

The Great Deception

MASS MURDER

Dublin and
Monaghan Car
Bombings 1974

John O'Brien



Introduction

The Dublin and Monaghan Car Bombings of 1974 were unspeakable crimes of wanton savagery, executed with total disregard for human life and suffering. Even in the context of the many atrocities committed at that time a barrier was crossed into the darkness. It is a matter of profound regret that no one has been made accountable for these crimes. The memories of those dark days slip from the wider public consciousness but never from the memories of their families and close friends. Much has been said and written about the culprits and much of the discourse has been coloured by competing political narratives. Many promises have been made and broken and there is no way that justice can prevail in the truest sense of that word. Personally I have spent many years researching the topic and, in this book, I intend to provide an honest appraisal based on the known facts and without fear or favour. I invite the reader to form their own judgments.

Notwithstanding this analysis both Sovereign Governments, British and Irish owe the victims and families a profound apology for failing in their primary duty to protect the innocent and for failing to show interest in the crimes for many years.

Fiftieth Anniversary

The Great Deception
Copyright © 2024 John A. O'Brien
ISBN 978-1-3999-7902-3
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

This edition printed and bound in the Republic of Ireland by

Lettertec Publishing
Springhill House,
Carrigtwohill
Co. Cork
Republic of Ireland
www.selfpublishbooks.ie



lettertec

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted by any device,
without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

This book may not be circulated without a cover
or in any cover other than the existing cover.

Foreword

The Dublin and Monaghan bombings of May 1974 – 50 years before this writing – remain the worst crimes, by number of victims, ever committed in this State and the worst atrocity on the island of Ireland in the period known as “The Troubles.” A total of 34 innocent people died in the no-warning car-bomb explosions and hundreds of others were wounded, many severely. Nobody was ever made amenable at law for these dreadful deeds although police investigations on both sides of the Irish border very quickly established the identities of those directly responsible – members of several Loyalist murder gangs with members in Lurgan, Portadown and Belfast.

But successive inquiries by news-media, by lawyers, and by politicians – including a Commission of Investigation sitting in Dublin have raised profoundly serious (and yet fully unanswered) questions about who facilitated, trained, equipped, and directed the murdergangs. John O’Brien’s forensically driven analysis of the case and the subsequent actions (and inactions) of governments provides some important new information but does not purport to provide all the answers. Rather does it consolidate the many unanswered questions and present them in a new and challenging format.

Why, when the British government informed their Irish counterparts, months after the bombings, that they had interned the bombers, were key members of the Irish security services, including members of the investigation teams, not informed? Why, when the Irish government was thus informed, was there no attempt to extradite the guilty men for trial in the Republic? Why, was the Garda response to the bombings so fragmented and slow? The inescapable conclusion must be that overriding interests of State security – both British and Irish – determined the

course of events. Given what we now know about secret British support for Loyalist paramilitary groups, as well as the penetration of Irish intelligence and security services by Britain's MI6, none of this should be especially surprising.

John O'Brien skillfully isolates the questions and brings the keen perspective of an experienced, senior security specialist to bear upon them. This is a narrative that must fill today's reader with sorrow for the lost lives of Dublin, of Monaghan, men, women, and children. It also serves as a grim reminder of two states' and two governments' failure to deliver justice to the innocent. Conor Brady

CONOR BRADY is the author of two histories of An Garda Síochána. He is a former editor of The Irish Times. In 1974 when the Dublin and Monaghan bombings took place, he was editor of The Garda Review and witnessed the aftermath of the Dublin bombings firsthand.

Contents

1.	The Attacks and the Long Silence	1
2.	The Key Questions/Hypotheses	8
3.	Information Disregarded by Dublin and London	12
4.	The Investigations Dublin and Monaghan	23
5.	State of War – Pivot to Infiltration and Black Operations	29
6.	British Army Bomb Intelligence and Weapons Intelligence Function 1972 -1977.....	39
7.	Defining Moment Hidden Hand: Yorkshire Television 6 July 1993	42
8.	L/Col Styles Troubling Scenario – Setting off a Bang	50
9.	Dublin Inquires Too Little Too Late.....	59
10.	Semi Hostile Reception to Lieutenant Colonel Wylde - Puzzling.....	66
11.	Many Inquiries.....	82
12.	Prior History of Bombings	94
13.	Planning for the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings	102
14.	Justice for the Forgotten JFF	105
15.	Analysis.....	106
16.	The Years of Silence by British and Irish Governments	113
17.	Touched by Tragedy	116
18.	The Wider Context	127
19.	The Ubiquitous Jon Boutcher.....	134

20.	Jon Boutcher Dublin and Monaghan Bombings	143
21.	Appendix One Terms of Reference Barron, Ardagh, MacEntee	150
22.	Appendix Two Reign of Terror IRA and UVF 1974	154
	Bibliography.....	166

Figures

Figure 1 Parnell Street 10 Victims	3
Figure 2 Talbot Street 15 Victims	4
Figure 3 South Leinster Street 2 Victims	4
Figure 4 Monaghan 7 Victims.....	4
Figure 5 The Victims	5
Figure 6 Dublin City Centre – Well Known to Car Bombers.....	5
Figure 7 We Have Interned Them - Wilson	20
Figure 8 Complex Investigation	23
Figure 9 Meeting the Enemy	32
Figure 10 Mark Urban - Big Boys Rules	33
Figure 11 Brigadier Frank Kitson	34
Figure 12 Lieutenant Colonel Styles – Letting off a Bang Admission	48
Figure 13 Lieutenant Colonel Styles receives his George Cross ...	48
Figure 14 Collusion Allegations	53
Figure 15 Expert Analysis Lieutenant Colonel Wylde	63
Figure 16 Dublin & Monaghan Car Bombing	82
Figure 17 Evening Herald Headlines New Evidence.....	99
Figure 18 Chief Constable PSNI	134
Figure 19 Sir John Stevens.....	138
Figure 20 Voices from America	142

Dedications and Acknowledgements

This book is dedicated to Margaret Lombard O'Brien.

It is also dedicated to the memory of the many victims and their families who suffered so grievously because of the bombings. Their lack of recognition by the British and Irish States has been a constant stimulus for me both professionally and personally in this venture.

I wish to acknowledge the help and support of many colleagues retired and serving in An Garda Síochána. A particular vote of thanks is due to the colleagues who shared their memories with me and with the Oral History Project of the GSRMA (Garda Retired). They provided untold stories and brought a poignant and telling context to the narrative. I am grateful to Rachael Hegarty for allowing me to use excerpts from her book, *May Day 1974*. I had conversations and discussions with many people including, Don Mullan, Margaret Urwin, Joe Tiernan and Jon Boutcher.

I must make special mention of my golf buddies, Paddy, Frank and Dave who have adopted the role of my unpaid focus group and who enthusiastically critique my narrative even in the middle of golf. The inestimable contributions from the Hidden Hand Documentary and the information from *Justice for the Forgotten* made this entire project possible. Special and sincere thanks is due to Aidan Shields, Kevin O'Loughlin and Pat Fay, who lost parents in the dreadful attacks and who engaged with me in an open and warm manner. I must also thank some anonymous colleagues who have provided invaluable insights into many aspects of the story. I owe a special thanks to Conor Brady for his thoughtful and incisive foreword.

My thanks to Margaret who has supported me throughout and understands better than anyone the effort and time involved.

Any omissions or mistakes are entirely mine.

Main Influencers

Harold Wilson Prime Minister 1974
Liam Cosgrave Taoiseach 1974
Bertie Ahern Taoiseach 1999
Patrick Cooney Minister for Justice 1974
Garrett Fitzgerald Minister for Foreign Affairs 1974
Patrick Malone Garda Commissioner 1974
Edmund Garvey Garda Assistant Commissioner 1974
Merlyn Rees Secretary of State NI 1974
The Hidden Hand Production Team 1993
Don Mullan 2000
Justice for the Forgotten Organisation 1996
General Sir Harry Tuzo 1970
Brigadier Frank Kitson 1970
General Sir Frank King 1972
Lieutenant Colonel George Styles 1972
Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde 1974
Colonel Mike Dewar 1974
Commandant Patrick Trears 1974
John Weir 1999
Justice Henry Barron 2000
Sean Ardagh TD Joint Justice committee 2003
IRA Provisional IRA unless otherwise described 1974
UVF Ulster Volunteer Force 1974
Jon Boutcher Chief Constable
John Stevens (Lord Stevens) 1999



1. The Attacks and the Long Silence

This work follows a Cold Case approach in reviewing crimes that occurred fifty years ago. There are an accumulation of reports, facts and opinions which require study and evaluation.

The initial process looks at the alleged perpetrators of these car bombings. Examines the known facts and peruses the records for information which may have been overlooked or misinterpreted. The common hypothesis assumes that the bombings were committed by loyalists and there has been divergent views as to whether they had the technical capacity to successfully carry out the attacks unaided. The literature has revealed startling information which has been either ignored or unrecognised. Three British Army Colonels provided revealing information which requires very close study and has not been fully explored.

There was a manifest failure by both the British and Irish governments to action suitable responses in the aftermath of the attacks. The belated inquiries authorised by Dublin were unsatisfactory in terms of scope and content. The Garda Síochána has been criticised for ending their inquiries prematurely and this proposition will be tested. The Irish Government failed to hold a Public Tribunal of Inquiry into the attacks and to examine allegations of collusion in a forensic manner.

Latterly and remarkably a British initiative styled Operation Kenova has undertaken contacts with the families of the victims of the bombings using British Police officers operating in the Irish jurisdiction. There are elements of “False Flag” about this approach.

One has to have concern for the families and one needs to recognise that their hopes may be raised and then dashed. This area will also be closely examined.

The simmering question of collusion requires close appraisal. This is the Appalling Vista on the question of State Actors being involved in the crimes. There are many unanswered questions, including the reluctance of Dublin governments to pursue inter-governmental contact with the British until forced to do so by the Hidden Hand documentary and the pressure which was exerted by Justice for Forgotten. Can the details of the attacks be unravelled even now.

DECEPTION – BLACK OPERATIONS IRELAND

“Never attempt to win by force what can be won by deception.” — Niccolò Machiavelli

Dublin and Monaghan Bombings 17 May 1974

Deception encompasses the deliberate act or practice of lying, often involving the misrepresentation, omission, or intricate cover-ups of information. It typically denotes a recurring pattern of behaviour rather than a singular instance and can manifest through actions, schemes, or tricks designed to mislead. The central question which remains is whether State Actors colluded with Loyalist Paramilitaries (UVF) in committing the outrages. There are competing narratives on responsibility and on the after actions undertaken by the UK and Ireland. There has been more than a hint of self-justification from both governments.

The Dublin and Monaghan car bombings claimed the lives of 34 innocents, with many casualties in Dublin, and in Monaghan, and including, tragically an unborn Baby Doherty in Dublin. This event marked the most devastating atrocity of the Troubles. However, the incidents largely faded from public consciousness until the airing of “The Hidden Hand – The Forgotten Massacre,” a documentary by Yorkshire Television on July 6, 1993. This documentary raised unsettling questions about the atrocities after a 19-year silence. The Sunningdale Agreement, which aimed at establishing a devolved assembly in Northern Ireland, sparked the Ulster Workers’ strike in May 1974, leading to many consequential events particularly the car bombings. The Northern Ireland conflict intensified with Loyalist strikes protesting the power-sharing Northern Assembly, causing the downfall of the Assembly. Simultaneously, Dublin faced economic turbulence and domestic threats from the IRA. Amid these challenges, Harold Wilson’s Labour government, widely distrusted in Britain oversaw the suspension of the power-sharing assembly in Belfast.

Friday 17 May 1974 – The Car Bombings

On that fateful Friday Dublin was busy and bustling with the center city streets crowded with shoppers and visitors. A bus strike was in place adding to the crowded streets. The weather was good, and the weekend beckoned. Death was far from the minds of the populace. This illusion of tranquility was shattered in minutes by three car bombs. A car bomb is a frightening and vicious attack, and a no warning car bomb is at the upper end of that scale. The noise of the explosion is tremendous particularly in an urban setting and the death and destruction is truly horrendous. Personally, I was a few hundred yards away when the car bomb exploded outside Liberty Hall, Eden Quay on the 1 December 1972. It is difficult to fully understand the real nature of these attacks unless one was proximate to them. Monaghan's fate was to fall victim to a cross border bomb over an hour later but with equally devastating results. Many garda colleagues were working in Dublin and Monaghan and their personal accounts are recalled later.

The timings were, Parnell Street: 1728, Talbot Street: 1730, South Leinster Street: 1732, and Monaghan: 1858

The Victims Dublin and Monaghan



Figure 1 Parnell Street 10 Victims



Figure 2 Talbot Street 15 Victims



Figure 3 South Leinster Street 2 Victims



Figure 4 Monaghan 7 Victims

The Victims

(1) Parnell Street Dublin

Marie Butler, 21,
John Dargle, 80
Patrick Fay, 47,
Antonio Magliocco, 37
John O'Brien, 24,
Anna O'Brien, 22,
Jacqueline O'Brien, 16.5 months,
Anne Marie O'Brien, 4.5 months,
Edward O'Neill, 39,
Breda Turner, 21,

(3) South Leinster Street Dublin

Anna Massey, 21
Christina O'Loughlin, 51

(2) Talbot Street Dublin

Josie (Josephine) Bradley, 21,
Anne Byrne, 35,
Simone Chetrit, 30,
Concepta Dempsey, 65,
Colette Doherty (with child), 20,
Elizabeth Fitzgerald, 59,
Breda (Bernadette) Grace, 34,
May McKenna, 55,
Anne Marren, 20,
Dorothy Morris, 57,
Marie Phelan, 20,
Siobhán Roice, 19,
Maureen Shields, 44,
John Walshe, 27,

(4) Monaghan North Road

Patrick Askin, 44,
Thomas Campbell, 52,
Thomas Croarkin, 36,
Archibald Harper, 72,
Thomas John Travers, 28,
Peggy White, 40,
George Williamson, 73,

Figure 5 The Victims

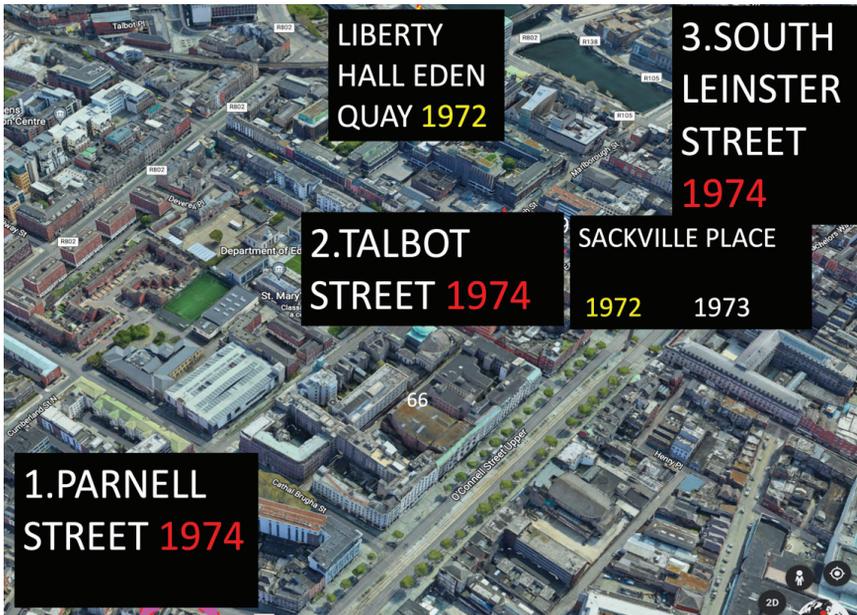


Figure 6 Dublin City Centre – Well Known to Car Bombers

There are obvious challenges to placing car bombs in a busy urban city center, not least to the perpetrators. It follows that a definite goal is in mind, in the first instance cause death and destruction and secondly

achieve a political/military goal. This was true on the 1 December 1972 and 17 May 1974. The attack on the 20 January 1973 was aimed at death and destruction with no defined objective. A warning was received from the RUC minutes before the explosion. Smoke was spotted coming from the car shortly before the explosion. This bomb had the unmistakable signature of a typical crude UVF bomb quite different from the Dublin 1974 car bombs.

1/12/1972 – Car bombs at Eden Quay & Sackville Place, Dublin, Cars (Acquired Belfast) Emergency Legislation Dead Locked in Dáil Passed Quickly after attacks. Belated warnings were given for these attacks.

20/01/1973 – Car bomb at Sackville Place (All Blacks Rugby) Car Acquired Belfast

17/05/1974 – 3 Car Bombs Dublin (Cars Acquired Belfast), Sunningdale Agreement Protests - Northern Ireland in chaos – Power Sharing Executive Falls. No warnings were given for these bombs or the car bomb in Monaghan later that day.

The Bomb Cars

All the bomb cars were acquired/stolen on the day of the Bombings. They travelled into the Republic still bearing their original plates. There is some doubt regarding whether all the Belfast cars were stolen or acquired for the bombings. There is no question but that the Monaghan car was stolen as reported.

In normal crime investigations the Garda would have interviewed the car owners and sought witnesses. In these circumstances they were totally dependent of the RUC for this action. This line of enquiry was never completed or perhaps even actioned.

(1) Parnell Street:

The car that exploded was a Hillman Avenger, 1970 model, metallic golden olive in colour and registration number DIA 4063. Acquired in Belfast.

(2) Talbot Street:

The bomb car was a Ford Escort, metallic blue mink, registration number 1385 WZ stolen Belfast.

(3) South Leinster Street:

The bomb car was acquired in Belfast. It was an Austin 1800 Maxi, lagoon blue in colour, with the registration number HOI 2487. This car was owned by the Ariel Taxi Company Limited, 144 Agnes Street, Belfast.

(4) Monaghan:

The bomb car on this occasion was a 1966 green Hillman Minx, registration number 6583 OZ. The car had been parked in a car park near Woodhouse Street, Portadown at 3.30 p.m. It was stolen from that location.

UVF¹ did not claim responsibility for the attacks until 15 July 1993 and then after the Hidden Hand exposé of 6 July 1993.

¹ *UVF – Ulster Volunteer Force not to be confused with the UDA – Ulster Defence Association*

2. The Key Questions/Hypotheses

Did the Dublin Government learn of the identity of the Bombers from the British Government?

Yes, the British Prime Minister Mr. Harold Wilson informed Mr. Liam Cosgrave “that they knew who the bombers were, and they had interned them” This information was exchanged on two occasions, September 11, and November 21, 1974.

Did the Dublin Government act promptly on the information supplied by the British?

No, Judge Barron in a scathing finding commented harshly on the failure of the government to pursue the information supplied at the time. This was a continual failure, and no action was taken until 19 years after the attacks following the Hidden Hand documentary in 1993. Substantive action was not taken until 1999 resulting from pressure from the group Justice for the Forgotten (JFF). This action was confused and self-limiting. Three separate actions were organized, (1) A Judge led Inquiry with no powers of compellability, conducted in private with no verbatim recording of the exchanges. (2) The formation of a Dáil Sub Committee commissioned to review the Judges findings, including the fact that his brief had been increased to consider other cross border attacks. (3) The ordering of a Commission of Investigation as the last formal government inquiry, and this was conducted on much restricted terms of reference. The government refused to hold a Tribunal of Inquiry despite the overwhelming evidence for this or a similar approach. This was even though the government ordered another Tribunal at the same time into “suggestions” of collusion into the murder of two RUC officers. The known facts regarding the Dublin and Monaghan and subsequent attacks far exceeded the “suggestion” benchmark.

Did the London Government act promptly on the information supplied to the Irish Government?

No, even though on their own admission the perpetrators lived in their jurisdiction and the cars and explosives used came from their jurisdiction.

They maintained this policy of studied indifference, despite and occasionally issuing placebo words of comfort to Dublin. As described elsewhere the British had at their disposal a vast intelligence network with unmatched technical and human resources at their disposal. Notwithstanding their public position it was obvious that this group of Loyalists posed an internal threat to security in Northern Ireland and despite this they were deproscribed early in 1974 and were not reproscribed until the following year. It was equally obvious that the British had a highly developed intelligence network and this network as a matter of normal duty would have taken an intense interest in the attacks. Potentially these forces could have been directed internally against British interests. It is most revealing that the attacks scarcely seemed to garner a mention or a call for action. I wonder why that was.

Was there Collusion between British State Actors and Loyalists – UVF?

Yes. On the balance of probability there was collusion in the instance of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings and in general over the period of the Troubles. One is looking specifically at groups, the Loyalists (UVF), British Military units acting asymmetrically involved in coaching the loyalists in the specific and rare skills required to detonate the three Dublin Bombs almost simultaneously and without injury to the bombers.

Nevertheless it is important to make a very important reservation recognising as one does that many RUC officers² and military took no part in collusion and many of them paid the ultimate price and many more were grievously injured.

One looks at the typology of Loyalist bombings in the Republic and in Northern Ireland. It is clear that with the notable exception of the attacks of 1 December 1972 and 17 May 1974 that they were crude hit and run attacks lacking in expertise and execution. Secondly this same record demonstrates their incompetence in executing those attacks. Thirdly they did not have access to High Explosives in 1974. Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde and other military experts agree on this fact.

² Breen, Colin. *A Force Like No Other: The Last Shift*: Blackstaff Press Ltd. (Part of a Trilogy)

The Dublin car bombs connect with a specific political agenda. (Opposition to the Sunningdale Agreement and power sharing 1974). This was a parallel circumstance to the car bombs on 1 December 1972 again a political purpose was present, "scare Dublin into passing the enhanced legislation to combat the IRA". Both attacks succeeded in their political objectives.

The opinions of many observers give testament to their belief of collusion. On the balance of probability there is no doubt that collusion paid a major part in these attacks.

Did the Loyalists have the capacity to carry out the Attacks unaided?

No, the Loyalists did not have the technical capacity to organise and resource the attacks unaided. Demonstrably they were incompetent bunglers as is testified by their many "own goals" in their bombing history. Many witnesses have given strong opinions on their lack of expertise. There is no doubting their willingness to commit murder through no warning attacks so they were willing partners in these crimes.

Lieutenant Colonel Wylde explained;

Loyalist Strategy. *The only discernible Loyalist strategy was that they were against anything that could threaten the link with Great Britain. As such they would use bombs indiscriminately as weapons of terror directed at soft Republican targets. These bombs would always be delivered without warning. A feature of the Loyalist bombings in 1974 was that as a result of the split in the Loyalist movement over the Sunningdale agreement there were a number of loyalist bombs directed at other Loyalist groups. Loyalist bombs were simple and unsophisticated and reflected their lack of technical expertise. Loyalists never issued a warning regarding their bombs.*

Loyalist Planning. *In 1974 the Loyalists terrorists were divided into many groups and fractions within groups. Consequently their ability to plan operations was very limited due to a lack of people to gather information. They had very limited access to commercial explosives and did not have access to the facilities necessary to make large quantities of home-made explosives. A severe limitation was their very limited supply of electric detonators, so their usual means of attack was to use safety fuse and an igniferous detonator. Consequently their operations were planned around*

what the local groups could organise themselves. Without exception their operations were simple to undertake and always designed to kill or injure. Their intelligence was very limited, so their targets were almost always indiscriminately chosen in Republican areas. Bombs were of simple construction requiring very limited skills to make and could be planted or thrown with minimum risk to the terrorists.

This is also the considered opinion of other military experts.

Was the response of the Garda Síochána deficient at the time or laterally?

One does not have access to the minute detail of the contemporaneous investigation steps. However it is plain from the fact that the suspects, the planning and launching of the attacks happened in another jurisdiction that the Garda investigators needed direct access to the suspects and to all relevant information. This could only be achieved with the legal cooperation of the RUC and this was not forthcoming at a formal level. Notwithstanding it is clear that a fair degree of informal cooperation was achieved and this led to the compilation of a common list of suspects. The missing ingredient in this equation was the absence of the necessary court quality evidence on which to make an extradition request to the Northern authorities. This ingredient was not present then and obviously exculpatory interviews with suspects was merely a box ticking exercise. It is clear that the Garda cooperated in an unprecedented manner with the Hidden Hand documentary and this is reflective of a mindset which was obviously unhappy with the way in which the attacks were ultimately forgotten. Personally I am well aware that contact between senior gardaí and the Department of Justice was conducted on a daily basis on all aspects of security. It would be wrong to assume that politicians can take cover behind a mythical wall of non-interference in Garda matters. It wasn't the case then and it is not the case now. It is an open question as to whether senior Gardaí should have done more to spur the government to act, personally I think it's probable that they should have been proactive following the Hidden Hand documentary.

3. Information Disregarded by Dublin and London³

A meeting was held in London on 11 September 1974, at which the British side comprised of the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, The British Ambassador to Dublin, the Permanent Secretary to the Northern Ireland Office, and other senior civil servants. The Irish side comprised of An Taoiseach, the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Irish Ambassador to London as well as senior civil servants of the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs. During this meeting, minutes prepared in the Department of Foreign Affairs quote the Prime Minister as saying the following: “In recent months some very nasty men had been lifted on the Unionist side. On the Friday and Saturday of the UWC strike, twenty-five interim custody orders had been signed and the perpetrators of the Dublin bomb outrages had been picked up and were now detained, but it was impossible to get the evidence to try them in ordinary courts”.

A similar statement is recorded in minutes prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs relating to a meeting in Dublin on 21 November 1974⁴. “He (the Prime Minister) emphasised again that the people who had bombed Dublin were now interned, and that this was the only way which they could be dealt with because the sort of evidence against them would not stand up in court. They were certain they had the right people, but they could not bring them to trial.”

This information was central, critical, crucial, and pertinent to the discovery of the culprits and never actioned. **It was discovered during the Barron Investigation in 2003 and has remained unreported.** I spoke with Vincent Browne at the Memorial Ceremony in Talbot Street in 2023 where he had delivered the keynote remarks. He was astounded by this revelation. I refer to this interaction as *British Information Admission*⁵ 1974.

³ *Interim Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings December 2003 Page 129*

⁴ *IRA Bombed Birmingham on this day.*

⁵ *Information Admission 1974 Factor* 12

Judge Barron observed with classic judicial understatement:

Notwithstanding the information supplied in the course of these meetings, there appears to have been no follow through by any of those who became aware of it. Nothing was apparently raised at the meeting. Names were not sought, nor the evidence which justified the internment, nor the allegation that they had been responsible for the Dublin bombing.

Following the meetings, there is no evidence that the information was passed, either to the Minister for Justice or any of his officials, or indeed to the Garda Commissioner or any other Garda officer. Certainly, Patrick Cooney, the then Minister for Justice was never made aware of it, nor is there any record of such information being passed to An Garda Síochána.

This absence of apparent interest in those interned, and in whatever evidence there was which indicated that some of them were involved in the Dublin bombings, strongly suggests that the Irish Government made no efforts to assist the investigation into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings at a political level⁶. It is also surprising that they did not convey this information to An Garda Síochána. One can imagine the impetus this would have given the Garda Investigation. Much could have been achieved with Government support.

The information revealed by Judge Barron indicts An Taoiseach, the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Irish Ambassador of not acting on the information supplied. Is it possible to draw any other conclusion from this report. In a spirit of international cooperation it also was incumbent on the British Government to act on their own information and to keep the Irish Government informed.

Many years of inaction could have been avoided and it would not have been left to the Hidden Hand Documentary to stimulate belated interest on the atrocities. This admission would have been of immense value to the investigators because it represented disclosure of the most pertinent kind, and it would have framed their approach in a focused way.

⁶ *“At a political level” – is disingenuous because the government had the sworn responsibility to act – not just spectators.*

The British would have been asked specifically what they knew and what did they propose to do.

Former Ministers Disagree with Barron

In 2004⁷ two former government ministers who were in office at that time took serious issue with Judge Barron's comments.

Dr. Garret Fitzgerald, Minister for Foreign Affairs (1973 – 1977) and a former Taoiseach.

Dr. FitzGerald submitted that had he been aware that Mr. Justice Barron intended to focus on the lack of follow-up to comments regarding internment made by Mr. Harold Wilson P.M. at an inter- Governmental meeting, he would have explained to him the different roles of certain bodies in Irish-British relations. Specifically, he would have expanded on the relationships, which existed between the diplomatic corps, the Department of Justice and the Garda Síochána.

Dr. FitzGerald pointed out that as Minister for Foreign Affairs he would not have thought it appropriate to respond to, or get involved in, individual cases. He felt:

“It would have cut across the correct channels. We now know, of course that those channels worked very well. [The Taoiseach] would not have thought it appropriate to respond and I suspect that if I had responded he would have rightly been unhappy that I had risen to the bait.”

Dr. FitzGerald told the Sub-Committee that at the time, it was not the Government's remit to intervene in the activities of the police and the Government would not normally take a proactive approach in the investigation of a matter such as the Dublin and Monaghan bombings.

In relation to collusion, Dr. FitzGerald did not recall any suggestion of active British involvement in the bombings, either at the time of the bombings themselves or indeed for a long time afterwards. He stated:

⁷ Joint Committee on Justice 28 January 2004 – Public Hearing on the Barron Report

"... I can only say that given the fact that I was rather persistent in these matters, to the irritation of the British, if I had such a suspicion, I would have been minded to pursue it. I probably would have had to consult first before doing so, but I would have wanted to pursue anything of that kind, as I did in a lot of other cases. I have no recollection of that happening."

Mr. Patrick Cooney, Minister for Justice, (1973-1977) and subsequently other ministries.

Mr. Patrick Cooney was the Minister for Justice at the time of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings. He met with Mr. Justice Barron during the preparation of his Report and had concerns about a number of issues contained in it.

Mr. Cooney pointed out to the Sub-Committee that in his opinion, the task assigned to Mr. Justice Barron and set out in the terms of reference of the Commission of Inquiry, was a formidable one. He stated:

"In discharging that task, he, as the sole member of the Commission, had to contend with a number of difficulties, which I feel are well nigh insuperable. It made his task almost impossible to complete."

One major concern of Mr. Cooney related to the fact that interviews, which were conducted with witnesses, were not recorded verbatim. The only records of meetings were written in long hand by an assistant. Mr. Cooney felt that these notes were an inadequate method of recording the meetings and as a result might not fully reflect the discussion.

Like Dr. FitzGerald, Mr. Cooney took issue with conclusion number 7 in the Barron Report, which found that the Government of the day failed to show the concern expected of it and showed little interest in the bombings. Mr. Cooney felt that this conclusion was reached as a result of a fundamental misunderstanding on the part of Mr. Justice Barron, as to the nature of the relationship, which existed between the Department of Justice, the Government and the Garda Síochána. He felt that the report indicated a misapprehension on the part of Mr. Justice Barron, that the Department and the Government controlled the activities of the Gardaí in their conduct of investigations. He emphatically disagreed with this. Any form of undue interference would have been anathema to the principles of democracy:

“We were aware, as was the Department of Justice, of what was being proposed by the Garda and we had to accept its professional assessment of how it was going to deal with this serious crime. The two most senior detectives in the State headed up the investigation with a dedicated force of 40 officers. It was unprecedented. As Minister for Justice, I would have been happy with that and happy that that was an appropriate response from the Garda.” In considering whether the Government should have done anything about allegations of collusion in relation to the bombings, he stated:

“There was no evidence at that stage; there were suspicions of collusion between maverick elements of the security forces in the North and the probable-putative bombers but there was no hard evidence of collusion on which the Government could have gone to the other Government to make a complaint.”

Another problem faced by the Government related to the fact that the suspects were from Northern Ireland. Even if an admission of guilt had been procured from a suspect in the North, the prosecution and trial of the offences would be held in the Republic. This would have meant that the suspect would have to be extradited to the Republic to stand trial. Mr. Cooney indicated that the likelihood of a successful extradition would have been slim in the political climate of the time, due to Irish law and policy on extradition.

He also felt that Mr. Justice Barron had misunderstood the role and function of the Attorney General in his report. Conclusion 5 of the Report states:

“Although the investigation teams had in their opinion no evidence upon which to found a prosecution, there is no evidence that they sought the advice of the Attorney General, in whose name criminal prosecutions were at that time still being brought. Had the Attorney General reviewed the file, it is likely that advices would have been given as to what further direction the investigation might take.”

Mr. Cooney was of the opinion that this conclusion in the Barron Report suggests that the failure to consult was a factor in the failure to find evidence. Mr. Cooney submitted that the Attorney General had no role in

investigating crime or in directing the Gardaí in the investigation of crime. He stated:

“He did not want to see a file and a file would not be sent to him until there was a file or prima facie evidence against named persons and then he would deal with it.”

With regard to any perceived failure by members of the Department of Justice to keep their counterparts in the Department of Foreign Affairs fully updated in relation to all matters, Mr. Cooney explained that certain information was obtained in confidence by the Gardaí and shared with the Department of Justice, and the failure to pass on this information was sometimes the price which had to be paid in order to preserve confidentiality and protect Garda sources.

Authors Comment

Frankly I was amazed at the responses from both former ministers. The words are carefully chosen but are unmistakably self-exonerating. The notion that following the single biggest atrocity in the history of the state that they were concerned to operate withing clear protocols of demarcation and boundaries and they were jesuitically avoiding getting close to the garda investigations. Nonsense! There were daily contacts between the Department of Justice and An Garda Síochána and all items of daily and national interest were discussed and reported on . It was a very short time since the Arms Crisis of 1970 and the many turbulent events which followed.

Respectfully, not alone had they the right to be fully informed they had a solemn duty to act. Perhaps the passage of time had dimmed their recollections of the horror which prevailed in the country at that time.

Cabinet Sub Committee on Security

A Cabinet sub-committee had been formed on the recommendation of Judge Finlay following the IRA Helicopter escape from Mountjoy prison. The members of that committee were Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave, Tánaiste Brendan Corish, Minister for Justice Patrick Cooney, Minister for Defence Paddy Donegan. A Inter- Departmental Security Group was also formed.

