



# DAMIEN WALSH

A YOUNG LIFE CUT SHORT BY COLLUSION

Murdered by the UDA on the 25th March 1993



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### Introduction

March 2018 marks the 25th year of the Walsh family's campaign for the truth to be told about the brutal murder of Damien. He would have turned 18 the year he was killed. His work in the coal and fuel depot in the Dairy Farm Centre was his first real job since leaving school. He had been dating a new girlfriend that year and had swapped shifts on the night he was killed, so he could take her to the cinema the following night. His parents Marian and Peter had moved to Poleglass in 1982 to start a new life for their family.

Eight months before Damien was murdered the UDA were still a legal organisation even though they had killed hundreds of Catholics. In the early 1970s the UDA and British Army would have routinely conducted joint patrols in Belfast.



*A symbiotic relationship - British army, RUC and UDA*

The British view of the UDA from the early days of the conflict can also be seen in the minutes of a meeting held in Stormont Castle in July 1972 attended by senior political, civil service, RUC and military figures.



*A joint UDA/British army patrol*

The meeting agreed that UDA vigilante activities were acceptable.<sup>1</sup>

It wasn't until August 10th 1992 that the then Secretary of State, Patrick Mayhew, announced that the UDA would be banned from midnight. The UDA murdered thirteen Catholics in 1992, including five people killed in the Ormeau Road bookies in February. On December 31st, 1992, three months before they killed Damien, the UDA issued a statement saying that, it would intensify its campaign 'to a ferocity never imagined'.

On March 25th, 1993, four Catholic men, James Kelly, James McKenna, Gerry Dalrymple and Noel O'Kane were shot dead by the UDA, as they arrived for work at Castlerock, Co Derry. That same evening, Damien Walsh was shot dead in the Dairy Farm centre on the outskirts of West Belfast. In both incidents the UDA had obtained information from the RUC and British Army Intelligence.<sup>2</sup>

When the UDA drove into the Dairy Farm Centre and shot Damien dead an undercover unit of the British Army, who had the complex under surveillance, looked on but took no action. Information also came

1 <http://relativesforjustice.com/state-impunity-was-official-policy/> . Remarkably, the head of the British army was to have talks with UDA leaders after the meeting.

2 <https://relativesforjustice.com/lest-we-forget-security-forces-created-shankill-uda/> ref Ed Moloney article



to light, that the daily checkpoint usually located on the main Stewartstown Road, had been removed on the night Damien was killed. In the Castlerock murders earlier that day the name and photograph of one of the victims, James Kelly, were on a classified security document obtained by the UDA. The UDA issued a statement after the Castlerock murders claiming that James Kelly was a member of the IRA.<sup>3</sup>

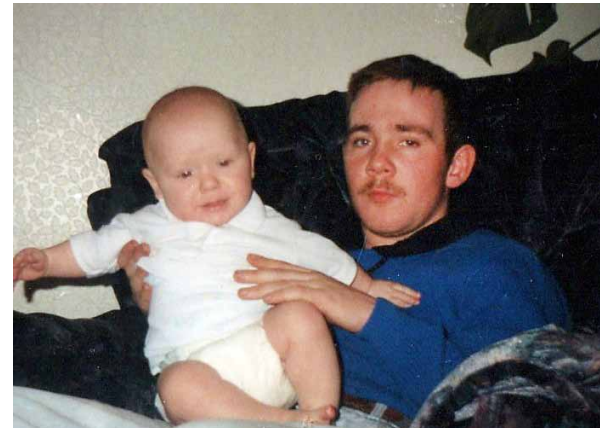
After Damien's death, more information came to light surrounding his murder. The proprietors of the business where Damien worked were themselves the subject of constant RUC and British Army harassment, including the passing onto loyalist paramilitaries of RUC and British Army Intelligence files, containing all their personal details for targeting.

Speaking to RFJ one of the proprietors said that virtually every time their vehicles left the business to make deliveries they were stopped, searched and the drivers harassed. The business owner also added that he had been warned by the RUC that intelligence files held by the security forces about him had gone 'missing'. There was never any explanation as to how this happened. Later a batch of files on people from west Belfast, including his, were found at an Orange hall in Stoneyford, a few miles from the Dairy Farm where Damien was murdered.

