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Killer arrested after alleged bar assault

By Seamus McKinney

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SCENE: The Blackthorn public house where notorious killer Torrens Knight was arrested following an alleged assault against two sisters MAIN PICTURE: Margaret McLaughlin

ONE of Northern Ireland's most notorious killers, Torrens Knight was arrested by police investigating an alleged assault on two sisters in Coleraine, The Irish News has learned.

If charged and convicted, Knight could face a return to prison to serve out the remainder of 12 life sentences imposed after two of the worst loyalist paramilitary attacks in the Troubles.

Knight was arrested and formally interviewed by police following the alleged assault at the Blackthorn public house at New Market Street, Coleraine on May 30.

While police refused to identify Knight, a spokesman confirmed they were investigating an incident "in which two women were assaulted" at New Market Street.

"A man arrested in connection with the incident has since been released pending the preparation of a police report for the PPS (Public Prosecution Service)," he said.

Knight, from Macosquin outside Coleraine, received eight life sentences for his part in the UFF murder of eight civilians in the "trick or treat" massacre at the Rising Sun bar in Greysteel in October 1993.

Knight had stood guard at the door of the bar with a sawn-off shotgun and had driven the getaway car on Halloween night 1993.

He was also sentenced to four life terms for being part of the UFF gang which murdered four workers, one of

them IRA member, James Kelly, at Castlerock in March 1993.

With his fellow killers, Knight was released from prison in July 2000 under licence as part of the Good Friday Agreement after serving seven years of his life sentence.

If charged and convicted of the Coleraine alleged assault, Knight's case could be reviewed by the Life Sentence Review Commission and could lead to the suspension of his licence and return to prison to complete his life sentence.

East Derry assembly member John Dallat said if Knight was convicted of an offence it would be a "clear breach of the early release scheme".

"If Knight is found guilty then there is only one decision that can be made and that's to put him behind bars to serve the remainder of his sentence."

Mr Dallat said the pain of those who lost loved ones in the Greysteel and Castlerock killings was as raw today as it was in 1993 "when Knight and his cowardly thugs first took their innocent lives away from them".

In 2005 Stephen Irwin, who was charged with the Rising Sun killings along with Knight, was returned to prison after he was convicted of slashing a football supporter with a knife following the Irish Cup Final between Glentoran and Coleraine at Windsor Park the previous year.

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