# Friends of Jamesy Lowe credit UVF leader’s ban for fatal overdose as they toast his imprisonment



Friends and family of Jamesy Lowe, a loyalist who tragically ended his life due to a drug overdose in 2009, have recently expressed their sense of closure with the imprisonment of Winkie Irvine, a leader within the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). Irvine had been instrumental in imposing a ban on Lowe's presence on Belfast's Shankill Road, an act that his friends attribute as a significant factor contributing to his subsequent overdose. The gathering of Lowe's friends to toast Irvine's downfall highlights the intense emotions surrounding this incident, revealing deep-seated conflicts within loyalist factions and the consequences of internal disputes.

Lowe's death, which occurred shortly after he was ostracised from a community he deeply identified with, underscores not only the personal tragedy within his circle but also broader issues facing loyalist communities in Northern Ireland. Friends claim that Irvine's actions created a sense of isolation for Lowe, propelling him into a downward spiral exacerbated by substance abuse. This narrative sheds light on the psychological burdens that can occur when individuals are forcibly relegated to the periphery of their social and historical roots, particularly within tightly-knit groups where loyalty and identity are intricately linked.

The response from the community encapsulates a desire for accountability that has often remained unaddressed in the region. While celebrating Irvine's imprisonment, many see it as a stepping stone towards justice for Lowe and others who have suffered due to similar intra-communal disputes. This attitude reflects a significant shift in how members of loyalist communities are beginning to process their history and the violent legacies that often accompany it. The ongoing internal strife within these groups not only affects individual lives but also poses broader questions regarding the future of loyalist identities in a changing socio-political landscape.

As the loyalist community grapples with the implications of such tragedies, it is clear that there is a critical need for open dialogue regarding mental health and substance abuse. The loss of Jamesy Lowe serves as a somber reminder of what can occur when issues of accountability and communal support are overlooked. Moving forward, friends of Lowe see the commitment to justice as essential not just for healing, but as a way to challenge the systemic issues that have historically afflicted their community. The emotional resonance of this situation reveals that the path to reconciliation and awareness is fraught with complexities, yet ultimately hinges on addressing the root causes of distress and conflict within their ranks.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/sunday-life/news/friends-of-loyalist-who-died-from-overdose-after-shankill-road-ban-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine/a451728032.html), [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2025/06/01/news/friends-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine-after-blaming-uvf-boss-for-loyalist-s-overdose-in-aftermath-of-shankill-road-ban-451728032/), [[4]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2025/06/01/news/friends-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine-after-blaming-uvf-boss-for-loyalist-s-overdose-in-aftermath-of-shankill-road-ban-451728032/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2025/06/01/news/friends-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine-after-blaming-uvf-boss-for-loyalist-s-overdose-in-aftermath-of-shankill-road-ban-451728032/), [[5]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2025/06/01/news/friends-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine-after-blaming-uvf-boss-for-loyalist-s-overdose-in-aftermath-of-shankill-road-ban-451728032/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2025/06/01/news/friends-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine-after-blaming-uvf-boss-for-loyalist-s-overdose-in-aftermath-of-shankill-road-ban-451728032/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/sunday-life/news/friends-of-loyalist-who-died-from-overdose-after-shankill-road-ban-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine/a451728032.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2025/06/01/news/friends-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine-after-blaming-uvf-boss-for-loyalist-s-overdose-in-aftermath-of-shankill-road-ban-451728032/> - Friends of Jamesy Lowe, a loyalist who died from a fatal overdose in 2009 after being banned from Belfast's Shankill Road by UVF boss Winkie Irvine, have celebrated Irvine's imprisonment. They believe that Irvine's actions led to Lowe's tragic death, and now that justice has been served, they feel a sense of closure. The incident highlights the internal conflicts within loyalist factions and the severe consequences of such disputes. The community's response underscores the deep-seated tensions and the desire for accountability within these groups.
3. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2025/06/01/news/friends-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine-after-blaming-uvf-boss-for-loyalist-s-overdose-in-aftermath-of-shankill-road-ban-451728032/> - In 2009, Jamesy Lowe, a loyalist, tragically died from a drug overdose after being banned from walking Belfast's Shankill Road by UVF leader Winkie Irvine. Lowe's friends have now celebrated Irvine's imprisonment, believing that his actions directly contributed to Lowe's death. This incident sheds light on the internal strife within loyalist groups and the severe repercussions of their disputes. The community's reaction highlights the deep-rooted tensions and the call for justice within these factions.
4. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2025/06/01/news/friends-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine-after-blaming-uvf-boss-for-loyalist-s-overdose-in-aftermath-of-shankill-road-ban-451728032/> - The 2009 death of Jamesy Lowe, a loyalist who overdosed after being banned from Belfast's Shankill Road by UVF boss Winkie Irvine, has led his friends to celebrate Irvine's imprisonment. They hold Irvine responsible for Lowe's tragic death, viewing his actions as a catalyst for the overdose. This event highlights the internal conflicts within loyalist factions and the severe consequences of such disputes. The community's response underscores the deep-seated tensions and the desire for accountability within these groups.
5. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2025/06/01/news/friends-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine-after-blaming-uvf-boss-for-loyalist-s-overdose-in-aftermath-of-shankill-road-ban-451728032/> - In 2009, Jamesy Lowe, a loyalist, tragically died from a drug overdose after being banned from walking Belfast's Shankill Road by UVF leader Winkie Irvine. Lowe's friends have now celebrated Irvine's imprisonment, believing that his actions directly contributed to Lowe's death. This incident sheds light on the internal strife within loyalist groups and the severe repercussions of their disputes. The community's reaction highlights the deep-rooted tensions and the call for justice within these factions.
6. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2025/06/01/news/friends-toast-downfall-of-winkie-irvine-after-blaming-uvf-boss-for-loyalist-s-overdose-in-aftermath-of-shankill-road-ban-451728032/> - The 2009 death of Jamesy Lowe, a loyalist who overdosed after being banned from Belfast's Shankill Road by UVF boss Winkie Irvine, has led his friends to celebrate Irvine's imprisonment. They hold Irvine responsible for Lowe's tragic death, viewing his actions as a catalyst for the overdose. This event highlights the internal conflicts within loyalist factions and the severe consequences of such disputes. The community's response underscores the deep-seated tensions and the desire for accountability within these groups.