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- **Published Date:** 26 June 2007
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Nairac â€™ hero or villain?



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Watching the BBC 'Spotlight' programme on Robert Nairac, I was reminded of an interview I did many

years ago with John Parker, author of "Robert Nairac: Death of a Hero".

What I recall of the book was that it was laudatory but contradictory, and Fred Holroyd would most certainly have taken exception to many aspects of it. In fact Holroyd alleged that Nairac - assisted by two UVF gunmen, shot an IRA member, John Francis Green, at a farmhouse in Louth on 10th January, 1975. The aforementioned UVF gunmen were also alleged to have taken part in the murder of the Miami Showband on 21st, July 1975. The murders have been linked by forensic evidence - the same pistols were used and Holroyd also claimed that the RUC would not return the colour Polaroid photograph of Green's dead body which Nairac took just after he killed him. Indeed, he allegedly showed it to Holroyd the following day as proof of the kill. Also, Merlyn Rees confirmed to Ken Livingstone that Nairac had supplied the guns and the explosives to this particular UVF unit.

These murders happened during the tenure of Merlyn Rees and the IRA ceasefire of 1975 during which a memo from the permanent under secretary at the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), Frank Cooper, betrayed the government's true intentions.

"Our aim is to string the IRA along to the point where their military capacity goes soggy and where Catholic community support disappears".

Was part of that strategy actively colluding with loyalist paramilitaries? Most observers would agree that such collusion has been established beyond any doubt and what part Robert Nairac actually played in it may be fodder for a future 'Spotlight' programme or a book entitled "Death of an Enigma".

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