

UndercoverInfo*online investigative research & satire***'Dossier' confirms RUC & MI5 were warned of Omagh bombing**

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Aftermath of Omagh bombing

Two documents – in the form of an undisclosed ‘dossier’ and testimony marked ‘Restricted’ – confirm what many have long known or suspected: that the security services were informed well in advance of the bombing that took place at Omagh in 1998 and could have prevented it. Indeed, the scenario resembles but to a greater degree the events that led up to the earlier 1993 Shankill Road bombing in which the IRA operative who planned it was, in fact, an informant and who had warned his Special Branch and MI5 handlers of what was to happen (but the bombing was allowed to proceed). An undisclosed statement made by a British undercover agent to the 2011 Smithwick Inquiry alleges that details of the Omagh bombing were provided to UK intelligence via the RUC in advance. This statement – running to 24 pages and known informally as the ‘Hurst Dossier’ – is published below. A second document – marked ‘Restricted’ and submitted to the Bloody Sunday Inquiry – is in the form of testimony by the same whistleblower: it expands upon these claims and also alleges that agents working to the Force Research Unit, a covert British Army unit, colluded with paramilitaries on all sides of the sectarian divide in order to direct and control the conflict. These matters are explored – de-constructed...

(Note: all documents referred to were sourced via deep web searching.)

First... A [story was recently published](#) about the 1993 Shankill Road bombing in Belfast. The bomb targeted a meeting of the UDA (Ulster Defence Association) leadership but because of a tip-off by a double-agent the meeting was abandoned. However, to protect the informer it is alleged that Special Branch decided to allow the bombing to go ahead. It transpired that the bomb was timed to go off once the area had been evacuated: as it was, the bomb went off too early and the IRA operative carrying the device together with nine civilians, including two children, were killed. According to documents stolen by the IRA from a break-in at the Castlereagh barracks in 2002 the informer was codenamed ‘AA’ and is believed to have been in charge of IRA intelligence for the Ardoyne district.

What this story illustrates is exactly how the security forces during ‘The Troubles’ operated: a ‘mole’ had to be protected at all costs, even if that meant the loss of civilian lives. More troubling, the story provides a glimpse into the darker world of ‘deep state’ collusion in which security forces infiltrate loyalist paramilitary organisations and

republican paramilitary organisations alike to not only gain intelligence but to direct operations and even to arrange killings of insurgents and civilians. It was a time when the 'strategy of tension' formula was tried, tested and perfected

Documentary: Collusion



(Note: 'Collusion' – see video above – was a documentary commissioned and funded by RTÉ.)

And, so, the bodies of the 'Disappeared' lie long buried in the peat bogs – though questions as who actually carried out the killings or on whose orders remain unanswered. One shadowy group that is known to have infiltrated the paramilitary organisations is the FRU (Force Research Unit): an insight into some of its workings is provided by the documents published below.

But, first, let's reprise what happened on that dreadful day in Omagh...

A. Background to the Omagh bombing

In 1998 the Omagh bombing killed 29 men, women and children of different religious backgrounds and injured about 220 others. It was carried out by the Real IRA, though evidence (see below) suggests that the bombing could have been avoided as details of it had been passed to the RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary) and via them to MI5. Three phone calls were made, warning of the bomb in Omagh, using the same codeword that had been used in the Real IRA's bomb attack in Banbridge only two weeks earlier. Two of these warnings were to Ulster Television (15 and 30 minutes prior to the time the bomb was due to explode). The third warning was made to the Samaritans, who passed on the information to RUC. The police then tried to evacuate the area, but misinformation resulted in civilians being directed to where the car carrying the bomb was parked.

Those killed by the bomb were: James Barker (12), Seán McLaughlin (12) and Oran Doherty (8), from County Donegal, Fernando Blasco Baselga (12) and Rocío Abad Ramos (23) from Spain, Geraldine Breslin (43), Gareth Conway (18), Breda Devine (1), Aidan (or Aiden) Gallagher (21), Mary Grimes (65), Brenda Logue (17), Brian McCrory (54), Seán McGrath (61), Jolene Marlow (17), Avril Monaghan (30; pregnant with twins), Maura Monaghan (1), Elizabeth Rush (57), Philomena Skelton (39), all Catholics; Deborah-Anne Cartwright (20), Esther Gibson (36), Olive Hawkes (60), Julia Hughes (21), Ann McCombe (48), Samantha McFarland (17), Alan Radford (16), Veda Short (56), Fred White (60), Bryan White (26), and Lorraine Wilson (15), all Protestants, were killed. (Seán McGrath died from his injuries on 5 September 1998.)

