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Martin Ingram is the [pseudonym](#) of ex-[British Army](#) soldier Ian Hurst, who served in the [Intelligence Corps](#) and [Force Research Unit](#) (FRU). He has made a number of allegations about the conduct of the [British Army](#), its operations in [Northern Ireland](#) via the FRU, and against figures in the [Provisional Irish Republican Army](#) (IRA) and [Sinn Féin](#).

Military career

He served two tours of Northern Ireland working for Army Intelligence between 1981 – 1990. Ingram joined the Intelligence Corps in 1980. In 1981, after training, he joined 121 Intelligence Section as a Lance Corporal. 121 Intelligence Section were based at Headquarters Northern Ireland (HQNI). The unit supplied intelligence support for the General Officer Commanding (GOC) and Commander Land Forces (CLF). They were attached to G2, the intelligence wing of HQNI. G2 desk officers were graded GSO2 or GSO3 and were captains or majors.

Ingram began in the 3 Special Collation Team (SCT) whose sole function was inputting RUC Special Branch intelligence reports, known as SB50s or RIRACS (RUC Intelligence Report and Comment), onto the army 3702 computer system. The RUC did not want their reports filed on computer so they were not told of the practice. SB50s were photocopied and circulated within G2. The originals were formally recorded in the HQNI Registry by being entered in the MoD Form 102 books. This was the official procedure whereby a secret document is recorded as having been received and filed in a particular place. The photocopies were not entered because the SB50s should not have been copied or the information entered in the computer.

Ingram spent two or three months in the SCT before he engineered himself a more interesting posting in G2. After a brief spell working on Loyalist paramilitaries he was transferred to the Derry Republican desk. Officer "Y" was Ingram's immediate superior whilst on the Loyalist Desk. Ingram had a level one password which gave him full access to all the intelligence on the 3702 database. This meant he had access to source material from RUC Special Branch, the FRU and some MI5 and MI6 material. MI5 and MI6 source reports were not entered onto the database but in some cases the actual intelligence from these source reports was entered. At the time MI5 was not a big player in running agents in Northern Ireland.

All HQNI intelligence staff had level one passwords. This was between 10 and 20 people. Ingram was a collator and worked directly to his GSO2 desk officer. He would see perhaps six or seven files a week and these might contain one or two Security Service documents. He saw these files so that he would be kept up to date on developments. MI5 had very few agents in Northern Ireland at this time. So far as he was aware there was no sifting of documents before they were circulated within G2. There was also a personality card index which contained detailed

information of people of interest. [Martin McGuinness](#) would certainly have been on the index. In addition to personal information it also referred to relevant intelligence reports.

FRU North

In 1982, Ingram was posted to the north detachment of the Force Research Unit (FRU(N)). The FRU was divided into three sections: Headquarters West, based in Derry; FRU(N), also in Derry and FRO(W) in Belfast. He was promoted to Corporal and his job was to analyse and collate reports generated by FRU agent handlers following their meetings with Derry agents. His detachment commander was a major who subsequently died on the [Chinook helicopter which crashed](#) on the [Mull of Kintyre](#). Because of a shortage of agent handlers Ingram claims to have acted as a "co-handler" for some agents. He saw intelligence from all agencies with relevance to his area.

Ingram states that the FRU had access to a "massive budget" and "freedom to operate outside the structures which report directly to the RUC." The FRU is thought to have over one hundred agents in place within paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland, agents which have been in place for over twenty years. The [Force Research Unit](#) has been implicated in the murder of at least four civilian [Roman Catholics](#), the killing of a number of [Provisional Irish Republican Army](#) (IRA) members, and the killing of two senior loyalist paramilitaries.

Ingram claims he had access to screening reports for old agents whilst at FRU(N) even though they were no longer used by the time he was in Ireland. The screening reports used to be prepared when an agent was first recruited. These were kept so that FRU could circumvent the RUC's prohibition on recruiting new agents. New agents had to be screened unless they were former army personnel, as in the case of [Brian Nelson](#), or were old agents being re-activated. It was to allow re-activation of old agents, without a fresh screening, that FRU kept old screening reports. Originally agents were run on a fragmented basis with Field Intelligence NCOs (FINCOs), part of the Intelligence Corps, reporting to the local Brigade. The system was centralised by creating the FRU. The FRU took over all existing agents and therefore had to have access to all the existing agent files.

