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### Newsman shot after night out

By Emily Moulton  
Wednesday, 17 September 2008

The family of a man charged in connection with the murder of investigative journalist Martin O'Hagan has gone into hiding, a court was told yesterday.

Four men appeared in the dock at Lisburn Magistrate's Court charged in connection with the shooting of the Sunday World reporter on September 28, 2001.

Neil Hyde (28), from Princeton Avenue in Lurgan, and Nigel William Leckey (43), from Bowens Lane, also in Lurgan, were accused of killing Mr O'Hagan.

He was gunned down as he walked home from a pub with his wife Marie. He was shot three times by a gunman who pulled up beside the couple

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just metres from their Lurgan home.

A third man, Robin Andrew "Billy" King (42), described in court as a leading member of the LVF in the Mid-Ulster area, was accused of trying to destroy or conceal a silver Subaru Impreza.

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Mark Kennedy (28), of no fixed address, was accused of helping to facilitate the disposal or concealment of the getaway car and impeding the apprehension of the offenders. All four men appeared in the dock separately.

Kennedy was granted bail, but the other three defendants, who were handcuffed in the dock, were remanded in custody and will reappear at Craigavon court house via video link on October 10.

During the hearing, Detective Sergeant Michael Hamilton, who was in court to connect all four to the charges, urged District Judge Rosie Waters not to grant bail to King and Leckey because he feared they might intimidate witnesses, abscond or commit further offences.

He told the court that police believe King, who was on license from prison, was a leading member of the LVF in Mid-Ulster and posed a threat to witnesses.

He said: "I feel any witnesses in relation to this case would be safe if King was in custody. He has a ring of support around him. If he was out he would seek out witnesses which would be of very grave concern to me in respect of the investigation."

Det Sgt Hamilton then revealed that one family had already been forced to flee.

"We have had various threats, a ring of intimidation," he told the court. "A family of a co-accused has received threats and intimidation. They have been forced to leave their home.

"I am also aware of a solicitor who has discharged himself from the case out of fear for himself and his family. I also feel he [King] is likely to abscond. His brother is also wanted in connection with this murder and police are currently searching for him."

Det Sgt Hamilton then told the court that police were searching for Andrew "Drew" King in connection with the murder when he was asked why he was opposing bail.

Mr O'Hagan (51), developed a reputation for breaking stories on paramilitary activity. He was the first journalist to be killed during the Northern Ireland Troubles

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