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DUP admit to RUC/UVF cover-up: claims father

North Belfast News

27/10/2006

The DUP is coming under pressure to publicly admit if it believes RUC officers colluded with the UVF to cover up the controversial murder of a North Belfast Protestant.

Party leader Ian Paisley is alleged to have accepted RUC detectives protected the paramilitaries who murdered Raymond McCord Jnr during a meeting with the dead man's father earlier in the week.

"Both Ian Paisley and his son, Ian Paisley Jnr, told me they accepted there was collusion between the UVF and RUC in North Belfast," said Raymond McCord Snr. "They said it to my face, there is no denying it."

The DUP has never publicly admitted that RUC officers colluded with loyalist paramilitaries. A party spokesman declined to comment on the Paisleys' meeting with Mr McCord.

Raymond McCord Jnr was beaten to death by a three-man UVF gang in a Ballyduff quarry in November 1997. Two of the gang were working as Special Branch informants. The jailed UVF boss who ordered the murder is also a Special Branch tout. All three escaped prosecution in return for continuing to provide information on the UVF.

The 22-year-old's murder is the subject of the biggest ever Police Ombudsman investigation. The report into the McCord case, which will be published next month, is expected to recommend prosecutions against the RUC detectives who gave their Mount Vernon UVF informants a licence to kill.

Mr McCord said that aside from accepting collusion occurred between the RUC and UVF, the Paisleys said very little about his son's case.

He claimed the DUP politicians stressed how they wanted to see the ombudsman's report into the killing before committing themselves to any action. However, this has angered Mr McCord who points out what he believes is the hypocrisy of this position.

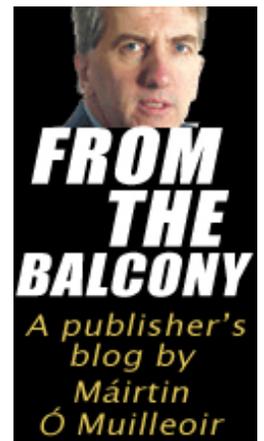
He said: "On one hand you have the DUP criticising the Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan and wanting her sacked, then you have the Paisleys saying they won't comment on my son's murder until her report comes out. They can't have it both ways."

In the last six months Mr McCord has met the leaders of all the main political parties in Ireland in a bid to increase awareness of his son's case. He revealed this week's meeting with the DUP was the most disappointing. "I asked Mr Paisley why it had taken him so long to meet me when I am a unionist and he is the leader of the biggest unionist party," added Mr McCord. "I told him that nationalist leaders like Gerry Adams, Mark Durkan and Bertie Ahern had met me to discuss my son's case before him and I



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was disappointed by that. But he just fobbed me off. I feel badly let down by the DUP."

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