


[HOME](#)
[History](#)
[NewsoftheIrish](#)
[Book Reviews
& Book Forum](#)
[Search / Archive](#)
[Back to 10/96](#)
[Papers](#)
[Reference](#)
[About](#)
[Contact](#)

Even having confessed, agent stayed free to take more lives

(Barry McCaffrey, [Irish News](#))

Mark Haddock is alleged to have been involved in at least a dozen murders over a 10-year period including the shooting of a Catholic woman 14 years ago today (Wednesday)

The two detectives listened in amazement as the UVF informer broke down in tears and admitted the murder of a Catholic taxi driver 24 hours earlier.

It was shortly after 6pm on January 18 1993 when Johnston Brown and Trevor McIlwrath stopped Special Branch agent Mark Haddock's Mini Metro car in a pre-arranged rendezvous at the side of the motorway on the outskirts of north Belfast.

Twenty-four hours earlier good Samaritan Sharon McKenna had been making dinner for a Protestant pensioner in his north Belfast home when Haddock and a second gunman burst in and blasted her with a shotgun. She was shot a second time at point-blank range as she lay on the ground.

Haddock was said to have been forced to kill Ms McKenna, a taxi driver, after the UVF suspected him of being an informer.

Mr McIlwrath had first recruited Haddock as a low-level agent when the loyalist was caught trying to petrol-bomb a bus in 1985.

By 1991 Haddock had joined the ranks of the UVF and come to the attention of Special Branch.

He had been under Special Branch control for more than a year before Ms McKenna's murder.

Mr Brown and Mr McIlwrath expected that Haddock would be charged with murder when they reported his confession to their superiors.

However, Special Branch is alleged to have insisted that its agent was too important to go to jail.

This article appears thanks to the *Irish News*.
Subscribe to the [Irish News](#)

[click here](#)

[interactive online business directory](#)

[Club Awards](#)

[the CORY report](#)

[breakingnews](#)

[Gaelmail
irishnews.com](#)

[GAA WORLD](#)

[online subscription](#)

[weather](#)

[travel](#)

[ireland2go](#)

[on thursday](#)

Haddock was arrested for the murder but released without charge.

Six months later he and another UVF man were arrested after a failed murder bid on a Catholic mechanic in north Belfast.

It is claimed that Haddock told his handlers that the attack was due to take place and agreed to be arrested along with the gunman.

His credibility within the UVF would increase, while his handlers assured him the charges would be dropped due to a lack of evidence.

Back out on the street in February 1994 Haddock is alleged to have taken part in the murder of Sean McParland (55), a Catholic shot dead while minding his four grandchildren at their north Belfast home. He was not the intended target.

Two months later Haddock is also alleged to have been involved in the murder of Catholic builders Gary Convie and Eamon Fox as they worked on a peaceline in north Belfast.

In June 1994 the UVF in Mount Vernon was implicated in one of the worst sectarian attacks of the Troubles when gunmen burst into the Heights Bar in Loughinisland, Co Down, and shot dead six customers as they watched a World Cup match between Ireland and Italy.

The car for the attack had been provided by Haddock's best friend, a Catholic from the nearby New Lodge area. It would later emerge that this man was also a police informer codenamed Mechanic.

By March 1996 Haddock is alleged to have been so convinced he was untouchable that he boasted to his Special Branch handlers that he had killed UVF man Thomas Sheppard after he was suspected of being an informer. He was not charged with the killing.

In March 1997 Presbyterian minister David Templeton became the first clergyman to be killed by paramilitaries. The 43-year-old died from injuries sustained in a so-called punishment shooting by the UVF six weeks earlier after he was falsely accused of being a paedophile.

It is understood that on his death bed Mr Templeton identified Haddock as one of his attackers.

Again, no action was taken to charge Haddock.

A month later Haddock was implicated in a UVF bomb

attack on Sinn Féin offices in Monaghan town. At least one other UVF man involved in the attack was also said to have been an agent.

Special Branch is alleged to have been made aware of the attack but took no action to stop it.

In May 1997 William Harbinson, a Protestant, was beaten to death by Haddock's UVF gang on the Mount Vernon estate. RUC sources were quoted as saying the UVF was not involved.

Six months later Haddock's gang beat Raymond McCord to death. The body of the 22-year-old was found at Ballyduff Quarry on the outskirts of north Belfast.

Haddock is alleged to have ordered the murder from the Maze Prison where he was awaiting trial for a UVF attack on a bar in Portadown.

Shortly after his release in October 2000 he was also implicated in the murders of David 'Candy' Greer and former Ulster Democratic Party spokesman Tommy English as part of a feud between the UDA and UVF.

In August 2003 Haddock was arrested in Wales and brought back to Northern Ireland where he was charged with the attempted murder of Newtownabbey doorman Trevor Gowdy.

By then the allegations of Haddock's role as a Special Branch agent had been made public.

Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan had already begun an inquiry into allegations that Special Branch had allowed the agent to take part in more than a dozen murders.

He was placed into a secure unit inside Maghaberry Prison amid fears that he would be killed by his former UVF colleagues.

However, last January he was released on bail despite police warnings that his release could lead to a loyalist feud.

In May he was shot and seriously wounded as he arrived for a meeting with former comrades.

In November he received a 10-year sentence for the Gowdy attack. He is being held on a hospital wing inside Maghaberry jail.

Having already spent three years on remand, he will be due

for release in 2009.

Exactly 14 years to the day since he first admitted killing Sharon McKenna, Haddock could now be just days away from learning whether he will finally be brought to justice for her murder.

January 19, 2007

This article appeared first in the January 17, 2007 edition of the [Irish News](#).

[BACK TO TOP](#)

[About](#)

[Home](#)

[History](#)

[NewsoftheIrish](#)

[Books](#)

[Bookstore](#)

[Contact](#)