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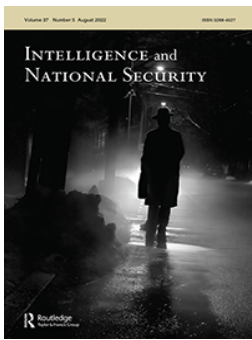
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The 'Unforgivable'?: Irish Republican Army (IRA) informers and dealing with Northern Ireland conflict legacy, 1969-2021

Eleanor Leah Williams  and Thomas Leahy 

ABSTRACT

The case of Northern Ireland and ex-IRA informers demonstrates the difficulty of dealing with the informer legacy post-conflict. We explain why Sinn Féin and the UK state have dealt with some conflict legacy cases involving informers but not with others. Contemporary political and reputational reasons are an important explanation, but there are also legal considerations and communal pressures at play. Divisions amongst alleged and self-confessed informers further facilitate this unstructured approach to legacy. These difficulties with informers' legacy are not unique to Northern Ireland. Similar challenges in reconciling former state agents with paramilitaries are evident across other conflicts.

Introduction

The use of informers was a crucial part of UK intelligence and security strategy against paramilitary groups during the Northern Ireland conflict.¹ In fact, the battle between the UK state's informers and Irish Republicans in particular is a reoccurring theme throughout Irish history.² During the recent conflict, publicly available information shows that overall the UK state recruited hundreds of informers from within Irish Republican (the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) being the primary Republican groups) and pro-British union Ulster Protestant Loyalist paramilitaries (the Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Defences Association as the two main representatives).³ Multiple UK intelligence organisations were involved in recruiting and deploying agents there. These include: MI5; Metropolitan Police Special Branch before the early 1990s in an attempt to repel IRA activities in England; Royal Ulster Constabulary Special Branch (RUC SB), the Northern Irish police special branch prior to being reformed after 1998; and intelligence organisations associated with the British Army, including the Military Reaction Force (MRF) in the early 1970s and thereafter the Force Research Unit (FRU). RUC SB were supposed to be at the centre of informant recruitment, information gathering and dissemination. But the various agencies involved also resulted at times from distrust between intelligence agencies.⁴

The IRA sought Irish unification and greater rights for Irish northern nationalists. Loyalist British Protestant paramilitaries aimed to stop the IRA achieving its objectives. The UK state ostensibly claimed to be defending law and order against paramilitaries. The IRA were perceived as the greatest threat to the UK state for multiple reasons: the UK state felt Loyalist violence was a reaction to militant Republicanism⁵; the IRA had a sizeable minority of popular support from Irish northern nationalists, providing plenty of recruits persistently for the IRA's small-scaled campaign⁶; and the IRA demonstrated an ability to carry out attacks across the north and at times in England including high profile bombings in London.⁷ During the conflict, 3,600 people were killed and over 40,000

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injured.⁸ The IRA killed at least sixty-eight alleged informers.⁹ But we also know from *An Phoblacht* (the IRA's newspaper) that the IRA claimed to have discovered and at times provided amnesties for many other informers (see examples below in this article).

'Informer' is a term frequently used by academics, security services and armed groups related to the conflict. IRA informer means 'an IRA member who provides information to British intelligence'.¹⁰ Alan Barker, former Royal Ulster Constabulary Special Branch (RUC SB) handler, also describes recruiting agents, who initially were 'not a member of ... the terrorist groups' but were 'carefully manoeuvred' into one of them by intelligence services.¹¹ British Army agents also infiltrated paramilitary groups.¹² These three types of human intelligence sources are discussed.

Following revelations about high-level IRA informers, debates about their effectiveness have emerged. The standout revelation came in 2003. An alleged IRA member within the internal security department (which hunted suspected IRA informers in Belfast) was, ironically, accused by various sources of being senior informer for the British state codenamed Stakeknife.¹³ Alongside saving lives, multiple sources claim Stakeknife killed other informers and civilians to protect his identity.¹⁴ The accused denies the allegations.¹⁵ An independent inquiry led by Jon Boucher, former Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police, is investigating the Stakeknife case. Further revelations came in 2005. Denis Donaldson, one-time IRA prisoner and senior Sinn Féin official, admitted informing since the 1980s. Donaldson went into hiding. In April 2006, he was shot at a remote cottage in Donegal. Dissident Republicans (those who reject the peace agreement and Sinn Féin) claimed responsibility.¹⁶

