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## Wright funeral appearance'

Saturday, 11 October 2008

A man accused of murdering a Northern Ireland journalist was sacked from the police's pipe band after playing at the funeral of former loyalist leader Billy Wright, a court heard yesterday.

Drew Robert King (40) denies driving the car from which Martin O'Hagan was gunned down near his home in Co Armagh in September 2001.

He was dropped from the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Prison Service pipe bands after he wore part of a prison officer's uniform during his appearance at Wright's 1997 funeral, said prosecution QC David Russell.

The killing of Mr O'Hagan, a 51-year-old Catholic, was branded sectarian and linked to his pursuit of loyalist paramilitaries during the defendant's refused bail application at Craigavon Magistrates' Court.

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Mr Russell said: "This applicant played as a piper at the funeral of Billy Wright, which was a paramilitary-style funeral.

What are these?

"He was asked as a result of that to leave [the RUC and Prison Service pipe bands]."

Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) leader Wright was shot dead by republicans at the Maze prison.

Mr O'Hagan was murdered near his home in Lurgan, Co Armagh, walking back from the pub.

Mr Russell added: "He [King] is a principal partner in the murder. He is intimately involved, not only in the murder but in the destruction of the evidence after the event, and the murder itself has huge sectarian overtones.

The defendant was remanded in custody to reappear at a later date.

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 I do not think that an article like this is appropriate at this point in time. Mr.King is before the court to answer serious charges and any news reports should be confined to the court proceedings. If he was required to leave the RUC and Prison Service pipe bands because he took part in Billy Wright'S funeral how many of our MPs should be forced to resign for having attended paramilitary funerals and carrying coffins?

Posted by *MARC* | 12.10.08, 02:17 GMT

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