

Fulton: the spy who could have prevented Omagh but also derailed Smithwick Tribunal



Informer Kevin Fulton gave plausible and timely information to the RUC that the Real IRA's Patrick Blair prepared a bomb at the time of Omagh. But RUC Special Branch doubted and then discredited him even when the Ombudsman supported him. Contrariwise Fulton was also the devious force who derailed the Smithwick Tribunal into nearly nailing the wrong colluder.

by Deirdre Young

MICHAEL GALLAGHER'S son Aiden was among 29 killed by the 'Real IRA' in the 1998 Omagh Bombing.

In 2013 Gallagher brought a judicial review against the then Northern Ireland Secretary's decision not to set up a public inquiry into the bombing. In July 2018 the case finally opened in Belfast, centring on claims that intelligence could have been drawn together to prevent the bombing.

Judge Mark Horner found in favour of Gallagher in Belfast's High Court. In an extraordinary and trenchant judgment in July, backed up by another in October, he ordered a new Human Rights-compliant investigation involving authorities North and South. It should examine whether

"politically-motivated 'de-escalation' of the security approach to dissident republicans in 1998 resulted in intelligence not being acted on".

This article looks at Kevin Fulton (real name Peter Keeley) and Omagh; and his contrasting performance at the Smithwick Tribunal.

It considers why Fulton's tip-off failed to stop Omagh, the worst bombing of Northern Ireland's troubles.

Fulton's decline as an informer

is a former agent/informer for the FRU (Forces Research Unit - a covert intelligence unit in the British army) as well as for MI5, Northern Ireland's Special Branch and the RUC.

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Patrick Blair



In IRA from 1981, as FRU agent then MI5

Fulton had worked as an undercover agent in the IRA since 1981. In 1990 Force Research Unit/Army Intelligence dispensed with his services as agent Kevin. It would be a long descent. He was first told to report to MI5.

But when a 1994 operation against a senior RUC Officer in Belfast went disastrously wrong for an IRA active service unit and led to multiple arrests, Fulton’s cover was blown. He had supplied the phones and a flat to be used in the operation. Fulton claimed he was interrogated after the debacle by senior IRA member Scappaticci.

CID agent

Compromised, he walked into an RUC police station in Belfast offering his services to one of its Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officers in 1996. From now on he would inform to the CID, beginning a new lease of life for Fulton.

Dissident Real IRA agent

After the 1994 IRA Ceasefire, Patrick ‘Mooch’ Blair, Fulton’s mentor in the IRA, joined the dissident Real IRA; and of course Fulton followed him. Blair, former commander of an Active Service Unit in South Down, was an accomplished bomb maker.

Fulton supplied Blair with ‘equipment’ and technical back-up. Both men were bomb makers and, as dissident activity was funded by the proceeds of crime, Fulton’s knowledge of the drug and criminal underworld was a considerable asset when reporting to the RUC.

Fulton: NI CID Asset; NI Special Branch Pariah

PSNI Assistant Chief Constable Raymond White described to Smithwick the reaction of the RUC Special Branch to his new ‘hire’ Fulton when he asked for their view about their former agent’s suitability. The Special Branch advised ‘Do Not Touch’. However, that didn’t rule him out as a – more mundane - CID informant. White warmly

endorsed Fulton’s usefulness as a CID informant. However as Fulton in his evidence to Smithwick described, his role in entrapment in the Luigi Marotta and other cases was in fact a cause of massive embarrassment for some members of CID. One senior officer has described how some files were examined by senior officers to assess how things could have gone so wrong.

A former Republican source in Derry involved with Fulton in the late 1990s recently described an extraordinary series of scams and frauds perpetrated by Fulton at the time, some involving dangerous criminals south of the border.

The close relationship between the terrorist anti-racketeering squad within the RUC (C16) and MI5 made Fulton’s ability to gain intelligence while mixing with money-launderers and smugglers linked to dissidents a valuable asset for the Security services too. There is a murky sense Fulton was not only informing to CID.

For aficionados the Chief Inspector in C16 was Alan Mains who had been Harry Breen’s Sergeant in Armagh in 1989. By coincidence both claimed to have evidence of Garda Collusion involving Owen Corrigan. The relationship between these two crucial witnesses did not emerge at Smithwick though it should have been focused on Breen whose murder was its central concern.