Academics disagree about informers' overall effectiveness against the IRA. Frampton *et al.* suggest the IRA was significantly infiltrated, which alongside other political factors helped force Republicans into peace.¹⁷ Research by Hennessey, O'Kane, Moran, Dingley, Kirk-Smith amongst others concur.¹⁸ Edwards also implies the IRA were pressurised into peace because of a 'secret defeat'. He argues some state agents protected the Republican leadership that supported the peace process and ensured its critics were undermined.¹⁹ Moloney's journalistic work reaches a similar conclusion, adding how a secret peace process was organised by specific Republican leaders.²⁰

In contrast, Leahy's detailed study specifically on the intelligence war suggests the IRA's small cell-structure in Belfast and Derry city after 1975, alongside its elusive rural units and leadership enabled it to persist. Leahy concludes: 'British intelligence did not "win" the intelligence war ... the conflict ended in a stalemate'. He suggests the IRA leadership and upper echelons were not infiltrated to any great extent, and explains why they were not significantly assisted by agents in convincing most Republicans towards peace.²¹ It is important to note other authors before and after Leahy have argued the conflict ended in a stalemate too. Examples include English and Ó Dochartaigh. But their studies addressed wider questions about the reasons for the peace process. They do not focus on evaluating the effectiveness of the intelligence war against the IRA in comprehensive detail, since this was not their purpose.²²

The aforementioned authors briefly mention ethical dilemmas emerging from the intelligence war. Edwards explores some ethical difficulties in utilising informers.²³ Leahy explains how certain indiscriminate intelligence operations (including certain informers' actions) unintentionally helped sustain or increased IRA support.²⁴ All aforementioned authors accept ethically dubious intelligence operations involving informers occurred.

Where disagreement emerges is on how decisive ethically dubious actions by some informers were in determining the overall effectiveness of the intelligence campaign. There is not a normative position emerging from the existing literature. Authors suggesting informers helped pressurise the IRA into peace argue that aside from ethically dubious intelligence operations which were exceptions, the intelligence war was ultimately effective in bringing about the peace process.²⁵ In contrast, authors including Leahy, Sarma, Urban and Williams suggest the intelligence war's effectiveness was restricted partly *because* of ethically dubious activities by some informers. The agent Stakeknife, some SAS ambushes against the IRA that led to deaths of Republicans and at times civilians (even if unintentional), and incidents that Republicans labelled as 'shoot-to-kill' ambushes in north Armagh in the mid-1980s are a few examples.²⁶

The authors above do not discuss in detail how the ethicality of informers' actions influences post-conflict legacy discussions. We argue that it most certainly does. Sinn Féin and the UK state cannot agree a common position on how to address the informer legacy in part because they disagree on the ethics and effectiveness of UK intelligence operations during the conflict. We agree with authors including English that the conflict ended in a stalemate and,²⁷ as a consequence, neither side can enforce their viewpoint. Republicans and the UK state recognise contemporary political reputations are at stake when discussing some ethically questionable informer legacy cases. And as the UK state has chosen not to adopt a formal truth commission for Northern Ireland (in part to keep arguably ethically dubious activities by certain informers in the shadows) the result is an erratic approach to dealing with informer legacy. Whether such an approach is suitable is for the reader to decide.

Other authors have analysed IRA informers' legacy. Dudai suggests multiple reasons why he feels informers are generally absent in Republican reconciliation efforts. Informers remain 'folk devils'. They pose a 'serious threat to collective social values' and Republican conflict narratives. In his view, Republican leaders help maintain community 'cohesion' by remaining hostile towards informers.²⁸ In addition, he discusses 'the informer as a celebrity'. Some self-confessed informers argue publicly that informing was morally justified. Dudai suggests 'celebrity' informers help sustain Republican hostility towards them by 'singing from the same hymn sheet as ... republican political opponents' in contemporary politics.²⁹

In a separate article, Dudai presents the IRA's multifaceted response to informers *during* the conflict. Despite the IRA's *Green Book* (code of conduct) stipulating that informers face 'the death penalty', rules were sometimes adapted. On occasions, exile orders and amnesties were issued. Different punishments provided the IRA with a quasi 'state-like' image to challenge state authority.³⁰ He suggests this flexible approach was partly about maintaining community support. As a volunteer organisation against state forces, Unionists, Loyalists and other Irish Nationalist political parties, 'the support of [Republican] communities ... could not have been taken for granted'. The IRA needed 'to avoid censure from within the community'.³¹ Dudai concludes that IRA efforts 'at maintaining legitimacy appear to have been generally successful'. Their community has not collectively demanded a pardon for all informers.³²

