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## Local & National

# Loyalist feud victim may have been murdered by mistake

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Thursday, June 19, 2008

By Victoria O'Hara

A man shot during a loyalist feud could have been linked to paramilitaries by mistake, an inquest has heard.

Michael Green (42) was killed in the Sandy Row area of south Belfast three years ago.

An inquest into his death held yesterday heard he had just arrived for work at around 8.15am by motorcycle.

As he was opening the gate to the rear yard of the premises he was approached by a gunman who shot him at close range.

Officer in charge of the investigation Detective Chief Inspector Raymond Ramsey said he could link the weapon used to loyalist paramilitary groups and that it had been used before.

However, he was unable to link it to any specific group.

Mr Ramsey added that it was his belief Mr Green was a victim of the loyalist feud between the UVF and LVF which was ongoing at the time, however he said there was "no evidence" that Mr Green was linked to paramilitaries.

Mr Ramsey was unable to shed any light on a motive for the shooting but said it was not random. "There is no doubt that Mr Green was the target for this murder," he said.

The court heard there had been no claims of responsibility for the murder while some loyalist groups had claimed responsibility for other killings during the feud.

Mr Ramsey said it was "one suggested theory" there had been no claim issued as the killers discovered Mr Green was not associated with paramilitaries.

Witnesses told the court they saw a man in the area on the morning of the murder dressed in dark clothing carrying a gun.

Lorraine Clarke said a man who was about 5ft 10in and wearing a grey jacket, dark trousers and had his face covered was nearby.

He was holding a gun in his right hand and his arm was pressed tightly to his body.

Ms Clarke said she then heard three or four loud bangs and when she looked up she saw a man on the ground and the gunman leaning over and shooting the victim three or four more times.

Another witness statement said they saw the gunman lift up Mr Green's visor of his motorcycle helmet and shoot.

One witness, a fellow employee at Gilpins, Neil Rea, said Mr Green had at no time expressed concern for his safety.

The court also heard that during the investigation a motorcycle which was used by the gunman to escape as a pillion passenger was later found abandoned in Abington Drive.

Inquiries were made at 396 houses and business premises, 281 statements were recorded and 1,053 investigative actions carried out.

One man had been arrested in relation to the murder but was not prosecuted.

In his findings, Coroner John Leckey said Mr Green died from multiple gunshot wounds.

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He extended his sympathies to Mr Green's family and friends and said he hoped that someone is caught for the murder.

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