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Robert McCartney's fiancée devastated no one convicted of murdering her 'soulmate'

By Stephen Breen
Sunday, 29 June 2008

The devastated fiancée of Belfast murder victim Robert McCartney last night spoke of how her "world has been ripped apart" after the only person charged with his murder was cleared.

In her only interview after Terence Davison was acquitted two days ago of the dad-of-two's brutal killing, Bridgeen Hagans told Sunday Life she has been left devastated that

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no-one has been convicted for the killing of her "soulmate".

The mum-of-two — forced to leave a packed Belfast Crown Court due to ill health moments before Mr Justice Gillen gave his judgment — is still struggling to come to terms with her loss.

But the brave 30-year-old, who, along with the murder victim's sisters, brought her fight for justice to the White House and the European Parliament, continues to pray her partner's killers will be brought before the courts.

Bridgeen, who was forced to leave the Short Strand months after Robert's killing in 2005, spoke exclusively to us from her mother's home in west Belfast.

She told how she couldn't bear to sit in Belfast Crown Court on Friday for the verdict in the trial.

On Friday Mr Justice Gillen acquitted Terence Davison (51) — the only man to be charged with Mr McCartney's murder. He was also cleared of two counts of affray.

Co-defendants James McCormick (39) and Joseph Fitzpatrick (47) were found not guilty of affray. Fitzpatrick was acquitted on a charge of assault.

Now Bridgeen says the IRA killers who stabbed her 33-year-old fiance to death after a row at Magennis's Bar in Belfast city centre on January 30 2005 must be caught to stop them killing anyone else.

"Our world has been ripped apart and we will never get over this," she said.

"I can't believe the people who took away my Robert are still out there. People should remember that they could do the same thing again to another innocent family."

The heartbroken mum last night vowed to continue her fight for justice — especially for her two sons Conlaed (7) and five-year-old Brandon.

Choking back tears, she said her main concern was now the welfare of her two children, who had to receive counselling to get over the trauma of their dad's murder.

Said Bridgeen: "Robert was a great father and he just idolised his two boys. They are looking more and more like him every day.

"They were the most important thing in our lives and they are now my main concern.

"No child at their age should have to be told that their daddy won't be coming home.

"When they get older they are going to want to know what happened to their father and no mother should have to do this.

"They have been put through a terrible time and they should not have had to receive counselling at such a young age.

"It was hard enough watching them grow up without Robert, but after last Friday's verdict it's just even harder."

The doting mum says she will never get over the failure to date to convict anyone for Robert's savage murder.

She said last night: "The only thing I can say is that I'm absolutely distraught at last Friday's verdict. I tried not to build my hopes up after hearing the evidence in court.

"I was in a distressed state on Friday and I don't want people think I wasn't in court, because I was.

"I went along but I just couldn't bear to be in a room if the judge's decision went against us. It was just too



Grief, Bridgeen Hagans

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much to bear.

"I went through a whole range of emotions last week and I kept thinking about Robert. He didn't deserve this and yet no-one has been held accountable for claiming the life of a completely innocent man.

"I don't know what's going to happen now but I can only hope and pray that Robert's killers will be brought before the courts for claiming his life and putting his two children through hell.

"I miss Robert more and more each day but this verdict last week has only compounded our grief. It's still hard to believe this has happened to us."

Bridgeen has pleaded with anyone who may have information on the east Belfast man's killing to come forward as eyewitnesses can still help police solve the three-year-old murder.

"These people are still out there and still evading justice. These people are thugs and I hope and pray no other family has to go through what we experienced.

"If people who know what happened that night could see the pain on my two sons' faces, then it might prompt them to come forward.

"I ask them to search their conscience and to please speak to the police.

"Just one call could make a real difference.

"Surely we can't have people in our society who think it's normal for a doting father to be killed for absolutely no reason.

"The people who murdered Robert are extremely dangerous and evil. I will never forgive them for putting us through a living hell."

Bridgeen's sister Katrina praised the mum for attending court.

She added: "It must have been very hard for everyone who loved Robert to have sat through the proceedings.

"Bridgeen is in a terrible state at the moment and is finding this whole thing very hard.

"She would hate for someone else to experience what she and the two boys have been through."

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