Dudai's suggestion of the IRA's varied response to informers during the conflict can be applied to the post-conflict period. He is right that Sinn Féin opposes addressing 'celebrity' informer legacy cases because the latter continue trying to politically delegitimise Sinn Féin.³³ But we highlight how the IRA *has* dealt with other informer legacy cases in part because these do not pose the same contemporary political risks. Furthermore, Dudai adopts the 'folk devil' term from Cohen's work. For Cohen, stigmatising deviants is primarily about powerful political actors maintaining social and political control. The threat posed by 'folk devils' is exaggerated. Dudai suggests the 'folk devils' argument in part applies to how Irish Republicans behave towards certain informers after 1998.³⁴ We slightly caveat this view. We instead agree more with his view for the conflict period. Republican community perceptions alongside contemporary political considerations influence whether Republican leaders portray an alleged informer as a 'folk devil'. This study contributes to understandings about how and why particular 'folk devils' are sustained or altered over time. We also compare why the UK state engages with some alleged IRA informer legacy cases, and yet ignores others.

Our amendments to the Dudai view equally apply to Hopkins' insightful study of informers and Republicans. Hopkins is right: there has been reluctance at times from Republican leaders to reassess informers' roles in the conflict. He suggests reasons for this stance include Republican leaders trying to maintain Republican group cohesion against dissenters (those against the peace process), with the latter viewing some informer revelations (such as the Donaldson case) as evidence for leadership duplicity during the peace process.³⁵ But this view does not fully account for why Republican leaders engage with other alleged informer legacy cases. Our article explains reasons for the multi-layered approach adopted by Republican leaders.

Darcy investigates how international and national laws influence informer recruitment, actions and treatment. States and non-state groups see infiltrating opponents as invaluable. Yet both oppose informers within their own ranks. This contradictory attitude makes states reluctant in international and national law to specify comprehensive recruitment and behaviour restraints regarding informers. The result is legal ambiguity. Darcy believes this ‘ambivalence of international humanitarian law ... is deliberate as it allows parties to an armed conflict to make use of an enemy’s personnel or population’. Legal gaps ‘may contribute to rather than restrict the harms that invariably accompany’ informing. For instance, ‘the law’s ambivalence towards’ all recruitment methods permits incentives and moral coercion. He highlights how inadequate legal accountability and oversight with informers in various scenarios including Northern Ireland enabled some informers to commit serious illegal acts before 1998.³⁶

We caveat Darcy’s crucial analysis by detailing how and why the UK state and IRA have addressed some informer legacy cases, despite few legal incentives. We agree that the absence of comprehensive legal restrictions helps explain why the state and IRA ignore some informer legacy cases. We also concur with Darcy: informers can be ‘both victims and perpetrators of serious crimes’.³⁷ This factor further explains why Republicans and the state respond on a case by case basis.

We also believe the UK Government’s decision since March 2020 to try to introduce in all but name an amnesty via a Statute of Limitations for Troubles related incidents³⁸ supports Darcy’s argument. We suggest *because* the state does not want to acknowledge in detail past unethical actions of particular informers and security operations (in fear of contemporary political and security repercussions) – it tried to introduce an amnesty. The widespread opposition to the amnesty plan amongst all major political parties in Northern Ireland, victims/survivor groups and the Irish Government has seemingly led to it being put aside for now.³⁹ Our article enables us to understand how past actions by Sinn Féin and the UK Government towards informer legacy cases can help predict what they will return to doing if the amnesty plan is formally shelved.

Using the Northern Ireland case study, we suggest UK state and IRA responses to dealing with informer legacy have been somewhat nuanced. Both engage with certain cases, whilst overlooking others. Some similar and other contrasting factors explain why, particularly contemporary political and reputational concerns. Other factors include community pressure, legal grey areas,⁴⁰ and differing perspectives on the motives for an alleged informer raising their case. Contrasting opinions towards informing amongst self-confessed or alleged informers further facilitates the state and Republicans adopting a multifaceted response.

