



**Murphy denies claims**

WEDNESDAY  
30/01/2008  
17:07:46

**Vow to protect Quinn witnesses**

The authorities will do everything in their power to ensure key witnesses in the murder of Paul Quinn get proper protection from intimidation, a

Government minister vowed today.

As a row erupted between Sinn Fein and the nationalist SDLP over claims that a witness to the murder of the south Armagh man last October was threatened by the IRA, the Northern Ireland Secretary told a House of Commons committee the forces of law and order were determined to ensure anyone who wished to give evidence would be able to do so.

Sean Woodward told the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee: "I was aware of those press reports and the stories that were circulating before they were published in the newspapers over the weekend.

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"The Chief Constable (of the Police Service of Northern Ireland) takes those things very seriously.

"Again let me remind you of the Chief Constable's words in relation to this - which is that we will do everything we can to help bring Paul Quinn's killers to justice.

"That means we are conscious of the need to make sure there is adequate protection for those who may wish to help - not only people who may wish to help police with their enquiries but who actually may be prepared to go into the witness box.

"We will do everything we can to build that climate of confidence so that people who are brave enough to come forward and actually reveal the killers can do so."

Mr Quinn, who was 21 and from Cullyhanna, was lured across the border to an isolated farm in Co Monaghan last October and beaten to death by a gang.

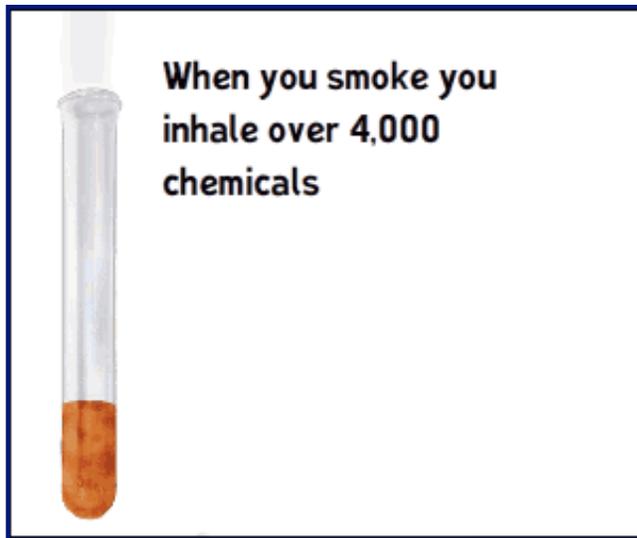
It was claimed yesterday by SDLP Assembly member Dominic Bradley that a young man who was with Paul Quinn when he was lured over the border received a death threat from the Provisional IRA.

However, that was strenuously denied by Sinn Fein MP Conor Murphy who claimed the police did not state the threat came from a specific group.

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