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From the Balcony



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By Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

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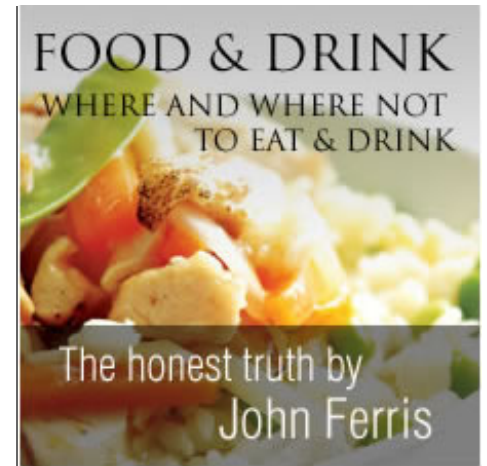
Widow's pain at HET report on Barney's death



By Aine McEntee

The wife of a man shot dead by British soldiers in 1971 has spoken of her hurt and anger after a PSNI cold case team told her they could not find the killers and concluded his death was lawful.

Theresa Watt, the widow of Barney Watt, was told last year by the newly established



Historical Enquiries Team (HET) that they would be reviewing her husband's case. The team has now come back to Mary after a 12-month investigation to say the Ministry of Defence couldn't supply the names of those involved in killing, and that if the names had been made known it would be inaccurate to assume interviews would follow. The 24-page resolution report says Barney was involved in a riot.

"On the basis of the information presently available to the HET there are no grounds to believe Bernard was unlawfully shot by soldiers because he was involved in rioting," the report states.

Theresa added that she was more angry at herself for hoping the team would support her family's belief that Barney's death was cold-blooded murder.

"The HET were the ones who approached me after all these years. They were the ones who re-opened my husband's case. I was just sitting here trying to get on with my life as best I could when they brought all this up again," she said.

"I did have a wee bit of faith and hope at the start," Theresa admitted.

"I thought he would have got his name cleared and that they would have said he wasn't a bomber. He was there but he didn't do anything. There was no proof. There was no marks on him or forensics to say he was carrying a bomb."

Local people claim that Barney (28) was gunned down in cold blood after a confrontation with a British Army patrol in Ardoyne's Hooker Street. Despite a total absence of forensic evidence, the British Army claimed they had shot a nail-bomber

"To be honest I feel disgusted and used," said Theresa. "I regret bringing them into my home and pouring my heart out in the belief that something positive might come out of this. I'm angry - but perhaps I'm more angry at myself for doing what I done. God forgive me."

A spokeswoman for the HET said: "We are sorry if any family feel unhappy with the outcome of a case. We don't discuss details publicly but this case is ongoing and the HET are re-examining some issues at the request of the family. A great deal of work and effort goes into every case, however we recognised from the outset of the HET process that it would not always be possible to answer all issues to the satisfaction of every family. The HET appeals to anyone who has information which would help this investigation to come forward."

27/07/2007