Fulton’s CID former primary handler graded Fulton’s Intelligence in criminal matters as A1. By January 1998 Fulton also began to give him intelligence about subversives, including the Real IRA in Dundalk and the border.

But there was the festering issue of the lack of confidence in him by his earlier employers, RUC/PSNI Special Branch. Fulton’s CID former primary handler gave evidence to Smithwick that Fulton was also giving subversive intelligence which was passed on to the Special Branch. Fulton refused to deal with the Special Branch himself.

The retired RUC CID Inspector who was Fulton’s co-handler, also gave evidence at

Smithwick (witness 70 at Smithwick). He had been particularly interested in Fulton's information about the activities of the IRA active service unit in South Down since he had served for years in the area. Many of his fellow officers had been blown up or shot dead by the IRA unit Fulton was 'embedded' in.

Fulton and Omagh 1998

A series of bombings by the Real IRA in 1997/8 intensified huge surveillance operations. Police forces on both sides of the border were running informants. The FBI and MI5 had recruited David Rupert, an American with no Irish ties, to infiltrate the American and Irish Republican dissident groups. He became a confidant of Michael McKevitt, leader of the Continuity IRA and Head of the loose groupings of so-called 'dissidents' which included the 'Reals'. The Garda informants included Paddy Dixon, a car thief who was robbing cars for bomb deliveries by the Real IRA. He would alert his Garda handler when an 'order' came in.

But despite massive surveillance, the so-called 'Real IRA' bombed Enniskillen on 24 January 1998; then Moira, Lisburn, Belleek, Newry and Banbridge on 1 August 1998.

On 15 August, again despite surveillance, came the so-called 'spectacular' - Omagh killed 26 people and injured 200 others. The bombs had in common the use of a timer unit or TPU as described by Judge Weir in *R v Hoey* (2007) "comprised of a 'Coupetan' brand two-hour timer and two toggle isolating switches mounted on a plastic lunch box...". The person who bought them has never been identified though again *Village* has been reliably informed Fulton was more involved than he admits - not an innocent bystander but an active participant.

Fulton's allegations to the Police Ombudsman about the Omagh Bombing brought down the wrath of the Special Branch which exerted influence that ultimately ended his career as an informant to RUC CID, in 2000.

Fulton's handler confirms he gave him tip-off on Omagh

In 2011 Fulton's RUC/PSNI former primary handler gave evidence at Smithwick (as witness 71). His relationship with Fulton had already proved to be crucial and pivotal: he had corroborated Fulton's evidence to the Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan in 2003, by confirming that Fulton



had given him information at the time of the 1998 Omagh bombing which he had passed on to RUC Special Branch. The evidence, which O'Loan accepted, was central to her devastating conclusions about the RUC Special Branch's investigation into the Omagh Bombing of 1998. Now Fulton's primary handler was also corroborating Fulton, this time at Smithwick.

Fulton gave information that Ombudsman relied on in her report on Omagh Bombing. - somewhere in Special Branch systems intelligence had been 'lost'

Fulton's CID primary handler was cross-examined by Fulton's Queen's Counsel Neil Rafferty at the Smithwick Tribunal. He was quite clear that Fulton had given him information that then Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland Nuala O'Loan had quoted and relied on in her report on the Omagh Bombing. He had told her that somewhere in Special Branch systems intelligence had been 'lost'. It crucially included intelligence Fulton had passed to him leading up to and on 12 August 1998, the day before the Omagh Bomb.

Something big afoot: Blair preparing bomb for uncertain purpose

Fulton, said his primary handler, had warned him that the Real IRA was about to move a bomb North, that the notorious dissident Blair was preparing a bomb and that something big was afoot. As Fulton himself said "Did I know specifically that a bomb was going to go off in

Omagh? No, I didn't. Did I give the RUC intelligence that the Real IRA was making a major bomb? Yes, they did have that".

Fulton's primary handler said: "He gave me specific information in relation to a meeting that he had with Blair, that he had met him, that he stinked (sic) the smell of fertiliser which is also the product of bomb making, and that he was as high as a kite...He felt that something big was going to happen".

