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Monday, June 30, 2008

Man who killed Billy Wright dies of cancer

GERRY MORIARTY, Northern Editor

CHRISTOPHER "CRIP" McWilliams, the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) member who killed Billy Wright in the Maze Prison almost 11 years ago has died of cancer.

At the time of the Wright killing Mr McWilliams, who was in his 40s, was serving a murder sentence in the Maze for the killing of bar manager Colm Mahon at Frames Nightclub in Belfast city centre in 1991. He shot Mr Mahon after he was earlier refused entry to the club.

It was while he was in the Maze that the INLA decided to murder Wright, the leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force.

Mr McWilliams, with two of his fellow inmates John Glennon and John Kennaway, shot Wright while he was sitting in a prison van in the jail.

The murder raised questions over how the INLA gang managed to get from their wing in the Maze to be in a position to kill Wright, which in turn triggered a public inquiry into his murder that is currently running.

Mr McWilliams told police that Wright was "executed for directing and waging his campaign of terror against the nationalist people from his prison cell".

Mr McWilliams was released early from prison under the terms of the Belfast Agreement. He refused to say how the INLA managed to smuggle guns into the Maze, how he was in a position to know of Wright's movements in the prison the day of his killing in December 1997, and how he and his INLA associates were able to break from the INLA section of H-Block 6 into the LVF section of the H-Block.

The Sunday World reported that Mr McWilliams recently travelled to Lourdes in the hope of a miracle cure for his cancer.

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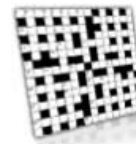
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