State power over informer revelations and secrecy also create different responses. Van Veen’s research on US special forces’ memoirs suggests the US state engages in revelation and secrecy with intelligence activities to maintain their dominant narratives about conflicts.⁴¹ Elsewhere, Aldrich and Cormac explain how states utilise the ‘logic underpinning implausible deniability’ with intelligence activities. They suggest the UK has engaged in ‘implausible deniability’ with intelligence operations. Examples include neither confirming nor denying whether someone informed. ‘Implausible deniability’ communicates state power to opponents whilst evading public accountability. It is politically useful by demonstrating to the public a resolve against enemies. For Aldrich and Cormac, ‘ambiguity and implausible deniability allow the construction of powerful narratives’.⁴² Building on these authors’ ideas, we outline how the UK state has ultimate control over secrecy and revelations surrounding IRA informers. On rare occasions, the state recognises strategic and political value in revealing information to support its conflict narrative. But it usually follows a neither confirm nor deny policy, even with self-confessed informers, for security and political reasons.⁴³ We agree with Aldrich and Cormac: the neither confirm nor deny policy is deliberately ambiguous partly to communicate or sustain state power over adversaries.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, state secrecy with regard to intelligence can unintentionally assist opponents.⁴⁵ In Northern Ireland, state secrecy at times facilitates Republicans in sustaining their narratives about the state behaving unethically. The state’s adoption of silence with various informer legacy cases suggests it primarily values protecting its contemporary intelligence operations, security and reputation.

There is a perception that Irish Republicans have a unique hatred for informers. Self-confessed IRA informer Sean O'Callaghan states: 'I had been brought up to believe that the worst thing anybody could do was to become [an] ... informer'.⁴⁶ Loyalist Protestant paramilitaries, however, also killed and exiled suspected informers.⁴⁷ Elsewhere, in 2014 alone, Hamas killed twenty-one alleged informers in Palestine.⁴⁸ Mosab Hassan Yousef, son of a Hamas founder, informed for Israeli intelligence between 1997 and 2007. He says: 'Being ... a collaborator was the worst reputation anyone could have' in Palestine.⁴⁹ During the anti-apartheid conflict in South Africa, armed groups killed many suspected informers.⁵⁰ Hewitt suggests resistance to informers 'points not only to the continuing lack of legitimacy of the state in some quarters, but also to ... greater allegiance to human bonds of family, religion, ethnicity, nationality, geographical location, community, gender, sexuality and, most fundamentally, friendship'.⁵¹ Rather than simply sowing seeds of disunity, informers can provoke greater cohesion between armed groups and a community to oppose the state. Our article supports this view. The longevity of Republican campaigns against British rule has simply produced longer-term hostility towards informers.⁵²

The UK state's and IRA's multidimensional approach to dealing with informer legacy has been seen in other contexts. In 2013, Hamas offered collaborators short-term amnesties.⁵³ The African National Congress discussed their treatment of informers during South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.⁵⁴ In terms of state behaviour, the Israeli government persuaded the Palestinian authority not to persecute former collaborators and to grant amnesties in the Oslo Accords.⁵⁵ Yet Cohen and Dudai suggest the Israeli state ignores other informer cases involving alleged human rights violations during recruitment.⁵⁶ International comparisons also suggest informers have different motives and justifications, which is similar to Northern Ireland. Some motivating factors in Palestine are different. Nonetheless, Cohen and Dudai outline similarities including blackmail, revenge and ideology.⁵⁷ The mixture of motives in Palestine and subsequent justifications for informing also shows informers will struggle to agree on a specific form of reconciliation. Ambiguities in international law about the recruitment, permissible actions of and treatment towards informers enable multiple states and paramilitaries to vary how they engage with informer legacy.⁵⁸ Our detailed case study helps us understand internationally why it remains difficult to deal with informers' legacy.

Sections one and two of this article explore IRA and UK state responses to alleged informers. The final section examines why suspected and self-confessed IRA informers cannot form a single narrative to guide rapprochement efforts. We cross-reference Irish Republican, former British security personnel and self-confessed informer perspectives alongside inquiry and media reports, *Lost Lives* (which details all conflict-related deaths), and *An Phoblacht* articles to help validate any potentially politicised accounts.⁵⁹ We also evaluate why some politicised accounts exist.⁶⁰

The IRA and informers

During the conflict, the IRA warned: 'Volunteers found guilty of treason face the death penalty'.⁶¹ Dudai argues hatred towards informers: 'is especially strong in relation to those ... considered to have betrayed national armed struggles'.⁶² The Republican newspaper *An Phoblacht* believed: 'to betray one's country ... is to ... reject one's own people. To do so in time of war makes the crime ... unforgivable'.⁶³ Dudai points out how punishing informers challenged state authority and maintained social cohesion within Republican communities.⁶⁴ After publicly ending its campaign in 2005, the contemporary political repercussions for Sinn Féin were too great if the IRA continued targeting informers.⁶⁵ Post-conflict, the mainstream Republican response to alleged informer legacy cases has varied. The contemporary political consequences of addressing an alleged informer's case are important.

