# Mary Kelly exposes double standards in Denis Donaldson case and state informant protections



Mary Kelly’s insightful column raises critical concerns regarding the tragic case of Denis Donaldson, whose death starkly highlights ongoing issues of justice, accountability, and the troubling involvement of the state in Northern Ireland's legacy of violence. The Donaldson family, grappling with profound loss, draws uncomfortable parallels between Denis and Freddie Scappaticci, the notorious informer still shielded by British intelligence while those deemed expendable, like Donaldson, are "thrown to the wolves."

Donaldson, once a Sinn Féin official who admitted to being an MI5 agent, was shot dead in 2006, shortly after his identity was revealed. His death underscores a glaring disparity in treatment between informants, raising chilling questions about the British state’s readiness to protect certain individuals while abandoning others. Recent inquiries into his murder expose fundamental failures within the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). A Police Ombudsman report noted the PSNI's gross negligence in assessing the threats against him. Although it concluded that there was insufficient evidence to claim Donaldson's murder could have been averted, the investigation reveals an alarming complacency towards the safety of those the state uses as informants.

Attempts to launch a thorough inquiry into Donaldson’s death have been met with stonewalling. Frustrated by the responses of both the Irish government and the PSNI, the family argues that critical evidence is being ignored and that some police officers may have been complicit in his assassination. The demand for a judge-led inquiry reflects their conviction that without transparency surrounding the state’s involvement in Donaldson’s life and death, true justice remains out of reach.

Conversely, the case of Freddie Scappaticci sheds light on the double standards that permeate the realm of state informants. An independent inquiry found that his actions as a high-ranking agent within the IRA may have led to more deaths than lives saved, sharply contrasting with the state’s efforts to shield him. This inconsistency raises urgent concerns over the legal frameworks governing informant conduct and the moral implications of state interference in paramilitary operations, leaving many to question the very foundations of the safety promised by state agencies.

Donaldson’s murder fits into a larger narrative of loss and betrayal that haunts families impacted by the Troubles. Take, for instance, the experience of Sean Brown’s family, similarly suffering under the veil of unresolved violence, which perpetuates a climate of distrust regarding the relationship between British security services and paramilitary groups.

Meanwhile, the recent chaos in Liverpool, where a driver injured 79 people during a celebration parade, further exemplifies the turmoil that arises from disinformation and public panic. In this instance, despite the rapid release of information about the suspect, a 53-year-old white British man, social media erupted with unfounded conspiracy theories, illustrating the ongoing societal struggle to discern truth in an age rife with misinformation.

Whether it concerns the troubling tactics of state informants or the volatile public response to unforeseen events, the quest for accountability and rigor in inquiries is glaringly evident. In light of the recent political shifts and a government that lacks transparency, the need to scrutinize the legacies of pain and suffering is paramount. Families relentlessly seek justice and closure—both personal and historical—as they navigate the murky waters of state involvement in their narratives.

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

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/actions-britains-top-ira-spy-likely-resulted-more-lives-lost-than-saved-inquiry-2024-03-08/> - An independent inquiry into the actions of 'Stakeknife', a senior British informer within the IRA, concluded that his activities likely resulted in more lives being lost than saved. The report highlighted that British security forces were often aware of imminent threats but failed to intervene, allowing preventable murders to occur. The investigation also criticized the lack of a legal framework governing agents' activities and proposed criminal charges for over 30 individuals, though the Public Prosecution Service found insufficient evidence to prosecute.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-60698692> - A report by the Police Ombudsman found that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) failed to properly evaluate the threat to informer Denis Donaldson before his murder in County Donegal. Despite this, the Ombudsman could not conclude that his death could have been prevented. Donaldson, who had admitted to being an MI5 agent, was shot dead in April 2006, months after his exposure.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr7r8n9p7y4o> - The family of Denis Donaldson criticized the Irish government for rejecting a call for a judge-led inquiry into his murder. They alleged that some police officers who handled him during his 20 years as an agent were complicit in his death. Donaldson was killed in April 2006, months after admitting to being an informer for the police and MI5.
5. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/denis-donaldson-murder-inquiry-proves-police-didn-t-do-enough-says-family-1.4823882> - An independent investigation into the murder of Denis Donaldson found that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) did not do enough to prevent his death. The PSNI is reviewing how it deals with death threats after being accused of failings by the Police Ombudsman. Donaldson, a former Sinn Féin official and IRA member turned British agent, was shot dead in April 2006.
6. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/courts/coroner-s-court/state-obstructing-inquiry-into-death-of-denis-donaldson-family-says-1.2108568> - The family of Denis Donaldson accused the State of wilful obstruction in the investigation of his death. They alleged that gardaí failed to protect their rights during the investigation. Donaldson was shot dead in a rural cottage near Glenties in County Donegal in 2006. The Real IRA claimed responsibility for the killing.
7. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/denis-donaldson-murder-inquiry-proves-police-didn-t-do-enough-says-family-1.4823882> - An independent investigation into the murder of Denis Donaldson found that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) did not do enough to prevent his death. The PSNI is reviewing how it deals with death threats after being accused of failings by the Police Ombudsman. Donaldson, a former Sinn Féin official and IRA member turned British agent, was shot dead in April 2006.