

Revealed: Secret murder tapes that 'name' Gerry Adams over IRA execution of mother accused of passing information to British

- Adams is accused of ordering execution of mother-of-ten Jean McConville
- IRA woman who drove Mrs McConville to her death recorded a confession
- The tape had languished for ten years in a Boston College library

- It has now been handed over to the Police Service of Northern Ireland

By [Bob Graham](#)

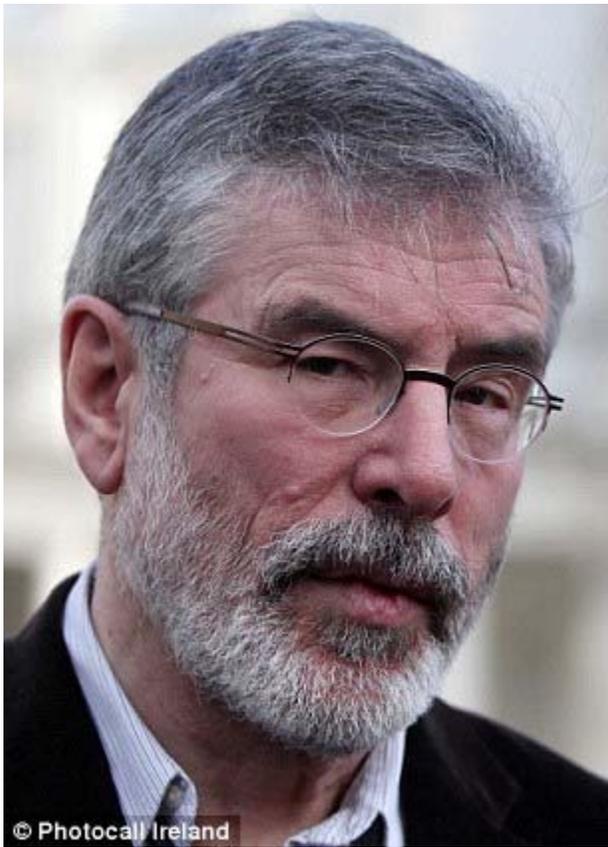
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Horror: The remains of IRA murder victim Jean McConville are recovered from an area near the Templetown beach in County Louth in 2003

Now, at last, the McConville children are on the verge of hearing – from beyond the grave – the confession of the IRA woman who drove their mother to her death.

And in an explosive testimony, she is believed to have named Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, as the IRA commander who ordered the execution of Michael's mother.



Gerry Adams is accused of ordering the 1972 execution

Yesterday, 11 clandestine tapes recorded by Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries, which have languished for ten years in the archives of the Burns Library in Boston College in the US, were handed over to the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

They include an admission from Dolores Price, one of the IRA's most infamous terrorists, that she ferried Michael's 37-year-old mother to the Irish Republic where she was tortured, tied up and shot in the head.

And she asserts it was Gerry Adams who sanctioned the murder.

Adams, who now sits in the Republic of Ireland's parliament, has always strenuously denied belonging to the IRA and any involvement in terrorist murders.

But Michael McConville, now 51, believes the tapes' shocking contents could lead to fresh arrests – among them that of Adams.

Price's damning revelation is corroborated in another tape, made by Brendan 'Darkie' Hughes, the terror-hardened deputy commander of the IRA's Belfast Brigade.

He, too, insists it was Adams who signed the Catholic Belfast housewife's death warrant. Yet Adams claims credit for shaping the 1996 peace agreement that ended Ulster's Troubles after he swapped the ArmaLite for the ballot box.

Price and Hughes, now both dead, agreed to make the tapes with Irish academics on the strict proviso they remain locked away while they lived. Price's death in January this year freed the Boston College from its obligation to keep them secret.

The release of the tapes has been at the centre of a bitter legal wrangle. Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness, Deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly and a self-confessed former IRA commander, and US Secretary of State John Kerry have waged a high-profile battle to have them suppressed on the grounds that they could derail Ulster's fragile peace process.



Mrs McConville with her husband and three of her ten children

For Michael and his siblings, their hope is that the recordings may at last lead to their mother's executioners being brought to justice.

