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Failure to capture killers tantamount to collusion - O'Dowd

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Upper Bann Sinn Féin MLA John O Dowd has said that the Police Ombudsman Investigation into the killing of Gerard and Rory Cairns highlights the complete failure of the RUC to attempt to apprehend their killers and once again shows the Special Branch as a force within a force.

Mr. O Dowd said:

"While no paper trail may exist of collusion before the fact, the findings of the Ombudsman investigation that the police investigation stopped after 3 months and that the Special Branch failed to even cooperate with that investigation surely highlights collusion after the fact.

"Many nationalists and republicans believe that a UVF unit acted with impunity in the North Armagh area in the early nineties. Today's report shows that after the murder of these two young brothers, who were murdered simply because they were catholics, the RUC displayed a lack of vigour and determination in catching their killers.

"I am particularly concerned about how the evidence of an off Duty RUC officer, was handled. This off duty officer, who was at the auction where the killers car was bought, told the Police Ombudsmans office that he identified the buyer of the car at an ID parade in Lurgan Police station 3 months after the murder. The officer who was in charge of the ID parade states that no ID was made. This serious contradiction in such a crucial aspect of the investigation speaks volumes about how seriously the investigation was handled.

Concluding Mr O Dowd said:

"The role of RUC Special Branch is again at the centre of a failure to capture loyalist killers. If the Special branch failed to cooperate with the original investigation then the question remains why? Why did the Special branch not think it was a priority to capture a group of sectarian serial killers? Many believe the reason is quite simple; they were one and the same."

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