End of army career

Ingram left Derry/FRU(N) in late 1984 when he was posted to deal with counter terrorism in Britain. In mid-1987 he was posted to [Belize](#) and on his return he requested to attend a course at Repton Manor in [Ashford, Kent](#). This included "agent running". He was then posted back to Northern Ireland at St. Angelo near [Enniskillen](#). His posting was to augment the small detachment in response to the [Enniskillen bombing](#). This unit was commanded by FRU(N). He

remained at St. Angelo until 26 September 1990. His last report included a recommendation for promotion from Lieutenant Colonel (now Brigadier) [Gordon Kerr](#) of the FRU. He was posted to the Ministry of Defence in London at his own request where he joined the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS). He held an Enhanced Positive Vetting (EPV) position working primarily on the [Israel](#) and [Syria](#) desks. EPV was at the time the highest clearance, giving access to Top Secret material.

Ingram notified Army Vetting of his intention to marry a nurse, Noreen Sweeney, born 25 Apr 1965 (into a [County Donegal](#) Irish republican family), and this created difficulties with his clearance. He effectively had to choose between his army career and his fiancée. He therefore applied for and received premature voluntary retirement. In a letter dated 8 May 2003, the MoD sought to suggest Mr. Ingram did not join the FRU until late 1993 but Ingram disputed this.

Credibility and motivation

It is worth mentioning as a preliminary caveat that there is a great deal of suspicion of Ingram and his allegations. This suspicion is particularly acute amongst republicans, and even more so amongst republicans supportive of [Sinn Féin](#). This is because Ingram is frequently critical of the leadership Sinn Féin has given the republican movement. This criticism has become more vocal since the 2006 killing of British agent [Denis Donaldson](#) as a result of "[Stormontgate](#)". Republicans are also critical because Ingram's claims about the British Government involving themselves in the activities of [Loyalist](#) paramilitaries i.e., Collusion, have been quite common for many years, and something which the republican movement has sought to have investigated. The suspicion is that Ingram may be engaged in [black propaganda](#), (sometimes called "Dirty Tricks"), self-promotion, or some other form of conspiracy aimed at damaging Sinn Féin and the wider republican movement.

Some of the allegations Ingram makes in his 2004 book *Stakeknife* have been aired before. Allegations previously made during "[the Troubles](#)" are quoted at length, notably those in [Eamon Collins](#) book, *Killing Rage*, and those aired in the British TV programme *The Cook Report*. This has led to accusations that he is recycling second or third hand knowledge heard from higher placed colleagues in the FRU. Ingram has protested his innocence in the face of all these allegations. He maintains that he has to protect his own life, that he still retains contacts within the republican movement, and says that his experiences operating in Ireland, operating alongside Loyalists, and his marriage into a strongly republican [County Donegal](#) family have convinced him that the partition of Ireland is wrong. He claims to be a republican although some commentators have expressed surprise at this "Road to Damascus" conversion after more than ten years working as a British agent.

There is some surprise at Ingram's claims that he "would have no problem with 99% of FRU's activities".^[1] Due to the sensitivity of his allegations he is eligible for prosecution under the

[Official Secrets Act](#) but so far he has not been successfully prosecuted by the British military authorities for making his allegations. It is also worth noting that disinformation and the use of one FRU controlled IRA agent to smear another is a tactic which Ingram acknowledged. He has described this process as: "using your own agents to sow those seeds and from small acorns grow."^[2]

However, Ingram made his allegations after he was discharged from the British Army. Following this he was arrested under the [Official Secrets Act](#), his house was burgled and he was injuncted against making any further allegations drawing on his military service.

Whistleblowing and dirty tricks

A number of intelligence operations in Northern Ireland have involved the spreading of disinformation and black propaganda, most infamous being "[Clockwork Orange](#)" – an operation involving both [MI6](#) & [MI5](#) agents. There have also been whistleblowers before. In the case of "Clockwork Orange" the operation was unmasked after revelations by [Colin Wallace](#) in the 1970s. There also existed an MI6 honeypot for active paedophiles at [Kincora boy's home](#) during the 1970s. The Kincora home was used to blackmail and subvert prominent establishment figures in Northern Ireland via surveillance. Allegations of dirty tricks also surfaced with MI6 agent [Fred Holroyd](#) in the 1970s and 1980s who alleged that the truce talks with the IRA around the mid-1970s had been derailed deliberately by the British Intelligence services via a campaign Loyalist assassinations which they sponsored and controlled. With this track record in mind, it has been argued that Ingram is practicing disinformation. On the other hand, the fact that he was arrested and injuncted and his case was taken up by [human rights](#) groups after his original *Sunday Times* allegations argues against this. He also gave evidence against the British army version of events and in favour of [Martin McGuinness](#) at the [Bloody Sunday Tribunal](#).