'If Price mentions Gerry Adams in the tapes, that he was in some way involved and if it can be proved, he should be tried,' Michael says. 'At the very least I'd like to see him stand in court and answer the accusations.'

'You can't turn around and say it is right to kill someone the way they did, especially a mother, no matter what your beliefs are.'

Michael's mother, Jean, a Protestant who converted to Catholicism when she married husband Archie, had moved to the staunchly Republican Divis Flats in the Lower Falls area after being intimidated out of a Loyalist area.

When the IRA eventually confessed to abducting and killing her, they claimed it was because she was a 'tout' who was passing information to the British Army.



Gerry Adams (centre) pictured attending an IRA funeral during the troubles

The McConville family has always insisted that their mother's only involvement with the Army was that she once gave succour to an injured squaddie.

Michael has yet to hear the tapes. But shortly before she died Delores Price chillingly told me of her role in the murder of his mother – one of 17 IRA victims known as the Disappeared. She told me that her memoir, including her role driving away the Disappeared, was recorded in the Boston Project – as the collection of tapes are known.

Price, who led the IRA terror squad that bombed the Old Bailey in 1973, admitted she drove Mrs McConville to Dundalk in the Irish Republic.

She confessed she was a member of a select unit of the IRA's Belfast Brigade, codenamed the Unknowns, whose mission was to take those believed to have betrayed Republicans for interrogation.

For those found guilty by the Republican kangaroo courts, the only sentence was death.

'I never knew for sure their ultimate end, I was simply told by Gerry Adams to take the people away,'



Gerry Adams with one-time friend Brendan 'Darkie' Hughes, who was a deputy commander of the IRA's Belfast Brigade and also insisted it was Adams who signed the Catholic Belfast housewife's death warrant

Price admitted. 'Some, I knew their fate, some I didn't. I took seven in all. My job was to hand them over to others. I don't even remember some of their names.

'I drove Jean McConville away. She was a very, very unpleasant woman. I know I shouldn't speak ill of the dead and I don't think she deserved to die. I didn't know she was a mother.

'I had a call one night and Adams was in a house down the Falls Road. McConville had been snatched and held for several days.

'It was part of my job to take them across the border to hand them over. She got into my car and as far as she was concerned she was being taken to a place of safety by the Legion of Mary [a Catholic charity].



**Son Michael McConville believes the tapes' shocking contents could lead to fresh arrests
among them that of Adams**

'She went on and on about "them f***** Provies, they wouldn't have the balls to shoot me. F*** them". I was saying to myself "please don't say any more". But she went on and on, she convicted herself out of her own mouth.

'It wasn't my decision to "disappear" her, thank God. All I had to do was drive her. I even got her fish and chips and cigarettes before I left her.'

Price refused to enlarge on why Adams ordered Mrs McConville's execution, but commented: 'You don't deserve to die if you are an unpleasant person, as she was, but you do deserve to die if you are an informer. Particularly in a war. That is the Republican way.'

For the McConville children, their mother's death blighted their lives for ever. Today a fragmented family, they rarely meet or discuss the trauma of her being taken.

Michael remembers his older brother Archie, then 16, followed the terrorists dragging his mother onto the street, begging: 'Can I go with my Mammy?' One of the gunmen took him aside, put his pistol to the teenager's temple and told him to 'f*** off'.

He added: 'Not long after she was taken, a local IRA man knocked on the door and handed Mum's purse and wedding ring to my sister.'

I knew then she hadn't just been murdered but executed. We found out she had been taken to a beach, had her hands tied, was knocked to the ground beside what would be her own grave and shot in the head.'

The Provisional IRA immediately imposed a menacing omerta among the West Belfast community. To talk of Jean McConville's fate was to invite a visit from a death squad.'

When, 30 years after her abduction, the IRA admitted they had killed Mrs McConville, exhaustive searches found no body. Then, in August 2003, walkers stumbled upon her remains buried on Shelling Hill beach, Dundalk.

Now, for Michael McConville and his family, justice is at last in sight.