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I'm no tout

Ex-IRA man accused of ordering murder of Robert McCartney speaks out

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By Stephen Breen

The leading IRA man accused of ordering the murder of Robert McCartney last night claimed: "I'm no tout."

In an exclusive interview with Sunday Life, Gerard 'Jock' Davison made the claim after the murder-victim's sister, Catherine, posed the question in her new book, Walls of Silence.

Crusading Catherine raised the possibility that the senior republican was being protected by Special Branch at the time of her brother's killing.

Davison was quizzed about the 33-year-old's murder outside Magennis's Bar in Belfast city-centre in January 2005, but was later released without charge.

The ex-IRA man - who is now a community worker in the Markets district - denies the suggestion.

And he urged Ms McCartney to make a complaint to incoming Police Ombudsman Al Hutchinson and British Irish Rights Watch (BIRW).

Said Davison (40): "I never, ever gave any information on my comrades or my friends during my 25 years in the republican movement. Any republican who knows me knows this.

"There is not one shred of truth in this suggestion that I was an agent. It would take Al Hutchinson or Jane Winters from BIRW just five minutes to establish this fact.

"I challenge the McCartneys to make a complaint immediately and I will co-operate fully with any investigation.

"Considering a family of their experience and the high-profile campaign they launched, you would have thought they would have come forward long before now."

And he added: "The days of informers hiding behind their handlers or being protected is over. Why don't the McCartneys just go down the Raymond McCord route?"

"I have no fear there is a scrap of evidence which proves I ever gave information.

"I also think it's important for the (Police) Ombudsman to explore the police investigation into this case. They should explore issues such as how the media were waiting outside the homes of suspects and how they knew suspects had kept quiet during interviews."

The senior republican also dismissed claims in the book that he told the murder-gang to "do what you want" with Robert McCartney.

He rejected the book's claims he gave the order for the stabbing by "a finger being drawn across his (Davison's) throat".

He said: "I admit that I was involved in an altercation with Brendan Devine inside the bar, but the allegation that I later made this famous hand signal is simply not true.

"I have read the key prosecution witness statements and not one of them has put me down for any wrongdoing.

"Outside of the altercation in the bar, I had absolutely no involvement in Robert McCartney's murder.

"In terms of the sworn statements, why have none of the witnesses mentioned the hand signal or the call for weapons?"

"Everyone in the bar has made a witness statement to the police, so where is this wall of silence?"

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Davison further claimed that he supported the McCartneys' campaign for justice, adding: "Robert McCartney should never have been killed. It is his family's right to demand justice and I respect that.

"Justice means justice, but not the McCartney sisters' version of justice.

"I also have to ask why they have released this book on their brother's killing before the trial.

"How do they expect anyone to get a fair trial?"

He revealed for the first time the details of "assurances" given by the IRA leadership to witnesses in the weeks after the killing.

"It is a matter of public record that anyone who wished to make a statement against any individual, including myself, were given rock-solid guarantees by the IRA and told to come forward.

"Life-long republicans were named in witness statements, so the fear factor can be ruled out.

"But the hurt caused to the families of the innocent people caught up that night, all of whom have made written statements, has never been taken into consideration.

"I will continue to serve my community because I believe serving the struggle and my people are one and the same thing."

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