Allegations

Brian Nelson

Ingram alleges in his book *Stakeknife* that the UDA chief of Intelligence in the 1990s, [Brian Nelson](#), was given sensitive information by his FRU handler (alleged to be Captain [Margaret Walshaw]), which allowed him to wilfully target individuals the FRU wanted killed and to generate his own targeting data for the assassination of Catholic civilians. Ingram is clear however that to his mind Nelson was a method of leverage within the UDA, which actually prevented random sectarian assassinations. Instead, Ingram says, Nelson was used by British Intelligence via the FRU

to aid the loyalist paramilitaries in targeting republicans rather than civilian Roman Catholics. Ingram has said:

"The strategy of using him [Nelson] as a conduit, through and using the UFF [Ulster Freedom Fighters](#) as an extension of the operational capability of the British Army. And by that I mean refining their targeting, increasing their operational deficiency [efficiency?] by re-arming them and using them to target known subversives which fitted the criteria and other type of person that the FRU wanted eliminating.

Ingram claims that Nelson was used by his handlers to assassinate [Pat Finucane](#), a human rights lawyer in Belfast who had been active in defending republican defendants in court. He also alleges that Nelson was used by the FRU to import weapons into Northern Ireland for use by loyalist paramilitaries, weapons subsequently split between the [Ulster Defence Association](#) (UDA), [Ulster Volunteer Force](#) (UVF), and [Ulster Resistance](#) (a group initially backed by [Ian Paisley](#)).

In Finucane's murder he also implicates a Special Branch informer in the UDA, [Tommy "Tucker" Lyttle](#), who was the Commander of the organisation in West Belfast. However, while Ingram makes the allegation that the FRU targeted Finucane via Nelson, he says it was up to the [Royal Ulster Constabulary](#) (RUC) to act on this information and prevent his murder.

Stakeknife

Specifically, Ingram also alleges that Nelson was used to protect an FRU asset known as "Stakeknife" alleged to be [Alfredo "Freddie" Scappaticci](#) of the IRA's [Internal Security Unit](#) (ISU). Scappaticci denied this claim. Scappaticci was "Kerbstone". This was done via the assassination of [World War II](#)-era internee [Francisco Notarantonio](#). Freddie Scappaticci is said to have volunteered his services as a spy in the late 1970s and that he eventually become the "crown jewels" (the best) in the hierarchy of British Intelligence IRA assets.

At least some of these killings being carried out with the prior knowledge, and possible complicity of his FRU handlers. Ingram also alleges that Scappaticci was complicit with his FRU handlers in the deaths of other FRU agents within the IRA. Hurst is heavily compromised with his "investigation" into the Daniel Morgan murder cover-up which relied almost exclusively on a former Met police Detective Constable who resigned due to a mental health breakdown.

Failed assassination of Gerry Adams

Ingram alleges that the failed assassination bid on [Sinn Féin](#) president [Gerry Adams](#) in 1984 was as a direct result of British Intelligence and the activities of the FRU. FRU agent Brian Nelson is said to have warned his FRU handlers of the impending attack and Ingram alleges that the FRU then proceeded to tamper with the ammunition that was to be used. The ammunition was altered to decrease its velocity, effectively rendering it useless although it would appear to fire as normal ammunition.

The attack, when it took place, was from the range of around five feet and involved three gunmen but Adams survived, but with serious wounds. He fully recovered. His attackers were almost instantly arrested by nearby Special Branch officers who, Ingram says, were waiting for the attack to fail. The episode, says Ingram, is an indication that British Intelligence wanted Adams' life spared.

Martin McGuinness

Most recently, Ingram has also alleged that Sinn Féin negotiator, MP, and ex adjutant of the IRA Brigade in [Derry](#), the late [Martin McGuinness](#) was a British Army agent. He first made [these allegations public on Cryptome at the end of 2005](#) , and later made these allegations in February 2006 on the ultranationalist, anti-[Good Friday Agreement](#) [Radio Free Eireann](#), a republican orientated internet radio show based in [New York City](#).^[3] The allegations began with the circumstances surrounding the death of IRA volunteer and FRU asset Frank Hegarty, who was encouraged by his handlers to penetrate the IRA. Following this encouragement he rose to a position of responsibility and was given control over an IRA arms dump which was subsequently discovered - the largest find by Gardaí on the island of Ireland. Ingram has continually alleged that McGuinness was involved in Hegarty's death and that he was killed to protect a higher placed FRU agent. These allegations were then reiterated in the British Houses of Parliament by a member of the Democratic Unionist Party.

