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Mother rejects allegations of involvement in Quinn killing

By Barry McCaffrey

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A south Armagh mother spoke out last night to reject allegations that her family had been involved in the murder of Paul Quinn.

Eileen McCabe was speaking after graffiti were daubed on walls in Crossmaglen at the weekend accusing her family of involvement in the 21-year-old's murder.

Mr Quinn was beaten to death by an armed gang after being lured to a farmhouse on the Monaghan border last October.

His parents blamed the PIRA claiming that their son was killed after a falling-out with a leading republican in the area.

However, Mrs McCabe last night denied involvement in the murder and called for an end to attacks on her family.

Mrs McCabe said she had had “words” with Paul Quinn after he allegedly attacked her 16-year-old son Tomas at a disco last May.

“I was angry and warned him I’d speak to his mother, who I’ve known for years,” she said.

“I met Briega afterwards but never mentioned it because, as far as I was concerned, it was over and done with.”

However, the mother-of-four said that she was shocked when she learned after Mr Quinn’s murder that her family was being blamed for his death.

“I couldn’t believe Paul had been murdered but I was physically sick when I heard someone was putting it about that me or my family had anything to do with it,” she said.

“They were saying I’d gone to his house and threatened him with a hammer.”

Insisting that the allegations were hurtful and untrue, she said: “I’ve never even been to the Quinn’s house and when I had words with Paul I was wearing pyjamas and slippers.

“I wanted to go to the Quinn’s house after Paul’s murder to assure Briega that I hadn’t anything to do with it.

“In the end I didn’t go because I was told it would only make matters worse.

“I wish I could sit down with Briega and tell her I had nothing to do with it.”

Mrs McCabe said she and her son made voluntary statements to Gardai after Mr Quinn’s murder about the alleged attack on her son.

“We’ve never heard another word from the gardai,” she said.

However, the 43-year-old says her family have since been the victims of repeated attacks.

“The worst incident was when Tomas and two of his friends were dragged from their car and beaten up by a gang before Christmas,” she said.

“They had Tomas on the ground and were shouting they were going to kill him.

“In another attack one of my other sons had a bottle broken over his head.

“I’m so afraid one of them is going to be killed that I don’t want them to leave the house.

“The Quinn family deserve justice for Paul’s murder but I can promise them we had nothing to do with it.

“My biggest fear is that some other poor child is going to be killed unless someone puts an end to these senseless attacks.”