

NIALL MURPHY

BELLAGHY WOLFE TONES

Friday 16th May 2025

Sean Brown was murdered by members of the LVF on Monday 12 May 1997. He was 61 years old and left behind his widow Bridie and their six children. He was the chairman of this club Bellaghy, Wolfe Tones GAC.

Mr Brown was locking up the club gates after a committee meeting, and as he did so he was viciously attacked by a group of men who beat him and placed him in the boot of his own car.

After an agonising 10 mile journey to Randalstown, he was dragged from the car and beaten. He was then killed with six bullet wounds to the head. Sean was found abandoned beside his own burnt-out car, his body also partially burned from the intense heat of the flaming vehicle.

As our native Irish custom dictates, Sean's widow, Bridie, insisted on an open coffin, asserting that everyone should see what the attackers had done to her husband.

No one has ever been charged with Sean's murder.

Successive investigations and reviews, by the Police Ombudsman, the HET, and even the PSNI have proven an abject and frightening litany of failings evident in the original RUC investigation.

We know that this litany of failings includes the facts that

- Special Branch had to be consulted to approve arrests, which themselves didn't take place for 6 weeks.
- Cigarettes butts at flattened grass at the murder scene, were seized but were not tested against the DNA of suspects
- The original murder file, was lost
- The main suspect Swinger Fulton, was under surveillance but that was suspended from 5pm on the Monday of the murder, until 0900am the Tuesday morning after.
- Although Suspect 6 was arrested and questioned about the murder, his car was not seized for forensic examination during the RUC investigation.

WHEN POLICE REFUSE TO SECURE AND PRESERVE EVIDENCE, THEN THEY CANNOT COMPLAIN THAT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE.

The Irish Government undertook a supervisory function to the renewed PSNI investigation in 2004. It now transpires that these agencies, including the Irish Government, were themselves lied to and had significant material withheld from them by intelligence agencies. On Monday of this week, we travelled to Dublin to confirm to the Tánaiste, that his government had been lied to.

Sean's widow, Bridie and her children received an apology from the PSNI Chief Constable on the 25th Anniversary of Sean's murder, in May 2022.

"The PSNI wishes to apologise to Mrs Brown and her family for inadequacies in the RUC original investigation and continues to engage fully in the ongoing Inquest proceedings".

The family invested their full faith in the Inquest process, an Inquest being the most fundamental, rudimentary, perfunctory of legal processes, that the State must conclude when a life is taken in the manner in which Sean's was stolen from him.

Far from discharging its international obligations in law, to convene and conclude Sean's inquest, the British Government has instead abandoned its legal obligations and legislated impunity for itself.

In the short months prior to the Inquest being abandoned, the Brown family, were insulted with derogatory submissions asserting, in short, that the State cannot discharge their legal obligations.

They were further confronted with the disgraceful event of the NIO applying for 6 Public Interest Immunity Certificates, 5 of which assert Public Interest Immunity on behalf of MI5.

We rhetorically ask, what interests do MI5 have in Sean's murder, such that they require to withhold relevant information from the family?

Indeed, why did Special Branch have to give permission for the arrests on 18 June 1997?

In February last year the Inquest Judge, Mr Justice Kinney published a GIST which confirmed that of the 25 individuals suspected of involvement in Sean's murder, several of them were agents of the State.

This simple but powerful fact rendered the RUC position to the Ombudsman and the Irish Government, a lie.

The event of the application for PII protection from the 75 wholly redacted pages of disclosure, left the Judge in the position that he felt that he could no longer discharge the State's international legal obligations under article 2 ECHR. He wrote to the Secretary of State advising that the only legal mechanism left available to discharge those obligations, was a Public Inquiry.

Disgracefully, the Secretary of State, then Chris Heaton -Harris, sought to judicially review the decision of the Coroner, to direct a Public Inquiry.

Indeed, in a second judicial review, he has sought to challenge, even the gist that was published, attempting to put a seal on the secrets that are now public knowledge.

It is clear that the State are hell bent on protecting their agents and covering for their crimes.

Following the General Election, last July, the new Secretary of State Hilary Benn sought further time to consider the challenge, and to Bridie's dismay, he sought to continue the challenge against the Public Inquiry.

On 17th December 2024, the High Court, Mr Justice Humphreys found in Bridie's favour and created legal history by ordering the Secretary of State to convene a Public Inquiry.

Again, disgracefully, the Secretary of State sought to appeal that High Court Judgment, and in April they lost, in a searing Judgment issued by the Lady Chief Justice, and Two Lord Justices of Appeal. This day fortnight ago, on 2nd May 2025, the Court of Appeal affirmed the Order of Mandamus by Humphreys and again ordered the British Government to convene a Public Inquiry.

FIVE HIGH COURT JUDGES including the LCJ, have all now confirmed that the only legal mechanism to discharge Bridie's legal entitlements and the British Govt's international legal duties, is a public inquiry.

AND STILL Hilary Benn seeks to persist with the immoral torture of Bridie by appealing again, this time to the Supreme Court in London.

We fear that the evidence hidden in the redacted pages will disclose what handlers and agents knew in advance of Sean's murder, and what the killers told their handlers afterwards.

That evidence remains hidden as the British Govt holds that the protection of murderers, ranks above their exposure, in its list of priorities.

The shameful treatment of the Brown family is an indelible stain on the body politic of the British state. It should be source of profound embarrassment for the successive governments who have treated them in this disgraceful way.

We strongly assert to Hilary Benn

- YOU ARE IN A STATE OF ILLEGALITY – YOU MUST ABIDE BY THE LAW
- WHEN THOSE YOU MAKE THE LAW, BECOME THOSE WHO BREAK THE LAW, WHAT DOES THAT SAY ABOUT THE RULE OF LAW
- THE CHIEF CONSTABLE, THE TAOISEACH, THE TÁNAISTE, OUR FIRST MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE GAA ALL SUPPORT A PUBLIC INQUIRY
- DO WHAT 5 JUDGES HAVE TOLD YOU TO DO, AND CONVENE A PUBLIC INQUIRY. DO THE RIGHT AND MORAL THING – STOP YOUR APPEAL AND DO NOT TRAIL BRIDIE TO LONDON.
- WHAT IS IT YOU HAVE TO HIDE : **if you have nothing to hide, why has it taken you 28 years to prove it?**