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Gardai pin murder on IRA gang

Killing a display of paramilitary power: police

Monday, October 22, 2007

By Clare McNeilly and Tom Brady

Gardai believe that members of the IRA were behind the vicious murder of a 21-year-old Co Armagh man, it emerged today.

Paul Quinn, from Cullyhanna, was brutally beaten to death by a gang of men at an outhouse near the border, at Castleblaney in Co Monaghan.

The young truck driver was taken to Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda after the savage assault on Saturday night, but was later pronounced dead.

Senior gardai confirmed that the brutal attack on Mr Quinn was linked to two previous assaults.

But they do not believe the IRA gang tried to kill him.

"Their aim was to beat him up in retaliation for the injuries they claimed he had inflicted on a republican and, separately, on another republican's son, in recent incidents," one officer told the Irish Independent.

The parents of Mr Quinn have blamed the Provisional IRA for their son's death - a claim denied by local Sinn Fein Assembly member Conor Murphy.

Speaking to the Belfast Telegraph on behalf of the Quinn family, Jim McAllister, a close friend and neighbour, alleged that the gang had issued a warning to Mr Quinn, which he chose to ignore.

"Our son courageously and correctly refused to leave," read a statement.

"We believe he was abducted by the Provisional movement and brutally beaten to death."

Mr Quinn was lured to the farm at Tullycoora, Drumacrib, near Castleblaney, close to the tiny border village of Oram in Co Monaghan, where he was savagely beaten by masked men.






It was believed his attackers may have used iron bars and wooden sticks to inflict massive injuries to the victim's head, shoulders, arms and legs.

Garda believe the attack had not been officially sanctioned by the former leadership of the Provisional IRA in the south Armagh region.

But they do believe the killers are all former members of the Provisionals, who had set out to demonstrate that they still wield considerable power in the area.

The involvement of the IRA in the killing will be of major concern to the Government and the allegation was expected to be raised with Martin McGuinness at Stormont today during minister's questions.

According to Newry SDLP MLA Dominic Bradley, two of Mr Quinn's friends were ordered to call him to a

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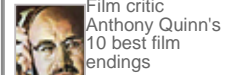
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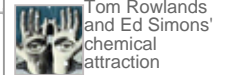
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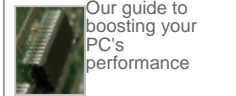
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farm shed at Tullycoora, Drumnacrib, near Castleblaney.

When he arrived he was separated from the others and brought to an outhouse where the barbaric beating took place. Mr Quinn sustained multiple injuries - to his head, shoulders, arms and legs.

His friends were also beaten up by the gang and later admitted to Daisy Hill Hospital in Newry for treatment.

Mr Quinn was in a semi-conscious state when he was taken to hospital.

Family friend Mr McAllister told this newspaper that the young men who saw their friend after the attack are still reeling from shock.

"I think brutality wouldn't be the word for what they did to Paul. The people who saw Paul's body were very, very distressed," he said.

A member of the ambulance crew which brought him to hospital later described his fragile condition.

"He was in a terrible state, with his face a mass of blood and bruising," he said.

It also emerged that gardai are working closely with the PSNI in the probe into the killing.

Yesterday afternoon Garda Supt Karl Heller of Carrickmacross, who is in charge of the investigation, said the reason behind the killing was unknown.

"It is too early yet to say what the motive behind this attack may have been, as our investigations are ongoing," he said.

An incident room has been set up at Castleblaney Garda Station.

The dead man was the youngest child of Stephen and Brid Quinn, a well-known and respected couple from the area.

"It was obvious he suffered a terribly brutal and gruesome beating."

Gardai from Castleblaney and the ambulance service rushed to the farm-shed after the alarm was raised, shortly before 6pm on Saturday.

A post-mortem examination was due to be carried out today.

Residents in the border area were deeply shocked yesterday as details of the tragedy were revealed.

Gardai sealed off the off-road farmhouse where the incident took place and a team of Garda detectives began house-to-house inquiries in the area.

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