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## Trio won't testify at 'King Rat' inquiry

**Henry McDonald**

- [The Observer](#), Sunday December 7 2008

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Three former associates of Loyalist Volunteer Force founder Billy 'King Rat' Wright are boycotting the inquiry into the terrorist leader's murder inside the Maze prison.

Pastor Kenny McClinton, Jackie Mahood and Alex Kerr could face court sanctions for failing to turn up to the Billy Wright Inquiry.

The public inquiry was set up to investigate the circumstances behind Wright's assassination on 27 December, 1997, in a prison van in the courtyard of one of the jail's H-blocks. Two Irish National Liberation Army prisoners, John Kennaway and Christopher McWilliams, shot Wright dead with a gun smuggled into the jail.

The trio are understood to believe that the inquiry will not uncover the truth about the controversial murder. Senior loyalist sources confirmed this weekend that all three had now refused to give

testimony to the hearing, which has been sitting for 122 days at Banbridge courthouse.

'They don't believe the inquiry will be able to substantiate a widely held belief that the British government played a hand in the murder,' one loyalist source told The Observer.

The father of Billy Wright, David Wright, issued a statement last month saying that his confidence in the Billy Wright Inquiry had been 'seriously eroded'. This followed the sudden and unexpected departure of the inquiry's lead counsel, Derek Batchelor in June. Wright said: 'My confidence has been seriously eroded. It is now up to the inquiry to demonstrate that it will conduct a fearless, independent and effective investigation of the intelligence agencies.'

In a statement, the Billy Wright Inquiry refused to name specifically the trio who had refused to cooperate in it.



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