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[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Local & National](#)

Local & National

Why did Order fly flag for my brother's killer?

Monday, July 16, 2007

By Stephen Breen

The brother of a loyalist murder victim is at the centre of a row with the Orange Order.

Patrick Magee, whose brother, Peter, was gunned down in the 1992 Ormeau Road bookmaker's massacre, demanded an apology from the Order after a banner honouring UFF killer Joe Bratty was displayed during last week's Twelfth celebrations.

Senior Orangemen have launched an investigation into how the banner came to be displayed.

Although it is not clear if the flag belonged to an Orange lodge or a loyalist band, Mr Magee said it had caused "outrage" among relatives of Bratty's victims.

In an interview with the Sunday Life newspaper, the south Belfast man offered to meet the Order's leadership to discuss the controversial flag.

Said Mr Magee: "I, like many other families, am completely disgusted by this banner. How can they honour a man who slaughtered innocent women and children?"

"Will the order apologise to me, my mum Claire and the other innocent families whose loved ones were killed by Bratty?"

"I cannot believe this monster has been glorified and someone from the Order has to say something.

"I would have no problem meeting Orange Grand Master Robert Saulters to get his views on this disgusting item. If they are trying to change their image they are going the wrong way about it."

Senior Belfast Orangeman the Rev Mervyn Gibson, Deputy County Chaplain for Belfast and a former chairman of the Loyalist Commission, confirmed an investigation is under way.

"We are certainly going to look into this matter now that it has been brought to our attention," he said.

"I didn't see the banner, but we are opposed to the display of paramilitary regalia during parades."

Bratty masterminded the bookmaker's atrocity which left five people dead.

He was also responsible for killing housewife Teresa Clinton, trade union activist Charlie McGrillen and Emmanuel Shields.

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