Can anyone seriously believe that this Cabinet Sub-Committee did not discuss the Car Bombings? Can we believe that they were not told of the British admissions? This is what we are expected to believe, and no minutes exist of its deliberations. This group was formed to deal specifically with matters of national security and yet no footprint of its deliberation exists.

SOVERIGN RESPONSIBILITY

The enormity of the Dublin and Monaghan⁸ Car Bombings were such that in any circumstances the first line of responsibility for action rested with both sovereign governments. The southern narrative was that government would not “interfere” with the garda investigation as if there was some highly principled line that prevented them assuming their responsibility. The precedent of the “Arms Crisis” and the actions taken by government and the opposition then underlined a different approach when suited. Maybe it was a case that government was overwhelmed by the crisis and the real threat posed to the State by the IRA.

The British Government owed a significant responsibility for joint action because clear evidential links connected directly with their territory. The North was in a political and security turmoil and additionally the possibility of collusion lurked very much in the wings.

As time passed the probability of collusion became a major factor and took on a new and important dimension. Key explosives information was revealed by two British officers, Lieutenant Colonel George Styles GC and Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde. The subsequent Dublin Inquiries disregarded the key information provided by Styles and Wylde. Commandant Patrick Trears agreed with their assessments regarding UVF capabilities.

Fully 19 years passed before the Hidden Hand Documentary reawakened interest and then a further seven years before the Southern Government acted.

⁸ *The details of Monaghan Car Bomb is discussed separately below*

A joint investigation team was required but, in the circumstances, this was not possible. Garda investigators went North and got very valuable information as to the identity of the culprits. They had no facility or power to arrest or interrogate these people. This was solely the responsibility of the hard-pressed RUC which was struggling to maintain its presence on the streets not alone to engage in the kind of follow up action required. The British standpoint was the one conveyed by their Prime Minister to Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave on the 11 September and the 21 November 1974.

“In recent months some very nasty men had been lifted on the Unionist side. On the Friday and Saturday of the UWC strike, twenty-five interim custody orders had been signed and the perpetrators of the Dublin bomb outrages had been picked up and were now detained, but it was impossible to get the evidence to try them in ordinary courts”.

Had this information the placebo effect on the Irish Government?

I will outline the many complex steps required in the investigation. (fig 8)

The obstacles are listed and initially the multi-jurisdictional aspect was a very real obstacle which was not overcome then or subsequently. In effect this obstacle became an immovable obstruction which was never removed.

An investigation is about seeking facts and the pursuit required the Garda to perform a range of operational **tasks identifying** witnesses and nominating suspects.

The collection of forensic evidence from bomb sites and the processing of this information through bomb data analysis was required. It is fair to say that the Forensic capacity of the State and the Garda was in its infancy relative to the size of the atrocities. It is also apparent that the Irish EOD teams had the primary duty of dealing with bomb alerts and making sites safe. The collection of Forensic material was not the primary role, but it was achieved by certain EOD officers. In the following years sources confirm that much more cooperation was achieved between the Garda and the Irish Army.

The issue of criminal intelligence was central to a successful investigation. There was limited knowledge of Loyalist terrorists but despite that the suspect names were identified albeit outside the State. Subsequently much emphasis was placed on the assertion that the Garda investigations were “wound down” too soon. The presumption being if they were not that the investigations would have progressed to a satisfactory conclusion. The reasons outlined here indicate the very real difficulty faced by the investigators in pursuing an investigation in Northern Ireland.

Nevertheless, there was a solemn duty on the Garda and the Irish Government to keep this investigation alive. Having regard to the political reality this duty rested primarily with Government but there should have been repeated promptings from the Garda. The record is silent on this aspect of follow up. Nevertheless the fact the Garda cooperated with the Hidden Hand documentary reveals a very real concern regarding the way the investigation had been neglected in succeeding year

HAROLD WILSON TO LIAM COSGRAVE “WE HAVE INTERNED THE CULPRITS”



Figure 7 We Have Interned Them - Wilson

Mr. Liam Cosgrave Taoiseach Dáil Eireann 21 May 1974.

What do they hope to gain? What does any man of violence in these islands hope to gain? For the blood of the innocent victims of last Friday's outrage—and of the victims of similar outrages in the North and in England—is on the hands of every man who has fired a gun or discharged a bomb in furtherance of the present campaign of violence in these islands—just as plainly as it is on the hands of those who parked the cars and set the charges last Friday. In our times, violence cannot be contained in neat compartments and justified in one case but not in another. Those who practise it must anticipate an answer in kind. What they are creating in the end is a world where reason and compassion are dead and only might is right. To them I would say that the only unity they are capable of creating is the unity, in opposition, of all decent men and women, to their values and methods.

Author: The Taoiseach's use of the word Unity may have conveyed a mindset that the IRA were involved or at least vicariously. Was he thinking only of the IRA.

Mr. T.J. Fitzpatrick for Minister for Justice 21 May 1975

I am informed by the Commissioner of the Garda Síochána that Garda investigations of these outrages continue although nobody has so far been made amenable.

Mr. Davern

Is it not a fact that the Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland stated that those three people were in their custody at one stage?

Mr. T.J. Fitzpatrick

The fact that these people were interned might suggest—if they were interned—there was **not evidence** sufficient to sustain conviction. Even if these were the people who were guilty, the offence was committed here and, unless the reciprocal legislation which is now being sponsored here and in Britain were available, it would not be possible to bring these people to justice in Northern Ireland for crimes committed here.

Fully one year later there is a harmless exchange in the Dáil and there is no admission that the British Prime Minister had informed the Taoiseach, “That they had interned the perpetrators” in September and November the previous year. Then the interest in the killings evaporated for years at least until 1993 and the Hidden Hand documentary.

Please refer to Appendix 2 which provides a list of IRA and UVF outrages in 1974. This material provides a context in terms of the security demands on the government. It is a horrendous litany of death and destruction in Northern Ireland and in England.

Despite this compelling background it is inexcusable and inexplicable that the murders were allowed to slip into the background and then be totally ignored until 1993. The Hidden Hand documentary became the stimulus for action albeit slowly.

Opportunities were lost and that was shameful neglect of the victims and their families.

4. The Investigations Dublin and Monaghan

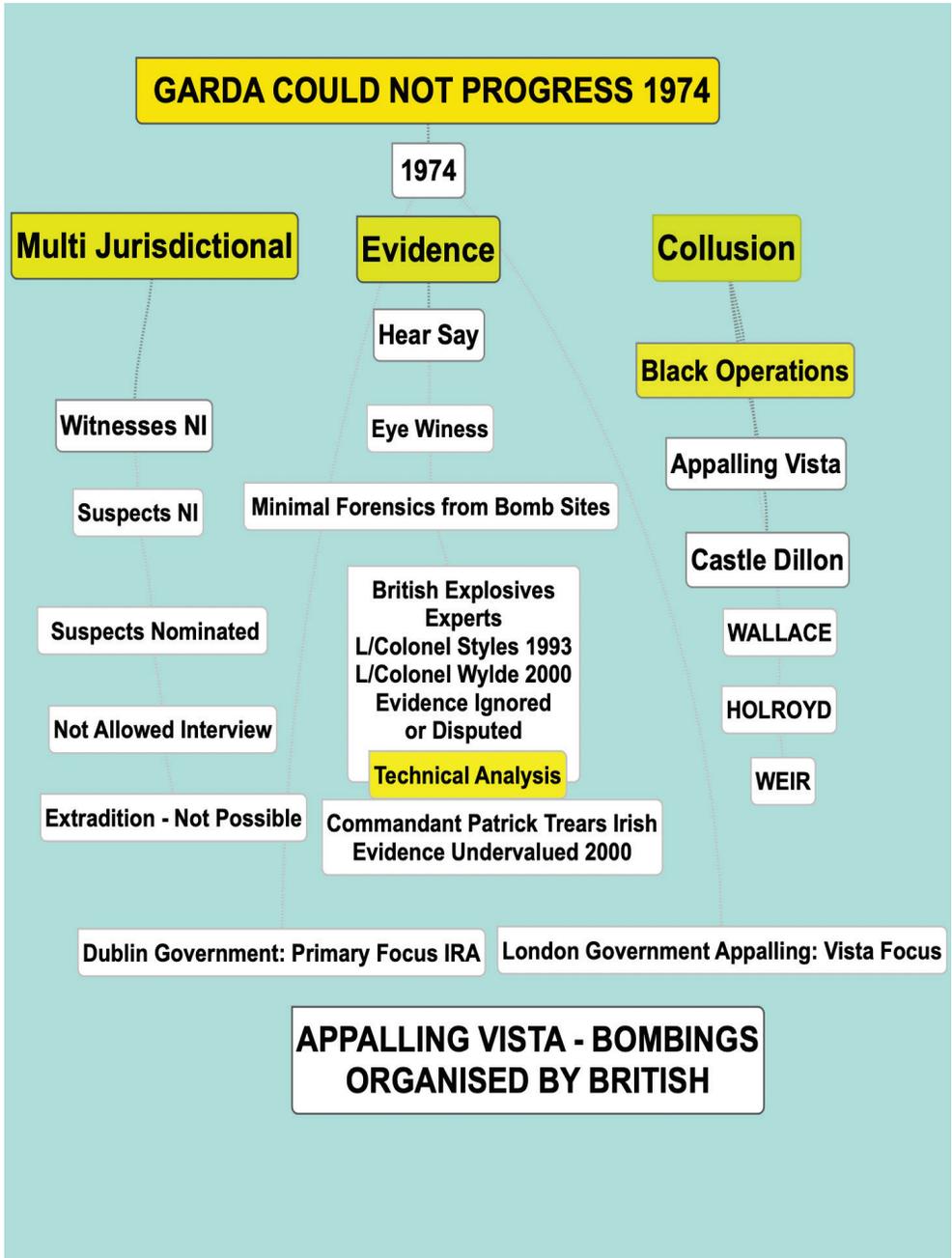


Figure 8 Complex Investigation

A Word Of Caution

A word of caution to the discerning critic please consider that we are 50 years on from these terrible events. One has to understand the context of the time, incipient civil war in the North, the military hold the Primacy in security matters and the rule of law is largely disregarded. The Republic is plagued with economic difficulties and now under real threat from the IRA and dissident elements. Many of these terrorists are in prison having been convicted in the courts. Internment is not in force⁹ because that playbook has been suspended. The AGS is struggling as an organisation in terms of resources and leadership. In short these are not normal times and this needs to be factored into retrospective judgement.

Both governments were severely challenged by the atrocities. On the Irish side the State was under considerable threat from the IRA and dissident elements. Indeed there was a preliminary mindset in Dublin the IRA were in some way responsible. There were different challenges for the British as the very real spectre of collusion emerged. This raised the Appalling Vista that British elements had colluded in the attacks. This focus was sharpened when it became obvious that the Loyalists had never mounted synchronised car bombings previously. Indeed this shadow is very much present to this day.

As outlined in the diagram, the first challenge related to the Multi-Jurisdictional aspect of the crimes. The Crimes were committed in the South and they were planned and executed from the North. This meant that witnesses/suspects and other normal policing inquiries could only be processed through the active cooperation of the host authorities and in accordance with the prevailing law. This formal cooperation was not forthcoming but informal contacts were made and this resulted in a mutual list of suspects. Nevertheless this information could not be processed until formal interviews were completed. This course was not open to the garda due to non-cooperation. This meant that Extradition was not an option. The only remedy lay in cooperation and facilitation at government to government level.

⁹ *Not in force in the South but in force in the North to 1975*

In relation to Evidence, the material emanating from the North was by its nature hear-say and needed corroboration to be of use in court proceedings. The potential witness evidence in the South was by way of visual identification. It was useful but again the quality of the evidence (not the witnesses) would be severely tested in court. There are very clear evidential rules on the admissibility of eye witness testimony. This is not good news for families but that is the plain truth. The other evidential area related to forensic evidence obtained from the individual crime scenes. Some useful information was gleaned from all crimes scenes but it is true to say that the full evidential potential was not achieved due to poor crime scene preservation. This is not intended as a criticism but it is a reflection of the shock and horror associated with attacks of this magnitude.

The Hidden Hand documentary (1993) produced two technical witnesses L/Colonel George Styles and Commandant Patrick Trears who provided a professional appraisal on the Loyalist bombing capacity (or the lack of it). L/Colonel Styles also revealed that it was usual for the British Army to set explosions off using captured IRA explosives as means of undertaking searches and for operational reasons.

He referred to it as being asked to “Set off a Bang”. The significance of this revelation went unnoticed for years. The British Army had the capacity and intent to use captured IRA explosives in this manner. Clearly that information did not become available until 1993, 19 years later. Another British Officer L/Colonel Wylde¹⁰ provided an extremely detailed forensic information in a report to the Judge Barron Inquiry and to the Ardagh Committee in the early 2000s. It is fair to say that he was not pleased with the way in which he was treated by these inquiries. I have seen a copy of his full report and it is remarkable for the forensic detail contained in it. He shares the views of the other officers relating to the Loyalists inability to produce sophisticated bombs in 1974. He also provides a compare and contrast with ability of the IRA in the same area, who were infinitely more competent. His detailed remarks are referred to elsewhere.

¹⁰ *Witness provided by JFF*

Collusion and Black Operations are linked in this narrative and form the basis of the Appalling Vista scenario so resolutely avoided by the British. Three operators on the British side, Colin Wallace, Fred Holroyd and John Weir provided very disturbing information on collusion with Loyalists. The complexity of British intelligence and undercover operations has been described. The presence of a “Special Duties Team” at Castle Dillon and the relationships between it and the Loyalists has been documented. It all paints up a very unsavoury picture but of course this was not available to garda investigators in 1974.

The Investigative steps - 1974

All investigations follow three basic steps in order to focus the investigation. Establish the Motive, the Opportunity and the Means. This seems relatively straight forward and part of that process in recreating the crime, is searching for evidence and identifying or eliminating suspects. The known information was the actual crime scenes and the locations from which the bomb cars were “stolen”.

Two investigation teams were established. Chief Superintendent John Joy, Central Detective Unit was in charge of the Dublin investigation. Chief Superintendent John Paul McMahon was in charge in Monaghan. Nevertheless the overall responsibility rested with the Garda Commissioner Patrick Malone. The Security Branch (A/C Garvey) at HQ, C3 had an overwatch on all security matters in the State. There also was operational input from Garda HQ where the Garda Technical Bureau was based. A separate investigations unit referred to as the “Murder Squad” was based at HQ. This was headed by Chief Superintendent Tony McMahon and Superintendent Dan Murphy. Chief Superintendent John Fleming was in charge of Special Branch at Dublin Castle. Rather surprisingly there is no mention of him in the records even though he was a highly competent officer. He had many links with the UK including with Special Branch in the Metropolitan Police. There were many different interests at work, probably too many for clean efficiency.

Monaghan Gardaí historically had good links with the RUC both socially and professionally. The respective officers knew each other albeit with a guarded scepticism on matters political. Simply put not everyone

could be trusted. This familiarity aided the Monaghan investigation and it certainly became well informed on the players involved and the manner of the attack and the subsequent escape, even down to where the killers stopped in a pub on the way home.

Progress

Solid progress was made in identifying the suspects and clearly the clues pointed unambiguously to Northern Ireland.

By¹¹ the end of July the Gardai had pieced together 95 per cent of the entire operation. From Armagh they had the names of Hanna, Jackson, Boyle, Wesley Sommerville, Fulton, Mulholland, Fulton's co-quartermaster, G.J., James Mitchell and the businessman who supplied the cars. From Belfast they had the names of Marchant and Bingham, who were involved in hijacking the cars. Along with Mulholland the information supplied by Esther Drumm and customers in the Coachman's Inn had given them almost the entire picture of the Whitehall end of the operation. But apart from Mulholland the evidence against the remaining suspects was unprovable. They had been fingered by loyalist colleagues who were not prepared to go to court to give evidence against them. And there was no forensic evidence against any of them.

Nevertheless, Northern Ireland was a closed book to the Garda Team because they could not interview the identified suspects, and this could not/would not be accomplished by the RUC.

It is important to understand that the garda investigation had made considerable progress in identifying several key suspects. All of whom were loyalist terrorists, mostly based in Portadown but some based in Belfast. It is reasonable to expect at this stage that the Dublin government would then have taken this situation to the diplomatic table with their British counterparts. Indeed, this door was swinging wide open because the British were formally indicating to Dublin that they knew the culprits and that they had been put out of circulation. Is it possible that this information

¹¹ *Dublin and Monaghan Bombings and the Murder Triangle, Tiernan Joe, 2004*

satisfied the Irish side and basically nothing happened until the “Hidden Hand” documentary was broadcast in 1993.

Considerable cooperation was received regarding the Eden Quay and Sackville Place car bombings on the 1 December 1972. One of the striking features of the investigation into these attacks was the extent to which the Garda investigation team was facilitated by their RUC counterparts. Gardaí were allowed, with the assistance of the RUC, to play an active part in the conduct of enquiries in Northern Ireland. They took statements from witnesses who had been involved in hiring out the bomb cars; they also took possession of all the hiring documents for fingerprint examination.

There had been another precedent (New Year’s Day 1973) for the extradition of a loyalist to Dublin to face a murder trial. This occurred because of the double murder of Oliver Boyce and Bríd Porter who were found lying on the grass verge at the side of Glenn Road, a minor road outside Burnfoot, Co. Donegal, about a mile from the Border as the crow flies. Self-evidently this process did not take place in relation to the Dublin and Monaghan attacks. This gave rise to considerable frustration in the Garda Síochána. The frustration is evidenced by the fact that the Garda cooperated with the “Hidden Hand” documentary 19 years later. In my view it is unusual and unprecedented that this cooperation was officially provided. *“We” never do this and the traditional response to the media has been a solid no comment in most instances. (authors note)*

Extradition

There was an insuperable legal difficulty which rose from the inability to interview the suspects and obtain admissions from them. Extradition is not permitted for investigation purposes because once the subjects are extradited to the requesting country they must be charged before the courts without interview. That was the law then and that is the law now. Consider the Hutch case as a current example.

5. State of War – Pivot to Infiltration and Black Operations

A state of undeclared guerilla war existed in Northern Ireland with the Security Forces (Army and Police) ranged against the terrorists. In 1974 the British Military had security primacy in Northern Ireland, and they were not to relinquish that until 1976. It is well recognised that the military are not police officers and in times of war the normal rules of civil society do not apply. The IRA repeatedly claimed to be at war and de facto the military accepted that status and their undercover units behaved accordingly. A state of war recognises the inevitability of civilian casualties and in certain situations civilian non-combatants could be targeted as an instrument of pressure on the enemy. In political terms the British government refused to formally consider the Troubles as a war situation but pragmatically they accepted the de facto position and acted accordingly by providing primacy to the military and the intelligence agencies. It was obvious to the Military that they could not employ their overwhelming force to the IRA because of public and international opinion. This stalemate was countered by employing a pivot towards intelligence gathering both North and South. This is the theatre that produced the best long-term results and the IRA and Nationalist institutions were heavily infiltrated as time progressed. Their most obvious human asset was the military recruitment of Freddie Scappaticci aka Stake Knife deep within the Provisional IRA. He was not alone by any means.

The political head as Secretary of State was Meryl Rees who took office with the new Labour government on the 5 March 1974 replacing the Conservative regime of Edward Heath. Labour was led by Harold Wilson and he and they were not popular with the establishment and were thought of being soft on the union.

The then head of the military was General Sir Frank King who had replaced General Sir Harry Tuzo on the February 1, 1973. One of the clearest indications of senior military thinking is to be found in a position paper forwarded to William Whitelaw Secretary of State by General Tuzo on the 9 July 1972 which was an options and outcomes document advocating the use of overwhelming military force against the National

Community/IRA for a defined relatively short period of time with the object of destroying the IRA militarily. An important part of that doctrine was the admission that Loyalists would be permitted to run their own areas and they would be de facto allies in the conflict with the IRA. In military terms only, this strategy was seen as a viable option based on the consideration of not fighting a battle on two fronts. Self-evidently it would have led to widespread bloodshed and chaos and would have occasioned world-wide condemnation. This overall plan was not adopted but many elements of it were.

Documents, uncovered by researchers from the Pat Finucane Centre, reveal:

- The Attorney General was “always ready to receive representations” from army officers to prevent soldiers being charged with serious crimes.
- Less than 10% of all cases submitted to the DPP, regarding shootings or assault incidents involving soldiers, resulted in prosecutions.
- MoD officials were assured that the Attorney General and DPP were all ex-army and by “no means unsympathetic” to the plight of soldiers.
- By 1976 the British army had paid out the equivalent of £5.7m in today’s money in more than 400 out-of-court settlements to avoid soldiers being convicted of unlawful shootings and assaults on civilians.
- The army’s most senior soldier warned that any decision to convict soldiers would force the British army to review its entire operation in Northern Ireland.

The confidential documents reveal repeated attempts by the army’s most senior soldier in Northern Ireland, Lieutenant General Frank King, to prevent soldiers from being prosecuted by the courts, for a range of offences, including murder.¹² These discussions involved the “Green” army not undercover soldiers who would have been operating in very dangerous situations and taking enormous personal risks. Clearly there would have been an even greater need to “protect” these personnel.

¹² Barry McCaffrey, 15 April 2013 *The Detail*

The remarkable frank revelations made by General John Wilsey, *The Ulster Tales*¹³ in identifying the British mole in the IRA as *Stakeknife* and his military handler Peter Jones. The General in a remarkable taped phone conversation admits to meeting the agent¹⁴ and reassuring him in the light of investigations being carried out by Sir John Stevens.

Stakeknife has been identified as Freddie Scappaticci a long time IRA member working at the very centre of that organization for many years and being run by the British for the entire period.

The General refers to the agent as to being probably the most important asset the British Army had in Northern Ireland. This was the individual who was in the IRA internal discipline unit “the nutting squad” and who was responsible for many killings. He was represented by lawyers paid by the Irish government at the Smithwick Tribunal¹⁵. He did not give evidence.

*When Willie Whitelaw was appointed to be the first Secretary of State on the dissolution of the old Stormont Parliament in March 1972, he insisted on having as his right-hand man a specially selected intelligence officer from MI6. Years later, that officer told me that he had been appalled at the time by the poor state of the RUC’s local intelligence records and by their lack of organisation. Warrant Officer Class 2 Jones has provided an outstanding example of leadership, courage and skill to the entire unit. Tasked with the improvement and expansion of the agent network within the terrorist gangs of South Armagh, he has worked tirelessly and with great success.*¹⁶

The British were masters of the double game, relentless pursuit of the terrorist in public, private engagement when tactics suited.

¹³ *The Ulster Tales John Wilsey Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2011*

¹⁴ <https://goo.gl/Y4DRcC>

¹⁵ *Report of the tribunal of inquiry into suggestions that members of an Garda Síochána or other employees of the state colluded in the fatal shootings of ruc chief superintendent Harry Breen and ruc superintendent Robert*

¹⁶ *The Ulster Tales John Wilsey Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2011*

E.R:

TOP SECRET

COPY NO 1 of 6
COPY NO 6 of 6
Prime Minister

NOTE OF A MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PROVISIONAL IRA

On the instructions of the Secretary of State I met representatives of the Provisional IRA at 3 pm on Tuesday, 20 June. The meeting took place at Ballyarnett, a house near the Donegal border owned by Colonel M W McCorkell. The Colonel and Mrs McCorkell were in the house at the time.

2. The IRA representatives were Mr David O'Connell and Mr Gerard Adams. I was accompanied by Mr Frank Steele.

3. Before the discussions proper started I was introduced to a third person, Mr P J McGrory who was described as a solicitor and a wholly independent person. It had been arranged that I should carry with me a note signed by the Secretary of State to say that I was an authorised representative. This note is in the following terms:

"The bearer of this note, Mr P J Woodfield, is a senior official in my Department. He has full authority to explain my position on the three points which have been put to me.

He is being accompanied by Mr Steele, another official in my Department.

(signed) William Whitelaw
Secretary of State
for Northern Ireland"

Mr McGrory's function appeared to be to scrutinise this note and by virtue of his legal powers he pronounced it authentic and then withdrew.

4. We began the meeting with a statement from me outlining the position of the Provisional IRA as reported to the Secretary of State which was as follows:

The IRA were prepared to call an indefinite cease fire if they could be satisfied that the Secretary of State would accept the demand of certain convicted prisoners for "political status"; that he would immediately order the cessation of all harassment of the IRA; and that he would be prepared after the cease fire had been shown to be effective to meet representatives of the Provisional IRA.

Figure 9 Meeting the Enemy

A brief truce took place for 12 days at the beginning of July 1972. Gerry Adams is quoted as saying that the British were trying to trick them into a cessation through a series of minor actions but there was no prospect of the British conceding IRA demands.

The studied politeness of the “Top Secret Note” is interesting, dealing with one’s enemies can be ever so polite but deadly.

Army and RUC Intelligence and Specials OPS

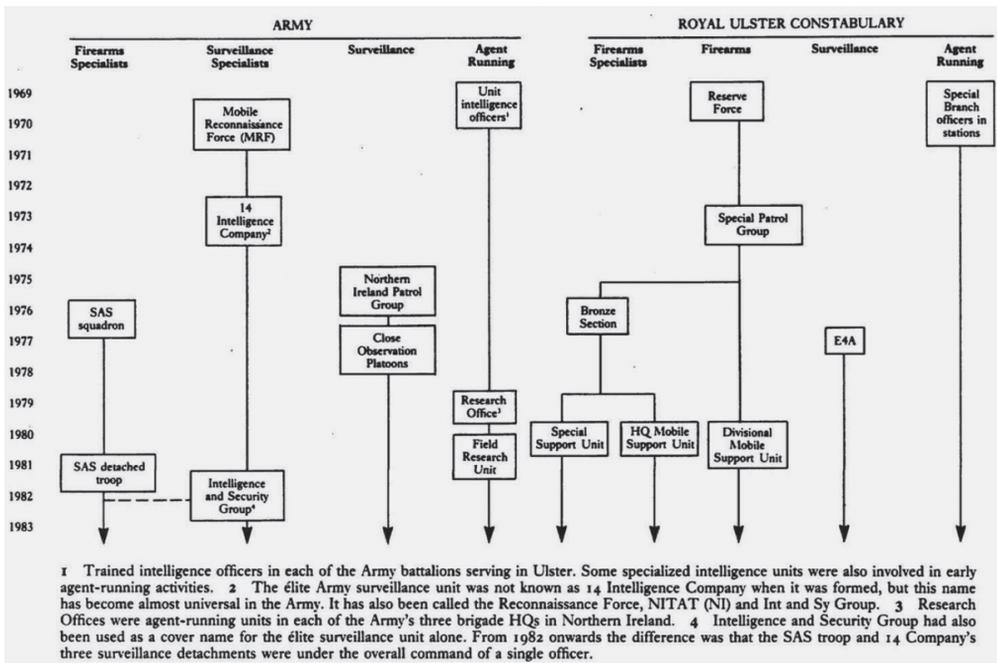


Figure 10 Mark Urban - Big Boys Rules

This was a complicated structure of units and commands¹⁷. The British had a practice of changing Unit names and generally confusing the observer. This structure does not take into account the activities of MI6 (Security Intelligence Service) or of MI5 (The Security Service). Nor does it account for GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters) responsible for electronic spying.

¹⁷ *BIG BOYS' RULES The Secret Struggle against the IRA MARK URBAN 1996*

The Frank Kitson Doctrine – Counter Gangs

Brigadier Frank Kitson was the British Army's leading expert in counter insurgency operations. He was based in Northern Ireland officially from 1970 to 1972. He was decorated by the Queen following his service in the North. He retired from the army with the rank of General and he was knighted for his service. He was the hate figure for many activists, and he certainly practiced the black arts. He was in the North until 1972. Its speculation as to what role he played. It is probable that he and General Tuzo had a meeting of minds on the best way to curb the IRA. This was an unconventional view and well to the right of orthodox policy. He had developed the doctrine of *Low intensity Operations and Counter Gangs* as a strategy for dealing with subversion and guerilla war fare. These tactics were deployed in the dying days of the Empire commencing in Kenya. This espoused the idea of recruiting "*friendly native forces*" to counteract the insurgency. In Northern Ireland terms this certainly meant using the loyalist gangs or undercover military to take the fight to the other side.



Figure 11 Brigadier Frank Kitson

At this remove its difficult to quantify his contribution to tactics in Northern Ireland but his basic philosophy of using local "friendly forces" found a resonance with his military colleagues. He was a heavily decorated officer and was subsequently granted a peerage. He lived to the grand old age of 97 and died this year.(2024)

The RUC had gone through a traumatic period of disorganization and reform at this time. The RUC Special Branch was to emerge later as

a significant source of agent handling and recruitment, but the military were leading the way at that time in 1974. The RUC did weed out colluding elements in their own ranks and in the UDR over a protracted period.

Intelligence Services 101¹⁸

The British Army brought three undercover units to the party – 22 Squadron SAS, which undertook ‘executive actions’, 14 Company, specialising in covert surveillance and FRU. The security services (MI5) brought their agent-handling and electronic technical expertise to the table. These units, plus Special Branch, were commonly described as the intelligence community. The FRU was manned by officers of the Intelligence Corps and by soldiers from all the British services. The operators, or handlers, were themselves recruited from all three services – Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force and included both men and women.

The Force Research Unit (FRU) was a British Army Intelligence Corps unit working in Northern Ireland, recruiting, developing and controlling the Army’s ‘human intelligence’ assets in Britain’s secret war on the IRA. Its motto was ‘Fishers of Men’. It was sponsored and funded by the Director of Special Forces (DSF). The FRU operated from 1980 up until the early 1990s when its name was changed to the Joint Services Group (JSG).

The British have a well-developed policy of using deniables, former members of the security establishment contracted to undertake certain operations for a commercial fee. Peter Keeley/ Kevin Fulton was a FRU asset initially before branching out to provide “services” to the other agencies. There was often intense competition between the agencies which led to many problems.

British Penetration

The British have a long history in the spying game going back for centuries. It is no coincidence that one of the most hated adjectives in Ireland is “Informant or Tout”. It is now well documented that the PIRA (IRA)

¹⁸ Harkin, Greg. *Stakeknife: Britain’s Secret Agents in Ireland* The O’Brien Press.

was penetrated from top to bottom. These included Denis Donaldson, Scappaticci and Fulton getting right inside the organisation. This agent penetration was supported by a technical resource infrastructure North and South. They had readymade raw material from within their own military because so many Irish joined the British Army in addition to locally acquired assets. This was the Fulton model, general intelligence gathering could be conducted easily using these assets.

The Irish and the government were extremely naive regarding the British potential to peer behind the veil and exploit advantage.

British Spies and Garda Colluder 1972-1973

On 20 December 1972 there were extraordinary developments when D/Sergeant Patrick Crinnion from C3 Security Branch was arrested as he attempted to pass security information to John Wyman (MI6) his British handler in Dublin. This was sensational news, but it was to have a very mild sequel. On the 27 February 1973 both men were convicted on a minor charge under the Official Secrets Act and sentenced to time served. British government papers of the time seem to suggest that Jack Lynch was anxious that it should be business as usual between both countries. There were strong political moves at that time to introduce power sharing in Northern Ireland. Self-evidently the IRA was identified as the common enemy, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend".

Coincidentally on the same day as the spies were sentenced, a Newry man Brian Mathers was convicted of involvement in the Grafton Street AIB bank robbery in October. There had been arrests in England of the infamous Littlejohn brothers Keith and Kenneth shortly after the raid took place. According to some sources the Littlejohns became a pawn in the exchange between both countries, spies in exchange for bank robbers. The only twist was that Kenneth Littlejohn claimed that he was working in Ireland as a British agent.

This was given absolute credence when on 3 January 1973 the British formally advised the Irish Government that the Littlejohns related to British intelligence services. This information was conveyed directly to Mr. Lynch and through him to Mr. O'Malley Minister for Justice. This matter was

brought to a head in August 1973 when Mr. Lynch and Mr. Colm Condon the then Attorney General were denying that they had received this information in January. Mr. Lynch then admitted that he had *forgotten* that Mr. Hugh McCann the Secretary in the Dept of Foreign Affairs had given this information to him which had been provided by the Irish Ambassador to London. This information exchange took place in the context of assurances sought by the British regarding the charges which would be preferred if the Littlejohns were extradited to Ireland.

Kenneth Littlejohn the eldest of the Littlejohn brothers made very explicit revelations both during his subsequent trial in the Special Criminal Court and through the media of his association with British Intelligence. He claimed that his handler in Ireland was the spy John Wyman under the alias Douglas Smythe. He claimed to have met Lady Jane Onslow and through her other top British political figures. Indeed, Littlejohns Dublin Solicitor William Blood-Smith was struck off because he had admitted that a gun was provided to him by Kenneth Littlejohn. Kenneth Littlejohn had been discharged from the British parachute regiment and was an established criminal with a strong Walter Mitty complex which probably made him easy fodder for the Intelligence services. He lived in Ireland for different periods, in Clogherhead, in Cahirciveen and in Dublin and possibly Newry. There is little doubt that he was trying to infiltrate the IRA. He obviously had some success because one of his co-accused was Brian Mathers a sometime IRA figure from Newry. It is also clear that Garda Special Branch blew his cover in the same way as they had identified Wyman.

He was an accident waiting to happen considering that he was arrested with his brother in London on October 21 following the Grafton Street robbery on October 12. This certainly means that he and his gang were well and truly compromised. He was later to escape from Mountjoy prison in March 1974 but was recaptured in Birmingham in December and extradited back to Ireland where he was eventually released in 1981. In effect the British had ensured the safe return of their spy Wyman together with his Irish agent Crinnion in exchange for the compromised Littlejohns. This certainly was a bad strategic deal for Dublin. It is an open question what intelligence could have been gleaned from Wyman and Crinnion had they been pursued more extensively.