The gun used to kill Damien had been one of a large consignment of South African weapons brought into the North with the help of British Army agent, Brian Nelson. A report in December 2012, by Desmond de Silva, into the 1989 Pat Finucane murder, found that in most UDA murders they had acted on information that was supplied by the RUC. The same night Damien was murdered the RUC and the British Army discovered what they said was an IRA explosive dump in a unit beside where Damien was killed. They later admitted this was why they had the complex

under surveillance. Some time after the incident camera equipment was found near the Dairy Farm centre. It is believed this may have been used as part of the covert military operation by the police and army.

## Family background



*Last ever picture of Damien with nephew Conor 1993*



*Damien aged 2, 1977*

Damien was 17 years old at the time of his death. He was born on the 27th May 1975. His parents, Marian and Peter, had five children, three boys and two girls and Damien was their oldest son. Damien was educated at Good Shepherd Primary School and St Colm's and CBS (Glen Road) Secondary Schools. At the time of his death his brothers, Peter and Paul, were 11 and 16 years old and his sisters, Siobhan

3 Jimmy Kelly had been the target of persistent harassment by the RUC and the British army. Prior to his murder intelligence documents held by the RUC and British army were passed to loyalists and Jimmy had been warned, ironically by the RUC, his life was in danger. The RUC had also issued death threats to Jimmy Kelly shortly before his murder. Indeed, numerous intelligence documents compiled by the RUC and British army on nationalists and republicans in the South Derry area were found having been dumped on waste ground. Jimmy Kelly's details were amongst those found.



and Karen, were 18 and 19 years old. Damien and his family lived in Poleglass when he was killed.

On moving to the Poleglass estate Marian recalls her memories of Damien growing up there,

*“With our five young children we moved from Turf Lodge to Poleglass in 1982 hoping to get away from the continuous army raids and attacks. Poleglass was a new set of small estates the building of which was strongly opposed by Lisburn Council, Paisleyites and loyalism in general. However, we settled down and hoped for the best. The children attended the newly opened primary school, Good Shepherd.”*



1980 Turf Lodge Damien with brother sisters and mum

*“Damien was seven years old when we moved into our new home. He was the middle one of our five kids. The house was always noisy with children, pets and friends. Damien loved having a dog and taking it on adventures to Colin Glen and up into the mountains. He was keen on bird-watching and cycling too. He kept up these activities when he went to secondary school. By this time Damien was a member of Poleglass Youth Club and started doing DJ at the discos. He was also doing a course in youth work.”*

*“On leaving school at 16 Damien was enrolled on the YTP (Youth Training Programme) - a government imitative to train teenagers in various trades. In 1992 he got a placement in a fuel depot at the rear of the Dairy Farm shopping complex. The people he was working with were teaching him how to do the accounts, how to drive the forklift.”*



Damien and family with puppy

*“Damien had a really good rapport with his work colleagues. He loved the work even though it was heavy and dirty carrying coal. A management job was earmarked for him once he turned 18. One Thursday evening in March 1993 he was working late. He was not due to work that evening, but he had swapped shifts with another young lad so that he could take a new girlfriend to the cinema on Friday.”*

*“We still live in Poleglass but when Damien was murdered our lives changed. Our once noisy home fell silent and remains so.”*

## The murder of Damien Walsh at the Dairy Farm Centre

Damien started work in the Dairy Farm Shopping Centre in 1992. The shopping centre is situated on the Stewartstown Road on the outskirts of the Twinbrook estate. He was employed as part of a youth training scheme at a Coal Bunker business which was situated at the rear of the centre and sold bags of coal to retail customers. At approximately 7.35pm on Thursday, 25th March 1993, a red coloured Vauxhall Astra estate, was stolen in the



Peter's Hill area of Belfast by two masked men who forced their way into a family home and demanded the car keys from the owner.

