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LVF killing inquest halted at the request of victim's family

By Margaret Canning

12/08/2008

An inquest into the death of a doorman shot dead by the LVF hours after the killing of Billy Wright has been adjourned.

Chief coroner John Leckey said he was taking the step at the request of the family of Seamus Dillon (45), who was gunned down outside the Glengannon Hotel in Dungannon in December 1997.

He said the family wished to see a report into the killing by the Historical Enquiries Team (HET).

Mr Dillon, a father-of-three from Stewartstown, died in hospital shortly after two gunmen opened fire on the hotel from a car.

The murder came around 12 hours after Billy Wright had been killed by the INLA in the Maze prison on December 27.

The hotel's disco had been full of young people at the time. Reports suggested that Mr Dillon, who also worked as a bricklayer's labourer, was trying to prevent the gunmen getting inside the hotel when he was hit.

He died of a bullet wound to the head. Two other doormen and a 14-year-old waiter were also injured.

At Dungannon Courthouse yesterday, Mr Leckey said witnesses had been summonsed to appear but had not done so for unknown reasons.

He said he hoped the inquest could be rescheduled for December, by which time the HET review would have been read by the family and witnesses able to appear.

Mr Leckey said he sympathised with the predicament of Mr Dillon's family.

"No-one has been made amenable for the murder of Seamus Dillon. An inquest should be held as soon as possible but I accept the views expressed by the family as to why they want it to be adjourned."

Mr Dillon was the first of seven Catholics shot dead by the LVF in the four weeks after Wright's killing.

Terry Enright, a doorman at a nightclub in Talbot Street in Belfast, was also shot at his work on January 11 1998.

Speaking after yesterday's hearing, Paddy Murray, a solicitor representing Mr Dillon's widow Martina, said:

"We requested an adjournment because we couldn't have a proper inquest without all the relevant facts being investigated.

"We understand the HET have finished their report and Mr Dillon's family want to have sight of it before any future inquest hearing."

He said the family also wanted witnesses who had failed to answer summonses to do so.

"Some of those witnesses are very important and relevant and we don't want to proceed without them."


He added that delays in holding an inquest into Mr Dillon's death, which had been adjourned on several occasions, were "frustrating" for the family.

Mr Dillon, a former republican life prisoner who had pleaded guilty to offences including two IRA murders and two attempted murders, had been freed on licence in 1994.

However, he was not believed to have been a specific target of the gunmen.

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