Handler conveyed the info to Special Branch

Fulton's former primary handler said he put the information in a document and also phoned it through to various departments including The Special Branch.

In 2001 the Guardian carried a definitive Special Report reprising Fulton's actions. It claimed Fulton rang his CID primary handler and had an emergency meeting in Holywood, County Down, with a warning that something big was coming.

The story continued: "I gave him the name of the man I'd been with and his car registration number...I told him I didn't know where the bomb was going to go off or when, but I warned him the attack was imminent. An assembled bomb retains its potency for a maximum of only seven days because beyond that the fertiliser becomes too caked and solid, and has to be broken up".

It goes into some detail as to what Fulton did when he learned that an enormous bomb had gone off in Omagh.

Aftermath of Omagh bomb - relief handler had conveyed info

"I rang my handler. It was a Saturday afternoon...I didn't have to say anything before he said 'Kevin, I fucking know'. I said 'You did put that stuff in the system, didn't you?', and he said 'thank fuck I did'".



Did I know specifically that a bomb was going to go off in Omagh? No, I didn't. Did I give the RUC intelligence that the Real IRA was making a major bomb? Yes, they did have that".

Superiors downgrade Fulton even further

Three days after the bombing in Omagh on 15 August, Fulton's primary handler had meetings with his own superiors in CID and Special Branch and then on the 20th he was given orders that Fulton was not to give information on dissidents - to have no further contact with 'Mooch' Blair or the Real IRA and his only status was to be in relation to mundane CID cases.

Confidence had been lost and Fulton was from now regarded as an intelligence nuisance by Special Branch.

When Fulton was pulled there was conflict. The Ombudsman clearly believed this meeting which occurred after the Omagh Bomb was an attempt to discredit Fulton's intelligence information. However, the Special Branch claimed the meeting was arranged before the bombing and was called because Fulton was supplying the dissidents with information.

Insight: handlers' boss didn't get the info

Fulton couldn't understand why his information wasn't acted on in the investigation.

He told the Tribunal: "I gave [his primary handler] the information I had about Blair...He was under the impression the RUC...were acting on the information. So it went on. But one day [the Senior Investigating officer] was on television and he started crying...that annoyed me. So I actually rang him...I told him that I did work for the police. And we arranged a call the next day. So the next day I spoke to him and I said I work for the RUC and I gave him the names of [both Fulton's CID handlers] and he says 'I'm their boss'.

And it actually shocked me. I mean if he was their boss he should have known about this".

This is another extraordinary insight into how crucial information about Omagh went astray.

Special Branch didn't forward info to Regional officers White and Flanagan

Regional police officers said Assistant Chief Constable White and Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan were, in fact, in control of the investigation into the bombing and that they were bypassed. The questions surrounding Special Branch's failure to pass on to the regional police officers the telephone numbers obtained from GCHQ have never been adequately answered.

Explanation could have been sensitivity of phone numbers: desire to avoid compromising agents

Drew Harris, the present Garda Commissioner in the Republic but then PSNI Assistant Chief Constable, gave evidence to the House of Commons Committee on Northern Ireland in 2009 and hypothesised that the sensitivity of the telephone numbers may have been the reason Special Branch failed to pass on the telephone numbers.

A 'Panorama' TV Programme on Omagh was given the numbers used by the bomb team. Crucially these phones were used to communicate between the car carrying the bomb and the scout car. Calls monitored by GCSH in the UK showed there was a mobile phone exchange between Mooch Blair and the bombers in Omagh within a minute of the bomb. Blair described the call as a "coincidence".

In the interview with the *Guardian*, Fulton said he recognised one of the numbers as

Blair's mobile when he was shown it by the BBC reporter John Ware.

The *Guardian* story continued:

"A call was made from the Omagh area to [Blair's] number, within an hour of the bomb going off [in fact as the car-bomb was being driven into position]"...It lasted 59 seconds"...

[Fulton] has said it was made within 30 seconds of the bomb going off. When asked about this call being made to him, at the Tribunal, Blair said getting a call from Omagh was pure coincidence.