That same evening, Damien was working at the Coal Bunker in the Dairy Farm Shopping Centre along with the store manager John (Tiger) McGuinness. It was due to close at 8.30pm that night. At about 8.08pm both Damien and John were sitting in the office within the unit watching the television and having a tea break. During this time the red Vauxhall Astra estate car was driven into the Dairy Farm Centre and stopped near the Coal Bunker.

There is disagreement as to whether one or two masked men got out of the passenger side of the car and walked towards the Coal Bunker. A later examination of the case claimed there was only one gunman. However, John McGuinness is adamant that two gunmen entered the depot. It seems, however, that only one gun was fired in the attack.

This pistol was used to fire three shots at John McGuinness and Damien. The gun jammed, and the gunman went back to the car to get a second weapon. He started firing this weapon at a crowd of people who had gathered in the immediate vicinity and were shouting at the gunman. The crowd started throwing stones at the gunman and he retreated to the Astra car, which was driven away out of the Dairy Farm Centre in the direction of the Stewartstown Road.

John McGuinness was wounded in the attack and Damien suffered fatal gunshot wounds. It was later found out that the gunman/gunmen used two 9mm Browning type pistols in the incident. Later that night the BBC received an anonymous telephone call from the UFF (Ulster Freedom Fighters), a cover

name for the UDA, admitting responsibility for the attack, a recognised codeword was used.<sup>4</sup>

## Flawed RUC investigation into Damien's murder

The police investigation into Damien's murder was flawed from the outset. It didn't look at collusion between the UDA and the RUC or ask questions about why the UDA had targeted the Dairy Farm Centre. It also - unbelievably - treated the British Army undercover operation and the explosives find as a separate investigation. In fact, the Walsh family were never informed by the RUC that there were British soldiers involved in a surveillance operation at the centre. The family only found this out when, Damien's mother, complained to the Police Ombudsman about the RUC investigation into her son's murder. Moreover, she was informed by the Ombudsman that the soldiers, who had seen the killers' car enter and leave the Dairy Farm, gave the RUC the wrong make and colour of car.

It is believed the covert military operation and the explosives find may be linked to the death of Joe Mulhern who was killed by the IRA on June 23, 1993. The IRA alleged that he was an informer and was working for RUC Special Branch.<sup>5</sup>

The weapons used in Damien's murder, two Browning type 9mm pistols were part of the South African consignment that British Army agent, Brian Nelson, helped bring into the country. The RUC would have been aware of this information when the weapon was forensically examined yet they never made the family or the public aware of this. It wasn't until 2016 that the Police Ombudsman informed Damien's mother that the weapon was one of the South African shipment.

4 The UFF was merely a cover name for the UDA. It was first used by the UDA in June 1973 when a bomb was thrown into a Catholic bar in Belfast. A barman bravely picked it up and threw it outside. Fifteen minutes later, the so-called UFF rang the Belfast Telegraph and made its first claim of responsibility. Some hours later, it abducted a Catholic, thirty-five-year-old Daniel O'Neill, and shot him through the head. (*A State in Denial* by Margaret Urwin, page 81)

5 Joe Mulhern from Nansen Street, Belfast, was shot by the IRA in June 23, 1993. His body was found 12 miles from Castleberg near the border. The IRA said he was a former member of their organisation and that he was a police informer. They said he had been an IRA member for three months but had worked as a 'civilian helper' for several years. They also said he had worked for the RUC Special Branch since 1990. The killing of Joe Mulhern is currently part of the Kenova investigation into the activities of the British military agent known as Stakeknife.



One of the guns used in Damien's murder was recovered by the RUC in June 1994. Before Damien's murder the gun had been used by the UDA to kill James McCaffrey (a delivery driver) on the 25th November 1991, when he picked up an order from a Chinese take away restaurant on the Ormeau Road. The second weapon, that has not been recovered, was linked to nine incidents, including one murder, four attempted murders and four shooting incidents that occurred between July 31st, 1990 and June 16th, 1996. All the incidents are attributed to the UDA.

