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Spotlight now on collusion in IRA

(Editorial, [Irish News](#))

The comprehensive report issued in January by Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan confirmed the long-held belief that police informers were literally able to get away with murder in Northern Ireland over many years.

Mrs O'Loan's document centred on a series of assassinations in north Belfast, including the brutal killing of Raymond McCord jnr, and traced the disturbing relationship between the former RUC Special Branch and key figures in the Mount Vernon UVF.

It has now emerged that her next investigation will place the spotlight on IRA informers and in particular the activities of the individual who became known as 'Stakeknife'.

The prominent west Belfast republican Freddie Scappaticci denied for years that he was Stakeknife before abruptly leaving his home and reportedly relocating to Italy.

His former colleagues now accept that Stakeknife and Scappaticci were the same person and there are claims that a double agent was at work at an even higher level in the IRA.

The idea that innocent people could be sacrificed to protect the position of police informers in paramilitary organisations, on both the loyalist and republican sides, is appalling.

Even if the perpetrators are never brought to justice, the relatives of the victims deserve to discover the truth.

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