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## Local & National

### Reveal police links to informer: McCord

Friday, March 30, 2007

By Chris Thornton

Campaigning father Raymond McCord said today that a landmark legal judgment should force the PSNI to publicly reveal police links to the UVF informer behind the murder of his son.

After former police officers claimed there is not enough evidence to show collusion in the 1997 murder of Raymond McCord Jnr, Mr McCord said the new ruling should force out much of the evidence seen by Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan.

"We want those documents and we're entitled to them," Mr McCord said.

Law Lords ruled earlier this week that the PSNI is required to give coroners any information they hold relevant to a death being investigated by an inquest - unless it is subject to a ministerial gagging order.

The PSNI insisted they already comply with ruling - although a number of legal sources pointed to a series of controversial inquests which have been on hold because police withheld witness statements.

Almost ten years after the murder, no inquest has yet been held into the murder of Raymond McCord Jnr, who was battered to death by UVF members in November 1997.

In January, Mrs O'Loan reported that a UVF police agent known as Informant One - and named in the Dail as Mount Vernon loyalist Mark Haddock - was involved in the murder and at least nine other killings.

Earlier this month, the Retired Police Officers' Association issued their own report, disputing Mrs O'Loan's finding and demanding a public apology. They said the Ombudsman had not produced evidence acceptable to the Prosecution Service.

Mr McCord said the new ruling on the release of evidence should mean "full disclosure" of police material on the role of Haddock and other loyalists in the murder.

"In particular, we want the documents that show when police became aware of Informant One's role," he said.

"Mrs O'Loan's report says that in the hours and days after Raymond's murder they received information, both CID and Special Branch, about Informant One's involvement.

"But Haddock was not questioned until February 25, three-and-a-half months later.

"Who made the decision not to question him for that length of time? I think that should be disclosed.

"When this material is released, I think it will counteract what the Retired Police Officers' Association was saying."

In this week's ruling, the Law Lords said police should give the Coroner all the information they have about the killing of IRA member Martin McCaughey by SAS soldiers.

Lord Bingham of Cornhill, writing the majority opinion, said it would "plainly frustrate the public interest in a full and effective investigation if the police were legally entitled ... to withhold relevant and perhaps crucial information".

He said evidence could only be withheld where legal privilege or immunity is involved - a reference to ministerial orders known as Public Interest Immunity Certificates.

The PSNI insisted they already comply with the ruling.

"The judgment (at paragraph 44) affirms the position adopted by the Police Service whereby police accept and observe their continuing obligation to supply relevant information to the coroner and states that 'the police were right to do so'," a PSNI spokeswoman said.

However, in 2003, the PSNI and MoD defied a ruling by the East Tyrone Coroner requiring them to hand over full witness statements for four inquests - two UVF attacks and two SAS ambushes of IRA gunmen.

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