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News

Family of IRA 'nutting squad' victim want collusion inquiry

Sunday, January 28, 2007

By Stephen Gordon and Chris Anderson

The parents of a man savagely murdered by a notorious IRA unit led by a paid British agent have called on Nuala O'Loan to launch a McCord-style collusion inquiry into their son's murder.

The Ombudsman's Office is now considering the request that could lift the lid on the role of former Belfast Provo Freddie Scappaticci - aka state agent Stakeknife - inside the IRA's ruthless internal security unit.

Scappaticci is believed to have carried out dozens of murders while leading a double life as a torturer in the IRA's so-called 'nutting squad' and as an £80,000 agent with the intelligence services.

Portadown couple Pat and Irene Dignam last week wrote to the Police Ombudsman's office requesting an inquiry into the police handling of the inquiry into the murder of their son, John, 14 years ago.

And they believe Scappaticci was one of the killers.

Dad-of-two John Dignam (32) was himself a British spy inside the IRA, as were his friends Gregory Burns and Aiden Starrs.

All three were abducted, interrogated for a week before being shot through the head in June 1992.

Their bodies were dumped on a border road in south Armagh.

The IRA said the trio had admitted being MI5/Special Branch agents and of involvement in the murder of Portadown woman, Margaret Perry.

But the Dignams believe their son was sacrificed by the intelligence services to protect Stakeknife and want the Police Ombudsman to investigate their claims police failed to properly investigate the killing in 1992.

Pat Dignam said: "Until now there has been a wall of silence about why my son was left to die at the hands of the IRA's internal security squad. That's no longer acceptable as far as we are concerned.

"One of the leaders of the murder squad that killed my son was the British agent Stakeknife.

"Over the years he has been well protected and paid thousands of pounds by his intelligence services paymasters."

He added he had no doubt the intelligence services and the IRA had colluded in his son's murder.

Irene Dignam said audio tapes existed that outline the events which resulted in her son's murder.

The family wrote to the Ombudsman's Office last Thursday to formally complain about the RUC investigation into their son's murder and have asked to meet Mrs O'Loan to present their case in person.

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