When it comes to 'celebrity' informers, Republican leaders believe they are still attempting to damage Sinn Féin. Hence Republicans tend to give curt responses to 'celebrity' informers. As Dudai explains, they are self-confessed informers and agents who have released memoirs, 'proudly' share

their activities and frequently speak against Sinn Féin in the post-conflict period.⁶⁶ One example is Raymond Gilmour. Originally from Derry city, he infiltrated and disrupted Republican groups between 1976 and 1984. His cover was blown after frequently preventing IRA activities. He turned 'supergrass' in 1984 and his information was the basis of charges against thirty-nine people. The case eventually collapsed. The judiciary would not endorse convictions based on just one witness. Thereafter, Gilmour left Derry. In 1999, he continued speaking against mainstream Republicans by releasing a memoir about his informing 'saving lives'. He reappeared in UK media in 2007, seeking assurance from Sinn Féin that he could return safely to visit family in Derry. Gilmour died in England from natural causes in 2016.⁶⁷

Gilmour's request to return in 2007 produced a cautious response from Martin McGuinness, former Sinn Féin northern leader. McGuinness said the IRA posed no threat. Yet he added Gilmour should consider for himself whether it was safe to return.⁶⁸ Danny Morrison, former Sinn Féin director of publicity, agreed informers could return. Attacks on them should be 'discouraged' because the conflict was over. He added some informers 'cannot expect a welcome home' because they 'got people killed'.⁶⁹ In response to Gilmour's claims that British intelligence abandoned him, Morrison commented '[t]here will be ... no sympathy ... when British intelligence are finished with people they discard them'.⁷⁰ During the conflict, Republicans publicly warned British intelligence 'are using the informer to suit their needs, and if this means sacrificing him or her then this will be done'.⁷¹ With IRA amnesties offered on occasions to informers, Republicans saw no reason to offer Gilmour sympathy.⁷² Sinn Féin would have risked challenging their past and present ideology and justification for the IRA's campaign if they empathised with Gilmour, who spoke against them continuously.⁷³

Political considerations are intertwined with how Sinn Féin believes or knows their community might react to a particular informer's return. Dudai identifies how the IRA's campaign and Sinn Féin's vote depended on Republican community support.⁷⁴ Ó Dochartaigh agrees. He researched how the IRA in its Belfast and Derry city heartlands was cautious even when hijacking local civilians' vehicles for operations. Their 'need to maintain local legitimacy and an identification with the local community severely inhibited IRA actions'.⁷⁵ As Leahy argues elsewhere, intergenerational memory, contemporary political agendas and community recollections of the conflict are crucial in influencing how *all* conflict belligerents approach legacy cases.⁷⁶ Consequently, Republican community perceptions of different informers in the past and present affect Sinn Féin's response. After Gilmour died, even an estranged son in Derry said his dad was 'a pest for the stuff he did and put my family through'. The son believed Gilmour informed for 'money' and 'wasn't a nice man'.⁷⁷ When Gilmour asked to return, graffiti appeared in the Republican Bogside in Derry, warning Gilmour: 'you dare come back'.⁷⁸ A mixture of historical anger towards Gilmour and concern that he continued to speak against Sinn Féin meant leading Republicans shared their supporters' disdain. Martin McGuinness was in the Derry Republican movement when Gilmour's information was the basis of numerous Republican arrests.