The RUC Special Branch more than likely kept any information about the weapons from the RUC's CID, who were responsible for investigating Damien's murder. RUC Special Branch controlled intelligence matters regarding weapons. They did this through, the Weapons and Explosives Research Centre (WERC), which was a unit located within the Northern Ireland Forensic Science Laboratory and was staffed by RUC Special Branch officers. WERC were able to examine weapons before civilian forensic scientists. It has been discovered that misleading information had been given by WERC in relation to loyalist weapons used in murders in order to protect Special Branch agents. Controversy surrounding WERC has been revealed recently in the Roseanne Mallon inquest. The inquest judge, Mr Justice Weir, described WERC as a, "forensic system within a forensic system." It has been claimed at the Roseanne Mallon inquest that misleading information had been given by WERC in relation to the weapons used in the murder.<sup>6</sup> Both RFJ and the Walsh family have asked the Ombudsman to investigate whether WERC had any role to play in the examination of the weapons used in Damien's murder.

Damien's mother, Marian, called the RUC investigation into her son's murder a 'whitewash and coverup' to protect their agents within the UDA.

Marian had no confidence in the RUC to carry out a proper and effective investigation.

## HET re-examination of the investigation into Damien's murder

The Historical Enquiries Team (HET) was established in 2006 to review all deaths related to the conflict.<sup>7</sup> They were to do this in chronological order from 1969 to 1998. Damien's mother, Marian, had approached the Police Ombudsman in January 2004 with her concerns about the RUC investigation into her son and her suspicions of collusion in the murder. The Police Ombudsman subsequently (in 2007) made a request to the HET to have Damien's case taken out of chronological order as additional information had come to light which merited 'further investigative opportunity'.

The HET began their re-examination of Damien's murder in 2010. Their report revealed for the first time that when the UDA murdered Damien, a British Army uncover unit had the Dairy Farm under surveillance as part of a police/army covert operation monitoring suspected IRA activity at the Dairy Farm. A search of one of the units at the centre by the RUC after the killing resulted in the recovery of five tons of fertiliser contained in coal bags. However, the HET report failed to explain sufficiently why there was not a proper and effective investigation into Damien's murder by the RUC despite the strong evidence of collusion between the UDA, RUC and British Military Intelligence. In fact, the HET stated that they found no evidence of collusion in Damien's murder.

Damien's mother described the HET report as a 'cosmetic exercise' that had done nothing to advance the murder investigation. Marian said,

*"The fact that the murder was witnessed by an undercover unit of the British Army, yet the killers were able to escape is tantamount to collusion. They*

6 (WERC) - <http://relativesforjustice.com/its-the-collusion-question-in-mallon-inquest/>

7 The PSNI Historical Enquiries Team (HET) was set up in January 2006 to re-examine killings that occurred during the conflict. It was an integral part of the PSNI. See RfJ publication, Another Bucket of Whitewash, for critical analysis of the HET.<sup>81</sup>



*also gave the wrong information about the make and colour of the car that the killers used to get away. Damien died on the same day as a child died who was badly injured in the IRA bomb in Warrington.<sup>8</sup> Can you imagine if Warrington was under surveillance and nobody intervened to stop that child from dying? We need answers and we will take this as far as we can for Damien."*

## Complaint to the Police Ombudsman into the circumstances surrounding Damien's murder

Damien's mother first asked the then Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan (right) to investigate the circumstances of Damien's murder in 2004. The case then became one of seven Police Ombudsman investigations that were put on hold in 2011 after questions were raised about the independence of the Police Ombudsman's office and Nuala O'Loan's successor, Al Hutchinson.<sup>9</sup> Marian along with Relatives for Justice met with Al Hutchinson in September 2011, to ask why it had taken - by then - eight years to investigate Damien's murder. At the meeting Hutchinson displayed a total lack of knowledge of Damien's case and didn't even know about the circumstances of Damien's killing. It was clear he hadn't gone to the trouble of reading up on Damien's case.



Al Hutchinson subsequently resigned and a new Police Ombudsman, Michael Maguire, was appointed. Marian along with RFJ met Michael Maguire shortly after he took up office in 2012 and he gave a commitment that he would ensure the investigation into Damien's murder would be completed. Despite this commitment the Police Ombudsman's investigative report into Damien's murder has still not been given to the Walsh family.



