

MIAMI SHOWBAND MASSACRE INVOLVEMENT OF UVF MAN ROBIN JACKSON

A critical finding in the HET report concerns the involvement of former UDR man (and UVF killer) Robin Jackson.

This short statement gives an outline of the evidence linking him to the Miami Showband killings. More detailed evidence is available to journalists on request from the PFC/JFF members at today's press conference.

On Tuesday 18th May 1976, farmer, former "B. Special" and Ulster Service Corps member Edward Sinclair was arrested following the discovery of firearms, ammunition, explosives and bomb components on his land near Dungannon.

The following day, a Luger pistol was also discovered at his farm along with a home-made silencer wrapped in black adhesive tape.

A forensic examination of the gun, silencer and tape revealed two fingerprints, matching Jackson's, on the silencer's metal barrel.

The exhibit was then mistakenly labelled indicating the prints had been found on the TAPE (not the barrel).

Police made several abortive attempts between 20th and 30th May 1976 to arrest Jackson.

On May 31st, Jackson was arrested. The same day the corrected information reached a Detective Superintendent that Jackson's fingerprints had been found, not on the tape, but on the silencer barrel.

The following day, this Detective Superintendent (and a Detective Constable) interviewed Jackson. Jackson denied ever having been on Sinclair's farm (while admitting he knew him through a Loyalist Club in Portadown).

The Detective Superintendent placed the Luger, silencer and magazine (but not the tape) on the interview table. Jackson denied handling them.

The Detective Superintendent asked him if he could offer an explanation, should his fingerprints be found on either the pistol or the silencer (or both).

Jackson again denied he had handled the items but then volunteered information that, one night at the Portadown loyalist club, Sinclair had asked him for some tape and: "I gave him part of the roll I was using in the bar" (Jackson's words).

In his subsequent statement, Jackson said that a Detective Sergeant and a Detective Superintendent (not those interviewing him) had told him on the 24th May (a week before his arrest) that his fingerprints had been found on tape on a silencer.

He went on to say that the same RUC officers had told him "I should clear as there was a wee job up the country that I would be done for and there was no way out of it for me".

On 2nd June 1976 Jackson was charged with possession of a firearm, magazine, four rounds of ammunition and a silencer with intent to endanger life.

The silencer on which Jackson's fingerprints were found was discovered with the Luger used in the attack on the Miami Showband.

Despite this significant new evidence, Jackson was not questioned regarding the Miami Showband attack. There is no evidence either that the Miami inquiry team was even informed of these developments.

The Detective Superintendent's prosecution report stated that Jackson knew, before his arrest, that his fingerprints had been found and claimed that a senior RUC officer had tipped him off about a week before his arrest.

This confidential internal RUC report stated that, if the allegation were true, it constituted a "grave breach of discipline and police confidentiality on the part of the officers concerned."

The Detective Superintendent reported this issue to the RUC Complaints and Discipline Department at HQ for investigation but there is no evidence that any criminal or disciplinary investigation was instigated by RUC HQ.

When Jackson stood trial on 11th November 1976, the only charge he faced was possession of the silencer.

The trial judge, Judge Murray, rejected Jackson's defence that his fingerprints were only on the tape and had been innocently transferred to the silencer. However the judge went on to say that this "did not prove that Jackson knew he was in possession of a Luger silencer, nor did it show that he had assented to such possession."

Jackson was then acquitted of the charge.

To summarise:

The fingerprints of an infamous loyalist paramilitary, the Jackal, were found on the silencer of a gun used in the Miami Showband murders.

There is no evidence that this information was passed to the Miami investigation team.

The suspect was aware that his fingerprints had been found before his arrest.

He claimed that a Detective Superintendent had tipped him off and advised him how to avoid arrest.

There were only 12 officers of this rank in the RUC at this time – only one was in Special Branch.

There is no evidence that these serious allegations were ever investigated by RUC HQ.

The HET conclusion on this issue reads:

'To the objective, impartial observer, disturbing questions about collusive and corrupt behaviour are raised. The HET review has found no means to assuage or rebut these concerns and that is a deeply troubling matter.'