

## **'Gerry Adams warned me not to say who killed my mother': Jean McConville's son reveals Sinn Fein leader told him there would be a 'backlash' if he ever told**

- Adams set up meetings between murdered widow's family and IRA
- Allegedly warned grieving son Michael against revealing names
- Sinn Fein leader was freed on Sunday after 4 days questioning over murder
- But Adams claims he is the victim of 'sinister British forces'
- Insists he is 'innocent of any conspiracy' around the 1972 killing
- 65-year-old left Antrim station, west of Belfast, via rear exit yesterday
- Protesters holding Union flags attempted to block convoy of vehicles
- Mother of 10 Mrs McConville was abducted before she was shot dead by IRA
- Adams, 65, has always denied any involvement in the killing
- McConville family vow to continue fight for justice

By [Tom Mctague, Mail Online Deputy Political Editor](#)

Published: 16:05 GMT, 4 May 2014 | Updated: 14:08 GMT, 5 May 2014

Sinn Fein boss Gerry Adams warned the son of IRA victim Jean McConville that he faced a 'backlash' if he revealed who killed his mother, it was claimed this morning.

Michael McConville said he took the Republican leader's warning as a 'threat' and backed off.

Mr Adam's allegedly made the veiled warning as a report was being drawn up into claims Mrs McConville was an informer for the British government.



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The family of Jean McConville react to the news of Mr Adams's release this evening, saying: 'The McConville family is going to stay to the bitter end until we get justice'

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**Gerry Adams stands with Sinn Féin politician and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland Martin McGuinness (right) and Sinn Féin vice president Mary Lou MacDonald (left) before the press conference. He was released from police custody today after 96 hours of questioning**



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**Mr Adams said his willingness to speak to police was 'following yet another spate of media speculation - part of a sustained, malicious, untruthful and sinister campaign'**

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[Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams released from police custody](#)





The Sinn Féin chief had brokered a series of meetings between Mr McConville and members of the IRA in a bid to discover the truth.

The report was being drawn up by Northern Ireland's then police ombudsman, Nuala O'Loan.

This morning Mr McConville said: 'I asked the IRA if Nuala O'Loan came out and made her statement clear that my mother wasn't an informant would they come out and apologise for the murder of our mother.

'They turned around and says "no they won't" and they'd be making a statement saying that "your mother was an informant".

'I says to them "well, if that's the case I'll be releasing the names into the public for the people that came and took our mother that night".'

Mr McConville, speaking to the BBC Radio 4's Today programme, added: 'When I was having these meetings Gerry Adams used to get the meetings called.'

He said he used to tell Mr Adams what had happened in the meetings and warned him that he would release the names of those involved if Ms O'Loan's report was disputed.

Mr McConville added: 'Gerry Adams says to me "Michael, you are getting a letter of support from the Republican people". He says "if you release the names I hope you are ready for the backlash". I took it as a threat.'



The bombshell claim came Mr Adams was released from custody last night.

Adams walked free after four nights in police custody, blaming his arrest over the notorious murder of the mother of ten on 'sinister' British forces and a 'sustained, malicious, untruthful campaign'.

The Sinn Féin leader insisted he had been falsely accused of ordering the murder of the widowed mother, who was dragged screaming from her home in front of her children in 1972.

But Mr McConville said he would continue to fight for justice for his mother.

He said: 'We are calling for this case to be taken out of Northern Ireland and an independent body to look at it so the McConville family gets justice for its mother because we don't think we can get justice for our mother the way things are happening in this country.'

Mr McConville also revealed that he was 'disappointed' that Adams had been released.

He said: 'We thought we were going to get Gerry Adams brought to court.'

Adams was defended by his Sinn Féin ally Gerry Kelly. The Northern Ireland politician said: 'Gerry Adams has tried his best to help the McConville family... and continues to try.'

It came after Adams said on Sunday night that he would not allow the 'dark side of the British system' to derail the peace process.

And he even complained that the food he was given in custody had been 'inedible', adding: 'I didn't eat for the first number of days because it wasn't up to it.'

The threat of charges over the murder of Mrs McConville still hang over the Sinn Féin leader.

He also faces possible prosecution for alleged membership of the IRA after being quizzed by detectives over his suspected role in the terrorist network at the height of the Troubles.

