

April 23 2007

Lá

Property

Andersonstown News

Home

News

Comment

Sport

Features

North Belfast News

Home

News

Comment

Sport

Features

South Belfast News

Home

News

Comment

Sport

Features

Lineage Advertisements

Death Notices

Aisling Bursary

Aisling Awards

Media Pack

Site Search

Advanced

As of 11th April 2006, www.dailyireland.com, incorporating www.irelandclick.com is Registered with ABC ELECTRONIC (www.abce.org.uk) and supports industry agreed standards for website traffic measurement

Shankill Butcher and 'Murph UVF man killed father

The murder of John Crawford – Ciaran Barnes Reports on a shadowy death squad

North Belfast News

By Ciarán Barnes

19/04/2007

A leading member of the Shankill Butchers cut-throat killer gang was involved in the brutal murder of a West Belfast man in Janaury 1974, the North Belfast News can reveal.

William Moore was part of the UVF team which shot dead respected republican John Crawford outside his furniture shop next to Milltown Cemetery.

The killing occurred almost two years before the Shankill Butchers carried out their first murders – at Casey's Wines and Spirits in the Millfield area.

Never charged

Moore has never been charged in connection with the Crawford murder. However, his role in the father of nine's death is now being investigated by the PSNI's Historical Enquiries Team.

The Police Ombudsman is also probing the killing.

The Crawford family believe the RUC and British Army had prior knowledge that their relative was being targeted but did nothing to prevent the murder or arrest the suspects.

Catholic

The North Belfast News can also confirm that the UVF commander who led the four-man murder squad was a Catholic from Ballymurphy called Jimmy McKenna.

McKenna, who was in his early 50s at the time, was a member of the British Army. He had returned to Belfast in the late 1960s after fighting abroad.

The West Belfast man was part of a shadowy unit of the British Army known as the Military Reconnaissance Force (MRF).

During the early part of the Troubles the MRF trained UVF men in the use of guns and explosives.

Series of murders

Sources close to the Crawford murder investigation have linked McKenna, who died in Australia in 1986, to a series of murders throughout Belfast.

Sign up for the
irelandclick
newsletter

JOBS
at Belfast
Media Group

**From the
Balcony**
A publisher's blog
by Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

Lá Nua:
now available
as a **FREE PDF**

**Tribute to
Emma Groves**

**Click here to
download**

West Belfast Taskforce &
Greater Shankill Taskforce
Strategic review and final report 2007

ColdTypeTM

**Food and
Drink
Ireland**

About Us

Contact Us

Blogs

When is this site updated?

ABC Website

Download this week's

Business and

Recruitment supplement

These include the deaths of Robert Willis, Robert Clarke, Charles Vincent Clarke, James Mitchell, Joe Donnelly, Hugh McKenzie and the attempted murder of John Flannigan.

Campaign

Seven years ago John Crawford's son, Paul Crawford, mounted a campaign to get to the bottom of the circumstances surrounding his dad's death. Speaking to the North Belfast News he said he wanted those involved in the killing charged.

"I don't care if they are out in two years because of the Good Friday Agreement," said Paul Crawford. "I just want to make sure that this never happens again, that no families have to suffer what we have. I want to make sure the British can never work hand in glove with killers again to murder innocent people."

Murder case stinks of collusion

By Ciarán Barnes

John Crawford owned a furniture shop at the bottom of the lane that runs next to Milltown Cemetery.

The father of nine was a popular man and regarded as a committed republican.

Three days before his murder on January 9, 1974, the British Army impounded his car. It was returned to his family a few days after the killing. No explanation was given as to why the vehicle was taken away.

This meant John had to walk up and down the lane-way leading from the Falls Road to his shop. It was here that he was jumped and dragged into Milltown Cemetery where he was shot dead.

Full view

The killing occurred within full view of Andersonstown RUC barracks and a British Army sentry post at the Falls Road bus station.

At the time of the murder the area was swamped with RUC and British army patrols. The previous day the IRA had left a huge bomb outside Andersonstown barracks.

The UVF murder gang had been hanging around the lane-way for almost an hour before John walked their way.

They had travelled from the Shankill Road, leaving their getaway vehicle parked on the hard shoulder of the M1 motorway. UVF man Raymond Glover remained in the car.

The killers then clambered into Milltown cemetery and walked for ten minutes through the grounds to the spot where they attacked Mr Crawford. This all happened in full view of British Army and RUC observation posts.

The three UVF men – British soldier Jimmy McKenna, William Moore and Mr X – attacked Mr Crawford as he walked up the darkened lane-way.

Good fight

The 52-year-old put up a good fight but was eventually overpowered. Mr X then shot him twice in the head from point-blank range. The second bullet was fired through the hole caused by the first.

