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## Local & National

# RUC 'protected' IRA killer of policeman

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

The son of a murdered RUC officer has accused senior police of protecting the IRA gunman who murdered his father.

The off-duty police officer was shot dead in a Belfast ice-cream parlour almost 20 years ago. A report by the Police Ombudsman said it was not properly investigated by his colleagues.

In a report published today, Al Hutchinson criticised the probe into the shooting of RUC Constable John Larmour saying it was not thorough and that not all information available to police was passed to the detectives investigating the killing.

Mr Larmour's son Gavin said the report had confirmed his worst fears. He claims officers knew who the killer was but did not pass it on possibly because he was an informer. Gavin Larmour, who was 13 years of age when his father was gunned down, says he wants a public inquiry into why the murder had not been properly investigated.

The IRA shot Constable Larmour in his brother's ice cream parlour, Barnams, on the Lisburn Road in 1988.

He was looking after the shop for a week while his brother was on holiday. Two customers were also injured in the gun fire.

An inquest into the 42-year- old's death was told that he had taken every precaution not to divulge his occupation.






Building workers had been told he was an electrician and even an assistant in the shop had no idea he was an RUC officer.

Following a probe into the handling of the murder case, the Police Ombudsman has concluded that there were "a number of failings with the original investigation" and that it was "not as thorough as one would have expected of a murder investigation".

While consideration was given to the fact there were 98 'Troubles' related deaths that same year the Police Ombudsman's office said "more thoroughness" would have been expected in relation to follow up enquiries and that some of these enquiries "were either not started or not completed."

Police Ombudsman investigators have also established that the police received information about Constable Larmour's murderer following the attack but not all of it was passed to the detectives investigating what happened.

"We accept that the information was not necessarily evidence but it could have led to evidential opportunities which should have been explored by the police," a spokesman said.

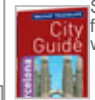
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“ At very best I feel it constitutes gross negligence, if not criminal misconduct. ”

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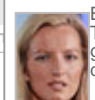
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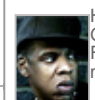
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"It did not happen in this case, as the police officers investigating the murder were never made aware of all the information available."

Constable Larmour's case is being reviewed by the PSNI's Historical Enquiries Team.

His son Gavin said while he welcomes the Ombudsman's report it "merely gives official recognition of the fact that after 19 years the investigation into my father's murder was not given the care and attention that should have been expected of any murder case, let alone 'one of their own.'"

"For one, or even a few, senior officers to have not spotted these errors may have been excused as carelessness or even incompetence but for such a large number of the most senior officers to not have recognised the mistakes and omissions in the investigation cannot be excused," Mr Larmour said.

"At very best I feel it constitutes gross negligence, if not criminal misconduct.

"I can never get back the lost years of my childhood and the many happy years that I should have shared with my dad since his untimely death at the hands of those that have never been brought to justice.

"I now need a full, proper, public investigation in the hope that I can finally get on with what is left of my life."

The DUP's Ian Paisley Jnr said police should reopen the investigation into Mr Larmour's murder.

"It only serves to fuel the view that there was something very serious to hide," he said.

"That is such a serious allegation, the police must reopen that case and with expedition find the murderer and get to the bottom of this case, either to allay the fears that have been put about or, indeed, prove those fears."

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