It appears the Republican community does not contest Sinn Féin's continued hostile narrative towards Gilmour. Republican leaders cannot risk ignoring this hostility. Otherwise, they may lose some community support, impacting Sinn Féin's present electoral vote. But leading Republicans would not ignore this animosity anyway. They share the past and contemporary political concerns of their supporters about reconciling with 'celebrity' informers who continue opposing Sinn Féin.⁷⁹

Gilmour was no exception. Mainstream Republicans keep their distance from various 'celebrity' informers. Sean O'Callaghan was an IRA volunteer from Kerry in the 1970s. He turned informer for the Garda (Irish police). He claims to have set-up weapons seizures and arrests.⁸⁰ O'Callaghan later served a prison sentence after confessing previous IRA activities, but he received a royal pardon in 1997. He subsequently released a memoir, worked as an advisor to the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and contributed to some court cases against Republicans. He died in 2017.⁸¹

O'Callaghan claims he informed for moral reasons.⁸² Republicans say O'Callaghan told 'lies' and made 'outlandish accusations'.⁸³ For Republicans, 'celebrity' informers 'sensationalise' stories to get 'moral reward for ... paid perjury'.⁸⁴ Dudai believes media appearances by 'celebrity' informers enhance 'the [Republican] hostility towards' them as they appear to side with Republicanism's contemporary political opponents.⁸⁵

Republicans also believe most people informed due to fear or greed. Morrison stated: 'Some were caught and compromised ... Most informed not out of principle, contrary to what Sean O'Callaghan's book might suggest'.⁸⁶ Republicans believe 'celebrity informers' exaggerate ideological motives to challenge Republicanism still, and to gain financial reward. In contrast, they maintain informers are rarely ideologically driven and instead are manipulated by British intelligence. Alongside contemporary political concerns, Republican leaders and supporters remain angry towards some informers for their past actions. Laurence McKeown, a former Republican prisoner, believes 'there probably would not be massive opposition to [informers] returning, unless a person in that community had a family member killed as a direct result of that informer or someone served a lengthy prison sentence because of them'.⁸⁷ Morrison envisaged the following situation if certain informers returned: 'one of them goes into a bar ... and sitting beside him is the brother of somebody his information got killed. Human nature says that the man is going to throw a pint at him at least'.⁸⁸ Contemporary political concerns alongside long-term Republican community anger towards certain informers explains why these cases are not seen as being about correcting past injustices. The state's neither confirm nor deny policy helps Republicans continue countering 'celebrity' informer accounts. Instead, Republicans suggest 'celebrity informers' and the state acted unethically.⁸⁹ Republican community apathy and opposition in particular to 'celebrity' informer cases is evident. It assists Republican leaders in overlooking and arguing against many 'celebrity' informer legacy cases.⁹⁰

Nonetheless, the IRA and Sinn Féin have responded to other cases. These examples are often specifically about dealing with conflict legacy and injustices. They tend not to involve victims or survivors questioning Sinn Féin's contemporary political actions. Since 1999 the IRA has located the remains of some people it accused of informing and whom it admits 'disappearing' (burying in an unmarked grave). The British and Irish governments passed legislation and created an Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains to work with Republicans to locate seventeen bodies. If Republican evidence located remains, prosecutions would not emerge. In April 1999, the IRA apologised for disappearing and said it wanted to 'rectify any injustice'.⁹¹ From the initial nine names provided, the IRA claimed seven were informers. One example is Eamon Molloy. The IRA alleged: 'Eamon Molloy ... a member of the IRA, was court-martialled in 1975 and found guilty of being an ... informer'. IRA information led to his body being retrieved near Dundalk in 1999.⁹² The IRA also claimed Jean McConville, a widow with ten children in Belfast, admitted informing in December 1972, and was subsequently disappeared. Her children reject the accusations. In 2006, Nuala O'Loan, former Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, took the unusual step of confirming evidence showing McConville was not an informer. McConville's remains were found by a member of the public on a beach in county Louth in 2003.⁹³ Three of the disappeared remain missing.⁹⁴

Republican supporters encouraged the IRA to locate the disappeared. In 2006, Jackie McMullan, a former Republican prisoner, said:

When we hear the name Jean McConville ... we should think ... about ... her ten children whose lives have been blighted by the horrific manner of her killing ... [W]orking to expose Britain's dirty war doesn't absolve us from our own responsibilities ... whatever negative consequences.⁹⁵

An Phoblacht's inclusion of this article highlights Republican leaders' agreement that it was contradictory to demand justice for British actions if Republicans ignored the 'disappeared'. The IRA were not delegitimising its campaign here. They did not apologise for killing the disappeared. They claimed many disappeared victims 'were executed for activities which put other Oglagh na hÉireann [IRA] personnel at risk'.⁹⁶ They accepted, however, disappearing did not follow IRA protocol

for dealing with suspected informers: courts-martial, release, amnesty, exiling or execution with a body left in public.⁹⁷ The IRA recognised Irish and UK government legislation put them under pressure to respond to the 'disappeared' cases too. Nevertheless, apart from the McConville case, the UK and Irish states neither confirmed nor denied whether others who were 'disappeared' were informers. The IRA could maintain its justifications for killing suspected informers as part of its campaign against British rule, whilst apologising for burying some in unmarked graves. For Republican leaders and their community, these cases were viewed as partly being about the legitimacy of Republicans' past and present actions before potentially becoming a future leader of an all-Ireland state. If procedures were not followed, apologies could occur in part to sustain community support.