The Irish ambassador¹⁹ called on me at 10 Downing Street at 1.00 pm on 23 December 1972, to report upon the result of his visit to Dublin, following his conversation with the prime minister the previous day. The ambassador said that he had reported what the prime minister had said to Mr. Lynch. Mr. Lynch had been surprised to learn that the prime minister had been told that things were “back to square one” as a result of the Wyman incident. Mr. McCann’s record of the meeting between Dr. Hillery and Sir John Peck had suggested nothing of this kind. I confirmed that Sir John Peck, in reporting his meeting with Dr. Hillery, had specifically quoted the words “back to square one”. The ambassador said that Mr. Lynch had asked him to assure the prime minister that there was no question of this on his side. He did not wish the present level of relationships to be impaired in any way. The Irish government had welcomed the British government’s agreement to discuss the Irish dimension and the Council of Ireland and hoped that nothing would interfere with that situation.

¹⁹ *British Cabinet Secretary Robert Armstrong to Prime Minister Heath UK State Papers*

6. British Army Bomb Intelligence and Weapons Intelligence Function 1972 -1977

Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde

The British Army Bomb Intelligence²⁰ (BIT) organisation was set up in early 1974. In about 1976 it changed its title to Weapons Intelligence. In 1974 there were three Bomb Intelligence Units supporting each of the three Brigades in Northern Ireland (39 Brigade in Lisburn, 8 Brigade in Londonderry and 3 Brigade in Portadown). They were commanded and controlled by their own Brigade Headquarters. Technical co-ordination throughout Northern Ireland was undertaken by the Chief Ammunition Technical Officer (CATO) a Lieutenant Colonel on the staff of Headquarters Northern Ireland. In 1974 their sole role was to deal with the threat posed by terrorist bombings.

Over the next two years their role expanded to include all types of terrorist weapons and equipment. Co-ordination across Northern Ireland was then transferred from the very part time control of the CATO to a full time Grade 2 Staff Officer (a Major) on the Intelligence staff of Headquarters Northern Ireland.

A Captain who had undertaken a recent (within 12 months) tour of duty as the ATO in the Brigade Area commanded the section in that area. Soldiers from the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, Royal Military Police and the Intelligence Corps supported him.

Prior to the establishment of the BIT organisation all information on bombs had been passed to the Data Reference Centre of the RUC located at Sprucefield outside Lisburn. From 1974 onwards information was still passed to Sprucefield, but the BIT staff would collate information immediately on incidents.

Sources of Information. Information was available from two prime areas to the British Army in 1974:

Covert sources and Open sources.

²⁰ Sourced from Paper Supplied by Colonel Wylde

Covert Sources of information. The following sources of covert information were available in 1974: **Covert surveillance units and operations.** The Army was able to deploy specially trained undercover teams to run long-term covert surveillance operations. Until 1974, this unit was called the Mobile Reconnaissance Force (MRF).

Human intelligence, agents and informers. Human intelligence sources (technically called "HUMINT") have been of critical importance since the beginning of the Troubles. The main human intelligence organisation in the province was and is the Special Branch of the RUC. However, agents were and are also run by the Army (at different levels), by the Secret Intelligence Service, (SIS also known as MI6), and by the Security Service (commonly called MI5). In 1974 MI6 ran operations in the Republic of Ireland.

SIGINT and ELINT: The most sensitive sort of surveillance is Electronic Intelligence (or ELINT) and Signals Intelligence (or SIGINT). SIGINT and ELINT are specialised technical activities concerned with deriving intelligence from intercepting radio or communications signals. SIGINT is primarily organised by Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), which is Britain's largest intelligence agency. In the context of Northern Ireland, in 1974 ELINT was almost entirely concerned with detecting and countering radio-controlled bombs (known technically as Remotely Controlled Improvised Explosive Devices, or RCIEDs). Since the early 1970s, the IRA has used radio-controlled bombs. These were at first made from model aircraft control systems. Communications interception activities, including SIGINT and telephone tapping, are another major source of intelligence on terrorist activities. The methods and results are highly sensitive and are not used in Court. They are however a valuable source of information.

TECHINT. Technical intelligence or TECHINT is the process of determining the function of equipment or devices and the capability of people to make them. TECHINT in Northern Ireland is often reliant on the speedy analysis of the forensic evidence. In the Dublin Monaghan bombings for instance the presence of ammonium nitrate prilles and the use of the beer keg would have indicated immediately where to target further intelligence collection resources.

Links to Foreign Security Forces. The Security Forces in Northern Ireland have always maintained links to the Security Forces of other nations including the Republic of Ireland, Germany and America.

Forensic Laboratories. All reports from the Department of Industrial and Forensic Science would be passed to the BIT organisation. A full time Ammunition Technical Officer worked at DIFS and coordinated their output with that of the RUC Data Reference Centre and the BIT organisation.

RUC Data Reference Centre. Close liaison was always maintained by BIT through the ATO liaison officer who worked between the DRC and DIFS.

RUC. In 1974 Military Intelligence Officers (MIO) or Field Intelligence Non-Commissioned Officers (FINCO) were located at various levels of the RUC and were able to report any significant information to the BIT teams. They were also able to pass tasking requests to the RUC.

7. Defining Moment Hidden Hand: Yorkshire Television 6 July 1993²¹



Olivia O’Leary: Good evening. If you live in Dublin, it’s possible to forget that Belfast is only 100 miles away. Daily life in the Republic is almost untouched by the terrorist violence which bedevils Northern Ireland, a fact that tourists are reassured about constantly. Ask about the Dublin and Monaghan bombs of May 1974 and the response will be hazy. It was the worst atrocity of the Troubles and yet it’s almost been forgotten. No one was convicted, no one ever charged. There’s been no public outcry. The grieving relatives of those killed must ask why. Was it fatalism—a feeling that Dublin at some stage was bound to get its share of the North’s misery? Or was there a more sinister reason for this long silence on both sides of the Irish border²²?

That’s what First Tuesday’s been investigating over many months in ‘**Hidden Hand—The Forgotten Massacre**’.

The Irish police—the Garda Síochána, carried out the official investigation into the bombings, the biggest murder hunt in their history. Most unusually in a terrorist case, the **Gardai have formally co-operated in our investigation**. In a series of briefings the Gardai reveal the contents

²¹<https://youtu.be/NOZVopDPG5I>

²² *The Appalling Vista was that British State actors were involved in the Car Bombings*

of many classified files, eye-witness statements, forensic reports and released official photographs. We also interviewed retired senior Police Officers, including three former Commissioners. Those officers who did not wish to be identified allowed us to use their verbatim statements. It is now clear that within weeks of the bombings the Gardai knew how they were carried out and the identities of the leading suspects but were powerless to do anything about it.

Olivia O'Leary's line in her introduction was prescient - Was there a more sinister reason on both sides of the border and she might have added the United Kingdom as well.

This was a remarkable documentary broadcast a full 19 years after the car bombings. It brought information into the public gaze which posed very awkward questions for the authorities in Great Britain and in the Republic.

In the first instance it got strong cooperation from the Garda Síochána. The liaison officer appointed to meet with the documentary makers was D/Superintendent Tom Connolly an officer with an outstanding record and with strong integrity.

Formal overt cooperation with the media was unheard of in the force. I served at that time and I can wholeheartedly confirm that the media posture was conservative and closed. It suggests that there was a very strong desire to set the record straight insofar as the car bombings were concerned.

The **documentary had** very good sources in their own right and were in a position to cross check any information supplied to them. Journalist Joe Tiernan²³ and retired army officer Lieutenant Colonel John Morgan²⁴ were significant contributors. Both men published books later on the topic

²³ *The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings, and the Murder Triangle, Self-Published, Joe Tiernan 2004*

²⁴ *The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings 1974 A Military Analysis, Belfast Historical & Educational Society, John Morgan, 2013*

and are worth informed study. Additionally another book was published by Don Mullan²⁵ in 2000 which is very informative on detail.

None of these studies were aware of the crucial British Admission made in 1974.

Hidden Hand made a major contribution to the narrative with their interviews with retired Lieutenant Colonel George Styles²⁶ and Commandant Patrick Trears²⁷. Both men were asked for their professional opinion on the provenance of the Dublin Car Bombs. Their responses could not be more explicit²⁸. Lieutenant Colonel George Styles was the former Head of the British Army's bomb- disposal network worldwide and served in Northern Ireland from 1969 to 1972.

The Three British Colonels

Their information was underestimated in the various government inquiries.

The three Colonels were, Lieutenant Colonel George Styles, Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde (1974) and Colonel Mike Dewar (Company Commander NI, 1970s)

Lieutenant Colonel Styles (NI 1969 -1972) and Lieutenant Colonel Wylde (NI 1974 1972) were explosives experts.

Their contributions are discussed, and this is a short introduction.

Styles – Wide experience in his specialist area, considered the UVF technically incapable of the Dublin Bombings. Revealed that the British Army set off explosions with captured IRA material for operational reasons. HH Documentary 1993.

²⁵ *The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings, The truth, the questions and the victims stories*, Wolfhound Press, Don Mullan, 2000

²⁶ *Lieutenant Colonel George Styles GC was a British Army officer and a bomb disposal expert in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC). He received the George Cross for his service in Northern Ireland.*

²⁷ *Commandant Patrick (Paddy) Trears was highly experienced Bomb Disposal Officer (EOD) in the Irish Army with first-hand knowledge and experience of the Troubles*

²⁸ <https://youtu.be/Suwm8YGaqjM?si=3Y1NvpJ93bV1vAPB>

Wylde – Provided a comprehensive report to Barron/Ardagh inquiries. His information was not interrogated at an expert level. I have seen his report, and it is detailed and thought provoking.

Dewar – Considered that an ad hoc Unit at a lower level could have made a “political point’ with the bombings. He also candidly admitted that in the overall context of the conflict “Loyalists” could be seen as “Friendly Forces” . RTE Prime Time May 1995

Synchronised Car Bombing? Styles

To put one bomb on wheels together, you have to have a fair amount of training and expertise. To get three to go off all at the same time, you’ve got to have some pretty good technicians organising the timing mechanisms for instance.

The organisation of getting three cars into the centre of a city all going off roughly at the same time — that smacks of some pretty good administrative ability and whatever organisation therefore that was behind this outrage, you could say they were not low down on the learning curve — they were high up on it.

Loyalist Bombing Skills 1974 Styles

I have no high regard of their skill in 1974. I don’t think they were at a level that would equate to the sort of techniques that were used here in Dublin.

I don’t think there was one. In my view, they had not done this sort of thing. This is, as I say, outside their field of technology.

Have they done it since? *I don’t... not to my knowledge.*

Commandant Patrick Trears - no residue left of the bombs?

The fact that all the ingredients of the bombs exploded and were expended, indicating that the mix was consistent and that the expertise of the people that made up the mix ’twas at a pretty sophisticated level. From a military point of view, it would have been considered a hundred per cent successful.

If the loyalists did it, from their own experience, I would find it hard to find they could do it without being assisted by some other experienced people,

because I think that they did not have the experience to carry out such a sophisticated operation at that particular time.

There are other technical; aspects of the bombing which will be explored later.

Merlyn Rees²⁹ - Secretary of State for Northern Ireland 1974 -1976

Knowledge of the bombers' identities in 1974

I am absolutely astonished to hear that such³⁰ ... there was detailed information about those who had been involved in Dublin. Certainly it wasn't notified to me. And if it had, to hell with any problems that there might be with the Garda — suspicion of the south you know, and all that. If names were given and the names were in the north, it would be my job, without ever interfering in day-to-day security matters, to make clear that something's got to be done within the rule of law — that these people should be questioned and, if needs be, dealt with by the full process of law.

Merlyn Rees opposition to the Government's Policies in Northern Ireland³¹ Castle Dillon?

It was a unit — a section — out of control. There's no doubt it reflected the views of a number of soldiers — let's go in and fix this lot, and so on. But that it went on, and that it went on from Lisburn and it went on from the Army Information Service and those associated with it, I have no doubt at all. Here was a special duties unit that operated down there, and I approved of that, I knew that it wasn't a large organisation and I know that it worked in Lisburn. If you are going to have a force operating like that then it's got to be given a great deal of freedom of movement anyway, that they couldn't have, through the normal army arrangements.

²⁹ He was present at the Inter-Governmental Meeting 11 September 1974 when the British made the admission regarding the known identities of the bombers.

³⁰ The Secretary of State was recorded as being present at the London Meeting 11 September 1974?

³¹ Was he referring to the Special Duties Team at Castle Dillon House otherwise the Four Field Survey Troop?

HH: In 1988 the Government was asked about this secret unit and replied: "The role of a royal engineer field survey is to provide aerial photographs, ground surveys and mapping for the army". But we had interviewed a former member of Four Field Survey Troop, and he painted a very different picture of its role in 1974.

Four Field Survey Troop Member:

We were a specialist unit with training in surveillance and anti-surveillance, silent weapons, breaking and entering. We were also trained in weapons for sabotage with explosives and assassination. We also crossed the Irish border with explosives to booby-trap arms dumps and for other missions.

Merlyn Rees British Military Cross Border Operations

I would certainly not have worried too much if they found arms buried in the ground that they left them in a position that would cause harm to those who were going to pick them up, you know . one lives in a harsh world. But, as for crossing the border, they certainly had no permission for any of it from me and neither should they in general but if they were going to cross the border, they would have had to have had permission from the man in charge of security and that was me.

Colonel Mike Dewar³²,

British Army commented on the RTE Prime Time Documentary 18 May 1995.

Mike Dewar

Certainly, on an ad-hoc basis, people at a lower level might have launched attacks like that in order to effect a political purpose, that is conceivable.... Yes, there is evidence of some nefarious activities by some RUC Special Branch, providing information, lending weapons, those are undeniable.... I remember concentrating all my efforts on the IRA, any help was very useful. We regarded the Protestants as useful, I will sign up to Friendly Forces, to some extent they were friendly, they were very helpful in giving information about the IRA and we had to prioritise at that stage.

³² Colonel Dewar (as a Major) served in Northern Ireland in the 1970s. He has written many books on Military matters including "The British Army in Northern Ireland"

This is a remarkably frank account of the pragmatic position adopted by the military in dealing with the IRA. The military are not the police and in times of war they literally pursue a military objective of defeating the enemy and using the enemies of their enemy as an ally. This ambivalent role leads to very close cooperation with their new allies and it relatively easy to conceive of a process whereby a clear line of demarcation can be disregarded. This is the fundamental question as it relates to Dublin and Monaghan Bombings and how did this cooperation manifest itself.



Figure 12 Lieutenant Colonel Styles – Letting off a Bang Admission



Figure 13 Lieutenant Colonel Styles receives his George Cross

L/Colonel Styles made quite a remarkable and troubling statement in an exchange with interviewer.

Statement L/Col Styles on Hidden Hand

Styles: No I would, I think I would say if somebody said to me, "We want you to set off a bang tonight so that we can go and have a look at whatever, and because the bang would be allied to an IRA explosion and therefore wouldn't be other than a normal occurrence it would be unthinkable to an operation such as that, to use other than captured IRA materials.

**"it could be a covert military operation by U.K. Armed Forces", but added "in my view which is based on experience of such operations (this" is extremely unlikely".
HH / But did "such operations" mean the British Army covertly detonated their own bombs?**

HH: So the British Military were carrying out explosives? Styles: Well they could have been, no reason why they shouldn't, if that was a way of getting information.

What if this strategy was employed by unscrupulous Rogue Military Elements?

8. L/Col Styles Troubling Scenario

Setting off a Bang

Lieutenant Colonel Styles was a highly qualified and decorated officer in the British Army specifically in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. He describes his career and experiences in his biography.³³ This a warm and interesting account of his career and family. Obviously, his views are of a British Officer viewing Ireland through that prism. Is it possible though, what he described succinctly was misapplied by ruthless elements of the military acting in conjunction with UVF terrorists? Operationally it was normal for the military to capture quantities of the IRA's explosives from failed bombings and from other sources.

Military explosives firing mechanism were far more stable than the systems available to the terrorists in 1974. On the balance of probabilities that was the technique employed in the Dublin car bombings.

HH: In his report to First Tuesday on the 1974 car bombings of Dublin and Monaghan, Lieutenant Colonel George Styles, the head of Army Bomb Disposal in Northern Ireland in 1972, said "it could be a covert military operation by U.K. Armed Forces", but added "in my view which is based on experience of such operations ("this is extremely unlikely"). But did "such operations" mean the British Army covertly detonated their own bombs?

Styles: I don't think without breaking the Official Secrets Act, or getting somebody to break it, you're ever going to get any information about every operation that goes on covertly, whether it involves setting a bomb off or whether it doesn't.

HH: I understand that, "It would be unthinkable for a covert operation such as this to use other than captured IRA materials". That suggests to me that the military were undertaking covert operations with captured IRA explosives.

³³ *Bombs have no Pity, William Luscombe Publisher, George Styles and Bob Perrin 1975*

Styles: No I would, I think I would say if somebody said to me, if somebody said to me "We want you to set off a bang tonight so that we can go and have a look at whatever, and because the bang would be allied to an IRA explosion and therefore wouldn't be other than a normal occurrence it would be unthinkable to an operation such as that, to use other than captured IRA materials.

Interviewer: But for us to set off a bang, we're still setting explosives?

Styles: Yes.

HH: So the British Military were carrying out explosives?

Styles: Well they could have been, no reason why they shouldn't, if that was a way of getting information.

Intelligence Matters and Collusion

There is corroboration between the opinion statements of individuals regarding collusion and the EOD expert opinion regarding the nature of the explosives used.

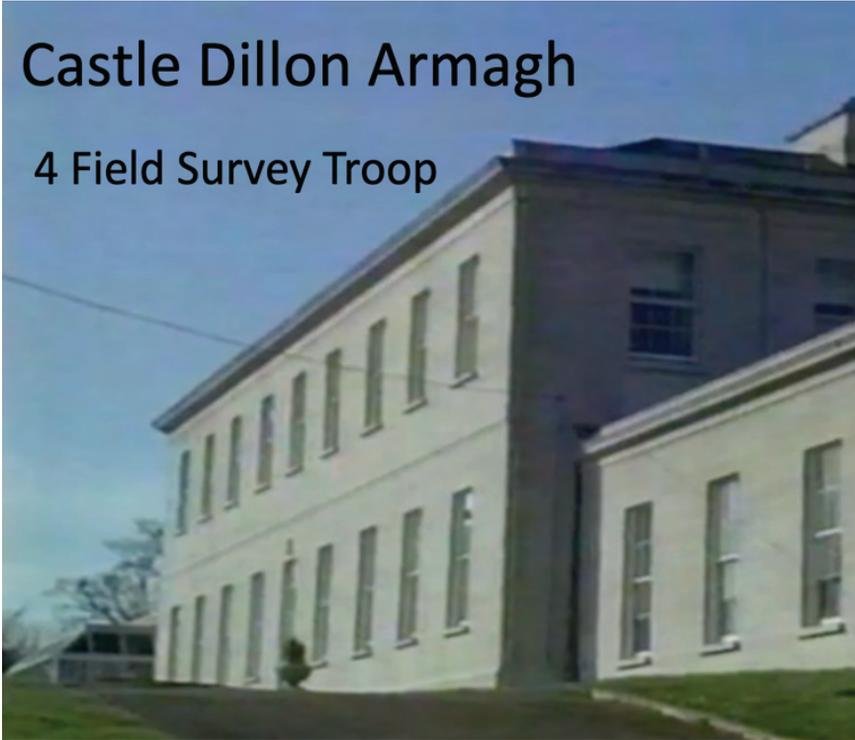
I reluctantly use the expression *COLLUSION* to describe what in effect is a criminal act by State actors inducing third parties to commit crime. Nevertheless, the word is popularly accepted as having a criminal meaning. Hidden Hand expert witnesses professionally assessed the Dublin Bombs of having technology superior to that used by the UVF. These witnesses were Lieutenant Colonel George Styles (British) and Commandant Patrick Trears (Irish) Their professional opinion was corroborated by Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde (British) and Sergeant Major Ed Komac, US Army (Retired).

The figure overleaf records the different interests involved and their relationship with the central notion of *COLLUSION BETWEEN STATE ACTORS AND THE UVF*. This connection is underlined by Captain Fred Holroyd (Intelligence Officer), Mr. Colin Wallace (Military Information Officer) because of their respective contact or knowledge of Portadown UVF members. The presence of a so-called Four Field Survey Troop unit at Castle Dillon. This title was an euphemism for undercover military operations. The

significant allegations came from the Hidden Hand Documentary itself and those associated with it including Joe Tiernan and Colonel Morgan.

Castle Dillon Armagh

4 Field Survey Troop



Pointing the finger to Collusion



Figure 14 Collusion Allegations

Guilty Knowledge

Three individuals from the British establishment who served in Northern Ireland and who claimed specific knowledge of undercover operations and collusion with the loyalists' provided information. These were Captain Fred Holroyd Intelligence Officer and Colin Wallace, a military information officer. In modern terms they would be considered high value whistle blowers. The third was the convicted killer RUC sergeant John Weir.

Allegations³⁴ John Weir – Collusion Black Ops

John Weir is a former RUC Sergeant. From 1980 until 1992 he served a prison sentence for his role in the murder of William Strathearn, who was shot at his home near Ahoghill, Ballymena on 18 April 1977.

On 3 January 1999 John Weir made a written statement in which he alleged that collusion between certain loyalist paramilitaries and certain elements in the security forces in Northern Ireland had resulted in a number of bombings and shootings which took place in Northern Ireland and in this jurisdiction during the mid-1970s. It also alleged that this group of individuals, which included members of an RUC Special Patrol Group to which Weir himself belonged in 1975/76, used a farm at a named location belonging to a named individual as a base for their operations.

In relation to the Dublin and Monaghan bombings, Weir stated:

"The explosives for both attacks had been provided by [a named UDR officer]. The bombs had been assembled at the farmhouse in [location given] which was owned by [a named RUC officer]. The main organiser of both attacks had been a loyalist paramilitary and UDR captain, [name given] from ... Co. Armagh. The bombs had been transported in cars from the farmhouse, with [3 named persons] taking part in the Dublin attack and [a named person] taking responsibility for the one in Monaghan. [This person] later told me, at a meeting in [the] farmhouse, that he had intended to place the Monaghan bomb outside a different bar in the town but that the Gardaí (police), who were completely unaware of what his gang was

³⁴ Mac Entee Final Report 2007 Page 82

doing, had not allowed them to park at that location. Although these two bombings were among the worst atrocities of the Irish troubles, those responsible for them were never even questioned by the RUC, even though both the RUC and Army Intelligence knew, within days of the bombings, the identities of the culprits.

Captain Fred Holroyd – Black Ops

At the time the loyalist explosive capability was pretty limited. They mainly used Double Diamond kegs, beer kegs, filled with explosives with a black powder fuse on, and they'd light the black powder fuse, disappear and this thing would burn down. The detonator would go off, and the bomb would go off. They weren't as sophisticated as the IRA who had electrical detonators, trembler devices and all sorts of other very sophisticated bits of equipment, anti-handling devices. I mean they were pretty primitive basically.

We knew who they were, I mean, there was no question about that, and we knew what they were involved in. Well, I would say we ran them. I mean, if you really want the truth, we were running the organisation, hands off, because the leaders belonged to us.

I mean, I was never asked once by anybody to question my sources or to try and find out any information about this whatsoever. At the time, and immediately afterwards, there was just no interest at all. It was only quite some time after that my Special Branch colleague told me in fact who the Portadown men who were involved in this were and where the cars had come from.

Atrocities were allowed to be carried out by the Protestants. We knew who they were, we had information, and no action was ever taken against them. And this caused a lot of disquiet, as you can imagine. Captain Holroyd was surprised that he was not ordered to investigate the Dublin bombings, since he was the Military Intelligence Officer for Portadown, where the suspects were based.

Holroyd on the Castle Dillon Unit – Black Ops

A remarkable little place — I mean, set behind an ordinary regiment of engineers in a compound of its own, guarded by civilian MoD police and it

was sort of made up of wooden huts and in there I was shown, for example, the locker with all their spare barrels so they could use weapons and then change the barrels and claim that they'd never shot people.

I was shown their communications equipment, which was quite separate, and I suspect went straight through to Hereford and to MoD. I was shown a number of things which meant that they were funded separately, and they were supported separately from regular Army, uniformed Army people. Now, there are only one ... there is only one organisation who can sponsor anything like that and that's the SAS.

Hidden Hand comment – Black Ops

The team's cover name was Four Field Survey Troop. Officially, they were answerable to Army Headquarters in Lisburn. But routinely, they operated in virtual isolation. Ultimately, their chain of command led to MI5.

Alleged former member: We were a specialist unit with training in surveillance and anti-surveillance, silent weapons, breaking and entering. We were also trained in weapons for sabotage with explosives and assassination. We also crossed the Irish border with explosives to booby trap arms dumps and for other missions.

Colin Wallace - Collusion

The difficulty I think with the Dublin bombings is that there was really no follow-up, no major offensive, no major determination to find out whether these people had been responsible or not. And it was the lack of interest I think that concerned us, that it was a departure from normal procedure because the outrageous nature of the bombing would have justified a greater interest and that just didn't seem to be present at that time.

I believe that that is probably members of the special duties team, who were then linked to SAS personnel. Loyalist paramilitaries by and large worked willingly with the Intelligence community, ostensibly with the Army, because they felt that both they and the security force were doing the same job — defeating the IRA. So, in many ways, they would have been much easier to manipulate because any work or any task given to them by the

Intelligence community they would have seen almost as an honour. That this would have been an extension of what they themselves were doing.

I suppose they regarded the election of a Labour government as a major threat to the Irish situation. The Army seemed, in the early days, much less involved; but I think they became increasingly concerned by statements made by senior Labour people about possible withdrawal from Northern Ireland.

Hidden Hand claimed: Collusion

In 1974 Four Field Survey Troop was led by two key officers—Captain Tony Ball—in command—and Lieutenant—and later Captain—Robert Nairac. Nairac had already spent twelve months as an undercover specialist in Northern Ireland. Nairac's job at Castle Dillon when I was there was as a source handler. He was getting intelligence and had contact from both sides. We have evidence from Police, Military and loyalist sources which confirms the links between Nairac and the Portadown loyalist terrorists. And also that in May 1974, he was meeting with these paramilitaries: supplying them with arms and helping them plan acts of terrorism against Republican targets.

In particular the three prime Dublin suspects—Robert McConnell, Harris Boyle and the man called Robin Jackson the Jackal, were run before and after the Dublin bombing by Captain Nairac.

That three of the Dublin bomb suspects at the time of the outrage were run by Nairac has been confirmed to us by officers from RUC Special Branch, CID, and Special Patrol Group Officers and from Garda Special Branch. The views of senior garda officers and investigators that the Loyalists could not have committed the Dublin car bombings unaided due to the sophistication of the operation.

No entity not even the IRA had managed to synchronise three car bombings in a similar fashion to the Dublin attack. This attack had the hall mark of a military operation using specialised detonation devices available only to them.

Colonel Mike Dewar³⁵

Certainly, on an ad-hoc basis, people at a lower level might have launched attacks like that in order to effect a political purpose, that is conceivable.... It is conceivable that they were making a political statement. Yes, there is evidence of some nefarious activities by some RUC Special Branch, providing information, lending weapons, those are undeniable.... I remember concentrating all my efforts on the IRA, any help was very useful. We regarded the Protestants as useful, I will sign up to Friendly Forces, to some extent they were friendly, they were very helpful in giving information about the IRA and we had to prioritise at that stage.

Seán Donlon – Collusion

Seán Donlon³⁶, former Secretary General in the Department of Foreign Affairs, was in 1974 the Assistant Secretary in charge of the Northern Ireland desk. It was his belief that there was collusion at a general level. This was based on his regular contact with responsible individuals in the North and from a litany of court cases involving collusion at local level. In response to a question by Deputy Power, he stated: ‘However, I would certainly with the passage of time, use the word ‘probability’ rather than ‘possibility’ when it came to collusion.’

³⁵ RTE Prime Time Documentary 18 May 1995

³⁶ Ardagh Report Page 20 2004

9. Dublin Inquires Too Little Too Late

Joint Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights – Collusion (2006)

These are some of the main conclusions of that report.

The Sub-Committee is left in no doubt that collusion between the British security forces and terrorists was behind many if not all of the atrocities that are considered in this report. We are horrified that persons who were employed by the British administration to preserve peace and to protect people were engaged in the creation of violence and the butchering of innocent victims.

The Sub-Committee is of the view that given that we are dealing with acts of international terrorism that were colluded in by the British security forces, the British Government cannot legitimately refuse to co-operate with investigations and attempts to get to the truth.

The Sub-Committee is of the view that at the time of the atrocities the authorities in this jurisdiction at all levels could have been far more vigorous in their attempts to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators. In saying this we recognise and do not under-estimate the difficulties those authorities faced when confronted by the non-co-operation of the British authorities. Nor do we underestimate the instability of the times or the threat that was posed to this State by certain organisations. Nonetheless, more should have been done.

In respect of the allegation made by the Irish Government to the British Government in August 1975 to the effect that four members of the RUC in the Portadown area were also members of the UVF, the Sub-Committee finds the whole chain of events to be surprising to say the least and we cannot understand why the documentation stops dead in its tracks on 3 September 1975 given the gravity of the issue.

This report is our fourth and is the culmination of all of our work. The spectre of collusion was raised in our first report and we now have enough information to be fully satisfied, not only that it occurred, but

that it was widespread³⁷. *The seriousness of this warrants direction from the Oireachtas and we therefore recommend that there should be a full debate in both the Dáil and the Seanad on the issue of collusion since it is necessary for there to be greater political impetus to highlight the fact that it occurred and the facts of its scale and to identify measures to bring closure to the victims.*

Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde - Explosives

The evidence of Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde is particularly relevant. His evidence was provided initially by way of interaction with Judge Barron. He demurred significantly from the Judges representation of his views and in a powerful interaction with the Dáil Justice Committee on the 27 January 2004 he provided a strong evidence-based testimony that the provenance of the Dublin Car Bombs was different from anything attempted before that attack or subsequently.

His expert evidence on the use of explosives photographic analysis was not considered by Barron or Ardagh inquiries. This is a puzzling omission.

Definitive Report Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde

It is possible to draw conclusions based on the information now available and these conclusions can be summarised under two broad criteria, *Different Explosives used in Dublin and Monaghan* and *the poor Operational Capacity* of the UVF.

The evidence provided by L/Col Wylde is particularly relevant and has been referred to already. His letter of clarification to Judge Barron was discussed in detail above. He explained that.

Ammonium nitrate and fuel oil. Ammonium nitrate fuel oil is a “high explosive”. It detonates, depending on the quality of the mixture, at over 4,000 metres a second and can detonate at over 6,000 metres a second if it is commercially produced. It does not require confinement.

³⁷ *This finding was not pursued by government*

He also advised that ANFO required a booster charge of commercial explosives to cause the explosion of the ANFO³⁸. In a conclusive remark he also states that. *In the summer of 1974 in Belfast “we encountered one bomb that could possibly be attributed to commercial explosives used by loyalist terrorists”*. Is it not reasonable to assume that if the loyalist had acquired this newfound expertise that they would have hammered their targets with deadly effect emulating the Dublin attack? This clearly did not happen. The observations of L/Col. Styles of the British Army letting off a “bang” with captured IRA explosives for operational purposes is an important consideration.

Lieutenant Colonel Wylde said.

“In 1974 the Army were consistently recovering large quantities of re-crystallised ANFO each week. This came from finds, interceptions and from defused bombs. In the Belfast area I would estimate that throughout the summer of 1974 we recovered at least 1000lbs of ANFO every week. The other Sections of 321 EOD Unit also recovered similar quantities... The material recovered in this way that was not sent for scientific analysis (very small quantities only) was destroyed on a regular basis. The most common method was to flush ANFO into the drains where it would dissolve. If a large quantity of ANFO together with commercial explosive had been discovered in the Belfast area it would all be taken to a quarry outside the city and blown up. This task was undertaken at least once a week. In Belfast we frequently received consignments from other parts of the Province because the other Sections did experience difficulties in disposing of their stocks due to lack of resources and time. The key issue was that quantity and type of explosive involved was not recorded. No account ledgers were maintained, and no stock takes were ever undertaken. For anybody who had access to the stocks, it would have been relatively easy to accumulate a large quantity of explosives in a very short time. It is impossible for me to say that the entire quantity of explosive collected in Belfast was properly destroyed. I believe it was, but I had no way of confirming this at the time.”

This was one probable route for the Loyalists to acquire the necessary ANFO and certainly was worthy of close examination.

³⁸ Authors description not Wylde's

However one must consider the overall methodology of the delivery of the Dublin Bombs. Based on the UVFs previous experience one must question whether these bombs were in line with their usual modus operandi.³⁹ In all seriousness no loyalist bomber was going to drive around Dublin in three “stolen” cars, still bearing their original number plates with a churn or beer keg bombs on board. This coupled with the proven history of misfires and “own goal” deaths. An additional factor was their use of the so called “jock clocks⁴⁰” as timers with a propensity for fatal error. Then these cars navigated a Northern Ireland in turmoil with large security presence in the streets with total freedom. This speaks of a high cover for the operation with redundancy built in, in the event of a checkpoint. They then navigated to Dublin and enroute numbers of the cars were recorded as described in the Hidden Hand documentary. This entire operation speaks of wanton disregard for basic security principles or alternatively excellent cover provided by ‘friendly forces’.

On the balance of probability the Dublin attacks were performed by some Loyalists with the technical aid and assistance of asymmetrical military forces.

Political Purpose Achieved

Most certainly a political purpose was achieved, Sunningdale and the Executive collapsed and the North returned to violence for long years. So much death and destruction could have been avoided.

L/Col Wylde’s evidence to the Justice Committee on 27 January 2004 is instructive on the Monaghan debris which included fragments of a beer keg and a cog wheel (from a clock timer?) This is a signature of the UVF Bombers. Dublin did not bear the same signature.