Omagh Investigator refuses to comment on help Fulton gave in investigation

Three months later, as Fulton said in his evidence at Smithwick in 2011, he rang the Senior Investigating Officer of the Omagh Bomb, a Chief Superintendent who was also a witness at Smithwick (Witness 68). It was then that Fulton, the Chief Superintendent and his secondary handler drove South to the Carrickmacross area to locate the farm where Fulton said bombs were made. He heard nothing more from the Chief Superintendent - the senior investigating officer - after that day. The same Chief Superintendent, while giving his views about Garda collusion at Smithwick, refused to comment further on Fulton and his handler's account of the journey South while being cross examined by Fulton's QC.

Fulton becomes lever for what became Smithwick Tribunal

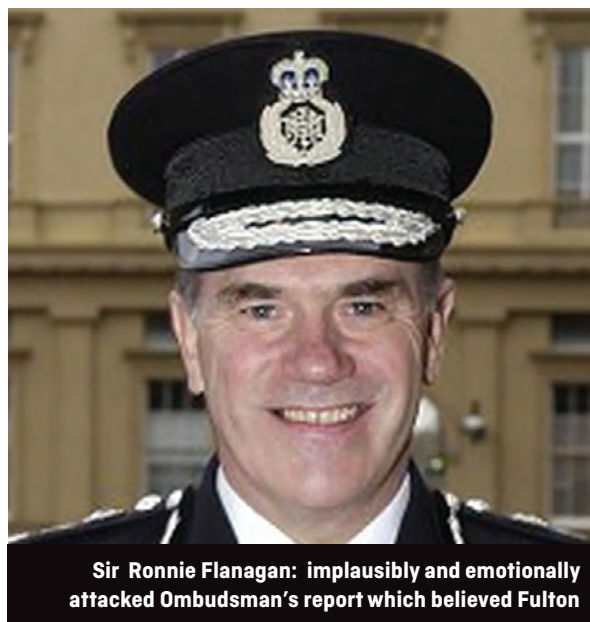
In 1999 Fulton met a former Sergeant in FRU Ian Hurst, and Liam Clarke of the *Sunday Times*. Clarke suggested Fulton meet some people in Armagh campaigning for an investigation into the death of Breen. Fulton was then to become a lever for those looking for an investigation into Garda collusion which eventually led to Smithwick.

The Ombudsman Reports in 2001

The Omagh Bomb Investigation was a reputational disaster for the RUC Special Branch and CID but the publication of the Ombudsman report on the RUC investigation in December 200, represented the nadir.

Crucially, Fulton's evidence was regarded as credible by the then Police Ombudsman, Nuala O'Loan, though she accepts that responsibility rests with the terrorists and also that "even if reasonable action had been taken, it is unlikely the Omagh Bomb could have been prevented on Fulton's Intelligence alone".

Her report was highly critical of the RUC investigation into the bombing and particularly of the RUC Special Branch which she pointedly described as "a force-within-a-force".



Sir Ronnie Flanagan: implausibly and emotionally attacked Ombudsman's report which believed Fulton

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Flanagan was scathing about the heavy emphasis the Ombudsman's report put on the evidence provided by Fulton.

Ombudsman relied on Fulton and McVicar

O’Loan had the benefit of seeing an unpublished review, the McVicar Report, into the Omagh bomb investigation and had heard from Fulton and his handler. Nearly half of O’Loan’s report concerned Fulton’s evidence.

Ombudsman notes Chief Constable untruthfully said Fulton found retrospectively wrong

Although the report accepted Fulton’s evidence, O’Loan referred to a cover article in the Sunday People newspaper of 29th July 2001 under the banner ‘I told cops about Omagh’, in which Fulton claimed that Omagh could have been prevented had his information been acted on. Ombudsman investigators got a copy of tapes Fulton had made of his conversations with handlers, and transcripts.

Chief Constable attacks Fulton’s post-bomb evidence

The report noted that the Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan issued an immediate denial of Fulton’s assertions and had further stated that “retrospective information he (Fulton) gave to the RUC about Omagh was checked and found to be without any foundation whatsoever”. There is no reason to think this was true.