Colm Murphy was later tried for the bombing and was convicted but released after it was revealed that the Gardaí (Irish Republic police) forged interview notes used in the court case. Murphy's nephew, Sean Hoey, was also tried and found not guilty. In June 2009, the victims' families won a £1.6 million civil action against four defendants. In April 2014, Seamus Daly was charged with the murders of those killed. On 8 June 2009, the civil case taken by

victims' relatives concluded, with Michael McKevitt, Liam Campbell, Colm Murphy and Seamus Daly found responsible for the bombing. Seamus McKenna (died 14 July 2013) was cleared of involvement but the others were held liable for £1.6 million of damages. Murphy and Daly appealed against the ruling and were granted a retrial, but this second trial also found them responsible for the bombing, with the judge describing the evidence as overwhelming. On 10 April, 2014, Daly was charged with murdering the victims of the Omagh bombing and with other offences and was arrested in Newry after he crossed the border into the north.

In 2001 double agent Kevin Fulton claimed he told his MI5 handlers three days before the bombing that the RIRA was about to bring a "huge bomb" across the border but that MI5 did not pass his information on to the police. David Rupert, a US citizen and an MI5 agent who fund-raised for the RIRA, told his MI5 handler four days before the bombing that a car bomb was planned for either Omagh or Derry. Paddy Dixon, who stole cars for the RIRA to use to transport bombs, told his RUC handler, DS John White, that he knew something was about to happen. White passed this information on to his superior, DCS Dermot Jennings. Later, according to White, Jennings said that they would let the bomb go through so that the RIRA would not become suspicious of Dixon. In 2003 a transcript of a conversation between Dixon and White was released confirming that the Gardaí would let the bomb go through, saying that "Omagh is going to blow up in their [PIRA] faces".

Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan published a report on 12 December 2001 that criticised the RUC over its handling of the bombing investigation; she stated that RUC officers had ignored the previous warnings about a bomb and had failed to act on intelligence. According to her [report](#): "On 4 August 1998, eleven days before the bombing, the RUC received an anonymous telephone call warning that there would be an 'unspecified' terrorist attack on police in Omagh on 15 August 1998." However "Special Branch took only limited action on the information received...and a threat warning was not sent to the Sub-Divisional Commander Omagh, as required by a Force Order."

The report added: "Three days before the bombing of Omagh the RUC also received information from a 'reliable' informant known as Kevin Fulton, which indicated that terrorists were about to 'move something North over the next few days'". The report goes on to say... "During the period 6 June 1998 and 12 August 1998, an RUC informant known as Kevin Fulton had five meetings with his 'handler', a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Officer. The Officer kept contact sheets (records) of his meetings with Fulton and passed them to the RUC Force Intelligence Bureau. Any intelligence of a subversive nature must then be passed to Special Branch. Between 6 and 8 June 1998 Fulton met his handler and gave information regarding (A) who lived in the Republic of Ireland and was involved with the Real IRA. Fulton said that 'A' had been seeking to obtain coffee grinders (sometimes used in the making of bombs) During a meeting on 23 July 1998 Fulton said that at one time 'A' smelt of fertiliser (the suggestion being that he had been making bombs). During a meeting on 12 August 1998, three days prior to the Omagh Bomb, Fulton said the Real IRA "was about to move something North over the next few days". Fulton also named another person, B, who was assisting 'A'. Shortly after the Omagh Bomb, Fulton telephoned his handler to ensure that, in particular, the information he supplied on 12 August 1998 had been recorded." Also: "Records for the meeting with Fulton on 12 August 1998, three days before the Omagh Bomb, and for the meeting with him on 23 July 1998 cannot be found within Special Branch." (More on Fulton below...)

It's also noteworthy that some years after the bombing, in 2008, it was revealed that GCHQ [had been monitoring conversations](#) between the Omagh bombers as the bomb was being driven into the town, but again there was no intervention.

B. The 'Hurst Dossier'



Ian Hurst

Notes:

1. The following observations are largely drawn from the 'Hurst Dossier' – a detailed and lengthy statement provided by [Ian Hurst](#) to the Smithwick Inquiry. This dossier can be read in full [here](#).
2. Hurst – who was also known by his cover name of [Martin Ingram](#) – provided testimony – marked 'Restricted' – to the Bloody Sunday Inquiry: this testimony – which includes an MoD briefing – expands upon many of his claims in the 'Hurst Dossier' and can be read in full [here](#).