³⁹ *Short range cross border attacks with beer barrel containers etc. Crude timers at best!*

⁴⁰ *Supposedly supplied by a Scottish contact*

Dublin Car Bombs 1974

Opinion L/Colonel Nigel Wylde Expert Report

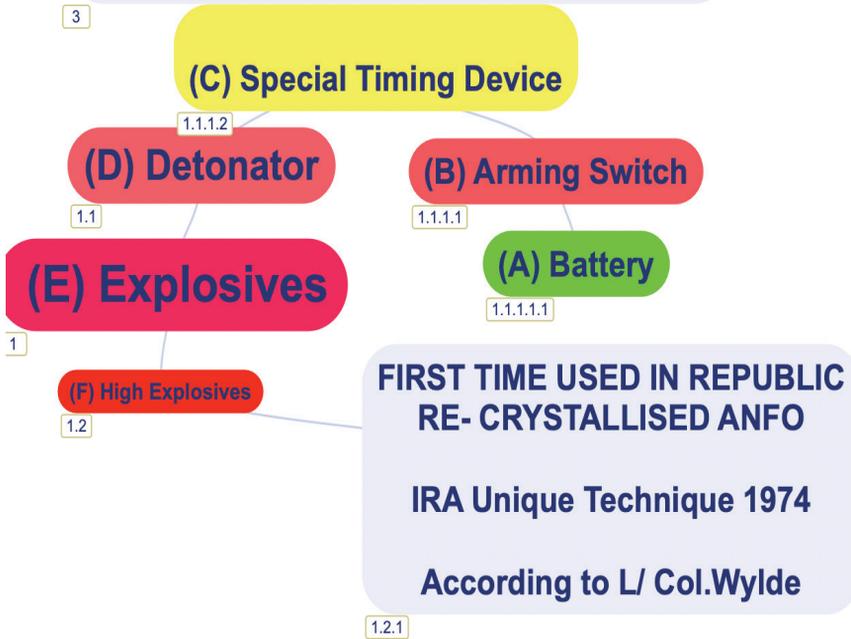


Figure 15 Expert Analysis Lieutenant Colonel Wylde

L/Colonel Wylde Revised Report

Revised 15 November 2001 Edited – New Information - Emphasis is the Authors.

Since I produced my report on the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings to Justice for the Forgotten, 5 February 2001, I have been shown the following additional material:

*A large number of press photographs of the scene of the explosions.
A video of the television programme 'The Forgotten Massacre'.
Compilation videos of the various bomb scenes.*

I have reviewed all this material and include my comments in this supplementary report.

EXPLOSIVE CONTENT

*I am satisfied that the videos show traces of what appears to be the explosive Ammonium Nitrate and Fuel (ANFO) at all the three Dublin bombings. **In my opinion it appears to be the re-crystallised variety of ANFO** rather than **ANFO made from high ammonium nitrate content fertiliser prilles and fuel oil**. This is because the deposits scattered on the road are in small clumps. Re-crystallised ANFO was produced at that time by the PIRA because fertiliser with a high ammonium nitrate content was not available. Loyalist terrorists did not have the knowledge to make this type of explosive in 1974. This finding has caused me to revise my original finding.*

The video evidence is significant in the case at the Talbot Street bomb as I was unable to find any traces of explosive on the photographs provided for my original report. Additionally, the Parnell Street bomb remains can be seen being hosed away. The video shots of the South Leinster Street bomb confirm the finding of the use of ANFO drawn from photographs I examined for my initial report. I am also satisfied that this explosive was cleared away very quickly by a combination of rain and water from fire brigade hosepipes. ANFO dissolves very quickly in water.

In one scene a fireman can be seen hosing down the road. I have no doubt that he was primarily concerned with washing away blood, but he was

in fact inadvertently destroying potential evidence. From other scenes at all three locations it is apparent that a great deal of water has been used to clean the road. For example at the end Part 1 of the programme 'The Forgotten Massacre' this can be easily seen where the fire brigade-have used their hoses to push all the glass to the side of the road. No traces of explosive remain in the resulting mass of glass and water.

I have not been able to identify any Scenes of Crime Officers or Ammunition Technical Officers at the scenes of the explosions and assume that they arrived after the fire brigade started the clear up.

The video clips of the Monaghan bomb were taken too long after the explosion for them to be of value. However, I have seen nothing to change my mind as to the explosive content of the bomb being a home-made low explosive contained in a beer keg.

Loyalist groups could only produce low explosive that had to be filled into steel containers to effect detonation. I believe they did not have the knowledge of how to make re-crystallized ammonium nitrate from fertiliser. Nor was there any sign in the summer of 1974 of any stock of pure ammonium nitrate.

The videos provide photographic evidence of the almost certain use of ANFO in all three Dublin bombs. There is no new evidence to change my view that the Monaghan bomb comprised a homemade low explosive contained in a beer keg.

There are two main potential sources of the ANFO:

High content Ammonium Nitrate fertiliser prilles mixed with fuel oil.

Re-Crystallised ANFO obtained from confiscated stocks.

It is difficult from the evidence available to be absolutely certain, but in my view the presence of what appears to be 'clumps' of ANFO at the site of all three Dublin bombs would indicate the use of Re-Crystallised ANFO.

This in turn would suggest that the source was confiscated stocks⁴¹.

⁴¹ Confiscated from the IRA

10. Semi Hostile Reception to Lieutenant Colonel Wylde - Puzzling

Extract from:

Houses of the Oireachtas

**Joint Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights
Final Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry
into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings. March 2004
Complaint Made by Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde regarding Judge
Barron's conclusions**

A specific complaint was made regarding Mr. Justice Barron's handling of the issue of the composition of the bombs. Justice for the Forgotten sought the assistance of Mr. Nigel Wylde as an explosives expert. Mr. Wylde was explicitly critical of Mr. Justice Barron's conclusions in this area.

Mr. Wylde was a former British Army officer commissioned from the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst in 1968, and retired from the British Army in 1991. In 1970 he was trained as an ammunition technical officer, specialising in guided weapons. He was also involved in bomb disposal of both terrorist and conventional munitions. During the months from June to October 1974, he held responsibility for terrorist bomb disposal in the 321EOD unit in Belfast. (EOD stands for Explosives Ordinance Disposal)

Mr. Wylde was interviewed by Mr. Justice Barron during the preparation of his report. Mr. Wylde felt that in several areas, Mr. Justice Barron had misinterpreted what he had said and wished to clarify these matters before the Sub-Committee.

The main thrust of Mr. Wylde's submissions to the Sub-Committee centred on his view that the UVF did not have the knowledge to construct a bomb of this type in 1974. From this, he deduced that the bombs must have come from captured IRA stocks, which would indicate a level of collusion in relation to the Dublin and Monaghan bombings.

Mr. Wylde's main concerns centred on Mr. Justice Barron's conclusions in relation to possible ANFO (i.e. homemade explosives) deposits at the scene of the bombings.

The Barron Report states that:

"EOD and ballistics officers who had encountered ANFO residues on other occasions conducted a rigorous search of each site. To suggest that they failed to find the clumps of ANFO deposits which were large enough to be visible on television camera or footage seems unlikely".

Mr. Wylde disagreed with the above conclusion reached by Mr. Justice Barron for the following three reasons.

(i) Firstly, he disagreed with the Barron Report's findings that the photographic evidence on the ANFO issue was poor. Mr. Wylde felt that the quality of some of the photographs was still very good and pointed that he had experience in examining photographs of explosion scenes and felt that they should be examined by other photograph experts. It was his view that re-crystallised ANFO was used. Judge Barron did not have this statement expertly examined.

(ii) Secondly, he felt that the Barron Report did not make it clear that **these were the first ANFO explosions to occur in the Republic of Ireland.** He submitted to the Sub-Committee that even if the evidence of ANFO explosives having been used was apparent at the scene, the chances of recognising such evidence was very remote, as he contended that it would have been the first time that experts from the Republic would have been exposed to the debris left behind in the wake of an ANFO- fuelled bomb blast. He also pointed out that the emergency response services would have immediately washed away much of the relevant bomb debris evidence.

(iii) A third matter which concerned Mr. Wylde related to whether or not the UVF had acquired the skills needed to manufacture the bombs by 1974. He laid considerable emphasis on the fact that the three bomb attacks occurred within a 90 second time frame. **He submitted that in order to undertake an operation of such precision required considerable skills in bomb-making, skills, which in his opinion the UVF probably did not acquire until 1976, 1977 or perhaps 1978.**

Commandant Patrick Trears (retired)

Retired Commandant Patrick Trears is an explosives expert and was formerly an EOD officer in 1974. He attended at the site of the Dublin bombings in the immediate aftermath. He was of the view that there was a high degree of expertise in the composition of the bombs. He stated that he was familiar with ANFO, both in its stable form and after it had been exploded. He was of the view that the type of explosive used in the bombs was ANFO, but that there was a commercial mix through it, and that judging from the size of the craters left by the bombs, one could establish that it was high explosive. He felt there was a high degree of expertise in putting together that composition and in reply to a question put by Deputy Costello, stated:

“I figured that you could not have done it better, I could not have done it better myself”.

Again, in reply to a question by Deputy Costello as to whether the UVF had sufficient expertise, he replied that while he had no expertise on this issue, his judgement was: ‘I do not think they were up to the game at all’

Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde to Dáil Justice Committee 27 January 2004 – Key points (edited)

I am a former army officer⁴². I was commissioned from the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, in 1968 and retired from the British army in 1991.

⁴² Deputy F. McGrath: Mr. Wylde, from the study of the 1974 Dublin-Monaghan bombings, are you telling the committee that from your expertise and experience, loyalists would not have had the ability to create such sophisticated bombs and set them off in such a way without professional help? Mr. Wylde: That is my view. Chairman: Deputy Power, did you have an issue that you wanted to briefly address to Mr. Wylde? Deputy P. Power: Four committee members asked the same question. Mr. Wylde, you speak with great authority on the point that the UVF did not have the expertise or ability to do what has been suggested. What is the basis of your authority and conviction? Is it just that they never did it before or since, or is it from your own personal knowledge? Mr. Wylde: It comes from a variety of sources.

First, from formal documents that have come into the public domain - by that I mean British military documents.

Second, it comes from my own personal experience in south Armagh, north Armagh and Belfast of what loyalist terrorists were capable of throughout the mid-1970s and, third, I think it comes from discussions with colleagues when I was working in eastern Germany having done what was euphemistically referred to this morning as a special duties course

In 1970, I was trained as an ammunition technical officer specialising in guided weapons, but part of the role of the ammunition technical officer is terrorist bomb disposal and explosive ordnance disposal of ordinary conventional munitions. From 1974 onwards I spent the summer from June through to October as the officer in command of No. 1 section of 321EOD unit in Belfast where I was responsible for all terrorist bomb disposals in that particular area. Stemming from that, I have given evidence in well over a dozen cases involving murder to straightforward conspiracy to create an explosion at the lower end of the terrorist scale. I have also given expert evidence in a number of cases in London, dealing with bombing attacks on the Israeli Embassy and various other Jewish premises at varying times over recent years. As to professional qualifications, I am a graduate of the Army Staff College and I have a postgraduate diploma in law.

The Barron report does not make it clear that these were the first ANFO explosions to occur in the Republic of Ireland. So the chances of the individuals recognising what was on the ground were very, very remote indeed, even if it had been there in the first place. We have to look at whether this was a true statement of the facts. My evidence, as a photographic interpreter, which Mr. Justice Barron did not go into - I have been trained as a photographic interpreter⁴³ - is that they are. What I would suggest that is required is a proper investigation of all the photographic material, and I certainly have not seen it all, so that this can be put before some form of investigation to confirm or contradict what I am saying and that other people can then test that evidence and test it properly.

which is a pseudonym for intelligence. We were collecting intelligence on the Soviet forces but the people who were involved had been working in an intelligence role in Northern Ireland and those people have exactly that same view that the loyalist terrorists did not have this capability.

Authors Note: He had already explained that the Explosives used represented a first time that ANFO2 was used in the Republic and he also explained that the IRA had mastered this technique in 1972/73 following changes made to the Base Product.

⁴³ *L/Col Wylde made two points, 1. ANFO had been dispersed by water before technical examination but it was (2) possible to interpret evidence from photographs taken before dispersal. This examination was not done.*

I would like to make it clear is that there was considerable skill involved in making this three-bomb attack happen as and when it did. I have referred in my reports to what was possibly viewed as the retaliation by the Provisional IRA on 25 July in Belfast ⁴⁴when it attempted to get six car bombs into Belfast for simultaneous explosion. It hijacked six cars in the Belfast area and then drove five of them into the city. The sixth was held up by the traffic jam it had caused in the whole of this process, so it arrived a couple of hours later.

To undertake the operations required considerable skills. The UVF did not have those skills in 1974 at all, nor has it displayed them on any other occasion. This point was made not only by me but by in the film for Yorkshire Television by Lieutenant Colonel George Styles who at that time was probably the most experienced bomb disposal officer in the world and had just written his book on the subject, Bombs Have No Mercy.

He had just attended a conference along with his superior, Brigadier Peter Dutton. We, in Belfast, had dealt with more bombs in the course of that conference than had been dealt with by the rest of the world in the same period of the previous 12 months. The expertise that Barron dismisses of myself, Colonel Styles and three army officers from the Irish Army, is cavalier in the way it has been done and it needs to be severely addressed because no form of cross- examination or questioning has taken place on that aspect.

Discussing explosive mixtures

The explosive mixtures A to C listed there are what are classed as “low explosives”. That means that if they are in the open, they will probably burn but they will not detonate. They have to be confined in an airtight, solid container, such as a gas cylinder. I have a photograph here that I can circulate which shows what I am actually talking about. The initiation of that device is through a detonator, usually attached to a piece of safety fuse - the detonator being what is called “igniferous” or “plain” - that is, it burns and is set off by burning. That is a very crude and very simple device.

⁴⁴ The IRA did attempt this attack but did not emulate the timings of the Dublin Bombings
- Author

That comes to ammonium nitrate and fuel oil. Ammonium nitrate fuel oil is a "high explosive". It detonates, depending on the quality of the mixture, at over 4,000 metres a second and can detonate at over 6,000 metres a second if it is commercially produced. It does not require confinement. What it does require, however, because they were operating with mixtures that were not pure ammonium nitrate, is a booster explosive. A booster explosive could be some form of chlorate mixed with nitrobenzene, which was quite common up until the 1972 regulations were introduced, both here and in Westminster, restricting the use of nitrobenzene. Therefore, that had virtually died by the end of 1973, and in 1974 we did not encounter any such explosives. It was unique, in any case, to the IRA. What was used, therefore, to initiate ANFO bombs was commercial explosive.

At that stage, the IRA's stocks of commercial explosives came from thefts that had occurred from the Irish Industrial Explosives factories in the Republic. The most notable explosive used was Frangex, which started being manufactured, if I remember correctly, in about 1972. The IRA managed to obtain large quantities of it. The loyalist terrorists, on the other hand, did not have that access. They had a little from quarries, as the IRA did. Again, with the tightening of the regulations, that access was denied to them. Even the quantities that they could obtain from Great Britain were virtually zero. The tightening up on commercial explosives was such that they simply did not have access to it. We had no finds at all of commercial explosives in the hands of loyalist terrorists during the summer of 1974.

The loyalists had to rely on stocks - primarily wartime stocks - of old military explosives, notably gun cotton or nitrocellulose, which came in blocks, as well as gun cotton primers. They could be set off and used as charges. By 1973, that had gone, and they were left with boosters, with extremely limited supplies of commercial explosives, which were used only sparingly and only under certain conditions. In the summer of 1974 in Belfast we encountered one bomb that could possibly be attributed to commercial explosives used by loyalist terrorists.

Perhaps I might add that the method of making the ammonium nitrate that had to be employed after the restrictions were imposed was developed by the Provisional IRA. Its development started in the middle of 1973. I cannot

be any more precise than that. It could have been March or August, but it was in the middle of that year. It involved recrystallising it. The process was obnoxious because of the fumes rather than the danger.

The loyalist terrorists did not have the knowledge of how to make that and probably did not gain it until late in 1976, 1977 or perhaps 1978. Therefore, if ammonium nitrate fuel oil was used in the explosions in Dublin, it would have to have come from one of five possible sources.

The first was old stocks of fertiliser, but everyone was agreed that those had been taken away and probably did not exist in the quantities used.

The second was pure ammonium nitrate, but they did not have access to that for the same reasons. It may also have come through a variety of ways.

They may have hijacked it or stolen it from the Provisional IRA. I am not sure that either side would admit to that if that happened.

It may also have come from confiscated stocks or because someone who knew how to make it had helped them.

They did not have the knowledge of how to make it themselves.

Mr. Wylde is disagreeing with Mr. Justice Barron on that issue?

A. Very much, and the evidence that I can put forward in support is not just my own.

We will not go into that any further.

A. Yes, but it is supported by written documents from others.

Chair: To sum up: although the use of electric detonators and timing devices was not usual for loyalist bombs at the time, there is evidence ⁴⁵to suggest the UVF could have acquired the necessary materials and assembled the bombs without expert assistance.

⁴⁵ *There was no EVIDENCE only a tenuous ALLEGATION This entire remark by the Chair was without foundation*

In your earlier evidence to us, you said considerable skill was involved in making the three bombs simultaneously explode. I think you mentioned that the UVF did not have those skills. Will you confirm if I interpreted what you said correctly? I refer you to the bottom of page 252 of Mr. Justice Barron's reports, which states:

As for timing devices, former Lt. Col. Nigel Wylde told the Inquiry that improvised TPUs based on alarm clocks could be constructed and tested without any great degree of skill being needed. Details of how to do this were available to both republican and loyalist militants.

Synchronisation of three TPUs each using the hour hand of an alarm clock would not be a difficult enterprise.

Q. That seems to be somewhat at variance with the very positive way in which you gave evidence earlier today.

I hope it is not. That is the first point. The key point, I think, is that if you are trying to make terrorist devices, you have to actually test them and retest them and retest them again. In this particular case, the timing devices will have used the hour hand.

That means they will have had to have been set with great precision. That precision could be developed as a skill over a period of time - yes,

I have no doubt about that - but it has never been shown before or since that the loyalists had actually bothered to do that, and yet here we have three bombs exploding within 90 seconds of one another. It was a formidable operation.

You would have expected, as with the IRA operation shortly afterwards, ten, 15 minutes, yes, but 90 seconds, I think, is just too much - too professional.

I refer you to Colin Wallace's submission. I do not know if you have seen Lieutenant Colonel John Morgan's submission but they would both have been along the same lines as you. From what you are saying, I think you are going to agree that your view of the overall operation was that it required a professionalism and a military training which was not available within the ranks of the UVF. Is that what you are saying?

I think that is fair when you look at this. Cars were hijacked in Belfast. To avoid detection, they would have been exchanged at a car park or in an arrangement away from where the bombs were loaded to other drivers, possibly the drivers who brought them down here to Dublin.

They would then have had the bombs loaded, not necessarily in the North - they could have been loaded anywhere in the South so the explosives would have had to have been moved.

They would then have had to have been primed, somewhere preferably down here because of the tightness of the timing of the explosions.

They would then have possibly had some sort of safety and arming unit⁴⁶ in them so that the bombers were not actually at risk until they had walked away from that particular device - again, something that the loyalists did not employ at that time.

Then, the team would have had to have had a getaway plan, all of which I covered in a substantive report which I provided to Justice for the Forgotten.

The planning of this operation was extremely competent. It was a very, very well executed terrorist attack and the result was a horrendous tragedy.

Q. Mr. Wylde, you speak with great authority on the point that the UVF did not have the expertise or ability to do what has been suggested. What is the basis of your authority and conviction? Is it just that they never did it before or since, or is it from your own personal knowledge?

It comes from a variety of sources. First, from formal documents that have come into the public domain - by that I mean British military documents.

Second, it comes from my own personal experience in south Armagh, north Armagh and Belfast of what loyalist terrorists were capable of throughout the mid- 1970s and,

Third, I think it comes from discussions with colleagues when I was working in eastern Germany having done what was euphemistically referred to this

⁴⁶ *Safety and Arming Unit SAU seems to be a military grade component - Author*

morning as a special duties course which is a pseudonym for intelligence. We were collecting intelligence on the Soviet forces but the people who were involved had been working in an intelligence role in Northern Ireland and those people have exactly that same view that the loyalist terrorists did not have this capability.

Remarkably during this session the Chairperson Sean Ardagh TD disallowed a question on collusion.

In summary at least three explosives experts, two British Army officers and one Irish did not believe that the UVF had the technical expertise to produce the Dublin car bombs in 1974.

They were Lieutenant Colonel George Styles, Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde⁴⁷, and Commandant Patrick Trears.



Both Said - No

Lieutenant Colonel Wylde's operational and technical experience was not capitalised on by Barron or Ardagh investigations. There are number of key points which can be gleaned from his testimony and that of others.

⁴⁷ *It is difficult from the evidence available to be absolutely certain, but in my view the presence of what appears to be 'clumps' of ANFO at the site of all three Dublin bombs would indicate the use of re-crystallised ANFO. This in tum would suggest that the source was confiscated stocks. – Wylde, Page 5 Supplementary Report 15/11/2001*

Both British and Irish Jurisdictions enacted legislation in 1972 to ensure that Ammonium Nitrate Fertilizer with High Ammonium Nitrate Content was removed from the market. This produced a technical difficulty for the IRA and Loyalist terrorists. The IRA overcame this problem by a process known as re-crystallizing. This mixture is called ANFO (Ammonium Nitrate and Fuel Oil). I have termed this ANFO 2, and it is a HIGH EXPLOSIVE.

The previous mix (prior 1972) I have termed ANFO 1, and it is a LOW Explosive. The Loyalists had NOT emulated the IRA expertise in 1974.

ANFO 1 is an effective explosive when it is physically contained in a Beer Keg or Milk churn or similar container.

ANFO 2 DOES NOT require containment which means it can be transported and deployed more easily in a more flexible manner – not requiring metal containment.

Wylde and Trears believe that the Dublin Attack used High Explosives

(IRA Model) and Wylde suggested captured IRA Explosives. Indisputably the Monaghan Bomb used Low Explosives in a Metal Container – ANFO 1 (Loyalists Model).

Lieutenant Colonel John Morgan Irish Army

Had extensive correspondence with Judge Barron on many issues of significant detail. This correspondence has not been published in any of the reports which emanated from Judge Barron or subsequently.

These views are articulated extensively in his book⁴⁸ and he commented;

The Genesis lay in Portadown⁴⁹. There, a strong, ruthless Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) company was located. 3 Brigade Headquarters, British Army, was in Lurgan, nearby. In Mahon Road Barracks, Portadown, Units of 3 Brigade, including a UDR company, were stationed. A large,

⁴⁸ *The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings 1974 A Military Analysis, Belfast Historical & Educational Society, John Morgan, 2013*

⁴⁹ *These comments are included as a record of what L/Col. Morgan said and the author has not formed a view.*

sectarian R.U.C. presence supplemented. There was a symbiosis between all of these. They had a common enemy. Here the plot was concocted. British Intelligence decided, or gave approval, to bomb the Republic. British Military provided the plan and resources. British Special Forces personnel, with UVF paramilitaries, implemented the plan. This was an official operation. A friendly state covertly attacked and devastated another. This was an operation of great sensitivity. The decision had to be taken at a high level. No army officer would do this of his own volition. Neither would the head of MI5, N.I. His Director, in London, had to be involved. I do not believe the P.M. [Harold Wilson] or S.O.S. [Secretary of State], N.I. (Mr. Rees) were involved. The Home Affairs Minister [James Callaghan] may have answers to give. (MI5 comes under his jurisdiction)

Angela Clifford commented in Colonel Morgan's book.⁵⁰

Colonel Morgan gave me his analysis of the operation and explained 'why it had to have been organised by a senior military figure, someone with extensive working experience of bombs. What he said made perfect sense to me. Loyalist involvement in the Dublin/Monaghan Bombings is fairly well proven, but could the operation have been staged without professional help? I discussed the Colonel's thesis with an acquaintance in Belfast who is well versed in unorthodox military affairs. He made a very telling remark. I had asked him about Loyalist military capabilities in the early 1970s, particularly with regard to bomb-making. He said that the 'British Army got its bombs ready-made. The implications of that are significant. What he meant was that Loyalists got their instruction from the British Army, either through having served themselves or from serving soldiers. But the Army itself does not make bombs: there are factories which turn out bombs and sell them to the Army. And, of course, the type of bomb the Army normally uses is different in kind to those which would be used to create a car-bomb, for instance.

Thinking further about the matter, it is clear that, to construct a bomb like those used in Dublin and Monaghan, it was not just any old Army personnel that would have the expertise. There would have to be expertise

⁵⁰ *The reference to Monaghan would not match the known facts*

with unorthodox bombs. Ordinary run-of-the-mill officers in the British Army would have no experience of the workings of such devices. There are, however, a very small number of specialists who know all about explosive ordnance. These are the Bomb Disposal Officers. Moreover there would have to have been links to Intelligence. Colonel Morgan believed that the Dublin/Monaghan Bombings had to have been designed and armed by such an element. It took a while for this to sink in. To a layman, Bomb Disposal Officers take bombs apart: they do not build them or design them. They do not blow people up. But the more the matter is considered, the clearer it seems that the Colonel was right—only an Ordnance officer of the highest calibre could have provided the expertise for the sophisticated bombs used in Dublin and Monaghan.

Hidden Hand Nominated UVF Suspects

The documentary nominated a number of UVF suspects for the bombings. This started with an initial list of eight and increased to 20. These are the same or similar names nominated by the Garda and the RUC. They were allegedly members of the Mid Ulster Brigade UVF and based in Portadown. David Alexander Mulholland was nominated a Dublin driver and Samuel Whitton a driver for Monaghan.

The additional names were William “Frenchie” Marchant, Belfast UVF leader and Billy Fulton who took charge of explosives for Dublin and Monaghan.

Four leading loyalists were nominated as the planners of the Bombings. Billy Hanna UVF I/C Portadown and his 2 I/C Harris Boyle. The third man was Robin Jackson (The Jackal). The last man was Robert McConnell. These last four were either members of the UDR or former soldiers.

Monaghan Garda also received confidential information from sources in NI. In that information reference was made to three suitcase bombs being assembled and separate reference to the Monaghan Bomb been place in a milk churn.

The Dublin investigation was a different matter, firstly it was run by the Central Detective Unit. This was a Unit primarily concerned with non-

subversive crime and with a main focus on the Dublin area. The Special Detective Unit (Special Branch) did not have the same capacity and at this stage was mainly occupied with intelligence gathering and protection. It acquired a much higher profile in subsequent years in the struggle with subversives. Despite these shortcomings officers did travel to Belfast and achieve a degree of cooperation in terms of identifying the suspects. These officers may have been comprised of Dublin/Monaghan personnel together with Murder Squad colleagues. It is highly probable that these detectives continued to work on the case long after the ostensible “closing” of files.

Critical observations have been made about the adequacy and duration of investigations and they deserve serious consideration. Despite the obvious obstacles of time and previous commentary one is required to establish key facts as a cornerstone to arriving at conclusions. This part of an investigation is about collecting evidence which may allow the criteria to be fulfilled and a successful conclusion achieved. This means that teams have to be tasked and directed to collect this evidence. The initial interrogation point is the collection of forensic evidence and followed quickly by the identification of witnesses and suspects. Both investigations resulted in a list of named UVF suspects mainly resident in the Portadown area and included the alleged leader in Portadown, Robin Jackson AKA “The Jackal”. The continuing difficulty was the inability of the Garda investigators to interview the suspects. They were reliant on the RUC for that cooperation and in practical terms this exercise even if fulfilled would not result in court approved evidence unless the suspects made statements of admission. There a zero possibility of that happening in the circumstances and with the “collusion” spectre attaching to members of the security forces.

The prior history of car bombing in the Republic provided excellent clues. It was important to consider the history of car bombing and no warning car bombings. At this remove it is not possible to say whether this exercise provided insights for the investigators. It should have been obvious to all that the car bombings of the 17 May 1974 and the car bombings of 1 December 1972 belonged in a separate category. The first fact was that both these bombings took place at politically critical junctures and that secondly the synchronised car bombings were unprecedented and were never repeated.

Long Running Dublin Inquiries & Reports

Subsequently Dublin was pressured into action because of the “Hidden Hand Documentary” and the campaign by the “Justice for the Forgotten⁵¹” (JFF) group. There was a virtual plethora of “Inquiries” which commenced with Judge Hamilton, appointed by the Irish Government, in February 2000. Judge Barron subsequently replaced Judge Hamilton. He was succeeded by the Dáil (Ardagh) Committee and eventually and finally by a Commission of Investigation chaired by Patrick MacEntee SC QC.

They chose this strange mix of Judicial interventions, Dáil Committees and finally a Commission of Investigation. Was this the most efficient way in which to explore the issues, hardly. The “Hidden Hand” documentary had provided the original impetus in 1993 but this was not going to provoke action on its own. The Justice for the Forgotten (JFF) lobby eventually tipped the balance. The government had choices to make, and the obvious one was a Tribunal. At this time they had agreed to hold a Tribunal into “*suggestions*” of garda collusion in the murder of two RUC officers. This became the long running and discredited Smithwick Tribunal. There were many allegations surrounding the Bombings that went far beyond the realms of “*suggestions*” but this or a similar option was disregarded in the strange mix settled on. Despite the obvious shortcomings some relevant information was disclosed, particularly the British Admission (1974) and the technical evidence provided by Lieutenant Colonel Styles, Commandant Patrick Trears and the very informative information supplied by Lieutenant Colonel Wylde.

The JFF had sought a full public inquiry but they were unable to secure that from government. An Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings was established in January 2000 and was finally concluded in 2003. The report of the Commission of Inquiry (the Barron Report) was published on 10 December 2003⁵². It was published, through the mechanism of the Joint Oireachtas Committee

⁵¹ *A Group dedicated to the search for Justice for the Victims and their families* <http://www.dublinmonaghanbombings.org/home/news2.html>

⁵² <http://www.dublinmonaghanbombings.org/home/publications.html>

on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights, as an Interim Report. A sub-committee of the Joint Oireachtas Committee was then established to consider, including in public session, the Report and produce recommendations. These recommendations were published as a Final Report. (See below for both)⁵³.

⁵³ *The text and links are copied from the JFF website*

11. Many Inquiries

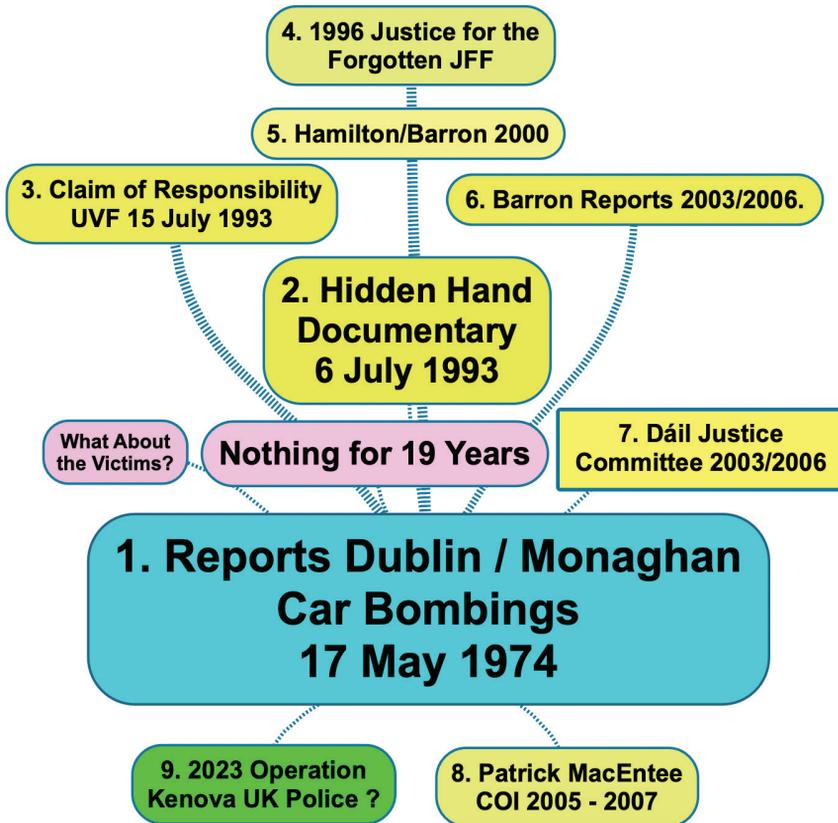


Figure 16 Dublin & Monaghan Car Bombing



Interim Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings of 1974 (December 2003). Barron



Final Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings (March 2004) Barron & Ardagh

Resulting from an expansion of his original remit that occurred during his investigations, Barron published three subsequent reports dealing with the Dublin bombings of 1972 and 73, the murder of Seamus Ludlow and the bombing of Kay's Tavern.

These were published in a similar fashion to the first report (see above) and were each considered, including in public session, by a sub-committee of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights. Three further Joint Committee reports were then published regarding these reports.



Interim Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin Bombings of 1972 and 1973. (November 2004.)



Final Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin Bombings of 1972 and 1973. (February 2005.)
Ardagh



Interim Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Murder of Seamus Ludlow. (November 2005)



Final Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Murder of Seamus Ludlow. (March 2006)



Interim Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Bombing of Kay's Tavern, Dundalk. (July 2006)



Final Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Bombing of Kay's Tavern, Dundalk. (November 2006)

After considering the Barron Report and the Ardagh Hearings the government opted for a Commission of Investigation with limited terms of reference.

The Commission of Investigation, set up on 13th May 2005, under the terms of the Commissions of Investigation Act (2004), and under the sole membership of Mr. Patrick MacEntee, S.C., Q.C., was due to present its final report to Government on 13th November 2005. The Final Report (the MacEntee Report) was published on 4th April 2007. The Final Report and all eight Interim Reports are available below.



Final Report (4th April 2007.) MacEntee



Eight Interim Report (13th February 2007.)



Seventh Interim Report (12th December 2006.)



Sixth Interim Report (31st October 2006.)



Fifth Interim Report (20th July 2006.)



Fourth Interim Report (30th May 2006.)