Al Hutchinson



Dr Michael Maguire

In May 2016 Marian was informed by the Ombudsman that the report was complete with an estimate for publication of October 2016. In 2017/18 a separate Police Ombudsman report into the Loughinisland killings in 1994 were subject to legal proceedings by the RUC's Retired Police Officers Association (RPOA).<sup>10</sup> The outcome of this is that a new court hearing will be held into the Police Ombudsman's findings of collusion in those murders. Because of ongoing litigation, the Police Ombudsman, Michael Maguire, took a decision to put on hold the publication of any outstanding investigative reports. This includes the Damien Walsh case.

## The UDA's murder of Damien and its collusion with RUC and British Army Intelligence

Damien's murder was carried out by the UDA's notorious C Company which was based in West Belfast (Shankill Road). There is now clear evidence that the UDA and especially C Company obtained information on members of the republican and nationalist community from both the RUC and the Force Research Unit (FRU) a shadowy British Army Intelligence Corps.<sup>11</sup> The IRA explosives find at the Dairy Farm Centre after Damien's murder, and the undercover surveillance operation by the British Army together point to the fact that the UDA killers were acting on intelligence.

8 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warrington\\_bomb\\_attacks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warrington_bomb_attacks)

9 <http://www.cjini.org/CJNI/files/fe/fee7c8c8-4e16-4492-ba70-fefbaf39427f.pdf>

10 <http://relativesforjustice.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/A2-Loughinisland-Poster-LRes-1.pdf>

11 The Force Research Unit (FRU) was a covert military intelligence unit of the British Army part of the Intelligence Corps. It was established in 1982.



C Company UDA - "C" for collusion

In September 1989 the British government appointed the deputy head of the Northumbria police, John Stevens, to investigate 'allegations' of collusion between the UDA and security forces. This was in response to growing evidence that loyalists were being given police and military montages and other information from the 'security forces.' By April 2003, after three investigations, John Stevens, said he had uncovered collusion at a level "way beyond" his first investigation in 1990.<sup>12</sup> During his three investigations Stevens interviewed 210 civilian people involved in collusion, mostly under caution. He would later state that 207 of these were acting as state agents.<sup>13</sup> The UK government has to this day refused to make his findings public.

In December 2012, the de Silva report was published into the UDA's murder of Pat Finucane. It specifically referred to the extensive provision of security force information to the UDA and stated that 85% of the UDA's intelligence originated from sources within the security forces. The de Silva report was critical of the RUC's failure to act against the UDA's C Company in West Belfast. It



Brian Nelson

stated they were linked with a string of murders and attempted murders and that Brian Nelson (the UDA's intelligence officer and FRU agent 6137) 'provided a significant quantity of intelligence regarding the identities of those West Belfast UDA members involved in 'planning and carrying out murders.'<sup>14</sup>

In January 1992, Nelson pleaded guilty to five charges of conspiracy to murder and fourteen charges of possession of information useful to terrorists. Two charges of murder were dropped by the DPP. 20 charges were dropped against Nelson including two of murder by the DPP after the direct intervention of the UK government through their Attorney General, Patrick Mayhew, including lobbying by the then Secretary for Defence Tom King MP. The Labour spokesperson on the north of Ireland, Kevin McNamara MP, would later raise the matter in a parliamentary debate where he questioned the motives of that government intervention: "I was not happy when the [British] Attorney-General took control of that prosecution and I was dubious about his reasons for deciding to drop charges. Those reasons remain undisclosed."<sup>15</sup> Nelson was sentenced to ten year's imprisonment. The outcome was designed to prevent Nelson from taking the witness stand and potentially exposing what the FRU were up to - collusion being their real motive. Prior to his arrest by the Stevens Enquiry team Nelson had been assisted by his FRU handlers to flee the North in a bid to avoid detection and arrest. It is also suspected that the FRU had burnt down the portable accommodation of the Stevens Enquiry offices at Seapark, RUC barracks, Carrickfergus, in a further bid to halt their work.

