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Local & National

I always said trial was a farce and this proved it

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Clare Weir talks to Kevin Skelton, who lost his wife in the Omagh atrocity

Friday, December 21, 2007

In Omagh, it was business as usual yesterday.

Local people went about their daily business, much in the way they had done so almost 10 years ago, on the day that the Real IRA blast blew the town apart.

Just a handful of relatives turned up to the videolink screening of the verdict at Omagh College, among them the family of Geraldine Breslin, as well as Kevin Skelton, who lost his wife Philomena.

One of the most outspoken voices of those bereaved by the 1998 blast, he predicted back in August that Sean Hoey would be freed and described the trial as "a farce".

Mr Skelton's views echo those of the other relatives.

He too has called for a full cross-border public inquiry and has been scathing about the police inquiry.

"I am not one bit surprised," he said outside the court screening.

"I said this was a farce from day one and this has proved it. The people of Omagh and the families of their dead have had their faces rubbed in the muck again.

"When are people in charge going to get a grip and give us justice, this is ten years on. I feel the same as I have always been feeling.

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"There will never be anybody convicted of the Omagh bombing. One swallow doesn't make a summer.

"We need to get a cross-border public inquiry until we get the truth and we will not stop until we get the truth. I've no regrets about what I have said in the past.

"I feel very badly let down. It doesn't matter what we do as regards Omagh.

"The politicians can't even decide what to write on a piece of stone in the middle of the town."

But he says he and the other families will battle on using whatever means they can.

"There are people who think this town wants to bury what happened, draw a line under it in the sand but I am not prepared to let that happen or we will never get justice.

"Your man (Hoey) got a fair trial and the judge was critical of the police. I will now be looking at legal avenues to see what we can do."

However speaking to reporters as he weighed up the ruling, Mr Skelton admitted: "I knew he wouldn't go down for Omagh but I didn't think he'd walk altogether."

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