Michael McConville, who was just 11 when he witnessed his mother being dragged away to her death, said: 'The McConville family is going to stay to the bitter end until we get justice.'



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Michael McConville, right, who was 11, when he saw his mother being dragged away to her death, added: We know it is going to be a long road. But we have already been fighting for justice for 40 years and we are not going to stop now'

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5/5/2014

Gerry Adams 'warned Jean McConville's son Michael not to say who killed his mother' | Mail Online



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**Mr Adams' release sparked huge interest in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.**  
**He attacked his arrest and insisted he was innocent**

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'We know it is going to be a long road. But we have already been fighting for justice for 40 years and we are not going to stop now.'

Adams' release from Antrim police station was met with dramatic scenes as Loyalists blocked the road outside with a sit-down protest.

Riot police were drafted in, while Land Rovers were deployed to clear the protesters, some waving 'Justice for Jean McConville' placards.

The Sinn Fein leader dodged them by leaving through a side exit and later addressed a hastily arranged press conference at a south Belfast hotel.





Mrs Jean McConville, who was one of 'The Disappeared' and believed murdered by the IRA



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Loyalists sit in the street in an attempt to block the exit at Antrim station before the release of Gerry Adams





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**Police vehicles leave Antrim station, west of Belfast, this evening. It is believed Mr Adams left via a back exit in a different convoy**

Adams said those who authorised his arrest and detention ‘could have done it differently’.

He said: ‘They did not have to use pernicious, coercive legislation to deal with a legacy issue even one as serious as this, which I was voluntarily prepared to deal with.

‘They did not have to do this in the middle of an election campaign.’ But Adams added that he supported Northern Ireland’s police force and called for peace, saying he wanted to live in a ‘peaceful Ireland based on equality’.

He added: ‘I have never dissociated myself from the IRA and I never will. But I am glad that I and others have created a peaceful and democratic way forward for everyone. The IRA is gone, it is finished.’



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The convoy of vehicles acted as a distraction while Mr Adams left the complex via a rear exit. Sinn Fein are expected to make a statement later this evening

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**The convoy, left, leaves the station, while police stand next to demonstrators with placards**

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Adams' release came 96 hours after he was arrested on Wednesday night for allegedly arranging for 37-year-old Mrs McConville to be abducted and shot after she comforted a British soldier gunned down by Republicans in front of her home.

A file will now be sent to Northern Ireland's Public Prosecution Service, which will decide whether to charge Adams. Mrs McConville's family told the Mail they were 'downhearted' by the decision to free him but remained hopeful that he might yet stand trial over his alleged part in the killing.

His release comes after Northern Ireland's first minister accused Sinn Féin of a 'despicable, thuggish' attempt to blackmail the police over Adams' arrest.





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**Loyalist protesters wait outside Antrim Police station where Sinn Fein president Mr Adams has been questioned**

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**Sinn Féin's Gerry Kelly (centre) speaks to the media outside the police station having visited Mr Adams today**

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Peter Robinson said the Police Service of Northern Ireland should not have to suffer 'Republican bullyboy tactics' after Martin McGuinness threatened to withdraw support for the police if Adams was charged. Adams, 65, has always denied any involvement in the murder of Mrs McConville, whose body was not discovered for more than 30 years.

## **A FIGHT FOR FREEDOM? GERRY ADAMS, A CAREER IN NATIONALISM**

Gerry Adams was born in 1948. He became involved in the nationalist campaign in the 1960s.

He was interned without trial in 1972. In July 1972 he was released to participate in secret talks in London. After his re-arrest he tried to escape and was imprisoned. He was released in 1976.

In 1984 he was shot and seriously wounded by a unionist death squad working in collusion with British Intelligence, according to the Sinn Féin website.

Gerry Adams and John Hume initiated the peace process which succeeded in bringing an end to the conflict.

He was one of the architects of the Good Friday Agreement which of all-Ireland political institutions and a power sharing Executive in the north of Ireland.

In 2011 he resigned his seat in the British Parliament and was subsequently elected to the Dáil (Irish Parliament) in the general election of February 2011.

He was quizzed after police obtained a batch of recordings by former paramilitaries about people who were abducted by the IRA and killed.