Nelson was thus offered a deal in return for his silence and not taking the stand during his trial; hence the withdrawal from the indictment sheet of two charges of murder by the DPP. A Colonel from the FRU, using the pseudonym 'J' (his name is now known - Gordon Kerr) gave mitigating evidence from behind a screen on behalf of Nelson citing that

12 <http://relativesforjustice.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Stevens-3-Inquiry-Report.pdf>

13 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9LFp95CCHo>

14 [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/246867/0802.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/246867/0802.pdf)

15 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/vo030514/halltext/30514h01.htm> Column 73WH





he had saved hundreds of lives. BBC investigative John Ware later disproved this claim in a Panorama programme entitled 'The Dirty War' broadcast on June 8th, 1992.

This programme claimed that Brian Nelson had been involved in 10 murders, attempted murders or conspiracies to murder carried out by the UDA with the knowledge of his army controllers. He had also identified 16 other people who were later killed or had attempts made on their lives. Army intelligence also failed to pass on to the RUC information about planned attacks.

## South African weapons used to kill Damien

The Browning type pistol used to kill Damien was part of a large assignment of South African arms imported by the UDA in 1987. Brian Nelson, FRU agent No. 6137, was involved in bringing the arms shipment into the North. The weapons haul included, over 200 Czech-made VZ 58s (based on the Russian AK 47), at least 90 Browning type handguns, 30,000 rounds of ammunition, several Rocket Propelled Grenades and 200 fragmentation grenades.<sup>16</sup> At every step of the operation to smuggle the weapons into the country, Nelson was kept informed of its progress and it seems inconceivable that he would not have informed his handlers in FRU. Dr Michael Maguire, the Police Ombudsman, stated in his report into the Loughinisland murders of June 1994,

*"police were aware of plans by the UVF, UDA and Ulster Resistance to import a significant consignment of weaponry to Northern Ireland in mid to late 1987 and knew about the arrival of the assault rifles, semi-automatic handguns, grenades and other weapons forming the shipment shortly after it was landed in Northern Ireland."*<sup>17</sup>

The repercussions of loyalist death squads obtaining such a huge shipment of weapons had devastating consequences for both republicans and members of the nationalist community. In the six years prior to the importation of the South African weapons, from January 1982 to December 1987, loyalists killed 71 people. In the seven years afterwards, from January 1988 to September 1994, loyalists killed 229 people (an increase of over 300%). Amongst the murders using weapons from the South African shipment were; 4 Catholics at Boyle's Bar, Cappagh, Co Tyrone, March 1991,<sup>18</sup> 6 Catholics at the Heights Bar, Loughinisland, Co Down, June 1994<sup>19</sup> and 5 Catholics at Ormeau Road Bookies, Belfast, February 1992.<sup>20</sup> All these murders are being investigated by the Police Ombudsman. In all the investigations, included that of Damien Walsh's murder, the Ombudsman is examining collusion between the UDA/UVF and state actors in both the RUC and Military Intelligence.

## The next steps in the campaign for the truth into Damien's murder

In 1998, a *Guardian* newspaper journalist, Roy Greenslade, criticised the British media for ignoring the loyalist murder of Damien Walsh. He was speaking at a memorial lecture in memory of Damien.<sup>21</sup> Roy Greenslade said the British media coverage of victims of loyalist violence was consigned to the lowest rank in a hierarchy of victims; as such were victims of loyalists were largely ignored. He compared the coverage into Damien's and the four Catholics killed the same day in Castlerock, Co Derry, to that of the deaths at Warrington, England.

