



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

First conviction in Omagh bombing case



Colm Murphy - history of terror

In a judgment most people believe would never have been delivered in Northern Ireland, due to the government's and the judiciary's craven subservience to Republicans, the Special Criminal Court in Dublin has convicted Colm Murphy from Dundalk, Co. Louth, the heartland of Provisional IRA in the Republic of Ireland, of conspiring to cause the Omagh bombing. The three-judge panel took a week and a day to reach a verdict and Mr Justice Robert Barr told Murphy, 49: "It was the worst atrocity in Northern Ireland since 1969."

Mr Justice Barr said: "The accused is a republican terrorist of long standing, having been convicted of a series of offences of this nature in both this state and the United States and having served jail sentences." Murphy, a father of four, showed no reaction as the verdict was delivered. The conviction carries a maximum sentence of life in prison.

The only man ever to be charged in connection with the blast, Murphy was found to have handed over two mobile phones to an associate of a suspected senior Real IRA terrorist plotting the attack.

The phones were used in the operation to transport the bomb to the Co Tyrone market town in August 1998.

The explosion killed 29 people, including a woman pregnant with twins, a total of 31 murder victims, and injured more than 300 others. It was the single worst atrocity in the history of the troubles in Northern Ireland. Mr Justice Barr, presiding, told the wealthy publican and land-owner, who also ran a large building firm until his arrest, that he was a proven liar, with a "long history" of violent republican activity.

He said admissions made by Murphy, but later denied, in evidence had a "firm ring of truth". And the judges rejected a retraction of evidence by Murphy's second cousin Terence Morgan. On hearing the verdict Laurence Rush, whose wife Libbi died in the blast, broke down in tears and sobbed: "I'm so relieved." During the 25-day trial, the court heard that Murphy loaned his mobile phone to terrorists who bombed Banbridge, Co Down, a month before the attack on Omagh, injuring more than 35 people.

Senior Counsel Peter Charleton, prosecuting, said: "Having aided in terms of the supply of something useful in the Banbridge bombing, the accused between the dates of the indictment, lent his aid to persons he knew were doing a bombing run." "As it happens, that was to Omagh and, as it happens, there was a terrible loss of life in Omagh." He added: "The accused was not present there. He did not carry the bomb there, but the evidence is capable of an inference that he aided in terms of the setting of the bomb, without necessarily knowing where it was going to be set off."

The judges accepted that on August 14 the accused borrowed a mobile phone from his foreman, Patrick Terence Morgan by way of subterfuge. He gave the latter phone and his own mobile phone to one Seamus Daly, a dissident republican terrorist in Dundalk that



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day.

It is to be noted that Murphy and those with him were constantly referred to as “dissident republicans.” In truth, they were lifelong members of the Provisional IRA and the bombing could not have been carried out without direct IRA assistance.