Third Interim Report (February 2006)



Second Interim Report (January 2006)



First Interim Report (November 2005)

Authors Comment

The JFF provided a valuable service in bringing together the different reports which emerged. These inquiries are confusing to any researcher for several reasons. The original remit to investigate the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings was extended into a series of other crimes which diffused the original focus. The personalities involved also changed, Judge Hamilton originally, then Judge Barron who in turn was succeeded by a Dáil Committee (Ardagh Committee) and finally by Senior Counsel Patrick MacEntee.

Limitations

It is surprising that no policing expert or assessor was part of the project teams.

It is appropriate that agencies or government should be criticised where appropriate and I will return to that aspect. Some significant information was revealed which clearly confirmed that the British Prime Minister had informed the Taoiseach that the people responsible had been interned. **This extraordinary admission is puzzling because it does not appear to have been pursued beyond its initial communication.** The evidence of L/Col. Styles and L/Col. Wylde (British) provide an invaluable insight into Bombing Technology at the time. Commandant Patrick Trears (Irish) was

equally informed, and evidence based. The information from Sergeant John Weir RUC, convicted killer, became available. Remarkably the statements made on video by Lieutenant Colonel Styles to the Hidden Hand Documentary are not discussed in the subsequent investigations. This is a remarkable omission. It is all the more remarkable because L/ Col. Styles made a very frank admission that the British Army were using captured IRA explosives to set off a “ A Bang” to facilitate searching or for other reasons. This clearly set up a scenario whereby this procedure could be used by unscrupulous military elements to collude with loyalists or indeed for other extra jurisdictional activity on their own volition. L/ Col. Wylde said that no records were kept of the captured IRA explosives (ANFO). This combination of critical factors was missed by Judge Barron and by the succeeding committees.

All these inquiries faced a very difficult task in trying to unravel the true nature of the crimes committed 26 years previously (1974 -2000). Did anyone seriously believe that the “Guilty Actors” would just voluntarily give up their secrets? Political involvement in the process was not optimum because the Dublin Political system had questions to answer. The lack of genuine investigative expertise could not be replicated in a political environment or indeed in the Judicial component as well. Plainly put they did not have the trade craft to deliver this competency in the same way as trained investigators. This exercise took over six years to complete. The sequence was Judge Hamilton/Judge Barron followed by Dáil Justice Committee (Ardagh) and concluded by Commission of Investigation Patrick MacEntee SC, QC.

It is interesting to note the evolution in the Terms of Reference⁵⁴. The initial approach Hamilton/Barron directed towards establishing the facts of the actual attacks, the response from the Garda and adequacy of the investigation. Comments were invited on the Hidden Hand Documentary and on a question as why no prosecutions took place.

Ardagh’s remit was narrower and asked to overview the Barron Report. The recommendations made were aligned to future actions, but

⁵⁴ *Appendix One*

the Ardagh Recommendations outlined options for the suggested way forward.

MacEntee's remit took a different direction and could be seen as an attempt to describe the administrative practices in place in 1974. One operational detail emerged in relation to Sergeant John Weir's allegations.

Police Practitioner

As a policing practitioner for many years my approach is more direct than the discursive nature of the different reviews and reports. My view is that it was reasonable to expect that clear conclusions would be drawn and unfortunately that was not necessarily the case.

The Barron approach was comment laden on the different evidence offered to it. The approach to discovering the singularly important area of bomb technology and expertise was weak. Specific technical information offered by Wylde was seemingly rebutted by two witnesses who disagreed but did not offer detailed rebuttal evidence. That was unfortunate on this very important area. The extremely important comments made by Styles on HH Documentary were not used in any of the reports. He made a very important point on British operational strategy in using captured IRA bomb material in explosions to promote a scenario conducive to searching the area for information. This matter should have formed a central part of any subsequent investigation.

In general, there seemed to be an obvious desire not to discuss the question of collusion despite the obvious indications of its relevance.

Cascade effect

The final Ardagh report was published November 2006 and ostensibly it dealt with the Barron Report into the Bombing at Kays Tavern in Dundalk on the 19 December 1975. As mentioned, the Barron Investigation had migrated from its earlier terms of reference, and one had a report on a report which was a very unsatisfactory position. Nevertheless this report

made trenchant finding of collusion on the British side which had overall applicability and not least to the Dublin/Monaghan bombings.

Modus Operandi - Loyalists

The logistical and technical implications of this operation have been discussed. One can agree based on previous events that Loyalist and UVF elements were familiar with Dublin. The extent of the operation was clearly beyond anything attempted previously and wasn't replicated subsequently. There is no doubt that their supporters would willingly undertake an attack in Dublin. This must be set against their typical cross border operation or indeed their attacks within the North. These were invariably local short distance attacks with hasty retreat to their home bases.

The Hidden Hand documentary described an elaborate sequencing of transport to Dublin using various routes and rendezvous close to Dublin. There is little doubt that this maneuver was completed but unlikely as exactly described in the documentary. Sources confirm that an individual took car numbers at a Boyne River crossing point, the so-called smugglers route.

One must consider that all bomb cars still carried their own number plates and that displays total indifference to being intercepted initially in the North and subsequently in the South. Logically this apparent weakness had been factored in by not having the bombs on board and employing credible cover stories if stopped in the South.

Its scarcely credible that the operation was mounted on a premise of indifference to detection and that certain measures had not been taken to protect the operation enroute. Paradoxically in the circumstances prevailing in the North it was easier for the gang to negotiate any roadblock or checks based on their own provenance. The South was a different option and that leads one to the conclusion that the actual bombs were brought South at an earlier stage possibly several days in advance and held over at a secure area pending allocation to the bomb cars. I know the popular story is that the RV took place at the Coachman's Inn, near Dublin Airport or at the Church close to Drumcondra. Its stretching credulity that the arming of the bombs took place in broad daylight in public car parks. This does not

smack of a very professional operation. It is more likely that the “arming” took place in concealment at one or more locations. Good field craft would dictate that separate locations should have been used thereby providing redundancy in the event of an operational compromise.

Its self-evident that operation would have been rehearsed many times and not necessarily with the actual bomb car drivers, a scout car could easily have guided the bomb cars to the target locations. There could have been additional precautions taken at the target spots by parking getaway cars in a holding spot so that the bomb cars could move into place seamlessly and escape the scene just as easily.

Then one recalls the faultless detonation of the bombs within minutes. There is nothing in the UVF’s playbook to indicate that this expertise was within their repertoire at that time or indeed subsequently.

The Barron Dilemma

Judge Barron was appointed when Judge Hamilton became ill shortly after commencement.

The very first obvious problem for him related to resourcing. He had no transcription service and notes were taken long hand. This was a serious issue because he was in receipt of written and oral submissions which he could not record faithfully. The process was conducted in private and there was no opportunity for an initial interaction between participating parties. This provided no opportunity to tease out technical matters and this shortfall was particularly impactful when it came to submissions on explosives. He did not have the services of a policing or security professional to assist him in unravelling questions on systems and procedures.

Ardagh recorded that subsequently, the Commission (Barron) was asked to conduct similar inquiries into the bombing of Kay’s Tavern, Dundalk on 19 December 1975 and the shooting of Seamus Ludlow on 2 May, 1976. It has also been asked to look into the shooting of Brid Carr in 1971; bombings in Dublin on 1 December 1972 and 20 January 1973; and other bombings within the State.

This was a totally unrealistic requirement which added years to the process and prevented an early distillation of the Dublin Monaghan crimes. In a bizarre system all of Barron's reports were re-examined by the Ardagh committee. Judge Barron also reported to the Ardagh committee on different points. This provided a circular investigation model. Then ultimately MacEntee was asked to conduct a Commission of Investigation on a very select and reduced Terms of Reference. His Final report was submitted in 2007. Therefore this entire exercise took seven years to conduct and was allowed to slide away from the public gaze.

However notwithstanding the considerable practical difficulties Judge Barron made one jaw dropping discovery which had remained hidden for 26 years. He discovered that the British Prime Minister had informed the Taoiseach and officials on two occasions that they the British had interned those responsible for the Dublin Bombings.

"In recent months some very nasty men had been lifted on the Unionist side. On the Friday and Saturday of the UWC strike, twenty-five interim custody orders had been signed and the perpetrators of the Dublin bomb outrages had been picked up and were now detained, but it was impossible to get the evidence to try them in ordinary courts".

This matter is referred in detail at the start of this narrative.

Unfortunately Judge Barron made a significant error when commenting on the evidence of Lieutenant Colonel Wylde.

"The Inquiry does not share the view of former Lt Col Wylde that confiscated PIRA stocks were the most likely source of ANFO for loyalist paramilitaries. There is evidence to suggest that the UVF and UDA were procuring fertilizer and other explosive substances from sources outside of Northern Ireland, in Scotland and elsewhere".

That presumption does not constitute a rebuttal of the evidence offered by Lieutenant Colonel Wylde. The phrase "evidence to suggest" is a contradiction in terms unless one presents the proof which underpins the contention. The quote from the expert was,

“It is difficult from the evidence available to be absolutely certain, but in my view the presence of what appears to be ‘clumps’ of ANFO at the site of all three Dublin bombs would indicate the use of re-crystallised ANFO. This in turn would suggest that the source was confiscated stocks”. – Wylde, Page 5 Supplementary Report 15/11/2001

Furthermore other factors needed to be considered, not least the synchronised nature of the Dublin Explosions, the powerful destructive effect of the car bombs. It should also be considered that this attack was atypical for a Loyalist operation, in terms of distance from home base and the many challenges posed by operating in a “hostile” environment. Also, the ANFO 2 product could be transported in boxes or cases or even plastic. This was not the case with the typical ANFO 1 loyalist product which had to be contained in a metal container. This was the single most important technical question and at the very least what was required was an “Intellectual Confrontation” between technical experts who shared potentially different views. This was not a topic that a lay person could easily interpret *but a British officer giving evidence which could be harmful to British interests should not be disregarded lightly.*

He also missed the relevance of Lieutenant Colonel Styles statement in the Hidden Hand documentary that he could be tasked to provide a bang for military colleagues for operational reasons.

Ardagh and Barron – No Power to Compel Witnesses

A fundamental flaw was the inability to compel witnesses.

This meant that while many were invited to attend vital witnesses, could blithely ignore the request. In the first instance the keepers of the Northern Secrets declined to participate directly and declined with honeyed words of regret. They included four Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Paul Murphy, Secretary of State in Northern Ireland

Mr. Peter Mandelson, former Secretary of State in Northern Ireland

Dr. John Reid, former Secretary of State in Northern Ireland

Lord Merlyn Rees, former Secretary of State in Northern Ireland

Paul Murphy responded (2004) on behalf of all four regretting they had nothing to offer and providing some anodyne information that had no bearing on the core issues of detail.

Former Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave was invited but did not attend.

There was a notable exception, when Sir Hugh Orde, Chief Constable of the PSNI addressed the Sub Committee⁵⁵ (2006) conducting hearings on the Barron Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Bombing of Kay's Tavern, Dundalk. This is a convoluted formula which in essence meant that Ardagh was looking at the Barron Investigation into the bomb at Kays Tavern Dundalk in November 1975.

This is the context in which Sir Hugh Orde attended and also present was a senior investigator from the Historical Enquiries Team⁵⁶, Mr. David Cox.

The Sub-Committee was addressed by Sir Hugh Orde, Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Mr. David Cox, Director of the Historical Enquiries Team, and other officials from the HET. Their attendance before the Sub-Committee was of historic significance since it was the first time that a Chief Constable from Northern Ireland has addressed a Committee of the Houses of the Oireachtas. This was the sub-committee that made the most stringent accusation of collusion by against the British.

Collusion – Fact or Fiction for Dublin Bombings

Collusion has been discussed in this book already and key sources related to it have been nominated. In this context I look at the information already supplied relating to Dublin/Monaghan.

There is a straight linear logical connection between the position which accepts that the UVF did not have the TECHNICAL or OPERATIONAL

⁵⁵ This was Final Report of the Ardagh Sub-Committee

⁵⁶ Historical Enquiries Team – HET, launched in Northern Ireland in January 2006 as an initiative to help relatives of unresolved deaths there. The team has a budget of approximately £30 million and a staff of 84, including analytical and administrative personnel.

CAPACITY to execute the Dublin Bombings. Self-evidently they were assisted in that process by a “rogue” military unit. One considers the statements of John Weir, Fred Holroyd, Colin Wallace, and commentary generally. In terms of the UVF I suggest Robin Jackson “The Jackal” as symbolic of all the UVF Portadown and Glenanne conspirators. Similarly, the “Special Duties Team” based at Castle Dillon are symbolic of military elements engaged in asymmetrical undercover operations with the reputation for extra judicial actions.

On the balance of probabilities COLLUSION was an essential element in the Dublin Car Bombings. It is important to also note that COLLUSION is not defined in the criminal code and it is important to consider that it is an expression (in my view) which means CRIMINAL ACTIONS undertaken by individuals who are in leadership roles or other roles to facilitate criminal acts. It includes both STATE and NON STATE actors.

Garda Investigation

There is a narrative which tends to suggest that if the investigation was “pursued” in a more robust manner a different outcome would have been achieved. There was an obvious deficit of documentation in the Garda Síochána, and the Department of Justice many years later. This was regrettable on one level but considering the passage of time it is not altogether unsurprising.

The biggest single obstacle to a successful investigation was the fact that the origins of the crimes were in Northern Ireland. The suspects resided there, and critical evidence remained there. There were no technical or legal measures available to the Garda to pursue these criminals in that jurisdiction. There is widespread misunderstanding on the process required to (a) interview suspects in another jurisdiction and (b) extradite them to this jurisdiction. This procedure requires the active cooperation of the Host country, and it is dependent on “court quality” information or evidence which links the suspects to the crimes. Neither of these prerequisites were available at that time. Suspects cannot be extradited for interview in this country. On return they must be brought to the courts and formally charged with the offence nominated on their Extradition Warrant. These are the international rules and they applied then as they do now. This is a

very distressing scenario for the families of the victims but it the absolute truth and to suggest otherwise further adds to the distress.

This legal gordian knot does not mean that active investigations must cease, and no further inquiries should be made.

It is obvious that continued pressure should have been applied at government-to-government level to ensure that the case remained live.

Dublin and Monaghan Bombs⁵⁷

“Someone planted the bombs in Dublin and Monaghan in 1972-74 and for both general and specific purpose. The chosen candidates have always been the loyalist paramilitaries, even if some wistfully hoped the IRA might have been responsible, at least for the December 1972 explosions. And in the case of May 1974 the specific involvement of the mid-Ulster UVF can be taken as actual, though not a matter of law. Far more interesting has been the almost universal assumption of most actors and nearly all observers in Ireland that the British in some manner were involved, certainly in 1972 and almost certainly in 1974, whether directly or indirectly, by rogue elements in the field or through special groups operating independently of higher command. The very fact that neither the RUC nor the British army undertook serious investigation is an indicator that the possibility was quite real north of the border, within the security establishment as well as in the Republic.”

⁵⁷ Bell, J. Bowyer. (1996) *In Dubious Battle: The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings 1972-1974*. Dublin: Poolbeg Press Ltd. [pp.157-158]

12. Prior History of Bombings ⁵⁸

- 31/10/1969 - bomb at Wolfe Tone's grave, Bodenstown
26/12/1969 - 10lb gelignite bomb at O'Connell monument, Dublin
18/02/1970 - bomb at RTE mast, Raphoe, Donegal
26/03/1970 - bomb at ESB sub-station, Tallaght Dublin
02/07/1970 - bomb on Dublin-Belfast railway track at Baldoyle, Dublin
17/01/1971 - bomb at O'Connell monument, Glasnevin cemetery,
08/02/1971 - bomb at Wolfe Tone statue, Stephen's Green, Dublin
29/10/1972 - 12lb gelignite bomb defused at Connolly Station, Dublin
29/10/1972 - incendiary bombs at 4 Dublin hotels.
01/11/1972 - bomb at a pub, St. Johnston Donegal
26/11/1972 - bomb at Film Centre, Burgh Quay, Dublin
01/12/1972 – Car bombs at Eden Quay & Sackville Place, Dublin, Cars
(Acquired Belfast) Emergency Legislation Dead Locked in Dáil – Passed
Quickly after attacks.
13/12/1972 - incendiary bombs at Clerys & Sackville Place, Dublin
28/12/1972 – Car bombs at Belturbet & Clones, Cars stolen Enniskillen.
28/12/1972 - Container Bomb Pettigo
20/01/1973 – Car bomb at Sackville Place (All Blacks Rugby) Car Acquired
Belfast
17/03/1973 – Car Bomb Cloughfin, Castlefin, Co. Donegal (Bomber Killed)
Car Stolen Castlederg
17/05/1974 – 3 Car Bombs Dublin (Cars Acquired Belfast), Sunningdale
Agreement Protests - Northern Ireland in chaos – Power Sharing Executive
Falls.
17/05/1974 - 1 Car Bomb Monaghan Car stolen Armagh.
29/11/1975, - bomb toilets Dublin Airport
19/12/1975 - Car Bomb Kays Tavern Dundalk (Car Acquired Belfast)
7/3/1976 – Car Bomb Castleblaney County Monaghan Car Stolen Belfast
21/5/1994 - Widow Scallan's Pub Dublin, Satchel Bomb and Murder⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Previous Bombings in the South

⁵⁹ The attack at the Widow Scallans was an attempted bombing of an IRA function. The bomb misfired and a doorman was shot dead. Hundreds would have died had the bomb exploded, There would have been no IRA cease fire that August 1974

Comparative scientific analysis of these attacks may have been instructive but only the attacks of the 17 May 1974 have this kind of analysis available.

The “UVF” car bombs on the 1/12/1972 and 17/5/1974 occurred at a politically strategic and sensitive time. In the first instance on the 1/12/1972 a Bill was before the Dáil proposing a raft of new measures directed at the IRA. The politicians were vacillating motivated in part by the hangover from the Arms crisis and an antipathy to the Northern Orange lobby. It looked like that the Bill would fail. The car bombs exploded, and the Bill passed. In May 1974 the North was convulsed with a political and security crisis caused by the new power sharing Executive. The bombs exploded and the Executive collapsed.

Serendipity – Widow Scallan’s – 1994

One makes the point repeatedly that context is very important when evaluating key events and recognising that chance plays a major part in the eventual outcome. So it was on the 21 May 1994 when loyalist gunmen tried to bomb the Widow Scallan’s pub in Dublin. This resulted in the shooting dead of Martin Doherty, a doorman and the placing of a hold all loaded with explosives. This bomb failed to explode when the detonator fired but failed to initiate the bomb. The attackers escaped in a gold-coloured car which was later found abandoned in the North Strand in Dublin. The UVF claimed responsibility for the attack. It is now well known that there had been continuous contact behind the scenes involving politicians north, south, and east for many years with the objective of weaning the men of violence from their campaign. This involved an internal dynamic in the Provisional IRA where it was by no means certain that cease-fire proposals would bear fruit. There were over two hundred people in the pub, some drinking in the downstairs bar, but most were packed into an IRA support event in the upstairs function room. This event had been advertised in An Phoblacht, so it was widely known what was taking place. Had the bomb exploded there would have been massive casualties, and it is certain that the Provisional IRA cease-fire which came into place on the 31 August 1994 would not have been possible. Garda Catherine Bartley and some colleagues were on the scene as the detonator misfired in the bag. They came that close to being obliterated and many more people with them. It

transpired that there were 18 lbs. of explosives in the bomb. It has hard not to pose the contextual question as to who would have benefitted from this attempted atrocity. Clearly it would have scuppered the embryonic cease-fire, and the conflict in the north would have been put back years. Loyalists were certainly opposed to the Provisional IRA's acceptance as partners in peace and no doubt security elements would have been of a similar mind. Ostensibly this attack had much in common with the attacks on 1 December 1971 and 17 May 1974 insofar as it occurred at significant political juncture but on this occasion mercifully the plan failed. This attack also underlined the inherent bungling by the UVF regarding bombing – mercifully.

Car Bombs Dublin - A Personal Experience December 1, 1972

It was hardly surprising that the murky underworld of the Intelligence Services came to play a role that night. Leaving my home in Drumcondra I travelled to do protective duty outside the Dáil. Large protests were expected, and we had the usual job of manning the barricades. Already several hostile meetings had been held outside the Dáil as different stages of the Bill were taken. There had been a major overflowing protest meeting at Liberty Hall, which spilled out onto the street. (One wonders was this why Liberty Hall was picked for a car bomb attack?)

I drove down Gardiner Street heading for the Quays intending to cross the river at the Custom House. The lights were against me at the junction of Gardiner Street and Talbot Street. Traffic was light and the evening was still. Just then an enormous explosion rent the air shaking my car and surrounding buildings. I knew full well that the north had come to Dublin. It was fortuitous that the lights were red rather than green because it was likely that I would have driven right into the full force of the blast. I drove a few hundred yards out onto the quays, and I saw that cars were on fire outside Liberty Hall. Liberty Hall itself was severely damaged, windows blown out and blinds were flapping through the broken glass. I drove to the Dáil and met up with my colleagues. We were posted at the lower end of Kildare Street when we heard another enormous explosion. Later we discovered that this bomb had gone off in Sackville Place killing two men.

These explosions and deaths had the probable intended effect of eliminating the political opposition to the Bill. In the event when the

division was called most of the Fine Gael Party abstained and the Labour Party voted against. Fine Gael TDs, Eddie Collins and Oliver J Flanagan voted against. The former Fianna Fail TDs, Neil Blaney, Paudge Brennan, Des Foley and Sean Sherwin all voted against.

The comments on the record of Mr. Paddy Cooney TD who shortly became Minister for Justice was very revealing of the political mindset. He was to earn a reputation as a “hard Line” law and order Minister for Justice.

Mr. Cooney (Fine Gael) It is window-dressing on the part of the Government to ask us to give them a power that turns the rights of the citizens, the very freedom we are here to protect into a nullity and I would ask this House, when it comes to decide how it votes on this particular matter, to decide in conscience if the Minister has demonstrated that the present laws are inadequate to justify this awful interference with individual freedom. It is a matter of conscience for every Member of this Parliament on which he must make up his own mind. If he feels that the rights of individual are now threatened beyond a tolerable limit consonant with the necessity to protect democracy, then he must in conscience vote against this Bill. No case has been made, in my submission, for voting for this Bill and I ask this House to reject it.

This bombing operation used four cars, two hired cars were used in the actual bombing and a third hired car was probably a support car, used for advance scouting and escape. The fourth car was a car stolen in County Antrim some time previously. This car contained a driving licence, which would appear to have been used to hire all three cars. One car was hired in Belfast and two were hired at Aldergrove Airport from two separate car hire companies. The hired car method meant that none of the cars would have appeared on police or military watch lists. This was an elaborate plan perhaps over elaborate as it is reasonable to conclude by the 17 May 1974 a new plan was used.

The RUC and the Gardai shared stolen car lists daily. The actual bombing operation required advance reconnaissance, scouting ahead on the days of the operation and selection of an area to prime the bombs

for use. Following placement of the bombs an escape route would be necessary and some preparation for contingencies.

The Liberty Hall bomb exploded at 7.58 pm and was followed at 8.15 pm by the Sackville Place bomb. A warning was telephoned to the Belfast Newsletter at 7.55 pm. The caller was alleged to have a “distinctly English accent”. The second bomb killed a bus driver George Bradshaw (30) and a bus conductor Tommy Duffy (23).

Who was Responsible?

The relatively simple answer to this question is, those that benefit. It is much more difficult to identify those who benefit although one is often pushed to a seeming obvious conclusion. The convenient answer was always of course it was the loyalist terrorist. Undoubtedly that was often the correct answer, but a serious question must be raised over their capacity to carry out sophisticated bombings far away from their home bases.

The Interim Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry December 2003 into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings characterised other Loyalist Bombing activity as “further minor bombing attacks”. This description seemed rather strange in the circumstances.

More importantly an analysis of the UVF’s use of car bombs indicates in the period 1969 -1979 they were involved in eight Car Bombs attacks in the South. These attacks comprised of 12 individual car bombs. Only two attacks showed a high level of technical sophistication, those in Dublin on the 1 December 1972 and 17 May 1974. The other attacks⁶⁰ were of “the Smoky Fuse variety” or of a “Clock Timer⁶¹” operation.

One of the crude detonation mechanisms was reported in relation to the car bomb explosion at Sackville place on the 20 January 1973. A passerby saw smoke coming from the boot before the car exploded. The most egregious example of their technical incompetence was their attack

⁶⁰ *Using a simple fuse and making a hasty retreat from the scene,*

⁶¹ *Lieutenant Colonel Wylde’s evidence of the 27 January 2004 makes it clear in his opinion that a clock timer can achieve a degree of precision but not to the degree witnessed on 17 May 1974 in Dublin – a ten minute interval possibly or longer.*

on the Miami Showband on 31 July 1975. They attempted to place a bomb on the bus having set up a fake checkpoint. The bomb exploded with tragic results. The key question for the investigators was to establish the difference in the methodology as well as the identity of the culprits. It should be noted that the UVF did not claim responsibility until 15 July 1993 and then after the Hidden Hand exposé of 6 July 1993. It's worth noting that the car bomb on 17/3/1973 (Castlefin) exploded prematurely killing the bomber.

In summary at least three⁶² explosives experts⁶³, two British Army officers and one Irish did not believe that the UVF had the technical expertise to execute the Dublin Attacks.

Evening Herald – Shock New Evidence on Dublin Bombings

The Evening herald published a headline story on the 31 August 1973 alleging a British Army connection with 1 December 1972 car bombings in Dublin. Sources say that the information came from frustrated gardaí who were unhappy that the Irish government had not actively pursued their British counterparts on the attacks.



Figure 17 Evening Herald Headlines New Evidence

⁶² They were Lieutenant Colonel George Styles, Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Wylde and Commandant Patrick Trears

⁶³ L/Col Wylde's evidence to Justice Committee on 27 January 2004 is instructive on the Monaghan Fragments which included fragments of a beer keg and a cog wheel (from a clock timer?) This is a signature of the UVF Bombers.

A full dossier compiled by the Special Branch in Dublin Castle, has been handed to the Government it contains information that two of four men working under the code names of Fleming and Thompson, who stayed in the Belgravia Hotel in Belfast, were, in fact, members of the Special Air Services section of the British Army. They are wanted here in connection with the bombings.' There is also proof that at about 7.30 p.m. on the day 'of the bombings a joint Army-R.U.C. checkpoint just outside Newry on the Northern side of the border stopped a car which had four occupants. They included the mystery men, Fleming and Thompson. After a conversation the car and its occupants were taken over by the British Army who drove them away. A subsequent inquiry by the R.U.C. about their whereabouts was ignored by the British Army. This was the essence of the story and at least it displays a continued garda interest in the car bombings.

Major Distraction – Portlaoise Provos Escape -18 August 1974

There had been previous problems in Mountjoy and rioting. Lessons weren't always learned. In 1974 the infamous Littlejohn brothers escaped over the wall of the prison. The helicopter escape (Three Provos 1973) brought about an immediate response from the authorities and on the 9 November 1973 all remaining IRA prisoners were removed from Mountjoy and the Curragh to Portlaoise Prison. This change only brought about a temporary respite. On the 18 August 1974 the Provos made their most spectacular escape, this time in Portlaoise Prison. They blasted their way through security doors and made their escape from the prison in an area adjacent to the Governors House. Nineteen prisoners made good their escape by hijacking cars locally. In effect they were well clear of the prison before an effective cordon could have been set up. A few weeks previously a tunnel had been discovered on the opposite side of the prison. The use of explosives was worrying in terms of their access to it. This raised the spectre of collusion from within which lingered for several years, and which has not dissipated to this day. The predictable response was the setting up of cordons and checkpoints throughout the country, but these measures were not to prove fruitful. Clearly the escapees were lying low. Amongst their number was Kevin Mallon the helicopter escaper from Mountjoy in 1973 (he had been recaptured and lodged in Portlaoise) and two brothers Sean and Michael Kinsella convicted of the murder of Senator Billy Fox.

A certain Martin McGuinness was also in custody but did not escape with the others. This emphasised the fact that the greatest danger to the State came from the Provisional IRA and not the UVF or so the prevailing climate would have it. Furthermore, the British Ambassador was assassinated in Dublin on the 21 July 1976 and Garda Michael Clerkin was murdered near Portarlinton on the 16 October 1976. Many of his colleagues were seriously injured. This was in response to Emergency Legislation being enacted directed at the IRA.

Murder Senator Billy Fox.

This had been preceded by the murder of Senator Billy Fox former TD and member of the Fine Gael Party. He was killed by IRA gunmen on the 12 March 1974 while during a visit to his girlfriend's home in County Monaghan. The gunmen were IRA members and neighbours.

13. Planning for the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings

As described the three car bombs exploded in Dublin at, *Parnell Street: 1728, Talbot Street: 1730, South Leinster Street: 1732, and Monaghan: 1858.*

The logistical capacity required to execute the Dublin Attacks were of a high order. The cars involved were stolen in Belfast on the morning of May 17 at different times but before 10 am. Belated reports were made to the RUC in respects of the theft of two cars and the third was reported more promptly. It is assumed that the planning stages of this operation had already been undertaken. The next stages involved loading the explosives in the stolen cars, driving the cars together with scout cars to Dublin. The bombs had to be armed (timers set for the explosion) at some location close to Dublin. The distance from Belfast to Dublin city center taking a direct route is 105 miles and a detour through Armagh probably adds another 30 miles to the route. The use of back roads would also have added significantly to the distance and driving times. One must consider three stolen cars with their real number plates still intact, with scout cars to ease their passage through potential hostile territory. It would be reasonable to allow at least 4 hours in travel time for this journey. There were considerable difficulties and unpredictability on the ground in the North because the UWC strike was taking place currently. The operation could have involved up to thirty people each fulfilling different critical roles. Logically this kind of operation could only be attempted if there were significant redundancy measures in place to avoid detection. This would have required discipline, organisation, the ability to place the bomb cars and ultimately to detonate them within minutes in Dublin city centre.

Reconnaissance and Planning

The Dublin car bombing was a complex operation. There were many variables to consider, not least the moral imperative. Although one can disregard the moral imperative in this context. In military terms a planning template is used which describes the key elements.

The Ground: A precise understanding of the area where the action is to take place. In the Dublin case, the streetscape, traffic flow, parking considerations. The presence of counter forces (Garda).

The Situation: The overall security and political situation in Dublin and the North.

Mission: Cause maximum human casualties. Ensure contingency planning allowing for unexpected obstacles and have an escape plan.

Execution: The basic plan of deploying the terrorist resources and subsequent escape.

Command & Signal: Who controls the operation and how is communication maintained.

Supply: Source all the material necessary, bomb material and transport.

Dublin had to be covered in detail and on foot on several occasions. Previous experience like the car bombings used on 1 December 1972 would have been instructive. The decision to execute this plan had to be taken at a senior level and in the utmost secrecy.

Exploding the Car Bomb

One of the intriguing aspects of the Dublin Car Bombing operation was establishing what timing and initiation system was used to explode the car bombs.

The Loyalist used two systems with varying success.

A simple fuse attached to the bomb detonator which was lit and caused the bomb to explode.

A timer linked to a watch or alarm clock designed to cause the explosion at end of a predetermined time lapse.

Both devices are considered unreliable for a variety of reasons and are prone to malfunction. Self-evidently neither of these options could be used to cause synchronised car bombings in the center of Dublin on a busy afternoon.

One of the possible options and possibly the only one is described by Don Mullan in his book *The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings*⁶⁴. He quotes the opinion of Sergeant Major Ed Komac, US Army (Retired) a highly trained explosives expert, who worked in Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD). Since his retirement from the military, he has worked as a civilian EOD expert.

A Military Operation

Having considered the documentation you forwarded to me. I have formed the opinion that this operation appears to be a military organised one. I am of the opinion that an operation of this nature would require 20 men to carry it out. The reasons why I believe this was a military run operation are as follows:

The organization and planning of the operation; the expertise evident in the building and detonation of the bombs; the delivery of the devices to each location (it takes a lot of nerve to drive around with over a hundred pounds of improvised explosives).

With regard to the arming of the timing devices, you may be able to find one or two individuals who have enough nerve to arm a clockwork-timing device. However, to find three people to put their trust in arming clockwork-timing devices I find hard to believe. Think about it: you are parked on a street with over a hundred pounds of improvised explosives with people walking by. There are at a minimum a couple of connections you must make to arm the bomb.

I understand that the eyewitness to the South Leinster Street bomb car has said the driver exited the car in less than a minute. This is one of the reasons why I do not believe the bombs were detonated by a clockwork-firing device.

If you were arming a clockwork device that is supposed to go off within 30 seconds before or after two other bombs, how much faith would you place in the other people doing the arming of their bombs? However, with the military firing devices available, their reliability, and the ease in arming them, again points to a military operation.

⁶⁴ *The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings, The truth, the questions and the victims stories, Wolfhound Press Don Mullins*

14. Justice for the Forgotten JFF

“Justice for the Forgotten was formed in 1996 with the aim of campaigning for truth and justice for the victims of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings of 17th May 1974. In time it also embraced the cause of the victims of other cross border bombing attacks. It has constantly lobbied for justice for the victims of the bombings. Their web site states. *Not a single person has ever been prosecuted in connection with any of the cross-border bombings. Indeed, an official silence was maintained about the events until the early 1990s.*

Over the years the bereaved and injured came to question.

- The complicity of British state forces in Northern Ireland in the bombings.
- The actions of the Irish state in pursuing those responsible.
- The integrity of the RUC investigations.
- The integrity of the Garda investigations.

Our campaign led to the establishment of two private, non-judicial, inquiries by the Irish Government”.

Interestingly they also state.

Most disturbingly however, it was acknowledged by the authors in all the inquiries that they had been *significantly restricted in their investigations by the non-cooperation of the British authorities.*

They were apparently unaware of the failure of the Dublin Government to act on the information supplied to them by the British Government in 1974.

In recent months some very nasty men had been lifted on the Unionist side. On the Friday and Saturday of the UWC strike, twenty-five interim custody orders had been signed and the perpetrators of the Dublin bomb outrages had been picked up and were now detained (Judge Barron Source).

