claims that he has made a fortune from the book.

"My family hasn't had a holiday in five years; we have been the victims of a six month campaign of intimidation; I was a victim of a blind-man; my house has been burnt down; and I was exiled from my home for three years after leaving prison.

"I haven't cashed in on anything and anyone who knows my family knows that."

Ivan Toombs's son Paul is reported to have launched a campaign to stop released paramilitaries from making money from books or films about their activities.

He said: "The problem for us now is that Collins must have made so much money from it. And that he seems to be getting loads of publicity."

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