



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### Garda officer was the IRA mole responsible for the murder of two senior RUC men



**Chief Superintendent Harry Breen**

**Both the Irish Republic's Garda and Northern Ireland's Royal Ulster Constabulary knew that an IRA mole was operating inside the Garda before he set up two senior RUC officers for assassination.**

The IRA agent is accused of setting up Chief Superintendent Harry Breen and Superintendent Bob Buchanan, who were shot dead on the South Armagh/Louth border on 20 March 1989.

#### **At least one**

The double murder is the subject of one of several inquiries headed by Canadian judge Peter Cory, who is also investigating the killing of Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane. His report concluded that at least one Garda officer was on the IRA's payroll.

Fresh evidence has emerged over how the IRA mole in the Garda was an open secret among police officers, well before the Breen and Buchanan murders. One of their colleagues has come forward to reveal that RUC and Garda officers were well aware of an IRA agent operating inside the latter police force in North Louth for several years. The officer has not provided this testimony to Cory though the judge has reported that Breen and Buchanan's colleague, Sgt Alan Mains told him the name of the mole.

#### **Documentary**

In a film for Ulster Television's Insight, the officer, known in the programme only as 'Robert', talks about the open secret. He recounts how there were fears for the security of RUC personnel if they crossed the border for meetings with their Garda counterparts in Dundalk. 'We were told quite clearly that there were certain people we couldn't tell we were coming down,' he says. 'Quite clearly the risk was in Dundalk Garda station and there was a certain individual we were not to inform we were coming down, although on occasion he did find out because inevitably he would have been at the some of the meetings that I was at.' When he heard about the murders, Robert adds: 'I think quite clearly it was my mind that this particular individual had tipped off the IRA about Harry Breen's movements and his colleague.' The army agent known as Kevin Fulton, who infiltrated the IRA for the British security services, backs Robert's claims. Fulton has been interviewed by Judge Cory and has provided the name of the IRA mole working inside the Garda.

#### **Codes**

Fulton claims that the murders of Breen and Buchanan on the main Dublin to Belfast road was a major coup for the IRA, because the hit squad involved seized the officers' notebooks containing names of informers in code. 'A short time after that, the Provisional IRA issued a statement saying that all the volunteers and people giving information had an am-



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nesty to hand themselves over; that they had acquired the officers' notebooks and files and had worked out who the informants were.'

Judge Cory's report does not name the Garda officer at the centre of the controversy over the killings though his name is well known amongst the members of the press and it is but a matter of time before he is named. The Breen/ Buchanan report is part of several inquiries the judge is holding. He has recommended public inquiries into the double murder.