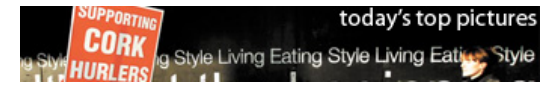


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I still want justice for my son Patrick says solicitor's mother

20th Anniversary of Pat Finucane's Murder

By Barry McCaffrey

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GRIEF: Pat Finucane's mother, Kathleen, holds a picture of her son who was shot dead by loyalists 20 years ago

today PICTURE: Mal McCann

On the 20th anniversary of the murder of Pat Finucane, his mother Kathleen has broken her silence to describe her ongoing grief and her family's long search for truth. She spoke to

Barry McCaffrey

It is now 20 years since UDA gunmen burst into Pat Finucane's north Belfast home and shot him dead in front of his wife and children as they sat down to Sunday dinner.

For two decades Kathleen Finucane has maintained a dignified silence following the murder of her eldest son.

Now, on the anniversary of his death and with no indication that the British government will allow a

full public inquiry into his killing,

Mrs Finucane has decided to break her silence.

"The pain of losing Patrick has never ever left me," the 85 year-old widow said.

"I have cried and prayed for him every single day since he was taken from me.

"He was so special and a good, loving son to his father and myself."

The eldest of eight children, Pat Finucane benefited from the post-war education system and in 1969 was the first in his family to go to university, studying philosophy and English at Trinity College Dublin.

The young student had already witnessed sectarianism at first hand when his family were forced to flee their home at Percy Street near the Shankill when the Troubles broke out in 1969.

A decade later his father, also Patrick, would die from a heart attack following a British army raid on the family home.

Mrs Finucane recalled her sense of pride when her eldest son was accepted into Trinity.

"We were all so very proud of Patrick. I was delighted when he went to university," she said.

"I wanted all my children to benefit from education."

A gifted footballer, Mr Finucane captained his university soccer team and would later sign for Irish League team Ards.

In Dublin he met and fell in love with a northern Protestant girl called Geraldine.

After graduating they married and returned to Belfast where Pat decided that he wanted to become a lawyer.

In 1979 he set up in partnership with close friend Peter Madden.

Over the next 10 years Mr

Finucane became one of the north's most high-profile lawyers, winning a series of landmark cases against the British government.

In 1981 he represented hunger striker Bobby Sands and in 1983 a number of the families of six unarmed republicans shot dead in the 'shoot-to-kill' controversy.

He represented loyalist clients as well but his successes against the state led to accusations of being an 'IRA lawyer'.

In January 1989 Home Office minister Douglas Hogg claimed in the House of Commons that a number of unnamed solicitors were 'unduly sympathetic' to the IRA.

Mrs Finucane said her eldest son would visit or speak to her every day but kept death threats he received from her.

However, she remembers a sense of dread when she heard Douglas Hogg's comments.

On the evening of Sunday February 12 1989 Mrs Finucane was visiting a family friend when her son Martin unexpectedly arrived.

She knew instantly that something was seriously wrong.

"I knew right away once I saw Martin's face that he had bad news for me," she said.

"I knew that harm had come to one of my sons.

"I was in a terrible state when Martin broke the news to me that Patrick had been murdered.

"I just broke down and was inconsolable in tears and shock. I was totally devastated, deep inside.

"My heart has been broken every day since."

Within a short period evidence began to emerge of security force collusion in her son's murder.

UDA leader Tommy Lyttle claimed that loyalists being questioned in Castlereagh were encouraged to target Pat Finucane.

British army agent Brian Nelson was shown to have planned the murder while the UDA man who supplied the guns, Billy Stobie, was a Special Branch agent who claimed that he warned police that an attack was imminent the day before Mr Finucane was killed.

In 2003 Britain's most senior policeman Sir Jon (now Lord) Stevens publicly confirmed security force collusion in the solicitor's murder.

Later that year the European Court of Human Rights also ruled that there had been "no effective" police investigation into the killing.

The European judges found that there had been a lack of independence in the RUC's handling of the case, "which raised serious doubts as to the thoroughness or effectiveness with which the possibility of collusion had been pursued".

They also raised serious concerns that the inquest into the solicitor's murder had failed to address the collusion allegations and that Geraldine Finucane had not been allowed to tell it about death threats to her husband.

In 2004 Judge Peter Cory concluded that the evidence of security force collusion warranted a public inquiry.

The British government proposed an inquiry but only under the terms of new legislation which allowed ministers to place restrictions on evidence and witnesses.

The family refused to accept these conditions and progress on the inquiry has been stalled since 2006.

"I have never got over Patrick's death, ever," his mother said.

"It still haunts me to this very day, the pain is still very raw.

"Every time I read about it in the newspapers or see Patrick's face on the news it breaks my heart.

"It makes me so sad and brings back such painful memories.

"I find it so hard when it comes to the anniversary of his murder."

Mrs Finucane also expressed frustration at the British government's continued attempts to block a full public inquiry.

"I want to see truth and justice for my family and for Patrick," she said.

"I'm not a young woman any more and have come through many painful and sad times.

"The deaths of loved ones, but especially your children, are the most painful for a mother.

"I may not be with my family for long. All I want for us all is to have truth and justice."

Mrs Finucane said she would only accept an independent, international inquiry into her son's murder.

"I don't trust the British government. I never have and I never will," she said.

"They murdered my son and they must be brought to justice.

"Patrick was a good lawyer. He was only doing his job and representing his clients to the best of his ability.

"He was challenging the injustices of the British state and they murdered him for it."

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