15. Analysis

Motive

It is readily apparent that the Loyalists (UVF) were waging a violent campaign in Northern Ireland with sporadic attacks in the South. These attacks were typically located close to the border. The campaign was aimed at preventing any changes in the Northern political system that were likely to impact on the Unionist dominance in the province. It was also aimed at the IRA who were engaged in a vicious campaign of murder and bombings. The record shows though that most casualties of the UVF were ordinary Catholics who were not directly part of the IRA machine.

The British establishment was resisting the IRA campaign as would be expected. There was a political agreement with Dublin to move forward with the Sunningdale power sharing executive in Belfast. The Secretary for State, Merlyn Rees had de-proscribed the UVF in March 1974 as an incentive to them to engage in the political process. This process was not favoured by a large portion of the Unionist/Loyalist population. Self-evidently this was a view shared by elements in the British military who were influenced to some degree by the thinking of Brigadier Frank Kitson and General Tuzo which favoured tacit or active cooperation with the Loyalists while concentrating on the IRA and the Nationalist community.

There can be no doubt that the Loyalists and some military elements would use force majeure against the Nationalist targets including civilians if opportunity presented itself.

Opportunity

The circumstances prevailing in Northern Ireland in May 1974 provided an opportunity for the counter forces to take decisive extra jurisdictional action to preserve the status quo. The rampant disorder allowed them freedom of movement by simply displaying their military or loyalist credentials. A previous spectacular attack on Dublin on 1 December 1972 showed that the Irish political system could be moved to a more accommodating political stance from a Northern perspective.

Means

On the strong balance of probability the UVF did not possess the skill or the explosives to execute the Dublin bombings unaided. They had the skill to execute the Monaghan attack which was a typical cross border hit.

The explosive material used in Dublin was ANFO 2, which was not available to the UVF unless provided to them from other sources. Significant skill was required to assemble the bombs which included constructing the circuitry, necessary to explode the bombs and including the necessary safety device to ensure safe transport and initiation at the target location. There was the daunting prospect of organizing simultaneous bomb detonations within minutes of each other. The UVF had not demonstrated that capacity before or after the Dublin attacks.

It is reasonable to assume that had they acquired that expertise that they would have used it subsequently to spread even greater terror.

The cars used in the Dublin attack were stolen or acquired in Belfast and there is a degree of suspicion regarding two of those vehicles as to how genuine their theft was.

This analysis seeks to adopt a logical discursive approach to the facts and information disclosed in the course of this Cold Case review. Essentially one is looking for the “bread crumb” trail that leads to a probable conclusion on who actually planned and executed these dreadful crimes.

There are many factors which impacted negatively on the quest for justice and the prosecution of the individuals concerned.

Government Failures

In the first instance the failure by both governments to pursue the information supplied by the British Prime Minister to the Taoiseach on two occasions in 1974 identifying the persons involved was of enormous impact. Judge Barron was very clear in highlighting this failure.

Secondly there was an overt unwillingness in Dublin to formally discuss the probability of collusion in the bombings which is difficult to reconcile with the facts.

The terms of reference set for the final report, the MacEntee Commission of Investigation (COI) set agenda for internal fault finding which moved far away from the core realities of the crimes and their interjurisdictional character.

There are also a wider set of questions and facts that relate to overall context. These matters are referred to below.

Monaghan Car Bomb.

There is no doubt that this crime was a typical Loyalist/UVF cross border attack. These attacks were characterised by the theft of a car a relatively short distance from the Border on the Northern side. The targets selected were also relatively close to the border on the Southern side. A relatively crude bomb contained in a solid container to enhance its explosive properties were used. These bombs sometimes used basic clock timers. Often simple back powder fuses were used to initiate the explosion via a detonator and no timer was employed. A full list of attacks is provided.

The examination of the scene in Monaghan revealed the presence of a brass cog wheel (presumably from a clock timer) and fragments of metal that came from the container holding the explosives mix. This combination of elements indicated that a low explosive was used employing a metal container and a timing clock.

Despite their unreliable technical history, bombs of this type were deadly and caused significant loss of life, injuries and damage. This was the case in Monaghan. Seven people were murdered, many injuries caused and significant property damage occurred. It was a no warning attack designed to cause loss of life, injuries and damage. **The political intent was to stop the power sharing executive in Belfast.**

This was not the type of bomb that could be trusted for the much more complicated synchronised car bomb attacks on Dublin.

Dublin Car Bomb Attacks

The complicated nature of these attacks has been discussed and the approach here is to examine the various aspects of the attacks under relevant and sometimes overlapping criteria.

Capacity – On the Balance of Probability

The UVF did not have the technical or operational capacity to carry out these attacks unaided. This is confirmed by various witnesses and underscored by the UVFs proven incompetence in bombings.

The bombs were constructed using ANFO⁶⁵ which is technically a High Explosive but utilises a Booster Charge from Commercial Explosives to explode. This changed methodology had been developed by the IRA following changes to the content of Fertiliser in 1972. They developed what is described as re-crystallised ANFO in substitution for a chemical that was widely used up to 1972/1973. The expert opinion is that the UVF did not possess that technology in 1974 and perhaps not for a number of years later.

Then expert witness Lieutenant Colonel Wylde stated.

In 1974 the Army were consistently recovering large quantities of re-crystallised ANFO each week. This came from finds, interceptions and from defused bombs. In the Belfast area I would estimate that throughout the summer of 1974 we recovered at least 1000lbs of ANFO every week.

He also confirmed other units around the province were also recovering ANFO on a recurring basis. He made the further admission that.

The key issue was that quantity and type of explosive involved was not recorded. No account ledgers were maintained, and no stock takes were ever undertaken. For anybody who had access to the stocks, it would have been relatively easy to accumulate a large quantity of explosives in a very short time.

The obvious question is could some of these explosives have found their way to the UVF through friendly military hands. It is probable that this is what happened because the UVF would have to have developed high skill

⁶⁵ L/Col. Wylde - Ammonium nitrate and fuel oil. Ammonium nitrate fuel oil is a "high explosive". It detonates, depending on the quality of the mixture, at over 4,000 metres a second and can detonate at over 6,000 metres a second if it is commercially produced. It does not require confinement. What it does require, however, is a booster explosive.

almost overnight or being extraordinary lucky to have *happened* on this material in some other way. Most assuredly they would have employed this technology again had they the competence.

In this regard the information supplied by Lieutenant Colonel Styles to the Hidden Hand documentary that he could be tasked to provide a bang for military colleagues for operational reasons is critically relevant. He was very comfortable with that arrangement and there is no suggestion that he was party to any nefarious conduct. In any event he was no longer in the North in 1974.

The added advantage of this new process was that the explosive mix did not need to be contained in the same manner as heretofore, typically in a beer keg or milk churn.

This allowed the transport and concealment of the bomb in an efficient manner regarding packaging and concealment. This model suited the Dublin car bombs exactly.

Lieutenant Colonel George Styles clearly indicated the practice of using captured IRA ANFO in British Army operations and his colleague Lieutenant Colonel Wylde confirmed that “No account ledgers were maintained for the captured ANFO”. The Dublin bombs were technically different and superior to the Monaghan Bomb. This is the perfect storm scenario; IRA explosives were being used in military operations. This involved a skill transference to other members of the British military. The only other ingredient necessary was the willingness to employ this skill in offensive operations. This is self-evidently the opportunity for Black Operations personnel to become involved.

UVF Bombing Incompetence in the Republic and in the North and South

There were several bombings in the South which demonstrated their technical incompetence.

19 October 1969 - Thomas McDonnell, a member of the UVF, was injured and died a few days later when a bomb he was planting exploded prematurely at a power station near Ballyshannon in County Donegal.

17 March 1973 - A UDA/UVF volunteer died when the car bomb he was transporting exploded prematurely as he parked outside Kirk's Bar, Cloughfin, County Donegal.

31 July 1975 a bomb exploded prematurely when placed in the MIAMI showband bus by the UVF. At least four of the gunmen were serving soldiers from the British Army's Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and all were members of the UVF. Three band members were killed and two attackers were killed in the bomb blast. The attackers were believed to be members of the Glenanne gang. This was the Miami showband bombing and murders which occurred north of Newry and this revealed the scheming brutality of this gang. It was intended that this bomb would explode as the band made their way home to the South.

The Wider Question of Collusion

Collusion was a significant factor in the Dublin and Monaghan bombings, but the topic of collusion was a much wider phenomenon in Northern Ireland. It is outside the scope of this book to cover this topic forensically. I certainly recommend several sources which provide greater detail and wider context. Sir John Stevens⁶⁶ provides a fascinating insight into collusion. One of the seminal works on collusion by the British security forces with Loyalists is contained in the research work of Ann Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies*⁶⁷. This work is well researched and detailed. It alleged that senior UVF figures like Robin Jackson were being run by RUC Special Branch and by British Military Units and enjoyed protected status as a result. The Cain Website <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk>⁶⁸ contains a vast repository of information and it includes links to the many inquiries which have been held into the collusion by State Actors. *Lethal Allies* contains references to many of the key UVF members who were named in connection with bombings and the Miami show band. The Cain website references the main inquiries on the topic of collusion and provides an insight into the many strands which bound the UVF to elements in the security forces in Northern Ireland.

⁶⁶ *Not for the Faint Hearted*, John Stevens, Orion Books, 2005

⁶⁷ *Lethal Allies* Cadwallader Mercier Press 2013

⁶⁸ <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk>

PART II
The Victims,
the Overall Context
and KENOVA

16. The Years of Silence by British and Irish Governments

Judge Barron highlighted the inaction of succeeding Dublin governments in dynamically pursuing the perpetrators down through the years.

The record is clear that it took the Hidden Hand documentary in 1993 to provoke a reaction and then some of that was outrage by Conor Cruise O'Brien that the cabinet was being impugned. This outrage was widely misplaced. The only ones who had the right to be outraged were the families of the victims and those injured in the attacks.

Mr. Liam Cosgrave was the Taoiseach in 1974 and he has no record in the public domain. We do know that he declined to participate in the Hidden Hand documentary and we do know that he was invited to participate in the Barron/Ardagh investigations which apparently, he also declined. It is extremely puzzling that the Taoiseach of the day has never gone on public record on these bombings apart from his address to the nation on the day of the bombings.

The interest occasioned by the Hidden Head documentary was relatively short lived and it was not until the formation of the Justice for the Forgotten (JFF) in 1996 that pressure was brought to bear on government. It took until 1999 for the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern to agree to a process of inquiry which led to the appointment of Judge Hamilton in 2000 to conduct this investigation. This initiative was controversial because JFF and others wanted an inquiry held in public but this was ultimately refused. Judge Hamilton was replaced by Judge Barron who provided a report in 2003. At this stage his remit was increased to include other cross border attacks.

In turn his investigation was subsumed into the Ardagh Committee which in turn was followed by the Mac Entee Commission of Investigation. All these inquiries left many unanswered questions particularly for the relatives. These complex issues have never been fully debated in a public forum.

The ultimate irony was when the British Operations Kenova (2016) and its principal Jon Boutcher declared their interest in the Dublin and

Monaghan bombings. This process was capped off by the British Legacy Act which in turn is being appealed to the European Court. Jon Boutcher has now resigned from Operation Kenova and is the current Chief Constable of the PSNI. This is a remarkable turn of events. The proverbial roadblock to uncomplicated inquiries has been the long-avoided question of active British involvement in the Dublin and Monaghan bombings. The Appalling Vista scenario. It is a fact the British contribution to the various inquiries was the provision of a relatively short document.

The Inquiry was told by Dr. Reid⁶⁹:

That the main reason for the delay in supplying information was that some 68,000 files of possible relevance existed in the Northern Ireland Office alone. The number of files in the Ministry of Defence could be counted in millions. Many of these files were not computerised. The team examining the files had finished at the end of 2001, and it was hoped to provide information to the Inquiry within weeks.

The promised information came in the form of a ten-page letter from Dr. Reid dated 26 February 2002. A further six pages appended to the letter gave details concerning the structure and control of intelligence gathering in Northern Ireland during the relevant period.

A Public Judicial Inquiry⁷⁰ - Don Mullan 19 January 2004

Having been taken up a four-year legal cul-de-sac, engaging with a process they never agreed to, the bereaved and wounded of the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings have once again had their Trust Betrayed by the Irish Government. While Mr. Justice Barron's Report has created its own dynamic, its limited scope must not be allowed to stand as a substitute for a properly constituted public Tribunal of Inquiry.

Now that the Barron Report is, at last, published, the sense of outrage felt by some elderly bereaved, who lost children or partners, is that they are

⁶⁹ *Interim Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings December 2003*

⁷⁰ *Don Mullan To the ARDAGH Committee*

four years older and fear they will go to their graves without the Irish State having dealt with them in an honest and transparent way.

Failure to establish a Public Inquiry erodes any moral standing the Irish Government has in calling upon the British Government to establish Public Inquiries into the murders of Pat Finucane, Rosemary Nelson, Robert Hamill and others in Northern Ireland. This too is a grave concern.

The only way forward is a sworn Public Tribunal Inquiry with full powers to compel disclosure of evidence and attendance of witnesses.

Failure by the British Government to fully cooperate can be held up for international ridicule, especially in the context of the so-called war on terrorism.

Without wasting any further time or public expense, and bearing in mind the potential minefield which must be negotiated in the wake of the Abbeylara hearings, the Oireachtas Committee should simply recognise there is only one fair and just outcome. Recommend a Public Tribunal of Inquiry immediately and use whatever influence they have to ensure the Government accedes to their recommendation.

Don Mullan's pleas fell once again on deaf ears.

17. Touched by Tragedy⁷¹

The Victims

(1) Parnell Street Dublin

Marie Butler, 21,
John Dargle, 80
Patrick Fay, 47,
Antonio Magliocco, 37
John O'Brien, 24,
Anna O'Brien, 22,
Jacqueline O'Brien, 16.5 months,
Anne Marie O'Brien, 4.5 months,
Edward O'Neill, 39,
Breda Turner, 21,

(3) South Leinster Street Dublin

Anna Massey, 21
Christina O'Loughlin, 51

(2) Talbot Street Dublin

Josie (Josephine) Bradley, 21,
Anne Byrne, 35,
Simone Chetrit, 30,
Concepta Dempsey, 65,
Colette Doherty (with child), 20,
Elizabeth Fitzgerald, 59,
Breda (Bernadette) Grace, 34,
May McKenna, 55,
Anne Marren, 20,
Dorothy Morris, 57,
Marie Phelan, 20,
Siobhán Roice, 19,
Maureen Shields, 44,
John Walshe, 27,

(4) Monaghan North Road

Patrick Askin, 44,
Thomas Campbell, 52,
Thomas Croarkin, 36,
Archibald Harper, 72,
Thomas John Travers, 28,
Peggy White, 40,
George Williamson, 73,

My name is Tim Grace and my wife, Breda, was killed in Talbot Street. She was a beautiful young woman and in the prime of her life.

We were in the seventh year of our marriage, living in Portmarnock with one child, our son. The baby was teething, I was off work with an injury and my wife was not in the best of form so I said to her that she should take the car, go into town and have a look around. During the day and in that afternoon, I looked after the baby for my wife. The news said that bombs had gone off in Talbot Street. There was no sign of my wife. I was standing at the door, looking down the road and waiting. I went to Jervis Street, the Rotunda and the Mater. Talk about horror.

I could not find my wife in the hospitals. I found her in the morgue. My wife had gone in shopping and parked the car in Gardiner Street. Breda was killed on the way back, at 5:30pm, when the bomb went off. Normally, she'd have been at home. The elements of chance are colossal.

⁷¹ The readings and poems reproduced in this chapter are with the kind permission of Rachael Hegarty

Married, housewife and living in Portmarnock, originally from Tralee, Co. Kerry. She was survived by her husband, Tim and 12-month-old son, Edward. Breda was killed in Talbot Street.

The garda who made the identification of Breda with Tim was a family friend who was detailed for duty in connection with the bombings.

A Country Man getting the Provisions - Joe Sullivan Garda⁷² Recalls

About 6:30 in the evening I think, in or around or maybe -- Between half six and seven o'clock in the evening we were in Killeshandra standing outside the Garda station in Killeshandra, speaking with the local sergeant, Sergeant Peter Maguire. I can't remember what about, but it was obviously to do with some Garda enquiry anyway. Peter was standing at the wall, and we were standing on the street side of the wall, and the next thing I heard, it was quarter to seven, I hear bomb explosions. Peter Maguire goes into the station to find out where it was, because he thought it was in the North, but he came back out and told us the bomb was, that a bomb had gone off in Monaghan Town. Absolute devastation, unbelievable devastation. The first thing I noticed was there was a wee cafe, just behind the monument on the North Road side the cafe, straight across from the pub, just the width of the street across from the pub, and it was absolutely demolished, it was gone. There was nothing only bits of timber, bits of timber like -- Like a box of matches scattered over a big area, you know.

A sump. Well, it subsequently transpired that it was a Hillman Minx that was stolen in Portadown. I don't know when it was stolen but anyway. But all I can recall seeing was the actual, the actual sump of the car.

I knew four of them. I knew George Williamson, I knew Peggy White, I knew John Travers and I knew Harper, four of them, I knew four of them, personally, I knew them well, yes. Peggy White was a barmaid and my recollection is, now I'm subject to correction, but I think she was working upstairs.

⁷² Extract from gardahistory.com courtesy GSRMA

Yes, George Williamson. Now, George Williamson's bicycle was parked down in Dublin Street, which would be about 100 yards away, up an alleyway with his shopping hung on the bicycle. And some of the neighbours knew who owned the bicycle. He was one of those guys who'd come into town every week for his, as they used to say, get the provisions. He was a single man and he was missing, he didn't come back for his bicycle

George Williamson⁷³ (remembered by his nephew, Thomas Steenson, and niece, Margaret McAdam)

George was born in March 1901. He was survived by one sister, Mrs Margaret Steenson, Armagh City, and two brothers, Mr Isaiah and Mr Jesse Williamson, Guelph, Ontario, Canada. His sisters, Mrs Jane Carson and Anna Williamson, died in 1939 and 1927 respectively. George was a farmer who lived on his own after his father's death, his mother having died some years previously. He liked field sports and was a good runner. On the day he was buried a commercial traveller (a school friend of his) told how he had watched George at a Castle Shane picnic as a young man beat an all Ireland champion. When the race was over, the champion said, 'No one has beaten me before,' and George replied, 'You'll not have that to say again.' That was Uncle George. He had a real dry wit. That was typical of the man. He liked everyone and everyone liked him. As was evident by the numbers from all walks of life who attended his funeral at First Monaghan Presbyterian Church on 22 May 1974. When his body was taken to the church from Monaghan Hospital, we were amazed at the crowds. There were so many people who wanted to carry his coffin that in the end it was decided to just let his cousins carry him a short distance, otherwise the minister would have been left waiting for a very long time. Protestants and Catholics alike stood together to mourn his passing.

On Point Duty – Michael McKenna Garda⁷⁴

In 1974 Dublin was a busy city but not that much crime, not that many incidents occurring. In '74 itself there had been loads of bomb explosions

⁷³ *The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings, The truth, the questions and the victims stories, Wolfhound Press, Don Mullan, 2000*

⁷⁴ *gardahistory.com ibid*

in Northern Ireland and when you come down to the South of Ireland then there were people ringing up with bomb scares. Around O'Connell Street where I would have been doing the traffic points there would have been lots of bomb scares for various hotels in cars, and things like that, and on occasion I would have to close off the whole street. For that purpose I had load of barriers at the junction of Parnell Street/O'Connell Street and whenever I would get a call on the radio I would just pull them across and redirect the traffic away from wherever the bomb scare was I had been appointed as a traffic points manager a year previous to that and I directed the traffic out of Parnell Street and I directed traffic down Parnell Square at 5.30pm. There was loads of people, yeah, there would have been loads of people around. There had been a bus strike so most people were walking, there wasn't that many getting buses. When I was directing the traffic there I directed the traffic out of Parnell Square and stopped it. Then I turned to direct traffic from Parnell Street. I looked at my watch and it was 5.30pm and just as I directed the traffic out of Parnell Street a massive explosion took place up near the Welcome Inn. I saw the explosion burst out with flames from the top of it, kind of blue or white smoke, and the whole place went quiet for just a few seconds, a second, and then the whole devastation of glass breaking, and people falling and injured.

I saw a gentlemen just up the road from me, he had been talking to people in the Venetian Cafe and he fell, I saw him fall, and the family came running out to help him.

I pulled the barriers across to block off any traffic from coming in to the street and I made my way up Parnell Street to see if I could help people. The area was covered with glass from all of the windows in the area. I directed the traffic out of Parnell Street to get rid of it all.

Then I met people who were injured, not too badly, mostly suffering from shock and cuts, I directed them to wait at the Parnell Street/O'Connell Street junction so maybe an ambulance would arrive to take them to hospital.

I then saw a man lying beside the Fiat car, this was the chap who was chatting to the people in the Venetian Cafe, I think it was his family, there

was an injury to the back of his head, he was assisted by a man who had first aid knowledge, so I moved further up the street.

I found two men lying on their own near the footpath beside the Volkswagen car, one had a head injury and appeared to be unconscious, the other man was conscious, he had a hand wound and appeared to be bleeding from the neck. I used my armllets to try and stop the flow of blood and he was suffering from shock and complained of a pain in his leg.

They were white armllets and gloves, yeah, white gloves and armllets that you wore to direct the traffic.

The Italian chap was Antonio Magliocco and he was hit with debris from the bomb and he fell to the ground and his family, or parents, I think his brother might have owned the Venetian Cafe.

It was an horrific event. I never experienced anything ever like it since and I wouldn't ever like to see it again. I know on occasions when I hear of bombs exploding anywhere in the world or even here in Ireland when they were exploding in Ireland I could still remember, I could still see the Parnell Street bomb explode.

I got a ferocious shock when it went off and the ground shook under me. As I said there earlier there was a silence for what I thought was, it obviously wasn't, I thought there was a dead silence for a second when the bomb exploded and then there was devastation and carnage, windows and people falling and the injuries to everybody that followed the explosion with no warning given to anybody. It was a terrible event and really horrific for the families of the people and for anybody that was in the street that day. I know myself I was shocked by the whole thing, it took me a long time to get over it you know.

I know that the only two people who ever asked me was I okay were two sergeants, that was Sergeants Michael Brennan and PJ McDermott. No senior officer ever asked me was I okay or did I have any problems. Of course at that time there was no peer supporters or welfare officers, or anything, you just got on with the job and that was it.

The only thanks I ever received for my help with the victims that day came at the inquest in 2004 when the Justice For the Forgotten counsel thanked me for my assistance to the people who were injured and some of them who had died on that day. What really hurt me the most, and I feel terrible sorrow for all the people who were killed in all of the explosions, but I feel a great affinity to the O'Brien family who were just walking by the car when it exploded, it was John O'Brien, who was only 24, Anna, was only 22, and their two daughters, Jacqueline I think was 16/17 months and Ann Marie was four months. To think that they had a lovely afternoon and walking down towards O'Connell Street and they were just killed in an instant when that bomb exploded. I think the only, what would I call it, sorrow, it is not sympathy, but the only comfort feeling some of the families had was the fact that they feel that they don't think they ever knew what hit them, you know that they didn't suffer, they were there one minute and they were gone the next.

It was totally horrific. I used to go every year, they used to have a mass in the Pro Cathedral and then they built the memorial in Talbot Street so they would have a memorial service at the memorial in Talbot Street and then they would have a mass in the Procathedral and on occasions they had it in Gardiner Street. I used to go to all of those masses whenever I could when I was working, I wouldn't have been able to go every year. Since I have retired I have gone every year and I have met with the people who are part of the Justice For the Forgotten, who want to find out what happened and why it happened and who was involved. I got to know them and I found them to be lovely people. All they want to know is what happened to their loved ones, who caused it and was there any State involvement.

My name is Alice O'Brien⁷⁵. I lost my sister, her husband and their two children in the 1974 bombing on Parnell Street. My sister was 22 years old, Jacqueline was seventeen months old and the baby, Anne Marie, was just five months. They lived around the corner from Parnell Street on Gardiner Street. My aunt lived across from Anna. She alerted the house in Finglas that Anna had not come home all night. Paddy Doyle, my father, and my

⁷⁵ Rachael Hegarty *ibid*

mother's sister, Christine Conroy, went to the mortuary. Paddy identified Jacqueline and Anne Marie because they were the only two babies killed, but he could not identify Anna at all. He identified Johnny by a tattoo on his arm that had "Anna and Johnny" on it. Anna was identified when Christine Conroy recognised my sister's earring.

The Rotunda

The O'Brien family had been attending the Rotunda Hospital that afternoon, baby Anne Marie was having hip treatment. Nurse Mary Molloy was talking to them.

John Farrelly Garda recalls,

She had a special little patient that afternoon. The O'Brien family were with her and they were comprised of John, the father, John O'Brien, who was 24 years of age, Anna O'Brien, his wife, who was 22, Jacqueline, 17 months and Ann-Marie who was a few months old. And Ann-Marie was being treated for that particular condition in relation to her hips and being rectified with a lot of loving care by Mary. And Mary will describe, in the course of her interview, how that care was administered and how important it was to have empathy with the family as a whole. And on that day, and you will hear how she describes her chat and her banter, and she was looking forward to having that little girl back with her again the following week, which I think might have been the last of her treatments.

Mary shared some banter with the O'Brien family and confided in them that she had a special date that evening and she was looking forward to going on that date and it was a special evening for her. So, they were all in high, good spirits. The little baby, Ann-Marie, was making progress and everything looked very good on the horizon. So, they said goodbye in a very happy way and looking forward to the consultation and the treatment the following week.

And today was Friday and it was the hip day we called it. Little babies, especially if they were born a bit premature, the ball and socket of their hip would be a bit loose and dislocated in some cases. So, that was examined on birth by a midwife or by a doctor and you can feel the click so then the plan was, come back on such a date, say, at four weeks and have a pelvic

harness applied. A pelvic harness was just like a little pants that was put on the baby to keep the hips in place and strapped on to the shoulders to extend the hips out. It was a skill in itself to apply this and that's what I did from maybe two o'clock on that Friday.

The last patient, John and the little one, Ann-Marie and it was her second last, it was fourth week, no, her fifth week and she was very cute. She would have been, you know, maybe nine weeks at the time and I got to know the mum and dad and the little girl and you found yourself in conversation with them about what went on last week and the baby didn't cry even when you were doing it, smiled. So, I called -- she was the last patient when I called that day and I was very happy that this was the end of the day because I was heading off for a nice weekend at home. And even the dad, I remember him saying to me, "what are you up to today" -- he called me "Mary", you know, in those days "nurse" was what people called you but I knew them so well and I said "I'm heading off, I'm going out on the town tonight" and that kind of talk. So, it was so casual and so lovely. And we did that and then I said "we'll see you next week for just last one".

There was to be no next week or any week for the O'Brien family.

On the Beat – Matt Givens Garda

I remember, I can remember it distinctly. I was on O'Connell Street for the first half of the tour. I was on 2 to 10 and I was due to go on a post, the GPO was a post at the time, it was six o'clock. I was, we'll say, taking an early break and at the time, we used to eat in the sorting office, the post office sorting office in Sheriff Street. Garda Joe Glennon was standing at Guiney's window. So we headed off anyway and we went, walked up, straight up as far as Amiens Street Station and had just turned into Sheriff Street when the bomb went off behind us. So we were back, we came running back down the street, the two of us, and when we arrived, Tom Madden, who was a traffic Sergeant in Store Street, in a little dinky, white Renault van, he had arrived at the scene, but other than that, we were the first two Guards there.

Oh, it was absolute mayhem, John. Absolute mayhem. There were people thrown everywhere. I remember the first woman I saw or went to was an

old lady, she was lying in the middle of the street, we'll say, outside Moran's Hotel, as it was then, there is a different name on it now, and, eh, I could see that her leg was gone above the knee, one of her legs was gone above the knee and she kept saying to me: "Guard, look after the injured, I'm fine, I'm okay, look after the injured." There were people lying everywhere. There was a man would obviously have been trying out a camera, there was a camera shop there right across the road from Moran's and he had a cinecamera, we'll say, and it was buried in his head. They were the two people I can really remember. And then there was people everywhere, Guards coming, ambulances coming. I went -- Martin Murphy was my Section Sergeant and Martin Murphy came on the scene and he sent me in the first ambulance to Jervis Street with the first body, actually, I was the first Guard in Jervis Street with the first casualty and I was given the job of helping to set up the temporary morgue and as the bodies were coming in, to try and identify, and the people come in, they were trying to identify them. Again, it was mayhem. But my abiding memory of Jervis Street was that there was a pregnant lady brought in who was dead, and a lady doctor did a caesarean on her there in the middle of the floor in a room where we were setting up to try and save the child and the child was also dead. I can remember that lady doctor's face the same as if it was yesterday, you know the way some things stick in your mind. I got married the end of June that year. And I can safely say I never slept, I never slept a wink from the 17 May until the end of June. How we kept going, I don't know.

John Mulligan Garda

I was actually at home, I think I might have been on a day off that day, and I was listening to the radio and next thing I heard about bombs in Dublin. And the more I heard, it became very clear that it was a terrible tragedy all together. So I rang the Bridewell a few times and I didn't get any answer, the phone was engaged obviously, understandably enough, so I just put on my uniform, got into my car and I drove into the station. And when I walked in the door I met the sergeant, and I have to admit I can't remember which sergeant, but as I walked in he said 'Good man, John, get up to the Richmond Hospital as quick as you can and do whatever you can up there.' So I finished dressing my uniform, my coat and that, and went straight up to the Richmond casualty department, which would be just up

the road from the Bridewell. It would be just in North Brunswick Street off Church Street and the Bridewell is just off Church Street just a short distance down.

So when I went in there it was mayhem, it was absolute chaos, there was people all over the place. There was trollies with injured and wounded waiting to be processed. I was in the casualty department, yes, and it was a small enough casualty at that time and there were small theatres off the casualty and you could see doctors inside working, the doors were flying open and back. And while I was there, ambulances arrived with more people and, you know, injured etc, and it was really distressing there at the time but one of the things that I do remember is, there was a couple of drunks started a fight and they started picking on members of staff. I caught one fella and I ran him out onto Morning Star Avenue and I ran the other fella down onto North Brunswick Street and warned them that if I saw them again they'd be in dire straits. So that's more or less what happened at that time. But shortly after that, a surgeon emerged from one of the theatres, one of the rooms, and he came over to me and he said 'There's a body here, this man is dead, we can do no more for him, can somebody take responsibility for him and get him down to the morgue.'

So I did that, I took charge. He handed a plastic bag or a couple of plastic bags full of shrapnel and he said to me 'This man had so much stuff in him, he must have been right in the car', he said, 'he must have been one of the bombers.' It was a victim not a bomber.

Anyway, I brought the remains down to the morgue. The old city morgue, you and I would be familiar with it. You had fairly big rooms as they seemed at the time and there were the slabs where the autopsies would be carried out, but the place was full, it was bodies on the floor, it was a scene of terrible carnage. When I went in, a couple of members stand out for me. I won't mention names because it might not be fair to them. Well, one has passed away in the meantime. But they were moving the bodies around. Some were covered, most were not, and it was a frightening scene, it really was a dreadful scene inside there. Okay, it was the place where all this is done, but it just was so full of so many bodies at the time.

Well, you know, to my own mind I was fine. You know, it was a dreadful event and it had -- I was shocked of course, I was shocked, you know, but I didn't think that I was that bad, but my beloved wife informed me that it had quite a shock on me, quite an effect on me, in that I had nightmares and would have been -- Her description of me was that it was like I was a walking ghost for quite a while afterwards. It really did have an impact.

Patrick Askin

The boss-man once asked
what tree I'd be if I had to be a tree. Sycamore I said. Given enough space
I'd branch out round and full.

My greeny-yellow clusters of bloom would hang like summer pendants
and make the bees drunk, aye, drunk
as Leslie lords and ladies on July-nectar.

My life span may be a short 150 years. Not much, compared to an oak's
300. But I'd live on and on in winged seeds spinning, spinning, spinning
down.

*A Poem by Rachael for Patrick Askin it could be for all the unfortunate
souls who were robbed of their natural life that day.*

A Sad Note

Derek Byrne was 14 when he was pronounced dead following the car bomb explosion in Parnell Street but woke up three hours later in a morgue and was rushed to the theatre for emergency life-saving surgery.

He died suddenly last November at the age of 63. His death came just days after he attended court in Belfast as part of a long-running claim for damages. It is so wrong that he should have passed away while there still was no resolution to the terrible injuries caused.

18. The Wider Context

TERRORIST MURDERS IRELAND AND BRITAIN 1974

There were many murders in Northern Ireland that year and significant casualties in the UK. On the 4 February IRA planted a bomb on a coach carrying British soldiers and their families travelling on the M62 in England and 11 people were killed. On the 12 February the IRA exploded a bomb at the National Defence College, there were no deaths but several injuries. On Thursday 2 May 1974 the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) exploded a bomb at the Rose and Crown public house in Belfast, killing six Catholic civilians. Wednesday 17 July 1974 the IRA exploded a bomb at the Tower of London which killed one person and injured a further 41 others. The IRA struck again on Saturday 5 October 1974 planted bombs in two public houses in Guildford, Surrey, England, which killed five people and injured 54. Friday 8 November 1974, the Protestant Action Group (PAG), which was a cover name for the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), claimed responsibility for the killing of a Catholic in Belfast. On Thursday 21 November 1974 the IRA planted bombs in two public houses, the Mulberry Bush and the Tavern in the Town in Birmingham and killed a total of 21 civilians. These events underscore the intense and tragic nature of The Troubles, with acts of violence committed by both republican and loyalist paramilitary groups, causing loss of life and widespread suffering.

The killing fields were dominated by the two main paramilitary organisations. The IRA on the Nationalist side and the UVF on the Loyalist side. In 1974 the IRA were responsible for 135 murders. The UVF were responsible for 70 murders, assuming Dublin/Monaghan is included. The greatest number of casualties were civilians with 193 killed. In terms of the religious divide 120 Catholics died and 73 Protestants were killed.