Conversely, not addressing these cases offered the prospect of Sinn Féin facing contemporary criticism from within and outside its community. True, some of the families of the 'disappeared' have protested against Republicans continuing to accuse their relatives of being informers, and for failing to return all the 'disappeared'. The McConville and Columba McVeigh cases are examples.⁹⁸ Yet whilst these cases may be seized upon by Republican political opponents, the families have focused principally on the return of bodies. Neither have they publicly encouraged people to vote for Sinn Féin's rivals. McMullan's quote demonstrates Republican supporters see these cases as distinct from 'celebrity' informers. They are about past injustices and are not concerned with countering current political opponents.

During and after the conflict, the IRA believed most 'informers ... are usually acting under severe psychological duress' and would seek amnesties.⁹⁹ For these and other reasons, mainstream Republicans continue engaging with some people who allege they were coerced informers. Politically, revisiting these cases also helps support the Republican analysis of the past and further justify their present ambitions to end British rule. In August 1999, *An Phoblacht* claimed Republicans were helping a man forced to inform after being caught stealing. Conor Murphy, a Sinn Féin Assembly Minister, commended the person for coming forward, saying the intelligence services 'care nothing for [the man] or ... community ... they ignore criminality ... to recruit informers'.¹⁰⁰ Amnesties and forgiveness in some cases can highlight alleged coercive recruitment to discredit state and 'celebrity informer' claims about informing being based on ethical considerations, and British rule being justified.

Republicans also recognise distinctions between particular informers. In November 1981, Christopher Black, an IRA volunteer, was arrested and became a supergrass. His evidence led to thirty-five convictions in return for immunity. Most convictions were later overturned.¹⁰¹ One woman's partner was remanded in custody. She reflected: 'I really hated Christopher Black ... but now I don't ... it was the British government ... responsible for it all'.¹⁰² She supports McKeown's observation that once 'a certain amount of time elapsed, people do change their opinions'.¹⁰³ For mainstream Republicans, the threat from many informers has decreased during peace, allowing the 'folk devil' image of specific alleged informers to be reviewed. Empathy towards those claiming coerced recruitment and who did not set-up deaths can emerge. These cases do not counter Republican conflict narratives, and do not threaten Sinn Féin's current vote. If anything, they complement Republican views about British injustices in the past and present. Whether or not an alleged informer's repentance is genuine is unknown. Nonetheless, informers claiming psychological pressure to inform reinforces Republican beliefs surrounding unethical state behaviour.¹⁰⁴ Engagement with specific informer legacy cases can provoke greater cohesion between Sinn Féin and their community, and continue justifying the need to end British rule.¹⁰⁵

The IRA has apologised for killing some suspected informers. In November 1973, Bernard Teggart, a teenager, was killed by the Belfast IRA. They originally claimed he informed after calling on the IRA to stop during a vehicle hijacking. A British Army patrol suddenly arrived and arrested the IRA volunteers.¹⁰⁶ Bernard's sister disputed the IRA's account, particularly because her brother had additional learning needs.¹⁰⁷ In 2004, the IRA declared Bernard's 'death was wrong and offered its

sincere apologies'. The IRA issued a further statement in 2009 confirming: 'Bernard was an innocent victim' and 'not an informer'. A family spokesperson welcomed the apologies.¹⁰⁸ McMullan felt the apology was important:

When I was in jail I met a young man whose twin brother had been ... shot dead as an informer by the IRA ... In 2004 the IRA apologised to his family ... It requires courage to be self-critical ... the IRA have enhanced the integrity of the republican struggle each time they have done so.¹⁰⁹

Anthony Braniff's family received a similar apology. In 1981, the IRA killed him in Belfast for allegedly informing. Anthony's brother disagreed:

