

Courtney 'killed Finucane'

(Martin Breen, News of the World)

A top loyalist has sensationally been named as the killer of solicitor Pat Finucane by the Stevens Inquiry.

William 'Mo' Courtney, who was recently jailed for killing Johnny Adair's henchman Alan McCullough, has been accused in a court document of being one of the two gunmen who shot the lawyer in 1989.

The claims about Ulster's most controversial murder are made by Detective Chief Inspector Graham Taylor, of the Metropolitan Police, who is the senior investigating officer in the Finucane murder.

The top cop, who runs the team set up by Lord Stevens to probe collusion between security force members and loyalist terrorists, reveals the information comes from a highly-placed UDA mole.

In a sworn affidavit filed in a Belfast court, he alleged that Courtney and another man, who we can only identify as R, were the triggermen.

DCI Taylor said: "The investigation team have in their possession information that Courtney and R were the gunmen in the Finucane murder.

"However, this information is not admissible as the source is not willing to testify as a witness."

The top cop also claims he has information that Johnny 'Mad Dog' Adair hijacked the car used in the killing.

The affidavit from DCI Taylor has never been read out in court and was part of other proceedings brought by the Stevens Inquiry to obtain documents for its investigation.

We have obtained the document from a source not involved in the Stevens Inquiry or Crown Prosecution Service.

This is the first time the inquiry has identified any of those it believes killed the lawyer at his North Belfast home.

It is now thought the same claims will be aired in the coming

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years at the public inquiry to be held into the murder and into allegations that the British Army's secretive Force Research Unit colluded with the UDA.

Army agent Brian Nelson, who died three years ago, provided the UDA with the intelligence needed to target Mr Finucane. Nelson insisted that he kept his handlers fully-briefed on the Finucane plot but they ignored his warnings.

Eventually, his undercover work was exposed and in 1992 he was jailed for 10 years on five counts of conspiracy to murder.

Amazingly, the affidavit doesn't name one of the gunmen as Ken Barrett — the man who was convicted of the murder after he boasted that HE shot Mr Finucane.

Last year the *News of the World* tracked down ex-RUC Special Branch agent Barrett to a sleepy English seaside town on his release from jail after serving two years of a life sentence for the killing.

In an interview with Courtney in Maghaberry jail, we put it to him that the police believed he killed Mr Finucane.

Courtney admitted he was a suspect and that he had DNA samples taken, but he protested his innocence. "I didn't do it," he told us.

The 43-year-old, a former lieutenant of Adair before defecting during the 2003 UDA feud, was jailed for eight years last month after admitting to the manslaughter of 21-year-old Alan McCullough.

McCullough was shot dead in May, 2003, after returning home to Belfast from Bolton where he had been holed up with Adair's family and friends.

His body was found in a shallow grave on the outskirts of Belfast.

In 1991 Courtney was jailed for seven years for his role in a UDA armed robbery. When Adair was first returned to prison five years ago for breaching his licence, Courtney was pictured menacingly aiming an imaginary rifle at a police officer in the street.

He has spoken openly about his involvement in the UDA in the past.

Now our revelations will lead to fresh controversy about the killing and those said to be involved.



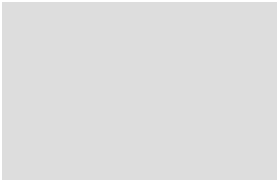


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