On March 20th, 1993, an IRA bomb exploded in Warrington, claiming the lives of two young boys, Jonathan Ball and Tim Parry. As Roy Greenslade said in his lecture,

16 See South African importation of weapons listed and deaths attributed to them at <http://relativesforjustice.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/COLLUSION-REPORT-1990-1994-PDF.pdf>

17 <https://policeombudsman.org/Investigation-Reports/Historical-Reports/The-murders-at-the-Heights-Bar-in-Loughinisland-Po>

18 <http://relativesforjustice.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Cappagh-Report-and-Cover-FEB-2016-print-version.pdf>

19 <http://relativesforjustice.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/A2-Loughinisland-Poster-LRes-1.pdf>

20 <http://relativesforjustice.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/S.Graham-Full-Report-Web.pdf>

21 <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/media/greenslade.htm>



*"It was front page news for days and led all the TV and radio bulletins. Thundering leading articles called not so much for action as for vengeance. Feature writers were dispatched to Warrington to provide a stream of copy about the "massacre of the innocents". A peace initiative launched by a woman called Susan McHugh (anyone remember her now) was given explicit support by the amount of media coverage. This was, said the press, a turning point. No more murders must happen. Sometime later political analysts Paul Bew and Gordon Gillespie, commented that the Warrington bombing created "a wave of revulsion throughout the British Isles against terrorist killings". What they meant of course, was that the media coverage of the deaths created a wave of revulsion."*

You might have thought the murders of Damien and the four Catholics in Castlerock would have been seized upon by the British media. Instead they were virtually ignored by the London-based press. In the weeks after Damien's death, his uncle Dr Sean Loughlin, reflected on the pain and hurt caused by the differential reaction to his nephew's murder in a letter to the *Irish Times*: "Most people in Northern Ireland, including Damien's family, were profoundly shocked by the Warrington atrocity.... What [our] family could not understand was why this wave of emotion [over Warrington] could not be extended to Damien, who was still only a boy... The purpose of this letter is not to score points but to make a point: every single life is unique and precious. There should be no discrimination in our reactions to murder... In their understandable reaction to Warrington, people in the south of Ireland should be careful to remember those other dozens of children and young people murdered in the north or Ireland."

Despite the media turning a blind eye, Damien's family have remained determined to find the truth and expose the British state's collusion with loyalists.

The next important step in that campaign is the publication of the Police Ombudsman's report into Damien's murder. The report remains unpublished due to the ongoing legal challenge by RPOA concerning the Ombudsman's report into Loughinisland (see above p. 9). The Walsh family lodged their complaint 14 years ago during Nuala O'Loan's tenure as Police

Ombudsman. This new delay understandably leaves the family deeply disappointed.

Roadblock after roadblock has been placed in the way of the Ombudsman from funding cuts, to the Ombudsman having to resort to judicial action against the PSNI to obtain intelligence on these and other killings, and now this latest legal challenge taken by among others a former head of Special Branch that has had the result of postponing the publication of the completed report.

The Walsh family sees these actions as a concerted and strategic rear-guard effort by those who have a vested interest in denying truth, accountability and ultimately justice. The onslaught by the British government, political unionism and former state combatants against families bereaved by state violence and collusion needs to end. As Damien's mother Marian has stated,

*"It's been 14 years since we first lodged Damien's murder with Nuala O'Loan. We'd expected that the matter would have been dealt with before she left office. Given the controversy that emerged under Al Hutchinson's term of office it was clear Damien's murder investigation was simply pushed to the side. I appreciate that the present Ombudsman, Michael Maguire, has concluded the investigation, so in one sense we are glad. But this latest delay leaves us once again in a state of limbo. It simply adds to our anguish. The report is finished and just sitting there - we simply want access to it. The irony for us is that we have always firmly believed there was collusion in Damien's murder and that involved the RUC and now the report is being withheld because the RUC are challenging collusion findings in the Loughinisland. To me that's not acceptable."*

In October 1998, a memorial plaque to Damien was unveiled at the Dairy Farm complex by Fianna Fáil TD Éamon Ó'Cuív. On Sunday March 25th, 2018, 25 years after the brutal murder of Damien, there will be a re-dedication of the plaque by the Justice for Damien Walsh - Time for Truth campaign. RFJ continue to support the Walsh family in their search for justice and the truth into Damien's murder.



Marian Walsh wants a Police Ombudsman report into the killing her son Damien to be released (photo: Courtesy of Irish News)



## DAMIEN WALSH

27TH MAY 1975 - 25TH MARCH 1993

“We still live in Poleglass but when Damien was murdered our lives changed. Our once noisy home fell silent and remains so.”

Marian Walsh



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