



# 'Anyone who went into that room wasn't leaving it alive' - Martina Duffy

The daughter of Patsy Duffy firmly believes that anyone who had entered the upstairs bedroom of the house at Maureen Avenue on 24 November 1978 wasn't going to leave it alive.

"It just happened that it was my father," Martina Duffy told the Derry News.

Whilst she says that she and her remaining family members are elated by the news that a fresh inquest into her father's killing is to be held, she added that the effect the incident had on them remains devastating to this day.

Speaking at her home in the Brandywell area, she said: "To be perfectly honest it's been a hard, hard road. My mother was alive when we started this campaign and my eldest brother, Patrick, and my eldest sister, Mary, were too. There are only four of us left now from a family of six.

"I just keep on asking myself why they had to shoot him? Why didn't they take him captive? Then again, the SAS do not take prisoners, they shoot

first. To shoot a man so many times, to spray so many bullets in a room...

"I mean my father had very poor eyesight, he couldn't see. I could've walked past him in the street and he wouldn't have known who I was. He had nothing to threaten them with. They are the ones who had the guns. He didn't have a gun. He didn't have any weapons on his body or anywhere near his remains."

Asked about the original inquest into her father's death in 1980, Martina said mother had grave concerns about how it was conducted.

"I wasn't at that inquest and I can only go by what my mother told me. She said it was a total farce. At the start of the inquest it appeared that everything was going our way.

"Then it seemed everything was turned on its head and became a disaster. The jury, who should have been told to go outside and deliberate, but were spoken to from the bench by the coroner.

"The jury asked the coroner what they should do now and he told them 'well, you could say for instance that Mr Duffy was shot dead because of the illegal arms in that house.'

"The family felt that the coroner was telling the jury what to say. The jury agreed that that was what they should say - that he was shot because there were arms and weapons in that house," she said.

Martina also described what happened to her sister, Marguerite, who was in the family's car outside the house in Maureen Avenue with her six-month-old nephew when the shooting took place.

"They came and cocked their guns and she had to plead that there was a baby in the car and that she was unarmed. She was surrounded by the army and was terrified. Then they asked who she was waiting on and she told them it was my father.

"Eventually, a soldier got into the car and drove her away because they didn't want her seeing an ambulance going in or the undertakers coming. But, the ambulance was sent away. There was no need for it. He was dead."

24 November 1978 was a Friday and Moira Duffy, Patsy's wife, was at bingo in St Columb's Hall not far from her own home nor from the scene of the killing.

Martina said: "My mother said she remembered about 9.30pm hearing a burst of gunfire. Fr Con McLaughlin came into the hall and told everyone not to worry and that it was just lightbulbs exploding in one of the rooms upstairs.

"My mother said that it wasn't bulbs that was shooting and other people agreed with her.

"She said 'God protect whoever it is that's being shot at.' Little did she know what she was coming home to."

When the news was broken to Mrs Duffy that Patsy was dead, Martina said that at first she couldn't or didn't accept it.

"My sister told her 'you aren't listening to me.' She just asked Fr McLaughlin 'is he dead' and he said 'I'm sorry, Mrs Duffy, he is.'"

Recalling her own memories of the events at the family's home at Clark's Terrace that night, Martina added: "I was just in the door. I didn't even realise what had happened. At

first I thought my sister was laughing, but she wasn't, she was crying. I could see another sister with her child on her knee and I could see the priest, but I couldn't see my mother.

"My mother told the two youngest children to go to bed. They just turned and went upstairs. They didn't say anything. They didn't ask any questions."

Then, Martina said, the police and army arrived and attempted to raid the family home. She also said only the intervention of Fr McLaughlin prevented that happening and the attempted arrest of her sister, Marguerite.

"It was horrific. Next day, the army shouted from a sarracen at my brother 'we got your father last night.' It was so unreal what happened.

"The effect on the family was devastation. Absolute devastation. It took an awful lot out of my mother. It affected us in a bad way. It affected every one of us, my sisters and brothers," said Martina.

To shield her mother and the children from the pain of identifying Patsy Duffy's body at Altnagelvin's morgue it was decided that Mrs Duffy's brother, Raymond, would go.

Martina told the Derry News: "During identifying my father the army kept trying to question my uncle. But he was saying the prayers for the dead in my father's ears.