Chief Constable attacks Fulton’s pre-bomb reliability and info

Dealing with his time in CID Flanagan went on:

“From 1996 to 2000 Fulton provided information to CID with regard to criminal, as opposed to terrorist, related matters, because of his particular access to certain types of criminal activity. In that role he provided information which led to a number of successful police operations, which is why his CID handler regarded him as reliable. As a result of his behaviour becoming steadily more erratic and counterproductive...the RUC decided in April 2000 to have no further contact, because the risks he posed to the police outweighed any potential gains”.

But Flanagan was scathing about O’Loan’s credulity. Dealing with the piece of evidence the Ombudsman found most significant and which had gone missing from the Special Branch system, Flanagan said:

“Fulton’s unreliability was demonstrated by the fact that he changed the date, when interviewed by the Ombudsman’s staff, on which he had claimed to have told his handler that ‘A’ had smelled of fertiliser, from the 23rd of July (the occasion confirmed in police records) to the 11th of August - presumably to imply some sort of link with the Omagh attack,



But as far as the Special Branch was concerned Fulton was a loose cannon, who was out of their control, and the case against Blair was unproven’.

as fertiliser is an ingredient of home made explosives. In [any event in] fact a check with forensic experts should have indicated that the fertiliser bomb mix used by dissidents since 1991 had been virtually odourless”. One senior forensic officer described this statement as meaningless.

Fulton’s CID handler at the time of Omagh, his CID former primary handler, the former RUC/PSNI officer, in fact confirmed to both Smithwick and the Ombudsman that Fulton had given him the crucial evidence on 12 August - just as he said he did. This is very important as to his credibility in relation to Omagh.

Ombudsman and Chief Constable diverge on Fulton

However O’Loan had seen things very differently. For her it was precisely the information that Fulton was giving to the CID about dissident IRA activity that went straight to the Special Branch, that she found constituted compelling and valuable intelligence.

It seems this discrepancy in the value imputed to Fulton’s intelligence about dissidents contributed to the failure to stop the bomb.

The Ombudsman accepted that:

Fulton did pass information relating to alleged dissident activities to his handler on five separate occasions between June and August 1998; that the key information in respect of each of these meetings was delivered to Special Branch; but that the key information in respect of two of those meetings on 23 July 1998 and 12 August 1998 could be found in Special Branch records. It had disappeared.

The Ombudsman pointed out that Fulton’s credibility had not been called into question before August 1998 and that he did not claim to show the location of the factory for the Omagh bomb.

She found the accounts of his conversations with handlers “highly significant”. O’Loan was convinced that Special Branch had received all the Fulton intelligence reports, “but the fact that Special Branch states it never received the documents represents at the very least, a breakdown in communications”.

Devastatingly and determinedly the Ombudsman noted “with great sadness”, that “the judgement and leadership of the Chief Constable, (Ronnie Flanagan) and ACC Crime (Raymond White) have been seriously flawed.

As a result of that, the chances of detaining and convicting the Omagh Bombers have been significantly reduced”.

O’Loan was swayed by the access she had to the McVicar review, the internal RUC review of the investigation carried out between March and November 2000, which had found “serious and fundamental errors” and that “many evidential opportunities had been missed”. This review had also been entirely unaware of Fulton’s allegations about what happened until the Sunday People article appeared.

O’Loan has recently reiterated her belief that the bombing could have been prevented and she has long emphasised the need for a public inquiry.

Chief Constable Flanagan emotionally attacks Ombudsman report

Flanagan said the criticisms of the CID investigation and the Special Branch handling of intelligence, contained major inaccuracies. In an unusually emotional outburst he talked about “committing suicide” if the Ombudsman’s report turned out to be true. Flanagan was scathing about the heavy emphasis the report put on the evidence provided by Fulton.

Fulton’s credibility

Whatever the truth of Fulton’s behaviour, and Special Branch no doubt found him erratic and dangerous, neither of his handlers or White had anything but praise for Fulton at Smithwick. They even – as if views on Fulton’s credibility were not confused enough - extraordinarily ignored some disastrous CID fraud cases, such as the Luigi Marotta case that had depended on Fulton’s evidence, but had collapsed when Fulton’s role in entrapping witnesses was revealed. There was a taint over some of his intelligence on ordinary criminality not just on dissidents.



