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INLA: We didn't kill those men

INLA source claims CIRA are responsible for horrific weekend double murder

Andersonstown News

Damian McCarney

15/03/2007

AN INLA source has denied any involvement by the group in the murder of two West Belfast men.

The body of Joseph Jones (38) of Colinbrook Avenue in Poleglass was discovered in Elmfield Street in the Ardoyne area in the early hours of Monday morning. He had "severe head injuries" having been savagely beaten with a spade.

The body of a second man, Edward Burns (36), originally from the Grosvenor Road but who had been living in Ardoyne, was found in a car park in the grounds of St Gall's GAC, having been shot once in the head.

A third man, Damien O'Neill from Beechmount, was admitted to the Royal Hospital at about 3am on Monday morning with gunshot wounds. He is no longer in the Royal Hospital and the PSNI would not comment other than to say that he is a witness.

There's been widespread speculation that the INLA killed the two dissident republicans.

From front

However, an INLA source denied any responsibility for the shooting and the brutal beating and claimed that the deaths were the result of an internal row between Continuity IRA factions over the use of weapons, stolen from CIRA arms dumps for unauthorised 'freelance jobs'.

A spokesperson for the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the political wing of



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the INLA, also denied that the movement had any involvement in the brutal attacks.

“Basically, it has nothing to do with the Republican Socialist Movement. None of these people were connected in any shape or form with the RSM,” insisted the spokesperson.

“It has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with us. Obviously there is speculation on the street, there will always be that, there is not a lot we can do to countermand that.”

PSNI Superintendent George Clarke, who is heading up the investigation, has linked the two deaths and said they occurred against a “background of tensions within dissident republicanism”.

For Republican Sinn Féin (RSF), who are widely regarded to be the political wing of the CIRA, it was business as usual at their offices on the Falls Road this week.

Fearful of attack

Geraldine Taylor, who stood in the recent Assembly election for RSF as an independent republican, denied knowledge of the incidents and said that members were not fearful of attack.

“Regarding seeing any of those people or anyone in that organisation [CIRA], we haven’t been in contact with them for months, so we would have no idea what they have been up to or anything else.

“The only thing that we deal with is the politics of Republican Sinn Féin, regarding anything else it has nothing whatsoever to do with us.

“Why would we be a target? We have no affiliation with any other organisation, we are just Republican Sinn Féin. Why would we feel fear, and why would we think we were going to be a target for a feud or whatever it is going on?”

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A search on Tuesday evening by forensic officers, some wearing bulletproof jackets, turned up a shotgun, a handgun and ammunition from a green at Butler Place near where Mr Jones’ body was found. The shotgun was fully intact and is believed to be an expensive Beretta model.

The PSNI officers quizzed Falls Road residents living near the Milltown Row entrance on whether they witnessed anything in the early hours of Monday morning.

Supt Clarke urged anyone who has any information about the murder to come forward.

Good husband

“In particular, we need to hear from anyone who knows anything about the movements of the victims between teatime on Sunday and breakfast time on Monday,” he said.

The PSNI also want to speak to anyone who noticed a silver Skoda car, registration PKZ 3760, in North or West Belfast since teatime on Sunday, March 11. They believe that there may have been several men in the car. Mr Jones had been a black taxi driver for 10 years but had stopped in January of this year. His wife, Linda, is said to have been in “total shock” and the family described him as a “good husband, a good father and a good brother, and the circumstances of his death were tragic and brutal.” The Jones family believed that the dead man’s remains would be returned on Tuesday, but the PSNI informed them that the body would in fact not be released until some time next week.

The families of the two victims have appealed for the media not to attend the funerals.

Sinn Féin councillor Angela Nelson described Mr Jones as a “family man” and condemned the brutal murder.

“We have been working very hard on the peace process to bring stability to society in the six counties, and we thought that murders of this nature were a thing of the past. It is an absolute tragedy that any family has to waken to hear the news that their loved one had been brutally murdered.

“To have two murders in such a short period is chilling and we totally condemn it.

“Anybody who has any information in relation to this murder should go immediately and pass it to the PSNI.”

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