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Robert McCartney murder trial date set

(by Suzanne Breen, Sunday Tribune)

The trial of the man accused of murdering Robert McCartney outside Magennis's bar in Belfast is due to begin in May.

The McCartney sisters told the *Sunday Tribune* that, three years after the killing, they were relieved that a date for the trial had finally been set and they hoped justice would be done.

However, they expected that listening in court to the details of their brother's brutal death would be a very harrowing experience.

Robert McCartney, a father of two, was stabbed to death outside Magennis's bar in Belfast on 30 January 2005. Three months later, Terence Davison (50) was charged with his murder. Two other men, James McCormick (38) and Joseph Fitzpatrick (46) were charged with making an affray.

Paula McCartney said that, after many delays, the family had been informed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) that the trial would open on May 12 and was likely to run for between two and four weeks.

She said she had been told the case would be heard before a judge, without a jury: "We think that's the right decision. Much as we believe that trial by jury is a vital part of the legal system, given the nature of Robert's murder and the intimidation that has taken place since, a jury trial just isn't practical."

Paula McCartney and her sisters Catherine, Donna, Gemma, and Claire, along with her brother's fiancée Bridgeen Hagans, have waged a high-profile campaign for justice since Robert's murder.

"The past three years have been very stressful for us. The more the whole process dragged on, the more damaging it was to us as a family and to the prosecution case. It became harder to keep witnesses on board," Paula McCartney said.

"But we also have feelings of apprehension about the trial beginning. Listening to the evidence in court every day will be very traumatic. We will have to relive Robert's murder. So far, we have managed to block out many details of what happened

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outside Magennis's bar.

"While we hope that justice will be done, given the history of these types of cases in Northern Ireland we don't want to raise our hopes. We are also disappointed that only three people are facing charges in connection with events that night.

"Police told us that ideally five people would face murder charges. There are another 10 who should be facing charges for involvement in aspects of the killing or the clean-up operation."

March 27, 2008

This article appeared in the March 16, 2008 edition of the [Sunday Tribune](#).

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