Detectives are also believed to have questioned Adams about IRA membership – which he has always denied – by using articles he allegedly wrote while in prison in the 1970s.

The reports are for the Republican An Phoblacht newspaper under the pseudonym 'Brownie' who admitted to being an IRA volunteer.

In one letter, 'Brownie' announced he was being released from prison in 1977 – the same year Adams was released from Long Kesh.

Gerry Adams lavished praise on the IRA grandmother accused of organising the abduction of Jean McConville, it emerged yesterday.

The Sinn Féin leader paid tribute to former head of the IRA women's wing Madge McConville – no relation to her alleged victim – as a 'wonderful woman'.

He spoke following her death at the age of 87 in 2009, saying she represented 'what Republicanism was about'.

Widow Mrs McConville, 37, was abducted from her west Belfast home after she was accused of being an informant.

She was then shot and secretly buried, with her body found on a beach in County Louth in 2003.

The IRA did not admit responsibility for the death until 1999, when the underground organisation defended its action by claiming she had been a British Army spy.

However, a 2006 investigation by Northern Ireland's police complaints watchdog found no evidence she had been a spy, and had been wrongly accused of passing information to the security forces.



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**The body of Jean McConville is removed from the Templetown beach in County Louth in 2003. She vanished in 1972**





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**Mr Kelly, a senior member of Sinn Fein, insisted the party still believes in Northern Ireland's police force despite a threat to review its support if Mr Adams was charged by detectives**

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**Mr Kelly visited his party leader at the police station and said they were 'assessing' their position on policing**

Earlier today Gerry Kelly, a senior member of Sinn Féin, insisted the party still believes in Northern Ireland's police force despite a threat to review its support if Mr Adams was charged by detectives.

Amid a growing row over the arrest, Northern Ireland's Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness has launched scathing criticism of the police's handling of the affair.

First Minister Peter Robinson also accused his partners in government of attempting to blackmail the police over the detention of their party leader.

Mr Kelly said: 'We are in policing because we believe in the new dispensation of policing.'

The Stormont assembly member added: 'If the policing which we see is wrong then we will speak out against that.'



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**Gerry Adams, depicted on this mural which has just been repaired following a paint bomb attack, denies the allegations against him**

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Mr McGuinness has blamed the arrest on an 'embittered rump' left over from before the reform of policing whom he claimed wanted to destroy the peace process.

But Mr Robinson said: 'The publicly conveyed threat to the PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland) delivered by the highest levels of Sinn Fein that they will reassess their attitude to policing if Gerry Adams is charged is a despicable, thuggish attempt to blackmail the PSNI.'

'The threat now means that ordinary decent citizens will conclude that the PSNI and the PPS (Public Prosecution Service) have succumbed to a crude and overt political threat if Adams is not charged.'

Sinn Fein's decision to sign up to support the police in 2007 was viewed as a major milestone in the peace process and prompted the return to devolved rule at Stormont, with the republican party and the Democratic Unionists entering government together.



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**Nationalists gather in support of Gerry Adams and to call for his release in Belfast yesterday**

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#### Sinn Fein's Martina Anderson joins the Gerry Adams supporters on the Falls Road

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Mr Kelly visited his party leader at the police station and said they were 'assessing' their position on policing.

'This is quite a serious situation,' he said.

'He is leader of Sinn Fein, he is being questioned about things that happened over 42 years ago and let me say this very clearly, the McConville family and the suffering that they have gone through is not going to be assisted by another injustice which is being perpetrated now.'

Mr Kelly told reporters that Adams looked well and was being treated well by police.

Two dozen pro-British activists raised a union flag from a lamp post near the police station. However, there have been no signs of trouble across the province since Adams' arrest.

Mrs McConville was dragged, screaming, away from her children in the Divis flats in west Belfast by a gang of up to 12 men and women after being wrongly accused of informing to the security forces.

She was interrogated, shot in the back of the head and then secretly buried - becoming one of the 'Disappeared' victims of the Troubles.

5/5/2014

Gerry Adams 'warned Jean McConville's son Michael not to say who killed his mother' | Mail Online

Mr Adams, a former MP for West Belfast and now an elected representative for County Louth in the Irish Dail, voluntarily presented himself for interview by prior arrangement with detectives.