The dreadful murder toll. 1970-26, 1971 – 171, 1972 – 479, 1973 – 253, 1974 – 294, 1975 – 260, 1976 – 295,

Northern Ireland Security Presence 1974

The British Army presence consisted of 23,000 soldiers including 7,700 UDR/RIR. The policing component in the RUC was 4,565 officers with a full

time reserve of 510 and a part time reserve of 3,860. The military operated various intelligence units and the RUC had a Special Branch element. The level of IRA and the UVF violence shows the general breakdown of law and order. (Appendix 2).

Republic of Ireland – Policing the 1970s

POWER STRUCTURE - Dublin	
JUSTICE MINISTERS	TAOISEACH
Micheál O'Móráin 1968–May 1970	Jack Lynch FF 1966 – 1973
Des O'Malley May 1970–March 1973	
Patrick Cooney 1973–1977	Liam Cosgrave FG
Gerry Collins 1977–1981	Jack Lynch FF 1977
	Charles Haughey December 1979–June 1981

Commissioner	Served
Michael Wymes	1968–1973
Patrick Malone	1973–1975
Edmund Garvey	1975–1978
Patrick McLaughlin	1978–1983 January

It is important to provide context to understanding the challenges encountered in the 1970s. My fundamental premise is that significant figures of authority were charged with high level responsibility. These important individuals were in office from 1970 to 2020. They were the Ministers of Justice (20), the Departmental Secretary Generals (10) and the Commissioners (16). Occasionally the Taoiseach exerted direct influence on prevailing circumstances. This was the case with Taoiseach Jack Lynch in the 70s, Taoiseach Charlie Haughey in the 80s and Taoiseach Enda Kenny in 2014. The permanent government was represented by the Secretary General who normally exercised maximum administrative control. Ministers were usually inexperienced and typically spent a few years in post before moving on. History is not best served because collectively these important people have left no public record of their time in office. This is particularly

true of Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave who was in power at the critical time. One exception was Desmond O'Malley as Minister for Justice. Initially, there is no evidence that senior Gardaí were actively pursuing a constructive policy against the threat posed initially by the bank robbing Saor Éire and then the IRA. Slowly the orientation turned to the IRA with remarkable results. Nevertheless, there was an ever-present danger of the northern troubles spilling over engulfing civil society in the South. Increasingly subversives were arrested and processed through the courts.

Garda Strength

In February⁷⁶ 1974, Garda strength stood at 7,853 officers, of which 1,028 were in border stations (13% of force). Of the 11,257 soldiers in the Army, 1,142 were in border posts (30% of available Army strength).

The Garda Síochána was in a difficult situation in 1973/1974 which was underscored by the Helicopter escape of three Provisional IRA from Mountjoy Prison. A helicopter landed in the prison exercise yard on the 31 October 1973 and three top provos made their escape. The government appointed Mr. Justice T. A. Finlay⁷⁷ to report into the escape. Justice Finlay presented four separate reports on the question of state security.

4 January 1974 Report on the Prisoner escape from Mountjoy prison.

28 January 1974 Report on Security at State Airports

26 February 1974 Report on The Garda, The Army and Vital Installations

2 April 1974 Government Departments, Banking Activities and Vital Installation

Finlay's conclusions were dramatic and sweeping and were accepted by government. He did an incredible job in a short length of time. He provided reports on, Prisoners Escape, Security at State Airports, the Garda, the Army, and the protection of vital installations. He also touched on the vulnerability of Government Departments. He reported with

⁷⁶ Hanley Brian. *The impact of the Troubles on the Republic of Ireland, 1968–79*. Manchester University Press.

⁷⁷ *Unpublished Report provided to Government.*

recommendations for change in every sector. On the security front he recommended strengthening at Security Branch Garda HQ, similarly SDU (Special Branch) was found to be understrength both in Dublin and country wide. He reported that the main threat in the Republic came for the Official IRA and not the Provisional IRA. This was obviously a miscalculation. He remarked that the flow of intelligence regarding the IRA was not as proficient as previously because their principal activities were based in Northern Ireland. He said that information on the IRA was forthcoming from the RUC. Conversely, he felt that the RUC were not as willing to share information on "protestant militants". He also estimated that these protestant militants were more likely to engage in action against the power sharing executive in Northern Ireland or the nationalist community generally rather than attacking the south. The Northern influence had made its presence felt in terms of crime, particularly armed robbery, and IRA activity

Armed Robberies

These robberies started with a trickle in 1968 and accelerated during 1969 and culminated with the murder of Garda. Dick Fallon in 1970.

The bank raids tapered off after the murder but were soon to resume with a vengeance .

3 April 1970 armed men entered the Royal Bank of Ireland at Arran Quay
Garda Dick Fallon murdered

21 July 1971 simultaneous armed robberies were carried out at branches of the Royal Bank of Ireland and the Hibernian Bank Ltd., Buncrana

12 October 1972, AIB Grafton Street armed raiders held captive the family of a bank manager, drove the manager at gunpoint to his bank and took £61000

9 August 1971 three armed and masked men entered the Ulster Bank at Edgeworthstown

30 August 1971 three armed and masked men entered the Ulster Bank at Kilcock

16 September 1971 an armed robbery took place at a branch of the Munster and Leinster Bank, Dunmanway £4462 was stolen. They fired a shot at a Garda who pursued them in his private car

8 October 1971, Provincial Bank, Collooney
21 October 1971, Northern Bank sub-office at St. Johnston
10 December 1971, Munster and Leinster Bank, Swords Road
30 September 1971, the Royal Bank of Ireland Ltd., Greystones
6 January 1972 two armed men held up the staff of the Ulster Bank, Ranelagh
24 February 1972, Hibernian Bank, Bray £8331 stolen
27 January 1972 Munster and Leinster Castlefin sub-office
15 February 1972, Northern Bank, Rush, £1764
4 May 1972, Clogheen Branch Allied Irish Banks £4050
6 April 1972, Munster and Leinster Bank, Artane
8 May 1972, Bank of Ireland, Merville
6 July 1972, Bank of Ireland, Waterford, £2661
9 August 1972, Royal Banks, Gweedore, £1674
25 August 1972, Hibernian Bank sub-office Kilcullen
4 September 1972, Ulster Bank, Baggot Street, and took £157
11 October 1972, Allied Irish Bank on Grafton St. Dublin (Littlejohns) £67,000

ARMED ROBBERIES (Continued, now too numerous to individualise)

- 105 - 1973

- 113 - 1974

- 153- 1975 Garda Michael Reynolds murdered*

The IRA in Jail

The increasing profile of the Provisional IRA propelled them into the primary spot in terms of State Security despite the Judge Finlay determination. An under strength and under resourced garda force was struggling to contain the challenges.

Thursday 18 May 1972 - Riot Mountjoy Prison

Sunday 26 November 1972 – Armed Attempt Rescue Mac Stiophain, Mater Hospital

31 October 1973 – Helicopter Escape Mountjoy Prison

18 August 1974 – Nineteen Prisoners Escaped Portlaoise

16 October 1976 – Murder Garda Michael Clerkin

15 July 1976 – Special Criminal Court Escape
21 July 1976 – British Ambassador Murdered
25 March 1983 Chief Prison Officer Brian Stack shot
Sunday 24 November 1985 – Foiled at the last Gate
18 May 1988 Patrick McVeigh Portlaoise
20 July 1988 Tommy McMahon High Court Escape Bid

Political Situation

The Arms Trial of 1970 still reverberated in the South when two government ministers had been dismissed from office and prosecuted (unsuccessfully). The burning of the British Embassy in 1972 following the Bloody Sunday killings in Derry was another powerful milestone. A serving garda in Security Branch had been discovered colluding with a British undercover agent. He was dismissed and charged before the courts.

Car Bomb and the All-Blacks Dublin 20 January 1973

This outrage happened on January 20 when a red Vauxhall car EOI 1229 exploded in Sackville Place, off O'Connell Street. This was the same location where a car bomb exploded on December 1, 1972 when the emergency legislation was before the Dáil. This also was the day of the rugby international between Ireland and the All Blacks in Lansdowne Road. Warnings came from a rather strange source the *Ulster Vanguard Alliance*. This was a cover name in all probability and suggested a link with the Vanguard movement, which was led by William Craig a former Home Affairs Minister in Stormont. On the 15 January 1973 a warning note was sent to the press in Dublin. This threatened dire consequences if demands were not met by January 20. Dire consequences did follow as predicted.

The hand-written notation on the warning letter seen by Irish Officials says that the names and addresses are spurious and beyond talking to the Gardaí no useful action can be taken. It is not clear if this note was forensically examined or if its contents were circulated before the car bomb exploded.

An unfortunate busman was killed in the blast. A witness saw the car parked with northern plates and smoke coming from the booth, but he had no time to warn anyone as the car exploded. This probably indicates

a crude device with a fuse attached and burning down which seems to be in line with the Loyalist capabilities at the time. The car had been hijacked on the Shankhill Road and probably mingled with the northern rugby fans heading to Dublin.

Two men were seen running to a car in Abbey Street and heading at speed towards O'Connell Street. No one claimed responsibility for the outrage. A warning had been phoned to the Gardai from the RUC minutes before the bomb exploded. During 1972 there were approximately 53 car bomb attacks, with 28 attributable to the IRA and 12 attributable to the UVF or UDA in the North. The Cain site also assigns the Dublin attacks to the *UVF*. This attribution requires elaboration bearing in mind the technical competence of the UVF

Security Playbook North and South

The Security Playbook North and South had striking similarities for many decades despite the obvious political differences. There were two pillars to the strategy, Emergency Security Legislation, and Internment without trial. Internment without Trial was in force on both sides of the border in every single decade until the 1970's. Charles J. Haughey was the last Justice Minister who presided over it in the Republic in the 1960s. It was used in the North selectively aimed at the nationalist community. This was very much the case when it was introduced in 1971 and lasted until 1975. The overwhelming number of detainees were from Catholic and Nationalist backgrounds. Following Bloody Sunday Internment was not possible in the Republic ever again. Public opinion simply would not allow it.

19. The Ubiquitous Jon Boutcher



Figure 18 Chief Constable PSNI

Then a late date intervention by Chief Constable Jon Boutcher former head of Operation Kenova and now Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). He has made the extraordinary claim that the Dublin and Monaghan Car Bombings were part of the remit of Operation Kenova⁷⁸. This is a mystifying exercise, and I made an offer to Kenova that I would be prepared to conduct an open book exercise with them and let the facts speak for themselves. The former Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Jon Boutcher was appointed in July 2016 by the Chief Constable PSNI to examine the issues concerning the British undercover agent Freddie Scappaticci, “Stakeknife”. He was to labour in this task from 2016 until he was appointed Chief Constable of the PSNI in October 2023. He is a very experienced British police officer. He has a unique senior policing history in running high profile and sensitive investigations. He has a long history in Operational Counter Terrorism and Crime Policing. He was also the UK National policing lead for Technical Surveillance, Covert Policing and Undercover Policing and held the post of National Coordinator for Pursue under the UK Contest strategy. In his early career he led Scotland Yard’s ‘Flying Squad’ tackling armed robbery and other serious crime.

Operation Kenova (2016) presents a set of circumstances that seem extraordinary in their depth and byzantine in their complexity.

⁷⁸ Operation Kenova - <https://www.opkenova.co.uk> 2016 Inquiries into Stakeknife

They challenge the very boundaries of credulity. Is this the single biggest initiative in finding reconciliation for the families of “Troubles” victims or is it another example of a British long game. The Chief Constable of the PSNI appointed him to investigate criminal allegations concerning the notorious Freddie Scappaticci aka Stakeknife, the British Army agent operating within the IRA for many years. This was to become an incredibly long and obviously convoluted process. Initially the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland in 2000 announced no prosecution in respect of four files and in 2003 announced no prosecutions in respect of several individuals and at this time Scappaticci was deceased. These are the investigations undertaken by Operation Kenova as published on their web site.

OPERATION KENOVA (“STAKEKNIFE”)

OPERATION MIZZENMAST (JEAN SMYTH-CAMPBELL)

OPERATION TURMA (SEAN QUINN, PAUL HAMILTON & ALLAN McCLOY)

OPERATION DENTON (THE BARNARD / GLENANNE SERIES REVIEW)

Two of these investigations are of interest in the context of North South interactions, highlighted above. I was professionally aware of the Stakeknife allegations for several reasons and particularly about the Smithwick Tribunal where **had he been posited as a witness**, although he did not give evidence. The Irish State paid his lawyers €382,270 so that Scappaticci could defend the allegation that he was in fact the British agent Stakeknife.

Then there was a late intervention by Mr. Boutcher when he made the extraordinary claim that the Dublin and Monaghan bombings were part of the remit of Operation Kenova under the banner of the Glenanne gang. This Review is described as an analytical review, it is not a criminal investigation. I arranged a meeting with Mr. Boutcher in 2023 and I wanted to discuss his Dublin and Monaghan intervention and his public comments and appearances in the Republic concerning the murder of County Louth farmer Tom Oliver in 1991.

It came as a remarkable surprise when Jon Boutcher appeared on *RTE News* in July 2021, standing in the field from where Tom Oliver had been abducted by the Provisional IRA. This was an extraordinary development because this was a British Police officer allegedly investigating

a crime committed in the Republic, and clearly the responsibility for its investigation belonged with An Garda Síochána. Mr. Boutcher claimed that he was working with the Garda and that they had taken a significant number of statements. He claimed to have discovered significant DNA evidence which could assist the investigation. The RTE reporter Vincent Kearney then went on to say that several former gardaí had not cooperated with the inquiry but "Jon Boutcher said that he was still working to speak with them". Boutcher does not make this claim on camera, but it is assumed that Vincent Kearney is reporting his comments accurately.

It is a fact that British Police Officers had travelled to retired gardaí at their homes, arrived unannounced and sought to interview them in connection with the murder. They also said that the visit was in cooperation with the Garda. They provided no evidence to support this assertion⁷⁹. The proper legal arrangements are outlined at the foot note below. Sources suggest that it seems that Boutcher's officers had an agenda to discredit the Garda Síochána, for some as yet unexplained reason. The plain fact of the matter is that the Provisional IRA murdered Tom Oliver in brutal circumstances, and that's where the focus should be North and South. Sources also state that the Gardaí had conducted a cold case review of the murder which uncovered significant evidential lines. They also requested crime scene information from the PSNI which was refused.

One has the right to be puzzled and dismayed by these actions. In straight forward terms it was open to the Garda and the PSNI to form a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) which would investigate the crime, collect the evidence, conduct the interviews, and bring the perpetrators before the courts. The venue or venues for trial would be a matter of pragmatic decision making. I made those points to Mr. Boutcher and I told him that kind of intervention was not helpful, and I asked him what the reaction would be if a Garda stood in a field in Northern Ireland appealing to retired RUC members to cooperate in an investigation. There were other troubling aspects to this initiative which I will not go into at this time.

⁷⁹ *The Mutual Assistance Convention provides the Legal Framework for Criminal Investigations, but this is not a criminal investigation it is an Analytical Review so called by Kenova*

We arranged for a second meeting to discuss the Dublin Monaghan crimes and I offered that, I would be prepared to conduct an open book exercise and let the facts speak. On the day of the second meeting it was announced that Mr. Boutcher had been appointed the interim Chief Constable of the PSNI, later confirmed. I met with two of his colleagues and again I offered an open book discussion with them provided they would do the same. They offered to consider that position and indeed that offer is still open.

Glenanne Series Analytical Review Not a Criminal Investigation

This process came about because of the many allegations of Collusion between State Actors and Loyalists relating to the deaths of many people. Many different reviews had investigated these allegations, and it became abundantly clear that the British State could not walk away not least until the arrival of the **Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023**. This was obviously seen as the exit strategy.

*A Bill to address the legacy of the Northern Ireland Troubles and promote reconciliation by establishing an Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery, limiting criminal investigations, legal proceedings, inquests and police complaints, extending the prisoner release scheme in **the** Northern Ireland.*

This Act is now being appealed to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, seeking a judicial review of the UK Legacy Act by the Irish Government.

I do not intend to reprise all investigations into collusion but the comments of Sir John Stevens in 2003 is all embracing in terms of the extent of the problem.

Sir John Stevens reported in 2003.

“I have carried out three inquiries into allegations of collusion between the security forces and loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland. These began nearly 14 years ago. I intend publishing these recommendations whilst allowing the specific criminal investigations to continue. These will

be submitted to the director of public prosecutions for Northern Ireland (DPPNI).



Figure 19 Sir John Stevens

Obstruction of my inquiries

Throughout my inquiries I recognised that I was being obstructed. This obstruction was cultural in its nature and widespread within parts of the army and the RUC. It was only through the efforts of my team that I was able to identify and arrest Nelson in January 1990. When he was interviewed, it was discovered that he had been in possession of an “intelligence dump”. This had been seized by his FRU handlers when my first inquiry had begun, in September 1989. This evidence had been concealed from my team.

There was a clear breach of security before the planned arrest of Nelson and other senior loyalists. Information was leaked to the loyalist paramilitaries and the press. This resulted in the operation being aborted. Nelson was advised by his FRU handlers to leave home the night before. A new date was set for the operation on account of the leak. The night before the new operation my incident room was destroyed by fire. This incident, in my opinion, has never been adequately investigated and I believe it was a deliberate act of arson.

During my first inquiry I asked to examine particular documents but received written statements that they did not exist. My latest inquiry team

has now recovered all these documents. The dates recorded on them show that they all existed at the time of my first request. Much of the effort of this inquiry has had, yet again, to be spent building up its own intelligence database and in so doing discovering that it has not been given a full and proper disclosure.

Following three recent disclosures by the army I am investigating whether the concealment of documents and information was sanctioned and if so at what levels of the organisations holding them. It has been necessary to interview the same witnesses a number of times because of the failure to provide complete information at the first time of asking.

Conclusion

During the course of my three inquiries 9,256 statements have been taken, 10,391 documents recorded (totaling over 1 million pages) and 16,194 exhibits seized.

This has led to 144 arrests. So far 94 persons have been convicted. To date 57 separate reports have been submitted to the DPPNI for his direction. I have uncovered enough evidence to lead me to believe that the murders of Finucane and Lambert could have been prevented. I also believe that the RUC investigation of Finucane's murder should have resulted in the early arrest and detection of his killers".

Additionally Stevens later told a House of Commons Committee hearing when asked about agents.

*"There was the RUC, MI5, the Army doing different things,
and when you talk about intelligence, of the 210 people we arrested
only three weren't agents"*

Another Boucher Interview

Mr. Boucher has been interviewed several times. One of these was a *Morning Ireland* RTE radio interview with Audrey Carville on the 8 June 2020. On this occasion he was making an appeal in relation to the murder of Jean Smyth- Campbell in Belfast in 1972. He was then asked about his "Stakeknife" investigations and whether he thought there would be

prosecutions. He said that he had submitted 12 files to the Director of Public Prosecutions, although it is not clear from his answer whether these files related directly to Freddie Scappaticci. He then went on to explain that he would do a public facing report regardless of whether there were prosecutions or not. He was then asked about the activities of the Glenanne gang suspected of many sectarian murders and involvement in the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings of 1974. It was also put to him that the families of the victims had fought a battle with the PSNI for years looking for documents and information. He was also asked if he faced any obstacles to his investigations and he did not answer that question. He responded by saying that “I don’t have jurisdiction to specifically investigate the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings because that occurred in the Republic of Ireland” and went on to say that “I am working closely with the commissioner of the Garda Síochána”.

In that interview he clearly understands the relevance of jurisdiction to the scope of his investigation. It is an open question as to whether he thinks that his relationship with Commissioner Harris cures that impediment in whole or in part. He also mentions his commitment to a “public facing report” in the interests of the families. Mr. Boutcher has a wonderful calming manner, and he exudes sincerity and empathy with almost every utterance. However professionally speaking I find his odyssey through legacy killings to be incomprehensible from an operational perspective. Does he really think he can lift the veil of secrecy from the many collusive killings in Northern Ireland? In any event the Amnesty proposals would end all his inquiries peremptorily.

Harris v Boutcher

While Mr. Boutcher spoke knowingly and confidently about his relationship with the commissioner it was not about to transpire that way as time would show.

Mr. Harris wrote to Mr. Boutcher along the following lines.

RE: KENOVA Investigation Consultation Exercise: Draft Protocol on Publication of Reports.

I refer to your letter of 29 September, which I received together with the Draft Protocol on Publication of Public Reports. Having examined the draft protocol, I provide the following views.

As noted by your cover letter, this draft protocol document is intended to be a “process map” and does not discuss the contents or outcomes of any potential reports, published or otherwise.

As you are aware, this office has previously advised that there is a legal void with regard to the exchange of information between An Garda Síochána and your ongoing analytical review under the auspices of Operation Kenova.

This office was advised that the review proposed to publish data provided by An Garda Síochána as part of the review, which in effect creates a difficulty in respect of the sharing of information for this specific purpose. In order to mitigate any potential organisational risks for An Garda Síochána in this regard, the organisation is currently liaising with the Department of Justice in order to seek the advice of the Attorney General in respect of this matter.

It would appear at this juncture that an additional legal framework will be required to allow for the lawful exchange of information between An Garda Síochána and the analytical review under the auspices of Operation Kenova.

This correspondence related directly to the Dublin and Monaghan bombings in the context of the British Analytical review being conducted by Mr. Boucher. It is difficult to find a descriptor that adequately describes the dichotomy of the British asking the Irish to share information with them for those awful crimes when quite clearly the information flow should be coming the other way.

Mr. Boucher responded to Mr. Harris on the 31 October 2023 and provided assurances that all information would be handled in accordance with relevant obligations and agreements. It was not clear that Mr. Harris still retained the right to prevent publication of a particular item although any comments he wished to make would be considered.

Mr. Boucher again and this time in America



Figure 20 Voices from America

He shared a podium place with John Parkinson, a former UK Police Chief and Marie McDonald, Barrister and Human Rights activist and a member of the Operation Kenova Victim Focus Group. They were introduced by Sue O’Sullivan also a member of the Kenova Victim Focus Group.

20. Jon Boutcher

Dublin and Monaghan Bombings

I have no jurisdiction in Ireland the Republic of Ireland, the South of Ireland but one of the cases I'm looking into is the case known as the Glenanne gang. We have identified 127 murders, the Glenanne Gang was responsible for in the 70s. One of those attacks was the worst atrocity on a given day during the conflict was the Dublin Bombings of 17 May 1974. Dublin and Monaghan in the South not in the North. The offences were committed by a Loyalist Paramilitary Organisation on the other side to the IRA, who basically drove three car Bombs down to the South. A Friday afternoon, busy Dublin afternoon. There was a bus strike lots of people walking about trying to get in and out of the Dublin city centre. The three bombs went off in Dublin and one in Monaghan, thirty-three people were butchered and many life changing injuries. In fact there was one family, husband, wife and two children were killed.

And that particular attack, it reinforces some of the issues I mentioned now, It isn't just an RUC, Royal Ulster Constabulary issue. That particularly at the Garda, and I have sympathy for all of the different perspectives here. The Garda closed the investigation, in the Dublin attacks on the 11 August and Monaghan which was one bomb, closed on the 7 July. Now that probably was the biggest attack there has been, for this nation of Ireland that they have experienced and not a lot of other work (inaudible), nobody prosecuted for those crimes. Now these families listened to the Prime Minister (Taoiseach) on television saying that no stone would be left unturned, one family member I first met still hadn't met a garda. To talk about this, he survived, and nobody has asked him had he seen one of these cars parked or the basic enquiries you'd expect to ask a survivor of a crime, like that, did you see this particular car, did you see who was driving it. He said he doesn't think he knows of one stone the garda actually picked up, never mind no stone would be left unturned.

And this has left such a difficult psychological barrier between those families and authorities. And we have now gone down there, in fairness to the Irish government they have introduced some new legislation to give ME

information which we faced some real challenges with getting recently. But there is a new law in Ireland sharing information with ME now.

Those families you know, we can RECOVER THIS SITUATION, WE CAN PUT IT RIGHT as John has sort of described that obligation is still there on governments. but we need to act now before it is too late. It will be fifty years, for that offence in 2024.

The Anniversary falls on a Friday. The memorial for that offence is outside a pub and people use it to urinate on. It's not a very good memorial. There is an organisation called Justice for the Forgotten about these victims and you could not get a more suitable name for those victims. It's now 2022 so I think the work we're doing is putting a lot of these issues or recovering a lot of these issues, but it is far harder than it should be.

Mr. Boutcher's comments to his American audience are quite astounding when one considers the complexity of the overall circumstances of these atrocities. Particularly having regard for the high probability of British State actors' involvement in the planning and execution of these dreadful crimes. He was unwise to seek to summarise these events in a very brief slot of under four minutes.

He was given one job in 2016 by virtue of his appointment to investigate the crimes of Freddie Scappaticci aka Stakeknife. Interesting to recall how that investigation went and what it achieved.

The End of Operation Kenova?

The PSNI/RUC and the British State were faced with a herculean task regarding the endless list of collusion cases that just wouldn't go away. The pragmatic decision taken in 2016 was to appoint Chief Constable Jon Boutcher to tackle one of their most odious cases by way of CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION. Ultimately, they (the British) were to settle on another comprehensive strategy in 2021 when they introduced their guillotine legislation Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023 to make all these troublesome allegations go away.

From a southern perspective the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings (1974) and the Omagh Bombing (1998) would be written off to expediency.

The murder of farmer Tom Oliver in 1991, the murders of RUC officers Harry Breen and Bob Buchanan (1989), the Ballymurphy Eleven(1971) and countless more would be expunged.

In 2016 the Legacy legislation was still far distant and Mr. Boutcher was tasked to investigate the alleged crimes of British Agent and IRA executioner Freddie Scappaticci – STAKEKNIFE. A team was assembled consisting of some 70 officers both serving and retired.

The Belfast Telegraph reported in May 2023,

In July 2020, the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee heard from former RUC Assistant Chief Constable Raymond White, who said that it would be unaffordable to replicate the Operation Kenova template for all Troubles-related investigations.

“You can afford something like Kenova for very special investigations, but when you try to roll that out to embrace the 1,100 cases, we believe the [PSNI’s] Legacy Investigation Branch has and the 300 cases that the police ombudsman has, can you afford what Kenova actually is?” he asked.

“Kenova’s cost is currently running at around £6m a year. He has 72 officers. Some are retired officers who have been re-employed while others have been seconded from police forces in England and Wales, and that is just to address those cases that Kenova has under its umbrella.”

Speaking in the wake of Scappaticci’s death, Mr. Boutcher said his team were working through the implications of his passing in consultation with stakeholders, including bereaved families and victims.

Stakeknife was compromised in 1990 following an RUC raid on house in Belfast where Sandy Lynch was being interrogated by the IRA Nutting Squad. He was rescued and arrests were made but Stakeknife was not present. A fingerprint was found that identified him at the house but he decided to hightail it south to Newry. This episode was effectively the end of his usefulness to British Security and the inevitable questions were raised in IRA circles and he was never again to retain his former dominant position within the IRA ranks. He continued to live on in a twilight world, he obviously knew too much on both sides and there was the inevitable fear

that he had squirreled away enough information to cause a lot of problems in the event of his early permanent departure. Richard O’Rawe writing in 2023 describe how full exposure was delivered.

All the conjecture about whether Freddie Scappaticci was an FRU agent was dissipated by former Cook reporter Sylvia Jones. To her credit, she decided to bring this odious charade to a close, and so, on 20 July 2003, she wrote an article in The People in which she recounted meeting Scappaticci on 26 August 1993. She wrote, ‘A senior officer in the then RUC warned us in the strongest terms that everything possible should be done to protect Scappaticci because even the slightest slip could put his life in danger and threaten their most important source of intelligence. To reinforce her position, a recording of the Cook Report interview with Scappaticci was put on the Internet. Following this, Scappaticci’s only recourse was to leave the country of his birth without so much as a mea culpa on his lips. And as for those republicans who supported him in the face of overwhelming evidence, he didn’t even tip his hat. It was over, and all the self-manufactured fury evaporated like steam from the spout of a kettle as he set off to a new life in England.

Lest one thinks that was the end of his contact with state bodies. The Smithwick Tribunal in Dublin unbelievably engaged with this man. He was welcomed as a potential witness to the Smithwick Tribunal where he had been posited as a witness, although he did not give evidence. The Irish State paid his lawyers €382,270 so that Scappaticci could defend the allegation that he was in fact the British agent Stakeknife.

This was the individual that Mr. Boucher and his redoubtable team were tasked to investigate. This investigation carried on for many years with many files being sent to the Public Prosecution Service in Belfast. The main target eluded the earthly bar of justice in April 2023.

The financial cost to the PSNI has been in excess £37 million and the human cost in terms of the victims’ families suffering is inestimable.

The Public Prosecution Service Northern Ireland have issued two, no prosecution decision in 2020 and 2023 in respect of Kenova and Stakeknife

in 2020 and others in 2023. Stakeknife was no longer in consideration for obvious reasons.

The PPS reported in 2020.

These are the first decisions to issue in relation to a number of files submitted by Operation Kenova concerning the alleged criminality of an agent known as ‘Stakeknife’. The decisions are connected with an allegation that an individual committed perjury in the course of making affidavits sworn between 2003 and 2006, and also concern the circumstances in which a decision was subsequently taken not to prosecute that individual in 2007. The first individual was considered for the offence of perjury, while three others – two former members of the Security Service and a former PPS prosecutor - were considered for the potential offence of misconduct in public office.

“After a thorough analysis of all available evidence and with the benefit of independent advice from highly experienced Senior Counsel, I have concluded that in each case there is insufficient evidence to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction for any offence. In these circumstances the Evidential Test for Prosecution was not met. The second limb of the Test for Prosecution, which relates to the public interest in bringing proceedings, did not therefore fall to be applied.”

The decision in 2023 was in a similar vein.

“After a thorough and careful consideration of a large volume of material and information submitted to the PPS on five files, it has been concluded that there is insufficient evidence to provide a reasonable prospect of conviction for any of those reported. The cases referenced have been anonymised by the PPS on the advice of Operation Kenova after consultation with the victims and families involved.

This approach is intended to minimise the potential re-traumatisation of those involved and is in keeping with the victim-centred approach of the investigation”.

The reason not to prosecute was based on the quality of the evidence, “hearsay” and “Intelligence based” and the “non-cooperation of witnesses” or indeed their demise.

The PPS further advised.

In February and June 2020 Operation Kenova submitted files to the PPS in respect of a number of separate incidents that occurred between 1981 and 1990. Additional files were submitted between May and November 2021 and again in February 2022. These extended the date range of incidents under consideration to between 1979 and 1994. The investigations were extensive and complex, and it is estimated that the files submitted to the PPS comprised over 60,000 pages.

A total of 28 suspects were reported on the files referred. 14 are civilians alleged to have been members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA). 12 are retired soldiers who served in the British Army at the relevant times. Two are retired police officers who were members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) at the relevant time. As explained above, three civilians and one retired police officer have died since the files were submitted to the PPS and therefore decisions are required in relation to 24 suspects.

In respect of the civilians alleged to have been members of PIRA who have been reported, the Kenova investigation related to their alleged role in the false imprisonment and murder of, or conspiracy to murder, individuals whom PIRA accused of being security force informants. Some of those reported are alleged to have had roles within PIRA’s “Internal Security Unit” which conducted internal security enquiries including investigations of suspected informants. Regarding the retired police officers reported, the Kenova investigation related to their role in the investigation of an incident of false imprisonment and an allegation that they conspired to pervert the course of justice in respect of that investigation. Regarding the former soldiers reported, the Kenova investigation related to their role within, or advising, the Force Research Unit (FRU)⁸⁰, a unit within the British Army

⁸⁰ *FRU Force Research Unit – Undercover British Unit*

located in Northern Ireland which recruited and managed agents, and more specifically their role in the handling and management of the agent known by the codename Stakeknife.

Incredulity

It should be a source of incredulity to any person that considering the enormity of the task facing him in Northern Ireland that he found time to wander into this jurisdiction. He freely admitted that he had no jurisdiction now that statement can be qualified in several ways. There is solid well used legal ways to ensure cooperation between countries and these are provided in the Mutual Assistance Convention. This is the basis for the uplifting of evidence in one jurisdiction for court use in the other. I suggested to him that formation of a joint investigations team (JIT) could provide a productive road. However these provisions did not apply because he was not conducting a criminal investigation into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings. He was engaged on what is euphemistically referred to as an analytical review, it is not a criminal investigation. In simple terms one reads the files and issues an opinion.

The Operation Kenova input into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings is mystifying where they are supposedly conducting an Analytical Report on the activities of the Glenanne Gang of killers. Mr. Boutcher's comments in America regarding Dublin are unwarranted and unhelpful and its difficult to see how victims' families here are served by this approach which can only add to their grief and sense of neglect.

The Dublin and Monaghan car bombings were committed by northern terrorists with special help from "Friendly Forces". This is where Kenova's energies should be directed.

21. Appendix One Terms of Reference Barron, Ardagh, MacEntee

Terms of Reference Hamilton/Barron

On 19 December 1999, the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern T.D., announced the appointment of Mr. Justice Liam Hamilton to undertake a thorough examination, involving fact finding and assessment of all aspects of the Dublin, Monaghan and Dundalk⁸¹ bombings in 1974. The terms of reference were agreed on 15 February 2000, and were as follows:

To undertake a thorough examination⁸², involving fact finding and assessment, of all aspects of the Dublin/ Monaghan bombings and their sequel, including

The facts, circumstances, causes and perpetrators of the bombings.

The nature, adequacy, and extent of the Garda investigation, including the co-operation with and from the relevant authorities in Northern Ireland

The handling of evidence, including the scientific analyses of forensic evidence.

The reasons why no prosecution took place, including whether and if so, by whom and to what extent the investigations were impeded.