The killers are then understood to have got into a fist fight with each other. Bloodied, they walked onto the Falls Road and down to the top of the Donegall Road where Glover picked them up in the getaway car.

They drove to the loyalist Village estate where they washed and cleaned their clothes.

Description

An eye-witness who saw the three men walking along the Falls Road gave a detailed description to the RUC.

Family and friends of Mr Crawford found a driving licence belonging to one of the killers, Mr X, close to the murder scene.

However, the men responsible were never arrested or charged.

Mr Crawford's son, Paul Crawford, has described the investigation into his father's death as "worthless".

"At the time the RUC just didn't want to know, my father was just another



number as far as they were concerned," he said.

"The case stinks of collusion, what with my father's car being taken for no reason before the murder occurred, and the UVF gang being able to move through West Belfast unchallenged even though there had been a bomb at Andersonstown barracks the day before.

"Then you have Jimmy McKenna's involvement – here was a British soldier leading a murder gang. He really was untouchable."

Human Rights

Paul Crawford's collusion concerns are shared by respected human rights organisation British Irish Rights Watch (BIRW).

Researcher Caroline Parks has taken up the family's case.

She said: "Our main concern is that the murder was not investigated properly. We are also looking at the role of state agents in the killing."

The PSNI's Historical Enquiries Team (HET) and Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan are also probing the murder.

The North Belfast News understands HET detectives are preparing to question Shankill Butcher William Moore in the coming weeks.

Jimmy McKenna and his killer gang

By Ciarán Barnes

Jimmy McKenna: The Ballymurphy Catholic led the UVF gang which murdered John Crawford in January 1974.

Unlike the rest of the gang members who were in their 20s, he was in his early 50s.

McKenna was part of a shadowy unit of the British Army known as the Military Reconnaissance Force (MRF).

The group trained loyalists in the use of weapons and explosives. The MRF was involved in a series of atrocities including the murders of six New Lodge men in 1973 and the 1971 bombing of McGurk's bar in which 15 people died.

McKenna was involved in the murders of at least seven other people throughout Belfast, including Robert Willis, Robert Clarke, Charles Vincent Clarke, James Mitchell, Joe Donnelly, Hugh McKenzie and the attempted murder of John Flannigan.

Myth

At the time of these murders the popular myth was that McKenna joined the Springmartin UVF because the IRA killed his brother, Arthur McKenna. However, the North Belfast News has learned that he was operating as an undercover British Army soldier in West Belfast before this killing occurred.

In the early 1970s McKenna was caught transporting a rifle through West Belfast. However, he was only charged with possession of a weapon without a licence and served less than a year in Crumlin Road jail.

He was again caught with weapons around 1977, but instead of being charged was deported to Australia where he had lived previously.

Charged with abduction

While living in Australia, McKenna was charged with abducting his partner's child. He was given a five-year sentence.

The killer had only been released from prison a short time when he died in 1986.

Prior to his involvement in the murder of John Crawford, McKenna had lived in a caravan in the grounds of the 52-year-old's Milltown furniture shop. He did odd jobs around the shop for his victim.

William Moore: In February 1979 Moore, who is now 58, pleaded guilty to involvement in 11 Shankill Butcher murders.

He was sentenced to life but released in 1998 under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement.

Gang

The first murder Moore admitted involvement in was in 1975 – however the

North Belfast News can confirm he was part of the gang that murdered John Crawford in January 1974.

Moore was an apprentice butcher and stole from his workplace the knives and meat-cleavers used by the gang.

In 1975 he started working as a taxi-driver. He would ferry the Shankill Butchers around looking for Catholics walking home late at night.

After the gang's leader Lenny Murphy was jailed on a firearms offence, Moore continued to carry out the cut-throat killings. This was in order to avert suspicion away from Murphy.

Moore was eventually arrested in 1977 after a surviving victim identified him.

First member

He was the first member of the Shankill Butchers gang to break during questioning.

Raymond Glover: The 57-year-old drove the car used in the John Crawford murder.

In 1978 he pleaded guilty to involvement in six UVF murders. These included John Crawford, Charles Clarke, Robert Willis and Hugh Harvey.

Glover was given ten life sentences, however he was not ordered to serve a minimum term because he agreed to turn Queen's Evidence.

Despite agreeing a deal to inform on his colleagues the other three men involved in the Crawford murder were not charged.

Released

Glover was released in the early 1990s. He is currently living in Rathcoole.

Mr X: A veteran UVF man from the Ligoniel area of North Belfast, he cannot be named for legal reasons.

It was this man who fired the two fatal shots into John Crawford's head.

His involvement was known within 24-hours of the killing after friends of the Crawford family, who were searching West Belfast for his body, discovered the paramilitary's driving licence which he had dropped at the murder scene.

The driving licence was not handed into police.

[Email to a friend](#)