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Colin Duffy in DNA link to soldiers' killings, court told

Court told of evidence found in getaway car

By Victoria O'Hara
Friday, 27 March 2009

DNA evidence links prominent republican Colin Duffy to the murder of two soldiers by the Real IRA outside Massereene Army Barracks earlier this month, a court was told today.

Duffy was remanded in custody charged with the murders of Sappers Mark Quinsey (23) of Birmingham, and Patrick Azimkar (21) of London, who were shot dead at the gates of the base in Antrim on Saturday March 7 while they collected pizzas from delivery men.

The District Judge at Larne Magistrates' Court said Duffy should reappear via video link at Antrim Magistrates' Court on April 21.

The republican, from Lurgan, Co Armagh, was also charged with five counts of attempted murder — of three soldiers and two delivery men — and possession of arms and ammunition with intent.

A packed public gallery filled with supporters watched as Duffy, dressed in a black jumper and jeans, was walked into the dock handcuffed to a police officer. More than half a dozen armed police stood around the small courtroom.

High-level security was also in place outside the court and on roads throughout the seaside town.

Detective Chief Inspector Jeffrey Smyth told the court that police were relying on three facts in the case, which included forensic evidence, CCTV footage and witness evidence.

He told the court that DNA evidence found in the car used by the killers in their getaway linked Duffy to the killings.

He said: "This is not trace elements — this is a full DNA profile. It was inside a latex glove found on the floor of the Vauxhall Cavalier."

And he added that the PSNI would be opposing an application for bail due to a number of reasons including the risk of absconding.

However defence Barrister Mark Mulholland said Duffy would not be at risk adding that he has not had any convictions on his police record since 1999.

The judge denied the application for bail and the accused was placed in custody.

As Duffy was led away handcuffed cheers and claps of support were given by supporters which included his wife and brother. However outside a small crowd of protesters gathered. Supporters and masked youths were separated by police as he



Colin Duffy is accused of murdering sappers Mark Quinsey and Patrick Azimkar

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Speaking outside court Paddy Vernon, Duffy's solicitor, said his client still maintains his innocence and will be applying for bail on Monday. He added that Duffy had once again started to take food after going on hunger strike in protest at his detention.

Last night up to 200 people attended a protest meeting in Lurgan to demonstrate their anger at his re-arrest. It was organised by the Duffy family.

Spokesman for republican group Eirigi, Breandan Mac Cionnaith, also said there had been concern for his health after it emerged the prominent republican had been refusing food. His brother Paul Duffy said his weight has dropped from 12st 2lbs to 11st since he was first arrested.

He said: "There is support for him, and I think that was reflected in the turn out last night."

Earlier this week former Sinn Fein councillor Brendan McConville and a 17-year-old youth were remanded in custody charged with Constable Carroll's murder.

Another 21-year-old man, who cannot be named for legal reasons, also appeared in court in Lisburn yesterday accused of withholding information in relation to that murder.

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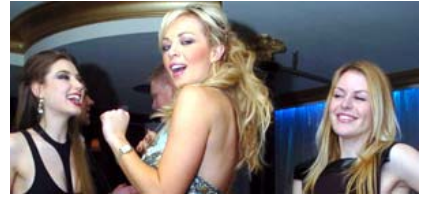
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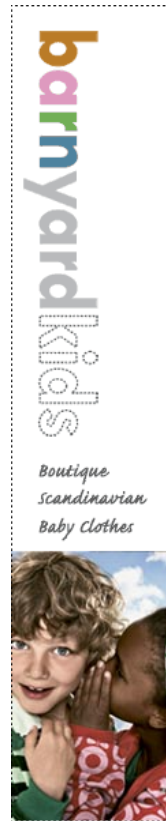


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