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News

Party members' invite to McCord report

Sunday, January 14, 2007

By Stephen Breen

Senior members of the PUP were last night invited to attend the publication of the Police Ombudsman's report into the controversial killing of Raymond McCord Jnr.

The offer was made by the UVF murder victim's father, Raymond, following the sudden death of PUP leader David Ervine.

The campaigning father invited the east Belfast MLA last December to attend the report's publication, but received no response on the offer. Although the PUP's executive has yet to decide on who will now lead the party, Mr McCord hopes one of the UVF linked party's leading figures will attend the publication of the eagerly awaited inquiry.

The report - which focuses on the killing of the young north Belfast man, the activities of the UVF in Mount Vernon and the role played by top spy Mark Haddock in the terror group - will be unveiled on Monday, January 22. Mr McCord expressed regret that David Ervine was unable to attend the publication of the report.

Said the north Belfast man: "I am not in the business of bad-mouthing people who are no longer with us, but it's a shame David Ervine wasn't around for the publication of Mrs O'Loan's report. I extended the invitation last year, but I got no response. I met David Ervine on a few occasions and I had hoped that he would have been able to assist me, but he never did. He never once called on the UVF to expel the killers of my son.

"I've no doubt David Ervine did great work for his constituents and I feel for his wife and sons, but I would have liked him to have done more for my family.

"The report into my son's murder is massive and I would like a senior member of the PUP to be present so that they can outline their thoughts to the people of Northern Ireland."

We attempted to contact senior PUP woman Dawn Purvis, but she was not available for comment.

But former PUP MLA Billy Hutchinson said he did not know who his party's new leader would be, adding: "This is a matter for the executive and I don't know what will happen or who will be the party's new leader."

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