The issues raised by the Hidden Hand T.V. documentary broadcast in 1993.

Terms of Reference Ardagh Committee

By a Motion of referral by Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann, on Wednesday 10 December 2003, and in accordance with its Orders of Reference, the Joint Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights, hereinafter called 'the Committee', has received the report by Mr. Justice Barron on his investigation into the 1974 Dublin and Monaghan bombings

⁸¹ *There was no bombing in Dundalk in 1974*

⁸² *This was a fact finding exercise rather than a Commission of Investigation*

entitled 'Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings' for consideration.

The text of the Motion is as follows:

'That Dáil Éireann requests the Joint Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights, or a sub-Committee thereof, to consider, including in public session, the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings, and to report back to Dáil Éireann within three months concerning:

Whether the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings of 1974 addresses all of the issues covered in the terms of reference of the Inquiry.

The lessons to be drawn and any actions to be taken in the light of the Report, its findings and conclusions.

Whether, having regard to the Report's findings, and following consultations with the Inquiry, a further public inquiry into any aspect of the Report would be required or fruitful.

MacEntee Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Commission of Investigation into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings of 1974 was established under Section 3 of the Commissions of Investigation Act 2004 by Order of the Government published in the May 13th, 2005 edition of Iris Oifigiuil.

2. Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the commission are set out in the Order made by the Government and are as follows:

To undertake a thorough investigation and make a report on the following specific matters considered by the Government to be of significant public concern:

1) Why the Garda investigation into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings was wound down in 1974?

2) Why the Gardaí did not follow-up on the following leads:

(i) information that a white van, with an English registration plate, was parked outside the Department of Posts and Telegraphs in Portland Row and was later seen parked in the deep sea area of the

B & I ferry port in Dublin, and the subsequent contact made with a British Army officer on a ferry boat leaving that port;
(ii) information relating to a man who stayed in the Four Courts Hotel between 15 and 17 May, 1974 and his contacts with the UVF;
(iii) information concerning a British Army corporal allegedly sighted in Dublin at the time of the bombings;
and

3) In relation to the missing documentation:

(i) the exact documentation (Departmental, Garda intelligence and any other documentation of relevance) that is unaccounted for;
(ii) the reasons explaining why the documentation went missing;
(iii) whether the missing documentation can now be located; and
(iv) whether the systems currently in place are adequate to prevent a reoccurrence

of such documentation going missing.

To take account of investigative work already undertaken into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings of 1974, including the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry, the Final Report of the Joint Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights, Inquest Statements and the Internal Garda Investigation. To provide a final report to AnTaoiseach not later than six months from the date of establishment of the Commission

Ardagh Findings and Options

The Barron Report taken together with the oral and written submissions point to the following:

(i) That in all probability the planning of the bombings was carried out in Northern Ireland.

(ii) That in all probability most if not all of the perpetrators came from Northern Ireland.

(iii) That in all probability information which identifies and which concerns the perpetrators still exists in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

(iv) That in all probability most of the information touching on collusion in relation to the Dublin and Monaghan bombings is in Northern Ireland and/or in Great Britain.

(v) That in all probability most if not all of the relevant witnesses in respect of perpetrators and collusion reside in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

The Sub-Committee has given very careful consideration to the various forms of investigations and inquiries that might be undertaken to bring closure to these atrocities. They include:

- (i) A public Tribunal of Inquiry with full statutory powers.
- (ii) An investigation under the Commission of Investigations legislation, when enacted.
- (iii) An investigation based upon the Weston Park proposals.
- (iv) A civil suit initiated in Great Britain and/or Northern Ireland by individual victims and/or relatives.
- (v) A civil suit against the British Government initiated in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.
- (vi) An inter/cross jurisdictional Inquiry
- (vii) A Truth and Reconciliation Process.

22. Appendix Two Reign of Terror

IRA and UVF 1974

IRA Terror 1974⁸³

1. 1 January 1974: A Catholic civilian (John Whyte, aged 24) was shot dead during an IRA sniper attack on a British Army patrol on McClure Street, off Ormeau Road, Belfast.
2. 3 January 1974: A 10-lb bomb exploded in London at the home of Major General Philip Ward, General Officer commander of the London district. The building was heavily damaged. The IRA is suspected.
3. 17 January 1974: The IRA shot dead an off-duty UDR soldier (Robert Jameson, aged 22) near his home at Trillick, County Tyrone.
4. 20 January 1974: A UDR soldier (Cormac McCabe, aged 42) was shot dead by the IRA; his body was found in a field near Aughnacloy, County Tyrone.
5. 21 January 1974: A British soldier (John Haughey, aged 32) was killed by an IRA remote-controlled bomb hidden in an electricity distribution box on Lone Moor Road, Creggan, Derry. It was detonated when a British foot-patrol passed.
6. 23 January 1974: An IRA unit which included Rose Dugdale and Eddie Gallagher hijacked a helicopter and used it to drop bombs on Strabane RUC station. One of the bombs landed on the grounds of the station, but failed to explode.
7. 25 January 1974: A British soldier (Howard Fawley, aged 19) was killed by an IRA landmine as he and his patrol searched a field at Ballymaguigan, near Ballyronan, County Londonderry.
8. 26 January 1974: The IRA shot dead a patrolling RUC officer (John Rodgers, aged 50) on Antrim Road, Glengormley, County Antrim.
9. 29 January 1974: An IRA sniper fired at a bus carrying Royal Air Force (RAF) personnel at Shimna Parade, Newcastle, County Down. The RAF personnel returned fire, killing an elderly civilian, Matilda Withrington (aged 79).
10. 29 January 1974: The IRA shot dead a patrolling RUC officer (William Baggley, aged 43) on Dungiven Road, Derry.
11. 2 February 1974: An IRA unit fired small arms and six rocket propelled grenades at an RUC outpost near Belcoo, County Fermanagh. The British army returned fire.

⁸³ Information in Appendix is submitted courtesy Wikipedia Open Source Information

12. *4 February 1974: Twelve people were killed in the M62 Coach Bombing, when a bomb exploded on a coach as it was travelling along the M62 motorway at Birkenshaw, England. The dead included eight soldiers, and the wife and two young children of one of the soldiers.*
13. *18 February 1974: A British soldier (Allan Brammagh, aged 31) was killed by an IRA booby-trap bomb hidden in a parcel which was left at the side of the road, while on foot-patrol at Moybane, near Crossmaglen, County Armagh.*
14. *23 February 1974: A large gun battle between the IRA and the British army occurred near Strabane, County Tyrone. The engagement also involved mortar rounds fired by the IRA. Some 25 traveller caravans were trapped between the warring factions; one caravan was destroyed by a mortar bomb.*
15. *24 February 1974: A civilian (Patrick Lynch, aged 23) was found shot dead at Rathlin Drive, Derry. He was killed by the IRA as an alleged informer.*
16. *2 March 1974: The IRA shot dead a patrolling RUC officer (Thomas McClinton, aged 28) on Donegall Street, Belfast.*
17. *3 March 1974: An IRA landmine exploded and killed a UDR soldier (Robert Moffett, aged 30) at Dunnamore, near Cookstown, County Tyrone.*
18. *10 March 1974: Two civilians, Michael McCreesh (aged 15) and Michael Gallagher (aged 18), were killed by an IRA booby-trap bomb hidden in an abandoned car at Dromintee, near Forkill, County Armagh. It was meant for a British foot-patrol. Gallagher died on 14 March 1974.*
19. *12 March 1974: A Fine Gael senator, Billy Fox, was kidnapped by the IRA and later found shot dead at Tircooney, near Clones, County Monaghan.*
20. *13 March 1974: The IRA shot dead a British soldier (David Farrington, aged 23) at a pedestrian checkpoint on Chapel Lane, Belfast.*
21. *15 March 1974: Two IRA volunteers, Patrick McDonald (aged 21) and Kevin Murray (aged 27), were killed when their landmine prematurely exploded on Aughnacloy Road, Dungannon, County Tyrone.*
22. *15 March 1974: A civilian (Adam Johnston, aged 34) was killed by an IRA lorry bomb on Queen Street in Magherafelt, County Londonderry. The warning sent by the IRA had been inadequate.*
23. *16 March 1974: IRA snipers shot dead two patrolling British soldiers, Roy Bedford (aged 22) and Philip James (aged 22), at Moybane, near Crossmaglen, County Armagh.*
24. *17 March 1974: An IRA sniper shot dead a patrolling RUC officer (Cyril Wilson, aged 37) in Rathmore, Craigavon, County Armagh.*
25. *17 March 1974: An IRA sniper shot dead a patrolling British soldier (Michael Ryan, aged 23), on Foyle Road, Brandywell, Derry.*

26. 19 March 1974: An off-duty RUC officer (Frederick Robinson, aged 40), was killed by a booby trap bomb attached to his car outside his home, Glenkeen Avenue, Greenisland, County Antrim.
27. 21 March 1974: An IRA sniper shot a patrolling British soldier (James Macklin, aged 28), on Antrim Road, Belfast. He died on 28 March.
28. 23 March 1974: The IRA shot dead a former British soldier from Northern Ireland (Donald Farrell, aged 56), while he was sitting in a stationary car near his home, Mountfield, near Omagh, County Tyrone. He had recently retired.
29. 26 March 1974: A civilian (Joseph Hughes, aged 25), was killed when an IRA car bomb exploded on Springfield Road, Ballymurphy, Belfast. He had been driving past at the time.
30. 31 March 1974, a civilian (Sean McAstocker, aged 28), was found shot dead, Lagan Street, Markets, Belfast. The IRA were responsible.
31. 1 April 1974: It was reported that "small arms fire, mortar bombs and possibly rockets were used" in an attack on a British base in Derry. Two British soldiers were injured.
32. 9 April 1974: The IRA shot dead John Stevenson, a Commanding Officer of the British Army, at his home near Otterburn British Army base, Northumberland, England.
33. 10 April 1974: The IRA shot dead a former UDR soldier (George Saunderson, aged 58), at his workplace, Derrylin Primary School, Derrylin, County Fermanagh.
34. 11 April 1974: A patrolling British soldier (Norman McKenzie, aged 25) was killed by an IRA land mine attack while on mobile patrol, Mullynaburtlan, near Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh.
35. 11 April 1974: A patrolling UDR soldier (David Sinnamon, aged 34), was killed by a remote controlled bomb, hidden in a derelict house which detonated when an Ulster Defence Regiment foot patrol passed by, Dungannon, County Tyrone.
36. 14 April 1974: The IRA shot dead an undercover British soldier (Anthony Pollen, aged 27), observing a republican commemoration parade at Meenan Square, Bogside, Derry.
37. 16 April 1974: An IRA sniper shot dead an RUC officer (Thomas McCall, aged 34), outside Newtownhamilton RUC base, County Armagh.
38. 18 April 1974: A civilian (Seamus O'Neill, aged 32), was killed when he triggered a booby-trap bomb on his farm, The Loup, near Moneymore, County Londonderry. It exploded about 8 ft from his tractor as he drove past Saltersland church hall. There had been a small explosion there earlier in the day. It is believed both bombs were planted by the IRA and that the second bomb was for security forces investigating the first.

39. *20 April 1974: A civilian (James Corbett, aged 20), was shot dead by the IRA as an alleged informer. His body was found by the side of Upper Springfield Road, Hannahstown, Belfast.*
40. *22 April 1974: A civilian (Mohammed Khalid, aged 18), who worked for the British Army was shot dead by the IRA in his car at Silverbridge, County Armagh.*
41. *1 May 1974: A British outpost came under IRA attack at Crossmaglen, County Armagh. It was hit by three rockets and a 15-minute gun-battle followed. No injuries were reported.*
42. *2 May 1974: Up to 40 members from the Provisional IRA East Tyrone Brigade attacked the isolated 6 UDR Deanery base in Clogher, County Tyrone with machine gun and RPG fire resulting in the death of Private Eva Martin, a UDR Greenfinch, the first female UDR soldier to be killed by enemy action.*
43. *10 May 1974: The IRA shot dead two patrolling RUC officers, Brian Bell (aged 29) and John Ross (aged 40), on Finaghy Road North, Finaghy, Belfast.*
44. *13 May 1974: Two IRA volunteers, Eugene Martin (aged 18) and Sean McKearney (aged 19), were killed when their bomb prematurely exploded at a petrol filling station, Donnydeade, near Dungannon, County Tyrone.*
45. *18 May 1974: The IRA is blamed of a car bomb that exploded at Heathrow airport; three people were wounded and about 50 cars destroyed.*
46. *31 May 1974: A former Royal Navy serviceman, Alfred Shotter (aged 54), was killed by an IRA booby trap bomb hidden in a dustbin at his former home, Strabane Old Road, Gobnascale, Derry. It is believed to have been planted by the IRA.*
47. *5 June 1974: An IRA sniper shot dead a patrolling British soldier (Frederick Dicks, aged 21) on Irish Street, Dungannon, County Tyrone.*
48. *17 June 1974: A bomb exploded at the Houses of Parliament in London, causing extensive damage and injuring 11 people.*
49. *18 June 1974: A patrolling RUC officer (John Forsythe, aged 30) was killed by an IRA booby-trap bomb in an entry off Market Street, Lurgan, County Armagh.*
50. *18 June 1974: The IRA detonated a 600 lb van bomb in the town center of Dungannon, County Tyrone, destroying & badly damaging many buildings. On the same day three other IRA car bombs exploded outside RUC stations in Coagh & Stewartstown, County Tyrone as well as Ballymena in County Antrim.*
51. *22 June 1974: RUC officer Daniel O'Connor (aged 35) was shot dead from a passing car driven by IRA volunteers while on foot patrol at the junction of Crumlin Road and Clifton Park Avenue, Belfast.*

52. 22 June 1974: An IRA sniper shot dead a patrolling British soldier (Kim Ian McCunn, aged 18), New Lodge Road, Belfast.
53. 24 June 1974: Two IRA volunteers, Gerard Craig (aged 17) and David Russell (aged 18), died when the bomb they were planting at a supermarket, Greenhaw Road, Shantallow, Derry, exploded prematurely.
54. 29 June 1974: An IRA sniper shot a patrolling British soldier (David Smith, aged 26) on Whiterock Road, Ballymurphy, Belfast. He died on 4 July.
55. 2 July 1974: A patrolling British soldier (John Walton, aged 27) was killed by an IRA booby-trap bomb in a derelict house, Carrickgallogly, near Belleek, County Armagh.
56. 12 July 1974: The IRA shot dead a UDA member (John Beattie, aged 17) while he was standing on the corner of Glenrosa and Moyola streets, Tiger's Bay, Belfast.
57. 17 July 1974: The IRA bombed the White Tower, Tower of London; one English civilian (Dorothy Household, aged 48) was killed.
58. 20 July 1974: A former British soldier (Brian Shaw, aged 21) was found shot dead in a derelict house on Arundel Street, off Grosvenor Road, Belfast.
59. 23 July 1974: A British Airways Belfast-London flight, carrying 85 passengers including James Flanagan, RUC Chief Constable, made an emergency landing at Manchester after the pilot was told of a bomb warning. The IRA claimed it planted an un-primed bomb aboard the jet to prove it could breach airport security. It warned that in the future bombs would be set to explode.
60. 23 July 1974: A UDR soldier (John Conley, aged 43) was killed when a car bomb exploded while he was helping to evacuate civilians from the area, at Bridge Street, Garvagh, County Londonderry. Inadequate warning given.
61. 30 July 1974: The IRA devastated the commercial centre of Bangor, County Down, in an overnight firebomb attack.
62. 30 July 1974: An IRA sniper shot dead a patrolling British soldier (Bernard Fearn, aged 34) on Hillman Street, New Lodge, Belfast.
63. 3 August 1974: A Protestant civilian (Charles McKnight, aged 25) was killed by a booby trap bomb when he entered the cab of his employer's lorry, parked outside house, Ballycraigy, Newtownabbey, County Antrim. CAIN cites IRA as responsible. Reason unknown.
64. 13 August 1974: Two Royal Marines, Dennis Leach (aged 24) and Michael Southern (aged 19), were killed when the IRA detonated a remote-controlled bomb in their observation post at Drummuckavall, near Crossmaglen, County Armagh.

65. *23 August 1974: The IRA shot dead an undercover RUC officer (Peter Flanagan, aged 47) inside the Diamond Bar, George Street, Omagh, County Tyrone.*
66. *23 August 1974: The IRA shot dead a former UDR soldier (William Hutchinson, aged 29), while engaged in traffic census, Cabragh, near Dungannon, County Tyrone.*
67. *26 August 1974: A patrolling British soldier (Philip Drake, aged 20) was killed by an IRA sniper in Drumbeg, Craigavon, County Armagh.*
68. *27 August 1974: An IRA volunteer (Patrick McKeown, aged 29) died when his bomb prematurely exploded in a house in Barcroft Park, Newry.*
69. *7 September 1974: A civilian (Mary Bingham, aged 58) was shot dead during an IRA sniper attack on a British foot patrol, Dungannon, County Tyrone.*
70. *8 September 1974: A Catholic man (Arthur Rafferty, aged 56) died three weeks after being shot on Newington Street, New Lodge, Belfast, by the IRA. A piece of cardboard was found nearby that had written on it: "this is the penalty for a sexual assault on a child of seven years old at the Waterworks". After the shooting a caller rang the Irish News and said it had been a "punishment shooting" carried out by the IRA.*
71. *16 September 1974: The IRA shot dead Martin McBirney, a resident magistrate (aged 55), at his home on Belmont Road, East Belfast. His sister-in-law, Frances Cooke, suffered a fatal heart attack upon hearing the news.*
72. *16 September 1974: The IRA shot dead Rory Conaghan (aged 54), a judge, at his home, Beechlands, off Malone Road, Belfast.*
73. *22 September 1974: The IRA shot dead a former prison officer (William McCully, aged 58) at his home, Hillmount Gardens, Finaghy, Belfast.*
74. *29 September 1974: Twenty-three mortar bombs were launched by the IRA at a British Army facility in Crossmaglen. The facility was also hit by automatic fire. The attack was to be combined with an air strike using a hijacked Cessna plane that was eventually called off.*
75. *29 September 1974: An aerial bombing was attempted on the British Army base at Crossmaglen by two IRA members who hijacked a three-seat Cessna plane from a flying club at Dundalk, while another two IRA men remained on the ground to prevent club members from raising the alarm. The IRA unit loaded the aircraft with four-cylinder bombs and forced the pilot to fly over the border. The attack failed after the hijackers became lost, and one of them launched a bomb five miles away from the intended target before flying back to the Republic. The dropping of the bomb was witnessed by British soldiers manning a border outpost. The Cessna eventually made a safe landing in a field near Ravensdale, County Louth. The strike was intended to support the mortar attack on the same compound.*

76. 5 October 1974: A female civilian (Asha Chopra, aged 25) was killed during an IRA sniper attack on an RUC patrol at Greenhaw Road, Shantallow, Derry.
77. 5 October 1974: Guildford pub bombing – four British soldiers and a civilian were killed and 182 were hurt when the IRA bombed a pub frequented by off-duty soldiers. Four people, dubbed the “Guildford Four”, would be convicted for the bombing and imprisoned for life. Fifteen years later Lord Lane of the Court of Appeal would overturn their convictions noting “the investigating officers must have lied”. Some of the Four had spent the entire 15 years in prison.
78. 8 October 1974: An RUC officer (Arthur Henderson, aged 31) was killed by an IRA booby-trap bomb in an abandoned car, West Street, Stewartstown, County Tyrone.
79. 21 October 1974: The IRA kidnapped and shot dead an off-duty British Territorial Army soldier (Malcolm Gibson, aged 28) in Belfast. He was found shot dead in a derelict house, shortly after being abducted while driving a laundry van, Velsheda Park, Ardoyne, Belfast.
80. 23 October 1974: A British soldier (Michael Simpson, aged 21) died three weeks after being shot by an IRA sniper while on foot patrol on Racecourse Road, Shantallow, Derry.
81. 28 October 1974: The IRA detonated a van bomb outside the British Army base at Ballykinlar, County Down, killing two British soldiers, Alan Coughlan (aged 22) and Michael Swanick (aged 20).
82. 30 October 1974: An IRA volunteer (Michael Meenan, aged 16) died when his bomb prematurely exploded at a garage on Strand Road, Derry.
83. 30 October 1974: a civilian (Gordon Catherwood, aged 44), shot dead by an IRA sniper aiming at the victim’s son, a UDR soldier, Upper Hightown Road, near Belfast, County Antrim.
84. 6 November 1974: An IRA sniper shot dead two patrolling British soldiers, Brian Allen (aged 20) and Stephen Windsor (aged 26), while on foot patrol, Crossmaglen, County Armagh.
85. 6 November 1974: An IRA volunteer, Hugh Coney (aged 24), was shot dead by the British Army during an escape attempt from Long Kesh Prison, County Down.
86. 7 November 1974: Two British soldiers, Vernon Rose (aged 30) and Charles Simpson (aged 35) were killed by an IRA booby trap bomb at an electricity sub station at Aghalarg, near Stewartstown, County Tyrone.
87. 7 November 1974: An off-duty British soldier (Richard Dunne, aged 42) and a civilian (Alan Horsley, aged 20), were killed when a bomb was thrown through the window of the Kings Arms, Woolwich, England. Twenty-eight other people were injured.

88. *8 November 1974: An IRA volunteer (Gerard Fennell, aged 28), was shot dead by a British Army sniper from a concealed observation post during the attempted hijacking of a van, Stewartstown Road, Twinbrook, Belfast.*
89. *12 November 1974: Two civilians, Leonard Cross (aged 19) and Hugh Slater (aged 29), who worked for the British Army were found shot dead by the side of Sheriffs Road near Derry.*
90. *14 November 1974: An IRA volunteer, James McDade (aged 28), died after the bomb he was planting outside a telephone exchange in Coventry, England exploded prematurely.*
91. *15 November 1974: A patrolling British soldier (Anthony Simmons, aged 19), was shot dead by an IRA sniper while on foot patrol, Fountain Street, Strabane, County Tyrone.*
92. *16 November 1974: A UDR soldier (Thomas McCready, aged 32) on mobile patrol was killed by an IRA sniper in Newry, County Down.*
93. *20 November 1974: An RUC officer (Robert Forde, aged 29) was killed by an IRA booby trap bomb hidden under pathway, Rathmore, Craigavon, County Armagh.*
94. *21 November 1974: The Birmingham pub bombings kill 19 people. The "Birmingham Six" would be tried for this and convicted. Many years later, their convictions would be quashed, and they would be released. The IRA has never claimed or accepted responsibility.*
95. *2 December 1974: A British soldier (John Maddocks, aged 32), was killed while on foot patrol by an IRA booby trap bomb hidden in a milk churn in a field, Gortmullan, near Derrylin, County Fermanagh.*
96. *2 December 1974: An IRA volunteer, Ethel Lynch (aged 22), was wounded when her bomb prematurely exploded in a house on Crawford Square, Derry. She died on 7 December.*
97. *7 December 1974: An IRA volunteer, John McDaid (aged 16), died when his bomb prematurely exploded in a house on Bridge Street, Derry.*
98. *14 December 1974: IRA snipers shot a British Army soldier (Michael Gibson, aged 20) and an RUC officer (David McNeice, aged 19) while on joint foot patrol, Killeavy, near Forkill, County Armagh. Gibson died from his injuries on 30 December 1974.*
99. *17 December 1974: An IRA bomb exploded at Tottenham Court Road, London, killing a passer-by, George Arthur (35).*
100. *21 December 1974: A bomb was defused in Harrods in Knightsbridge, London. A second bomb was defused in the King's Arms public house in Warminster, Wiltshire.*
101. *22 December 1974: The IRA leadership declared a temporary ceasefire, pending talks with British government officials. Shortly before the ceasefire came into effect, the IRA bombed the London home of the Conservative Party leader and former Prime Minister Edward Heath. He was not home, and no one was injured.*

UVF Terror 1974

1. 10 January: The UVF shot dead a Catholic civilian near his workplace on Milltown Row, Belfast.
2. 14 January: The body of a Protestant civilian was found in a field near Carrowdore. It is believed he was shot by the UVF.
3. 17 January: The UVF launched a gun attack on Boyle's Bar in Cappagh. Two gunmen entered the pub and opened fire indiscriminately on the customers. A Catholic civilian was killed and three others wounded. The attack has been linked to the "Glenanne gang".
4. 30 January: The UVF shot dead a Protestant civilian at his home on Gosford Place, Belfast. It believed he was an informer.
5. 4 February: The UVF shot dead a Catholic civilian outside his garage on Whiterock Gardens, Belfast.
6. 19 February: Two civilians (Patrick Molloy, a Catholic, and Jack Wylie, a Protestant) were killed when the UVF exploded a bomb at Trainor's Bar, Kilmore, County Armagh. Two other men were injured. The attack has been linked to the "Glenanne gang". In 1981, a serving UDR soldier, a former UDR soldier and a former UVF member were convicted of the murders.
7. 28 February: The UVF exploded a bomb at Red Star Bar, Belfast, killing a Protestant civilian.
8. 5 March – Nine people are injured when the UVF carries out a bomb attack on a house in Mourne Crescent, Coalisland.
9. 11 March: The UVF shot dead a Catholic civilian in an attack on Bunch of Grapes Bar, Belfast.
10. 15 March: The UVF shot dead a Catholic civilian on the Ormeau Road, Belfast.
11. 24 March: The UVF shot dead a Protestant civilian near his home on Spruce Street, Belfast.
12. 29 March: Two Catholic civilians, James Mitchell and Joseph Donnelly were killed when the UVF exploded a bomb at Conway's Bar, Belfast.
13. 1 April: The UVF shot dead one of its own members, Jim Hanna, on Mansfield.
14. 6 April: The UVF shot dead a Protestant civilian as she walked with her boyfriend on Shankill Road, Belfast.
15. 16 April: A UVF member died when his bomb prematurely exploded in a house on Union Street, Portadown.
16. 21 April: The UVF shot dead civilian Sinn Féin member James Murphy at his garage at Corravehy, near Derrylin.

17. 2 May: Six Catholic civilians were killed and eighteen wounded when the UVF exploded a bomb at Rose & Crown Bar on Ormeau Road, Belfast.
18. 7 May: The UVF shot dead a married couple (James and Gertrude Devlin) near their home at Congo Road, outside Dungannon. As they were driving home, a man in British Army uniform stopped their car and opened fire on them. Their daughter, Patricia, in the back seat, was wounded. A UDR soldier was convicted for the killings.
19. 14 May: **The UVF and Sinn Féin were declared legal following the passing of legislation at Westminster.**
20. 15 May: The Ulster Workers' Council strike began in protest at the Sunningdale Agreement. For the next two weeks, loyalist paramilitaries forcibly tried to stop many people going to work and to close any businesses that had opened.
21. 17 May: Dublin and Monaghan bombings – 33 civilians were killed and 300 wounded when the UVF exploded three car bombs in Dublin and one in Monaghan (both in the Republic of Ireland). No warning had been given. This was the highest number of casualties in a single incident during "The Troubles". It has been alleged that members of the British security forces were involved. The UVF did not claim responsibility until 15 July 1993.
22. 18 May: A UDA member shot dead a UVF member during a fight in North Star Bar, Belfast.
23. 24 May: Two Catholic civilians were shot dead in their pub, the Wayside Halt, during a joint UVF/UFF operation to shut down Catholic-owned pubs in and around Ballymena.
24. 28 May: The Ulster Workers' Council strike ended.
25. 7 June: The UVF linked group the Red Hand Commandos, bombed a Catholic church, three people were mildly injured in the attack, on the same they tried bomb a Catholic pub but failed. Both attacks happened in Belfast City Centre.
26. 12 July: The UVF shot dead a Catholic civilian in Bangor.
27. 16 July: A Catholic civilian was killed when the UVF exploded a bomb at Sunflower Bar, Belfast.
28. 11 September: There was an attempted car bomb attack in Blacklion, County Cavan, Republic of Ireland. Three masked gunmen in British military uniform had hijacked the car, placed a time bomb inside and forced the owner to drive it into the village. They claimed to be from the UVF and threatened to attack his family if he did not comply. The driver parked the car in the middle of the village and alerted the Irish Army and Garda. The village was evacuated and the Army carried out a controlled explosion on the

- car. They estimated that the bomb would have destroyed most of the village.*
29. *16 September: The UVF left a booby-trap bomb in a parcel outside a factory in Pomeroy which killed the owner, a Catholic civilian.*
 30. *18 September: The UVF killed a member of the Official IRA youth section in a drive-by shooting on Clifton Street, Belfast.*
 31. *25 September: The UVF shot dead a Catholic civilian on Limestone Road, Belfast.*
 32. *30 September: The UVF shot dead a Catholic civilian at his workplace, a bakery on Orby Road, Belfast.*
 33. *4 October: The UVF shot dead a Protestant civilian near his workplace on Moonstone Street, Belfast. He was mistaken for his Catholic workmate.*
 34. *10 October: The "Protestant Action Force"⁸⁴ claimed responsibility for shooting dead a Catholic civilian at a house in Newtownabbey.*
 35. *11 October: The "Protestant Action Force" claimed responsibility for shooting dead a Catholic civilian as he walked to work along Brougham Street, Belfast.*
 36. *13 October: The UVF shot dead a Catholic civilian and dumped his body in a quarry on Hightown Road, Belfast.*
 37. *18 October: The "Protestant Action Force" claimed responsibility for exploding a bomb outside a Catholic school in Belfast, injuring twelve people (including children).*
 38. *18 October: The "Protestant Action Force" claimed responsibility for shooting two Catholic street-sweepers in Belfast.*
 39. *21 October: The UVF killed two Catholic civilians in a drive-by shooting on Falls Road, Belfast. Billy Hutchinson was later convicted for his part in these killings. Hutchinson was to become a leading spokesman for the Progressive Unionist Party.*
 40. *27 October: The "Protestant Action Force" claimed responsibility for killing a Catholic civilian, whose body was found at the back of a farmhouse at Mullantine, near Portadown. He had been beaten, strangled and then shot by UVF members after taking a lift from Lurgan to Portadown, together with a friend who managed to escape. The attack has been linked to the "Glenanne gang".*
 41. *8 November: The "Protestant Action Force" claimed responsibility for killing a Catholic civilian who was found shot dead in a derelict bakery on Byron Street, Belfast. This was claimed as retaliation for the Guildford pub bombings.*

⁸⁴ Protestant Action Force, Allegedly a cover name for the UVF

42. 9 November: The "Protestant Action Force" claimed responsibility for shooting dead two Catholic civilians in Templepatrick.
43. 12 November: The "Protestant Action Force" claimed responsibility for shooting dead a Catholic civilian at St Mary Youth Centre on Carolan Road, Belfast.
44. 15 November: The UVF shot a Catholic civilian in Maguire's Bar, Larne. He died on 20 November.
45. 20 November: The "Protestant Action Force" claimed responsibility for a gun attack at Falls Bar in Aughnamullen, near Clonoe. A Catholic civilian (the pub owner) was killed and a customer was wounded. This was claimed as retaliation for the killing of an RUC officer in Craigavon earlier that day. A British Army UDR soldier was later convicted for the attack, which has been linked to the "Glenanne gang"
46. 23 November: A Catholic civilian was found dead in a car on Hightown Road, near Belfast. He had been kidnapped and shot in the head by the UVF.
47. 29 November: The UVF bombed McArdle's Bar in Crossmaglen. Six people were wounded and one, a Catholic civilian, died of his wounds almost a year later on 15 November 1975. The attack has been linked to the "Glenanne gang".
48. 29 November: The UVF bombed Hughes Bar, Church Street, Newry. Many people were wounded and one, a Catholic civilian (John Mallon, aged 21), died of his wounds.

Bibliography

Aldrich, Richard; Cormac, Rory. The Black Door: Spies, Secret Intelligence and British Prime Ministers . HarperCollins Publishers.

Aldrich, Richard. GCHQ , HarperCollins Publishers.

Barron, Justice H., Interim Report on the Report of the Bombing of Kay's Tavern, Dundalk (Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights, Dublin, 2006)

Barron, Justice H., Interim Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings (Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights, Dublin, 2003)

Barron, Justice H., Interim Report on the Report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin Bombings of December 1972 and January 1973 (Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights, Dublin, 2004)

Breen, Colin. A Force Like No Other : The Last Shift: Blackstaff Press Ltd.

Cadwallader, A., Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Ireland (Mercier Press, Cork, 2013)

Corrigan, Peter. Bandit Country (SAS Operation) Harper Collins Publishers.

Cursey, Simon. MRF Shadow Troop: Thistle Publishing.

Dewar Michael, Lieutenant Colonel, The British Army in Northern Ireland, Guild Publishing, 1985

Harkin, Greg; Ingram, Martin. Stakeknife (The O'Brien Press)

Jeffery, Keith. MI6 (Bloomsbury Publishing 2010)

Kerr, Alistair. Betrayal: The Murder of Robert Nairac GC

Morgan, Austen. Tony Blair and the IRA: The 'On the Runs' Scandal . The Belfast Press Limited.

Mullan Don, The Dublin and Monaghan Bombings, Wolfhound Press, 2000

O'Brien, John A. A Question of Honour: Politics and Policing - The Inside story (Choice Publishing). 2020

O'Brien, John A. Securing the Irish State: 1922-2022. Lettertec Publishing

O'Brien, John A. The Troubles Come South, Lettertec Publishing 2023

O'Rawe Richard, Stakeknife's Dirty War: Merrion Press 2023

Stevens John (Lord Stevens) Not for the Faint Hearted Orion Books, 2005

Styles George, Bombs have no Pity, William Luscombe Publisher, 1975

Tiernan Joe, 2004 Dublin and Monaghan Bombings and the Murder Triangle,

Urban, Mark. Big Boys' Rules: The SAS and the Secret Struggle Against the IRA (Faber & Faber.

Urwin , Margaret. A State in Denial: British Collaboration with Loyalist Paramilitaries . Mercier Press.

Wilsey, John. The Ulster Tales: A Tribute to Those Who Served, 1969–2000. Pen & Sword Books.