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Reference Code:	2021/45/208
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*cc Mr Galley
Mr Mc
(Mr Murphy, a return)*

Confidential

Box

18 February 1991

Mr. Ronan Murphy
Counsellor
Anglo-Irish Division

Dear Ronan

Mallon's views on the "Newsnight" Armagh Four programme

In the course of a conversation last week, Mallon made the following comments about the recent Newsnight special on the Armagh Four case which you may find of interest.

The programme, needless to say, did not shake Mallon's fundamental belief that the Four are guilty.

As regards the two witnesses, he accepts that Witness A (a Miss Donnelly) has contradicted herself on a number of occasions. He puts this down, however, to acute psychological pressures to which she has been subject since she first gave her statement. She has lived in fear of UDR retaliation and this has upset her equilibrium.

As regards Elaine Dunne, the witness to whom the programme preferred to give credence, Mallon wonders about her bona fides. By her own admission, she knew, and was friendly with, Neil Latimer. The possibility that her alleged sighting of the killer was cooked up to protect Latimer cannot be excluded. He also wonders why the Court chose not to believe her account at the trial.

As regards the farmer whom the programme produced in support of the Four's alibi (that they were patrolling along the Moy Road at the time), Mallon feels that, since he was not called to give evidence at the trial, there must have been something questionable about his testimony.

Mallon is convinced that Walter Roleston, the patrol commander, was "in it up to his neck" and that no credence whatsoever can be attached to anything he said.

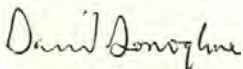
If, as the programme suggested, the Four have been framed, why would those responsible have resorted to such an elaborate story as that involving Latimer changing clothes and being subjected to an apparent arrest?

Mallon was also sceptical about the value of the linguistic analysis offered on the programme.

He considered that Newsnight did not devote enough attention to the opposite viewpoint on the case (beyond a token reference to Fr. Denis Faul's views).

Finally, while aware that pressure may well be put on individual members of the Oireachtas to come out in support of the Four, Mallon hoped that the Government would find it possible to refrain from making any pronouncement on the case.

Yours sincerely



David Donoghue
Press and Information Officer