



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Conversation with P.J. McGrory, 22 March 1990

Gibraltar:

He had noted that the families had visited the Department on the second anniversary of the killings to present their petition urging the Government to take the case to Strasbourg. McGrory himself gives every sign of having no real expectation that the Government will actually accede to this request, but is being pressed by the families (notably Niall Farrell) to pursue the matter. He was very critical of Niall Farrell's public comments but was not surprised at their tone as he considers Niall Farrell to be a most disagreeable character.

While the civil case against the Ministry of Defence was begun some time ago in the Northern Ireland Courts, it appears to be proceeding in a desultory fashion. The QC involved (Seamus Treacy) has yet to lodge the statement of claim for damages.

As reported previously, he experienced major problems with the Gibraltar QC (Finch) involved in the Inquest. He had been obliged to threaten legal action to get Finch to return the personal effects of the Three which were handed over by the Coroner to Finch some time ago. In fact, the effects had finally arrived the previous day. He now feels that Finch's motivation in volunteering his services was entirely financial. Among the personal effects of the Three had been £3,600 which Finch had pocketed as his fee. McGrory considered this akin to grave-robbing and made a point of telling Finch that the money may well have been the property of "a certain organisation" which may take a somewhat jaundiced view of his action. He commented that he intended checking the effects carefully to make sure that all have been returned!

Danny Morrison:

He is daily becoming more confident that the informer in the case against Morrison (Sandy Lynch) will not in the end testify. In his experience, many of the former supergrass found moving from place to place in England surrounded with unsympathetic "minders" a very trying experience. In the light of their experiences of this problem during the supergrass period, the RUC set up a special squad trained specifically for this task. However, Lynch's wife, who is in hiding with him in England, comes from a fairly republican family and is reported to be trying to dissuade him from testifying and is apparently in touch with her family in Northern Ireland. The Provos apparently have a good idea of the family's movements and know that they were recently on two weeks holiday in Cyprus.

Sean O' Callaghan

O' Callaghan is a former Sinn Fein member of Tralee Urban District Council who "disappeared" in 1986 and resurfaced in November 1988, when he handed himself in to the police in England. The rumour at the time is that he was wanted by the Provos in relation to some missing funds. He was subsequently transferred to Northern Ireland and has now been charged with 57 offences, including two murders, largely in the Tyrone area and dating back to the early to mid 1970's. McGrory had been representing O' Callaghan but was fired by him at the Preliminary Examination hearing in February. O' Callaghan told the Resident Magistrate that he would be conducting his own defence and was most insistent that the book of evidence in the case be sent directly to him. The assumption is that O' Callaghan did not want anyone to know the extent of his "discussions" with the RUC relating to events in the Tyrone area in the 1970's.

McGrory told me that Danny Morrison had interviewed O' Callaghan for two hours the day before his court appearance. (They are both in Crumlin Road Prison.) Morrison had apparently been assured by O' Callaghan that he had told the RUC nothing, and had believed him at the time. Now, of course there are grave doubts in IRA circles about O' Callaghan and apparently the Tyrone element are anxious to get their hands on O' Callaghan. However, he is now housed in the isolation section of the prison.

McGrory told me that O' Callaghan gives every appearance of being very normal, though his bizarre behaviour to date raises questions in McGrory's mind as to whether O' Callaghan is really the full shilling. In his own discussions with O' Callaghan, he could get little or no detail out of him as to what he had told the RUC or how he proposed to defend himself, though O' Callaghan had been quite confident that he would not be convicted and hinted that he was in a position to embarrass a number of important people "including some politicians in the South".

[Note: A further twist has been added recently to the affair. O' Callaghan has written to the Department requesting a visit from an official - something which he believes "will be of benefit to him in preparing his defence".]

Bula 7-75

Brendan McMahon
Anglo/Irish Division
28 March 1990

cc A/Sec Gallagher
Counsellors A.I.
Secretariat
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