



[HOME](#)

[History](#)

[NewsoftheIrish](#)

[Book Reviews  
& Book Forum](#)

[Search / Archive](#)

Back to 10/96

[Papers](#)

[Reference](#)

[About](#)

[Contact](#)

## Family want dead man's name cleared and intimidation to end

(Marie Louise McCrory, [Irish News](#))

The family of a young man branded an RUC informer after he was murdered in what police say was a paramilitary-style execution have called for his name to be cleared.

The Bennett family say they have taken the step after suffering an eight-year campaign of intimidation by people who have taunted them over unfounded allegations that 22-year-old Charles Bennett was a 'tout'.

They claim the harassment has led to one member of the family taking his own life in 2003 and to others being attacked.

The body of north Belfast man Charles 'Chucky' Bennett was found near St Gall's, off the Falls Road, on July 30 1999 – six days after he had disappeared.

Mr Bennett, a taxi-driver, had been shot in the head and was found blindfolded and with his hands tied.

The Bennett family – who say their son was not a member of any paramilitary organisation – believe the IRA was responsible for the murder and have always strenuously denied allegations that he was a police informer.

An investigation by the police ombudsman, which was instigated by the Bennett family, found no evidence that Charles Bennett had been an informer.

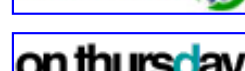
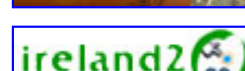
The family say they now want his name formally cleared so they can live in peace.

The murdered man's father, Michael Bennett, believes that the taunts over the years led to a series of tragedies

in his family including the death by suicide of his son Michael (26) on New Year's Day in 2003.

Mr Bennett said Michael had been depressed following his brother's murder and the subsequent allegations.

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The father-of-six – who lost his wife to cancer three months before his son was murdered – said his other son, John-Paul, was also the victim of an attack – outside a bar in north Belfast.

On Monday night, another son, Ciaran (23), was in-volved in an altercation in North Queen Street.

Ciaran said a man made remarks about his brother and claimed he had seen a video-tape of Charles being tortured and killed.

Following the row Ciaran attempted to take his own life.

He was found by a stranger who called an ambulance and he was last night (Tuesday) admitted to hospital for treatment.

Speaking last night, Ciaran said he was "fed up with people saying Chucky was a tout".

"It's very hurtful. It was responsible for Michael taking his life," he said.

"Whenever that guy said it to me the other night it just brought it all back."

Michael Bennett snr said it was time his son's name was cleared.

"I don't know how I am sticking this," he said.

"It's hurting me. A tout in Catholic circles is the lowest of the low.

"I now fear for the lives of my other children, the effect this is having on them. I just want my son's name cleared so everyone is safe."

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[BACK TO TOP](#)

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