According to the late Liam Clarke of the Belfast Telegraph... Ian Hurst (aka Martin Ingram) was a British agent responsible for handling agents in the IRA and had enhanced access to other agents' reports, though not their names, via military intelligence computers. Clarke refers to an undisclosed "24 page statement by Hurst" – the 'Hurst Dossier' – to the Smithwick Inquiry: "ot portrays a wilderness of mirrors in which every organisation has the other penetrated to some degree and "all sources have a shelf life". The statement by Hurst talks of British agents in the Garda, Garda agents in Northern Ireland, IRA agents in the RUC and Garda and RUC agents in the IRA.

Ingram/Hurst worked for the Forces Research Unit – for East and North divisions (N. Ireland). He was recruited to the FRU by Willie Carlin and Brian Nelson, both former British Army operatives and loyalists.

Sensationally, in the 'Hurst Dossier' Ingram/Hurst claimed that one in four IRA members were either informants or working directly for British Intelligence and that half of all senior IRA members during the Troubles were working for the intelligence services

Ingram/Hurst also confirms Kevin Fulton claim that he warned the RUC of the planned 1998 Omagh bombing by the Real IRA and, crucially, that British Intelligence were also aware the bombing was planned. (Fulton further claimed that he had flown to New York, met FBI and MI5 agents and was given money to buy an infra-red device to be used to set off Republican paramilitary bombs – see also [Congress probes 'IoS' revelations on IRA link.](#))

According to Ingram/Hurst, Fulton said that "the real reason why the Real IRA planted the bomb at Omagh and have never been taken to court or their cases investigated is because the actual bomber was also working for the RUC (the police)".

Ingram/Hurst frequently claims that some members of the RUC, UDR and Army colluded with terror groups. In the 'Dossier' he states "the fact that a Garda was passing information to the IRA did not bother me any more or any less than in the same way members of the RUC/UDR/BA (British Army) passed information to the IRA and members of various loyalist paramilitaries. It was a matter for HQNI and the RUC and way above my pay grade ... in other words it was a strategic and not a tactical problem". He concludes that none of this "registered massively on the Richter scale, it was just a fact of life, indeed it was well within the rules of our game!"

C. The FRU

“That 98.5% of those arrested were on the British secret state payroll is the most surprising thing I have read for a very long time. These were on the Loyalist side of the conflict – allies. Essentially, of the British state – and I think we may assume that on the Republican side a lower percentage of the combatants had been recruited by the British state.” (Source: [Lobster 62](#) – “Spy versus Spy” section re Smithwick Tribunal.



Members of the secret Force Research Unit in the 1980s (Ian Hurst is pictured second from left)

Much of the following is based upon the [Patrick Finucane Review report](#)...

The FRU (Force Research Unit) can be characterised as the 1990s successor to the 1970s [Military Reaction Force](#) (MRF). Unlike the MRF, however, the FRU operated over at least half a decade. The FRU worked closely with MI5 and (to a lesser extent) with RUC SB (Special Branch); it is believed it reported directly to the Joint Intelligence Committee (Whitehall).

Many of the FRU's members not only infiltrated the IRA and the PIRA, but also the loyalist UDA (the FRU's overall objective was to neutralize as many paramilitary members as possible). By design, or otherwise, the FRU was complicit in the actions of these paramilitary forces. (For a definition of the FRU, later renamed Joint Services Group, see [here](#) (section 3.16). See also: <http://www.patfinucanecentre.org/fru/fru12022k1a.html> & http://www.powerbase.info/index.php/Force_Research_Unit.) The FRU was headed by [Colonel Gordon Kerr](#) (see photo below), a counter-insurgency expert from the SAS.



Case example 1:

Photographs and intelligence reports on republican targets were deliberately passed by the FRU to members of the outlawed Ulster Defence Association, which then passed the information to its gunmen to carry out sectarian and political executions. In 1987 [Brian Nelson](#) became an Intelligence Officer for the UDA (Ulster Defence Association) though working for FRU (see sections 27,29, 33, 34, 37-39 of the Finucane Report). Nelson was recruited to the FRU by Kerr and Captain [Margaret 'M' Walshaw](#). Nelson together with Ken Barrett and William Stobie were accused of the murder of lawyer [Pat Finucane](#), who was shot 14 times in front of his family (Finucane Report: sections 102,103). In 1992 Nelson pleaded guilty to five cases of conspiracy to murder (and 10 cases of

attempted murder). He was found guilty of the murder but given early release. He was later assassinated on 3 February 1992 – no one has been arrested/charged for his murder. William Stobie (an RUC agent and a UDA quartermaster) was tried for his role in the murder of Finucane (Stobie is now dead). A BBC Panorama special programme claimed that UDA activist Ken Barrett drove the car to Finucane's home, where he was murdered. Barrett was found guilty of complicity in the murder, but after three years was relocated to a secret location. Also: RUC Special Branch was frustrated in its investigation in the Finucane murder: an inquiry (see Section 80).