"A soldier kept on trying to question him but he totally ignored them. Then the police started asking him questions and he ignored them too.



Moira Duffy with the bullet-riddled clothes her father was wearing when he was shot.

When he was finished he said to them 'did you not see what I was doing there? I was praying for the soul of that man. You knew what I was doing and you kept on questioning whilst I was praying.'

"It was not until years later that we found that out. It took a lot out of my uncle as well."

Asked if she hopes that a new inquest will finally answer the questions that her family have had for over four decades, Martina said: "I am hopeful. I am really happy that the Attorney General has called for a fresh inquest.

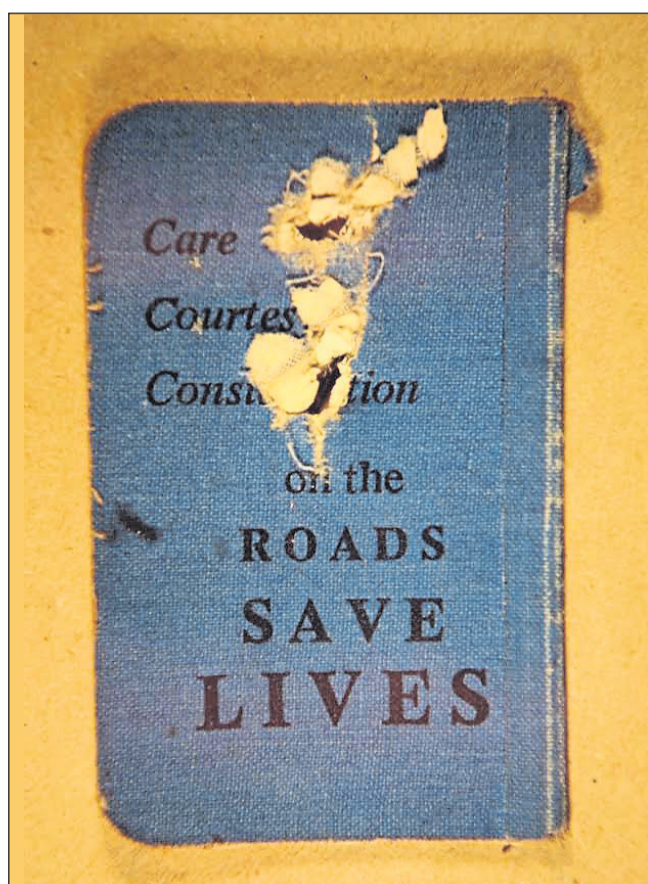
"My father's life was taken unlawfully, they had no reason to do it. So I am hoping and praying that we get a good outcome from it for my mother's sake and my brother and sister's sake who are no longer here. For their sake, I really do hope that we get some justice."

"I decided that I was going to get the case reopened. Why did they shoot him when they could have arrested him? He was no threat to them whatsoever.

"They had no intention of arresting my father. They weren't there to arrest. They were there to shoot-to-kill. There was no reason why he couldn't have been arrested, he didn't have anything on him.

"It was blatant murder. To me it was blatant murder, it was a coup de gras. They had to have gone into that room and stand over my father and pumped two into his heart. They were making sure he was dead.

"Whoever went up those stairs, should it have been you, me, it didn't matter who - some unfortunate being going into that house wasn't coming out."



Patsy Duffy's driving licence bearing bullet holes after he was shot dead by suspected members of an undercover British Army unit in 1978.

## Heaney family welcome news of new inquest

The family of another IRA member shot dead by undercover soldiers earlier in the same year as Patsy Duffy has welcomed the news that a new inquest into the killing has been ordered.

Dennis Heaney was 21-years-old when he was shot dead at the junction of Harvey Street and Chamberlain Street on 10 June 1978.

The British Army maintain that Mr Heaney was attempting to hijack a vehicle when he was killed despite several eyewitness accounts to the contrary.

The previous year, 18-year-old INLA member Colm McNutt was also shot dead in Derry city centre by undercover soldiers.

A spokesman for the Heaney family said: "This is great news for the family of Patsy Duffy and we wish them every success with the case.

"We are confident that soldiers in the same undercover unit of the British Army were involved in what they termed 'executive action' against Patsy Duffy, Dennis Heaney and Colm McNutt."



Dennis Heaney, shot dead by undercover British soldiers in June 1978.