Village has tended to believe Fulton on Blair and Omagh’.

The Police seek a Judicial Review

In February 2002 the Police Association, representing retired senior officers and the rank and file in the PSNI, moved to seek a judicial review of the Ombudsman's report. Assistant Chief Constable Raymond White and the Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan signed the affidavits for the application. They were represented by the then QC, now High Court judge, Bernard McCloskey. (The issue of Judge McCloskey's previous representation of the Police Officers as QC was raised at the Loughinisland Judicial Review; and he effectively if reluctantly recused himself.)

Other regional officers impute blame to their senior regional officers

Unfortunately for them two other senior – regional - officers Alan McQuillan and Sam Kincaid contributed affidavits on behalf of the Ombudsman. They rejected any suggestions that they had responsibility for the Omagh investigation – it rested with Ronnie Flanagan and Raymond White. They stated that the investigation was run by the two top officers and driven by crucial intelligence that bypassed regional officers like themselves. They flatly rejected White's assertion that his role in the bomb inquiry was limited. According to sources close to the investigation who spoke to *Village* the regional officers had unfairly shouldered the blame internally in the PSNI when in fact they had had little or no

access to the intelligence.

After this huge conflict between fellow officers emerged the judicial review application did not proceed.

One former RUC officer claims some of what wrong in the investigations into the bombing is down to the confusion created by cutting across the usual line of command in the investigation.

It did little to bolster the PSNI's dismissal of Fulton's claims.

It is also ironic that White who knew Fulton's history so well initiated legal actions against the Ombudsman's report - which accepted Fulton's intelligence - in the light of the fact that he endorsed Fulton as a source in his evidence to the Smithwick tribunal in 2012, a time when he would have had all the information necessary to assess Fulton's credibility.

It was also ironic that Fulton, in evidence to Smithwick, was adamant that he had not been the source of the information contained in *The Sunday People* in 2001 that triggered a number of actions including the Ombudsman's report. However, at Smithwick he agreed he was the source of allegations against Blair.

White Interviewed

In 2008, after he had retired, White was interviewed by BBC's 'Panorama' in another programme about Omagh. White said the attacks carried out in 1997-1998 had been perpetrated by a fluid group of people, with different faces coming in and out.

White blames Special Branch dependence on Garda

The police investigators in Northern Ireland, he said, were heavily dependent on the Garda for intelligence as most of the dissidents were based in Dundalk and North Louth and so "pinning down, what you would call it, a definitive group of people, was very difficult for us. I wasn't within the Special Branch at the time and I can only build a picture from the conversations I've had with the colleagues who were serving there. They would say it was a fragmented picture. They were heavily dependent on their Garda colleagues, to sort of keep them up to speed [on it]".

But what White and CID's C16 did have was Fulton, running with the (dissident) wolves. The biggest wolf of the lot was his friend and mentor, master bomb-maker Patrick Blair. But as far as the Special Branch was concerned Fulton was a loose cannon, who was out of their control, and the case against Blair was unproven.