Case example 2:

In a video, Kevin Fulton [explained](#) how his handlers in the FRU helped him gain credibility in the eyes of the IRA, allowing him to make contact with the IRA and infiltrate republican ranks. FRU officers made a hoax bomb for Fulton using a plastic box and an oil can and then drove him to the main railway line between Belfast and Dublin. He placed the device and was then able to tell IRA men that he was behind the disruption to Ulster's rail network. Fulton says he was encouraged to carry out most of his terrorist activity – including bomb-making – in the Irish Republic. 'Ninety per cent of what I did took place over the border,' he says. 'I was basically told that over there anything goes. 'If the IRA ask you to shoot someone in the arms and legs and you can't do it because it's illegal, then you aren't going to last long as an agent.'

Regarding FRU's agents handling problems, see Finucane Report, sections 4.82 and 4.86. With regard to how FRU agents received orders via PIRA, see Finucane Report, section 4.83.

According to a FRU source (Hurst?) who was interviewed by Neil Mackay of the 'Sunday Herald', "There was an unbroken chain of command running from the handlers, to Kerr, then through to the military top brass in Ulster, on to the Ministry of Defence Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and finally the Prime Minister. At the time of Finucane's death George Younger was Secretary of State for Defence, Tom King was Ulster Secretary, Thatcher was Prime Minister and General Sir John Waters was the general officer commanding in Northern Ireland". The source added: "I can say with dead certainty that the FRU did conspire to murder certain individuals with loyalist terrorists through our work with UDA informers. And Kerr knew about it".

Altogether, [it has been estimated](#) that 15 innocent civilians died as a direct result of FRU/UDA collusion alone. During the conflict, loyalist paramilitaries [killed 864 civilians](#), the vast majority of them were Catholics.

In summary, some may describe the FRU as a para-judicial death squad – its modus operandi little different from that employed by paramilitaries. Indeed, the lack of investigation into the role of the FRU explains, in part, how and why the Peace Agreement took the form it did.

But the true history of the FRU (and its predecessors) in Britain's 'Dirty War' in Northern Ireland is yet to be told, as also what really happened with ['The Disappeared'](#).

Useful links:

- [Collusion – Chronology of Events in the Stevens Inquiries](#)
- [Beyond collusion: the UK security forces and the murder of Patrick Finucane](#)
- [Counter gangs: a history of undercover military units in Northern Ireland 1971-1976, by Margaret Urwin](#)
- [Collusion Or The Secret History Of The British "Jihad" In Ireland](#)
- [Independent Commission for the Location of Victims Remains](#)
- [The Policing You Don't See](#)

Articles from the Belfast Telegraph:

- [British Army's secret 'terror unit' Military Reaction Force shot dead innocent civilians in Northern Ireland: claim](#)
- [PSNI to probe British Army's 'death squad' Military Reaction Force](#)
- [BBC Panorama team 'loses' confidential information relating to a secret British Army unit the Military Reaction Force](#)
- [Murder weapon linked to state agent Brian Nelson](#)
- [Loyalist 'collusion' legal action: relatives deserve the dignity of knowing the truth about 1970s killing spree, court hears](#)
- [British state 'involved in mass murder on British soil, colluded with loyalist paramilitaries in 80 deaths between 1972 and 1978'](#)

Articles from The Guardian/Observer:

- <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/oct/20/northernireland>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/may/18/uk.northernireland1>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2003/dec/07/northernireland>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2000/jun/11/northernireland.henrymcdonald>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/jun/23/henrymcdonald.focus>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2006/nov/12/northernireland.henrymcdonald>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/sep/11/ira-murders-claim-to-smithwick>
- <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/2011/jan/11/faint-echoes-of-ulsters-dirty-war>
- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/greenslade/2011/mar/16/bbc-ireland?CMP=twf>
- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2003/may/13/northernireland.northernireland1>

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12 February, 2016 at 9:27 am

Yep. Reminds me of Claudy. Was there ever a convincing explanation why the terrorists failed to get through on the phone to warn? Or was this another instance of “an acceptable level of violence”.

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