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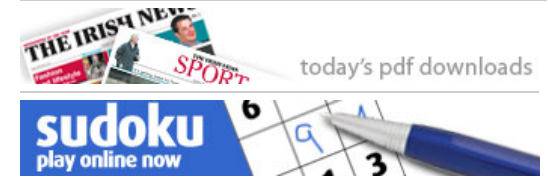
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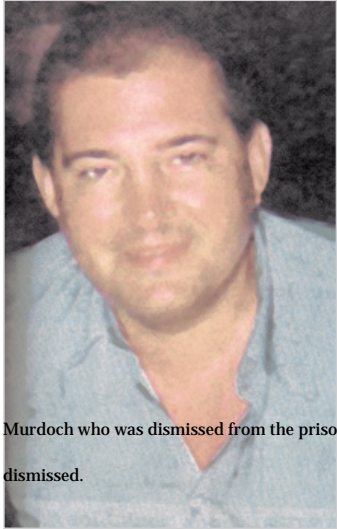
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## O'Hagan murder accused gets 'special attention' in prison

By Allison Morris

04/10/08

LURGAN loyalist Drew King has claimed his close "friendship" with a female former prison officer is the reason why he has been held in solitary confinement in Maghaberry Prison since being remanded last month.



The 40-year-old loyalist yesterday launched a High Court challenge against the decision to keep him in the prison's secure supervision unit (SSU) since being remanded in custody charged with the 2001 murder of Sunday World reporter Martin O'Hagan.

An application submitted by his legal team claimed that King had been on the receiving end of some "special attention" from staff at the top-security prison.

Papers submitted by the leading loyalist's legal team state: "He has a friendship with a female former prison officer named Caroline Murdoch who was dismissed from the prison service. An industrial tribunal found that she had been unfairly dismissed.

"Furthermore, his father was a decorated prison officer who gave more than 25 years' service to the prison

service. As a result of this family connection the applicant played in the prison band. Caged: Drew King who is in solitary confinement at Maghaberry prison

"Accordingly, the applicant does know quite a number of prison officers within HMP Maghaberry personally.

"Guards will open his door and hurl abuse at him directed at Caroline Murdoch, calling her disgusting names."

Barrister Peter Coll representing the prison service refuted these claims saying that King was being held in isolation as "intelligence" existed to suggest that he was under threat if placed in the main prison population.

"The Prison Service has intelligence to indicate there's a high degree of risk to him from others in HMP Maghaberry," he said.

This claim was refuted by the loyalist's legal team who said that his co-accused and brother Robin King had been placed within the main prison population without any allegation of threat.

Legal paper's submitted by King's barrister state: "If any alleged threat emanates from loyalists it is inconceivable that the same threat would not exist against his brother."

King, of Moss Road, Waringstown is one of three men to be charged with Mr O'Hagan's murder.

The Sunday World journalist was shot dead as he walked home from a pub in Lurgan, Co Armagh with his wife in September 2001.

Granting leaving to apply for a judicial review of the decision, Mr Justice McLaughlin said there were issues which required further explanation.

Ciaran Shiels, partner with Madden and Finucane solicitors who are representing King, said they would be


pushing for a swift resolution.

"We welcome the decision of the High Court to grant leave today on all six grounds of challenge," he said.

"We will be seeking an expedited hearing of this case when it comes back before the High Court next Tuesday."

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