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Mum's plea to IRA for return of son's body

Monday, 19 January 2009

The mother of a man shot dead by the IRA 30 years ago issued an emotional plea for the return of his body last night after fresh claims that a map detailing his burial site was handed over to the group responsible for locating victims' remains.

Gerard Evans (24), one of the so-called "Disappeared", was last seen trying to hitch a ride home to Crossmaglen in Co Armagh following a dance over the border in Castleblayney, Co Monaghan, on the night of March 25, 1979.

Despite denials from the IRA, it is widely believed that Mr Evans was murdered by the organisation because he was suspected of working as an informer for the British security forces.

His remains are reported to have been buried in bogland outside Hackballscross in Co Louth.

Mr Evans' mother Mary last night said all she wanted was to have her son's body brought home.

"I haven't heard a thing yet from anyone apart from the newspapers," she said.

"I can't really speak about it at the moment but all we want is the return of his body to us."

According to a report in the Sunday Tribune, a map of the location was given to one of its reporters and has been passed on to the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains.

A spokesman for the Commission said he could not comment on whether it had received a map.

Last November a search by gardai of a Wicklow mountainside uncovered part of the remains of Danny McIlhone, a 21-year-old Belfast man who was abducted and murdered by the IRA in 1981.

The IRA man responsible for drawing up the map admitted to being a member of the unit that murdered Mr Evans. He said it was "time to do the decent thing" and allow the dead man's family to give him a proper burial.

He said the unit held the young man for three days before killing him at the bogland.

"He confessed very quickly to being an informer. He wasn't tortured. He pleaded for mercy, he pleaded not to be killed, and then he said his prayers. He was shot once in the back of the head."

Ms Evans held out hope for many years that her son was still alive. However, when both his father and a younger brother died tragically and he still did not return, she knew he was dead.

"I knew he was gone. If he was alive, he wouldn't leave us to suffer that pain alone.

"I don't want recrimination or revenge. I don't want anybody arrested or jailed. All I want is to bring my son home.

"Everything stopped for our family 30 years ago. We haven't been able to move on," she added.

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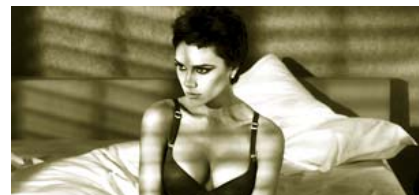


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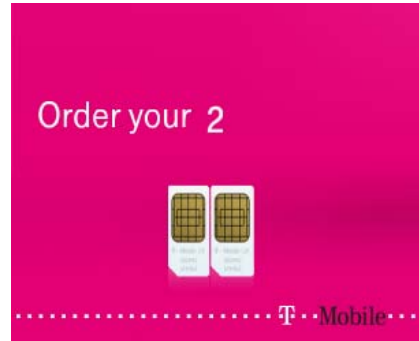


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