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By Emily Moulton
Thursday, 25 September 2008

A former prison officer who received a bravery commendation for his role in trying to stop the Maze prison breakout last night spoke of his disgust over the BBC documentary on the infamous escape.

The 68-year-old was also there the moment one of his colleagues was shot. He was behind Campbell Courtney — the former prison officer featured in the documentary — at the moment he was shot in the leg by escapee Harry Murray.

Last night the retired prison officer told the Belfast Telegraph he was completely dismayed by the one-hour programme and refuted some of the claims made by senior republicans in the documentary.

“I thought it was disgraceful the way the BBC had allowed them to say those things,” Mr McKane said. “It seemed to me they were only interested in telling one side of the story.”

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"Storey (Bobby) said the screws took him down to the bridge and tore the clothes off him and battered them in the Land Rover but that did not happen. No-one tore clothes off them or hit them."

What are these?

Mr McKane, who retired from the prison service in 1999, said he very rarely spoke about the ordeal because he felt it was in the past.

However since the documentary aired on Monday night, Mr McKane said it brought up memories of the past and was distressed by the programme.

And while he does feel that the programme makers did give Mr Courtney ample coverage to tell "their" side of the story, he did not think they did enough to balance out what the three escapees — Junior Minister Gerry Kelly, Sinn Fein's Belfast chairman Bobby Storey and Brendan 'Bik' McFarlane — said.

"I had put it behind me to tell you the truth," he explained.

"Nobody has really asked me about it since that day, I never really had a reason to talk about it but after seeing that programme on Monday and seeing the prison service getting blasted with all those lies, well I felt I had to say something.

In a statement released earlier this week, the BBC defended its programme saying it was a "fair and impartial" account of what took place that day.

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