Blair's cross-examination of Fulton

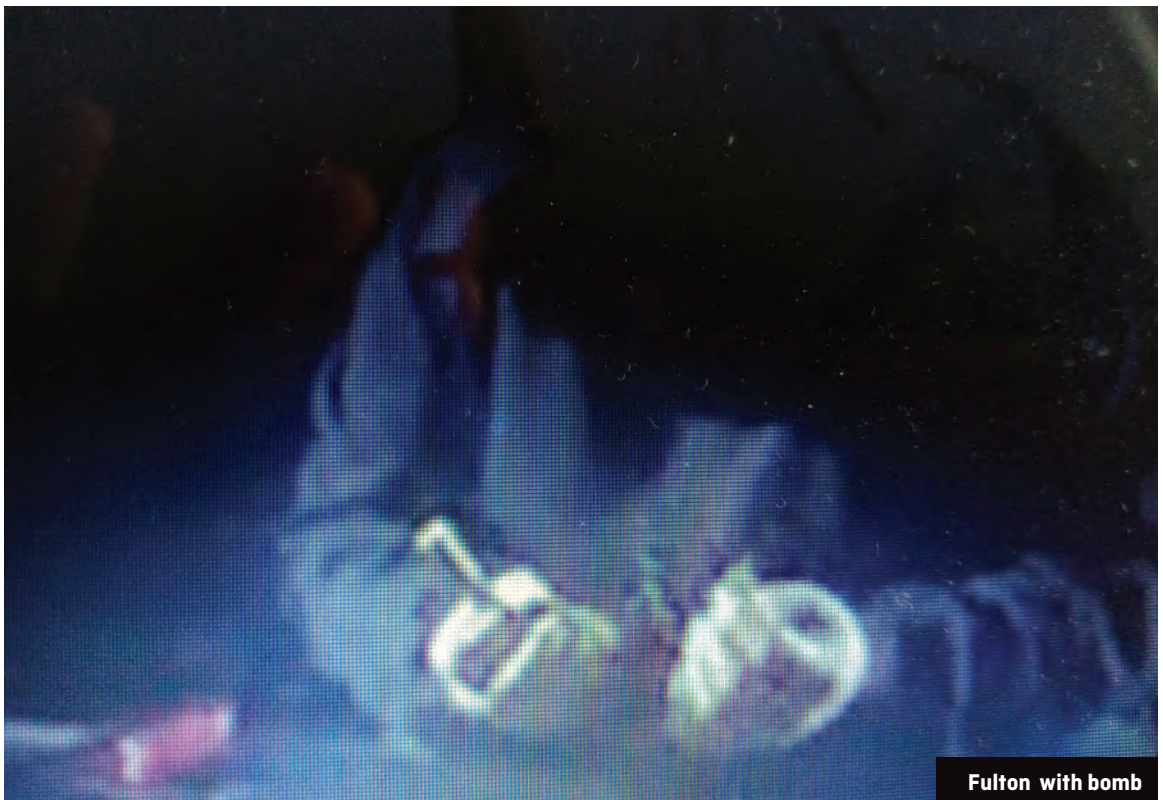
In December 2011 at Smithwick Patrick Blair's Counsel cross-examined Fulton who pointed out that Blair categorically denied allegations in relation to Omagh, and in fact everything else.

In 2002 Blair was sentenced in the Special Criminal Court in Dublin for possession of ammunition. He served 27 months. This was not connected to the Omagh bombing. He has subsequently been given short prison sentences for dissident activities.

Blair has got away with it, so far.

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Village has concluded that Fulton's evidence to Smithwick was intended to confuse



Fulton with bomb

Blair gives evidence in November 2011

Patrick Blair was cross-examined in relation to the Omagh Bombing, by counsel for the Smithwick Tribunal.

Q- I think that you were jailed in this jurisdiction on the 9th of October 2003, for firearms offences, is that right?

A- That's right yeah.

Q- And I think Mr Fulton complained at the time that you were sending him threatening death threats?

A- He is making this up. He is a fantasist.

Q- But there would be no love lost between you and Fulton sure there wouldn't?

A- No

Q- And did he implicate you in the Omagh Bomb?

A- Yes, he did..

Q- And that led to an inquiry being carried out in the North by the Ombudsman isn't that so?

A- Yes. I was never arrested in the North about ...or questioned in the North about that, even though I have been arrested (in relation to other alleged offences) .

Q- And it was generally known that you were the person that Fulton was referring to [in the Ombudsman's report], isn't that right?

A- That's right yes...

Q- And were you, was your name outed in the House of Common? [In relation to the Omagh bomb]

A- Yes.

Q- And despite all of that publicity and all of those allegations that went on over a period of years, you are saying that you were never, ever interviewed by the police authorities in the North?

A- That's correct yes.

Q- Were you ever interviewed by the Garda in the South about a possible involvement?

A- I was never arrested over the Omagh bomb in any State or Jurisdiction.

Q- But you were never interviewed in relation to it or formally....

A- That's right.

Blair wasn't even questioned about Omagh.