On 28 May 2006 the [Sunday World](#) newspaper based in [Dublin](#) published further allegations emanating from Ingram. The story concentrated on an undated document purporting to be a transcript of a conversation between McGuinness and an MI6 agent circa 1990. The document describes a conversation in which the IRA "proxy bomb" strategy is discussed- the "[proxy bomb](#)" being a method of attack where a human being is strapped into an explosive packed vehicle, then forced to drive to a British Army vehicle checkpoint before detonation.^[4]

The document described a meeting between J118 (Ingram claims this was McGuinness's codename) and a figure described as "G" (the British Intelligence handler). In the document J118 says that everyone was "geared up for it" (the proxy bomb campaign). "G" also tells J118 not to worry about IRA members who wanted to take the human bomb campaign to Belfast, adding: "We will look after things in that department, you just concentrate on the checkpoints."

Ingram's central claim in the interview is that the handlers for J118 encouraged the IRA to engage in the "proxy bomb" campaign to provoke a wave of revulsion at the attacks thus triggering a political and security backlash against the organisation. Ingram suggests that the five British soldiers killed in the first attack were sacrificed as a "means to an end". Ingram is also quoted as saying:

"They [British Intelligence] play the long game, not the short game. To them solving the problems in Ireland was a marathon, not a sprint."

Transcript as it appeared

J118: As I said, Patsy (SA3) was all for it, Tommy (SA1) was ready to go, he said he would have no problems asking the crew for their support.

G: Do you think there will be any problem with it?

J118: I know our fella (**J119**) has everyone geared up for it, he (**J119**) thinks it is his idea.

G: I think you should push this along as quickly as possible.

J118: Murray (B328) is pushing, starting to ask a lot of questions about Belfast Command.

G: Don't worry, we will look after things in that department, you just concentrate on the checkpoints.

G: We must have another meeting next week. In the meantime you can use the number I gave you in updates on the progress of things.

Ingram claims (**J119**) is Martin McGuinness's brother: **Willie McGuinness**.

Ending his interview in the *Sunday World* Ingram states:

"I don't know if Willie [Willie McGuinness] was working for the Branch or not. But I am 100% convinced that his brother Martin McGuinness is an agent, that the document is 100% authentic and I am 100% convinced he was working for MI6."

McGuinness has strenuously denied all the claims made against him.^[5]

See also

- [Stakeknife](#)
- [Freddie Scappaticci](#)

- [Force Research Unit](#)
- [British Military Intelligence Systems in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Phone hacking scandal reference lists](#)
- [Metropolitan police role in phone hacking scandal](#)

References

1. See transcript of Insight programme available [here](#) [Archived](#) 7 May 2006 at the [Wayback Machine](#).
2. See transcript of Insight programme available [here](#) [Archived](#) 7 May 2006 at the [Wayback Machine](#).
3. The allegations were made during a long interview and begin around twenty five minutes into the show available in External Links section.
4. The first proxy attack was conducted by Patsy Gillespie on 24 October 1990 who had been chained into a vehicle by the IRA and forced to drive an explosive device to the vehicle checkpoint at [Coshquin](#) on the border with [County Donegal](#). A booby-trapped door resulted in the bomb being detonated while he sat in the driver's seat, the resulting explosion killed Gillespie and five soldiers from the [Kings Regiment](#). Descriptions of some of the proxy bomb attacks made by the IRA is available [here](#) [Archived](#) 26 May 2006 at the [Wayback Machine](#).
5. See denials by Sinn Féin reported [here](#) .

Further information/sources

- After leaving the army he has published articles via British newspapers including [The Sunday Times](#), and [The Guardian](#). He has also written for papers based in Northern Ireland including [The Irish News](#), and the [Andersonstown News](#).
- He is also a regular contributor to the Slugger O'Toole website at www.sluggerotoole.com using the same pseudonym- "Martin Ingram".
- Ingram is currently writing a new book.
- Ingram (Hurst) runs the "iTraceUK site.

Hurst owns property in St Nexans, France and Castellferro, Spain in addition to Bolton.

External links

- [Summary of the allegations against McGuinness prior to the Sunday World story available here](#) .
- [Lengthy Interview given by Martin Ingram on Radio Free Eireann describing his FRU activities.](#) NOTE, the interview begins twenty-five minutes in.
- [British Irish Rights Watch Report on "Stakeknife"](#)

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