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Flanagan apologises

THURSDAY
24/01/2008
18:21:49

McVicker defends Flanagan over Omagh

The detective who first exposed the Omagh police investigation fiasco tonight defended Sir Ronnie Flanagan and blamed other retired senior officers for the bungled probe into the bomb atrocity.

officers for the bungled probe into the bomb atrocity.

Ex-Chief Superintendent Brian McVicker claimed: "These are the people who should be held to account. They have washed their hands of it."

His criticism of one-time colleagues followed an apology to victims relatives by Sir Ronnie, the former RUC Chief Constable, over the deficiencies in the failed initial inquiry.

But Mr McVicker, speaking publicly for the first time about the affair, insisted that other senior officers - all of them retired - were primarily responsible.

He told the Press Association: "Sir Ronnie is taking the rap for Omagh as he must because he was in charge of the RUC at the time. He was the top layer of supervision, but there were others just below him, the men on the ground.

"They are just as much to blame as he is and they`ve escaped all the abuse and criticism Sir Ronnie is having to take. That is unfair."

Mr McVicker was called in by Sir Ronnie in March 2000 to carry out a full review of the first investigation of the August 1998 atrocity by the Real IRA which claimed the lives of 29 people.

It was a devastating report which revealed serious shortcomings and a failure by officers to follow up inquires with people he believed to be key

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witnesses.

He also disclosed the loss of hundreds of documents and tensions between certain RUC officers and Garda detectives who were involved in the investigation on their side of the border where the bomb was assembled.

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STARRING: Michael Stahl-David, Mike Vogel, Lizzy Caplan, Jessica Lucas

DETAILS:US / 84mins (15A)

RATING: ★★★★★

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