Failed prosecution of Sean Hoey for Omagh

In 2006 Fulton was arrested in London and flown to Northern Ireland for interrogation in relation to serious crimes, including murder. He had also been subpoenaed by Sean Hoey's defence team to give evidence at his trial. Hoey had been jailed in 2003 on 58 charges relating to the Real IRA bombing of Omagh. According to reports Fulton



Judge Mark Horner In extraordinary and trenchant judgments ordered a new Human Rights-compliant investigation involving authorities North and South

was to give evidence about "informants working for the Irish and British security forces inside the Real IRA". He was interrogated 30 times by the Serious Crimes Unit of the PSNI on the basis of his book 'Unsung Hero'.

The arrest removed any suggestion Fulton was benefitting from any immunity from prosecution and he therefore did not give evidence.

Hoey was found not guilty on 56 charges including for 29 murders. He had maintained his innocence throughout.

Police deliberately deceived court about Hoey

At the Crown Court Judge Weir said there had been a "deliberate and calculated deception by police". The Police Ombudsman was alerted to transcripts in the case.

Hoey's defence team said the evidence had been tampered with and exhibits wrongly labelled, witnesses were accused of lying and allegations were made that there was a conspiracy to "beef-up" evidence. Judge Weir excoriated some of the police witnesses. The failure of this case based on weak forensics, adds to the questions which pile up about the failure to hold any of the perpetrators to account in a criminal trial.

Fulton now

The Security Services finally settled with Fulton and gave him what he believed he was due, a place to live and an income. Sources say Fulton aka Keeley now works as a photographer in London having acquired his specialist skills while working undercover in Northern Ireland.

Fulton - apparently reliable on Omagh, dubious in Smithwick

Inconveniently for this jurisdiction it appears Fulton's principal role for MI5 was as distracter-in-chief at the Smithwick Tribunal. Because he almost single-handedly diverted it from finding a colluder.

As I have written before in *Village*, the Smithwick Tribunal ended up with the strange finding of 'collusion' but no name for the 'colluder' in the murders of RUC men Breen and Buchanan – apparently because Smithwick was swayed by the successor to the RUC (PSNI) giving untestable very late evidence privately naming someone more plausible than Owen Corrigan as the colluder. Smithwick always focused on Corrigan because the Cory Inquiry, which prompted the

Smithwick Tribunal, unduly relied on 2003 evidence of Fulton that Corrigan gave relevant information to the IRA about the RUC men, though Fulton seems to have later changed his story (when giving evidence to Smithwick in 2011) to say that Corrigan gave information to the IRA only about informant Tom Oliver, and even the changed story was expressly and ignominiously disavowed by Smithwick in a statement to the High Court which halted a judicial review by retired Garda Owen Corrigan into some of the findings in his report.

This article has tended to the assumption that Fulton told the truth about Blair and Omagh but elsewhere Fulton is known primarily as a devious dissembler on a grand scale.

The Truth

The only way the truth will out is with the reinvestigation called for by Judge Horner. Some of the Omagh families have already brought a successful civil case against some of the alleged perpetrators of the bomb including Colm Murphy and Liam Campbell, Michael McKeivitt and Séamus Daly who were found liable for the bombing. Damages were awarded and they all declared bankruptcy. Indeed there are proceedings currently before the courts against Colm Murphy for alleged moving of assets out of his own name.

Dramatis Personae

Liam Campbell, the alleged leader of the Real IRA, was found to be civilly liable for the Omagh Bombing. He, obscurely, is to be extradited to Lithuania on weapons charges.

David Rupert the FBI/MI5 informant drove into well-rewarded obscurity in rural America after giving evidence against Michael Mc Keivitt.

Paddy Dixon, the Garda Informant, was resettled, given a new identity and paid a million euro.

Michael Mc Keivitt, after release from prison on conviction for 'Directing Terrorism', died recently after a long illness.

Patrick 'Mooch' Blair, was recently released after serving two years in prison.

Kevin Fulton was given an apartment and an income from MI5, works as a photographer in London and has gone quiet

Mr Justice Horner's trenchant judgement cannot be ignored by the British and indeed the Irish Governments. His emphatic endorsement of Fulton's intelligence in the run up to the bombing means Fulton will yet again come centre stage in a major inquiry. If and when it happens his evidence could be incendiary. **L**