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## McCartneys believe PSNI?have closed investigation

Suzanne Breen

Northern Editor

The family of murdered Belfast man, Robert McCartney, have said they believe the police have no interest in bringing his killers to justice. They have begun legal action to obtain police files on the case.

In their first interview since three men charged in connection with events on the night of the 2005 murder were found not guilty, the McCartney sisters said they believed the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) investigation was effectively over.

"The police haven't been in touch with us once since the verdict four months ago," Catherine McCartney told the Sunday Tribune. "Regardless of what they say publicly, we believe the PSNI murder investigation is effectively over."

"We suspect that if new witnesses came forward, they'd be sent away. Given the Stormont political set-up, there isn't the will to pursue an investigation into an IRA murder."

The sisters' fears are shared by Traditional Unionist MEP, Jim Allister, who is "seriously concerned" following correspondence between himself and PSNI Chief Constable, Hugh Orde. "The police seem utterly uninterested in this case," Allister said.

Catherine McCartney said the family had hired a solicitor to request access to PSNI files: "The prosecution case was unbelievably weak. We want to see if a stronger case could have been presented. We want transcripts of police interviews with those arrested to establish what questions were actually asked."

"We were told footage from the Law Courts' CCTV cameras, opposite Magennis's bar, were so grainy they were of little use to the investigation. We want to see the tapes for ourselves." The family

suspect one of those involved in the assault, who has never been charged, is a police informer.

The McCartneys' lawyer is seeking a judicial review into the Northern Ireland Coroner's decision to refuse an inquest into Robert's death. The Sunday Tribune has obtained correspondence on the murder investigation between Jim Allister MEP and Hugh Orde.

The PSNI told Allister the case remained open but added: "There are currently no new lines of enquiry. We are dependant on witnesses coming forward to testify against those responsible." However, Allister dismissed the replies as "evasive" on matters such as how many officers were currently assigned to the investigation.

He quizzed Orde on whether police were investigating possible perversion of the course of justice. One reason Judge Gillen acquitted those charged was that the IRA had meetings with two of the three chief prosecution witnesses. Gillen feared some evidence may "have been influenced or indeed directed by the IRA".

The court had heard meetings between witnesses and the IRA were facilitated through Sinn Féin figures including Gerry Kelly. Allister said: "I'm stunned that five months after this emerged in court, the PSNI still haven't even questioned Kelly." Allister also raised the issue with DUP First Minister, Peter Robinson, in whose office Kelly is a junior minister.

"I assume you would be disapproving of such behaviour (facilitating meetings between witnesses and the IRA). The question is what you intend to do about it?" Allister asked Robinson.

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