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McKevitt lawyers request witness files

By Staff reporter

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JAILED Real IRA leader Michael McKevitt is seeking police records on debriefing sessions with a convicted

IRA murderer due to testify against him at the Omagh bomb civil action, it emerged yesterday.

His lawyers also want access to medical files on Sean O'Callaghan held by the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Their applications have been prepared as part of an attempt to demolish a series of claims O'Callaghan made in a statement to the multi-million-pound compensation case brought by relatives of some of the 29 people killed in the August 1998 atrocity.

He is to be called to give evidence at the High Court in Belfast about allegations that McKeivitt was with him at a meeting of high-ranking republican paramilitaries to discuss buying guns to kill security force members.

O'Callaghan, who was paid more than £70,000 for media and fundraising work for the Omagh Victims' Legal Fund, will also be allowed to explore claims that a former IRA chief of staff told him in 1985 that he wanted McKeivitt voted onto the organisation's executive.

The former special branch agent, originally from Tralee, Co Kerry but now based in London, was due to go into the witness box later this month.

But those plans have been put back after McKeivitt's legal team responded to the plaintiff's decision to call him as a witness.

Barrister Kieran Vaughan confirmed they want the police service to provide notes from sessions with officers in England and

Northern Ireland in 1988, which O'Callaghan refers to in his autobiography, *The Informer*.

In a further application lawyers for McKeivitt – who is serving a 20 year jail sentence at the high security Portlaoise Jail for directing

terrorism – are seeking medical records on O'Callaghan held by the Prison Service.

O'Callaghan was sentenced to two life terms for offences including the murders of a soldier and police officer, but later released from jail under a Royal Prerogative.

The defence challenge to O'Callaghan's claims about McKeivitt – who is being sued along with Liam Campbell, Seamus McKenna, Colm Murphy and Seamus Daly over the devastating Real IRA bomb attack on Omagh – is expected to lengthen the civil trial which began in April last year.


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