[Anthony's] was one of the biggest funerals ... There were plenty of republicans at it and I don't think they would go to an informer's funeral ... the family are still republicans ... there is a totally innocent man lying in the grave ... for his kids, and his grandkids ... it's one of the most hated things in the world that your father ... or your grandfather was an informer; it is really devastating.¹¹⁰

In 2003, the IRA responded. They now 'found no evidence to support the claims made at the time'. The Braniff family expressed 'sincere gratitude to the Republican Movement' for apologising.¹¹¹

Sinn Féin's strong recent electoral performances suggest minimal adverse impacts from the apologies. In fact, these admissions may have helped sustain community trust. In addition, the families involved did not speak out against the IRA. They wanted relatives' names cleared. These cases differ from 'celebrity' informers who continue criticising Sinn Féin. Whilst admitting wrongdoing, the IRA can always cite their lack of knowledge about who was informing. Only the state knows. At the same time, Sinn Féin's ambition to create and lead a future all-Ireland state means they have to address some informer legacy injustices to build more trust in their movement across the island.¹¹² The quotes from McMullan, alongside Braniff's and Teggart's relatives, show there was pressure from within the Republican community to address wrongdoing too. Ignoring these requests potentially risked Sinn Féin losing support.

Recently, some mainstream Republicans have engaged with more controversial cases. Various sources claim Stakeknife, the alleged British agent operating within the IRA's internal security apparatus, interrogated and killed alleged IRA informers and civilians. The purpose was allegedly to cover his informing. Operation Kenova is submitting files to the Public Prosecution Service relating to this case.¹¹³ Mainstream Republicans may partly discuss Stakeknife to refute their political opponents' suggestions that Stakeknife helped force the IRA into peace.¹¹⁴ They also recognise how the Stakeknife investigation counters state narratives. Danny Morrison's conviction and imprisonment in 1990 were set-up by Stakeknife. The conviction was subsequently quashed in 2008. He writes how Stakeknife:

was the Prime Minister's man murdering weak ... troubled ... and compromised IRA Volunteers, and civilian supporters ... to perversely elevate his reputation as an IRA spy catcher. And it was all for nothing ... Immoral. It never deflected the course of Irish history, but ... gave rise to ordinary suffering and long-lasting grief.¹¹⁵

For pro-peace process Republicans, Stakeknife resembles British security forces' unethical and 'immoral' behaviour in collusion cases with Loyalist paramilitaries in certain Irish civilian deaths.¹¹⁶ They believe Stakeknife further demonstrates the continued illegitimacy of British rule.¹¹⁷

The Stakeknife case might raise questions about the IRA and could see Republicans arrested. Mainstream Republicans, however, can argue state secrecy made unearthing Stakeknife difficult. The person accused of being Stakeknife (who denies it) did challenge the UK state's decision not to deny they were an informer. But Darcy explains 'the Court accepted the State's argument that meeting the applicant's demands would have serious consequences for its intelligence-gathering capabilities' and priority to protect informer identities.¹¹⁸ Neither confirming nor denying this case assists Republican narratives about Stakeknife's and the state's immorality. The UK state's priority appears to be protecting national security and secrecy.

Political calculations influence mainstream Republicans' levels of engagement with different informer legacy cases. We've also explained how community perceptions are important and link with contemporary concerns about sustaining Sinn Féin's vote. Whilst Republicans may not have revelatory power compared to the state, state secrecy (even if for legitimate security concerns) enables Republicans to maintain their narratives about most informers being coerced or criminals. At the same time, without ultimate knowledge about who was actually informing, Republicans are reliant on treating suspected informer legacy cases on an individualised basis.

The UK state and IRA informers

The UK often maintains secrecy about IRA informer identities to protect national security. Andrew explains there is a 'guarantee given to ... agents that their identities will be kept secret indefinitely'.¹¹⁹ Otherwise, state secrets could be revealed for internal opponents and lead to unwanted scrutiny. There remains a threat to informers too.

Hewitt suggests a 'practical and self-interested reason why handlers ... protect the identity of ... informers and it has nothing to do with safety ... to ensure the continued recruitment of informers in the future'.¹²⁰ If a potential informer is worried the state might eventually reveal their identity, they may decline working for British intelligence. For the state, to obtain tomorrow's informers, it is imperative to protect today's and yesterday's. In 2007, Sir Hugh Orde, former Police Service of Northern Ireland Chief Constable, said he feared the pool of informers would evaporate against ongoing militant Republican groups if previous informer identities were revealed.¹²¹ This can explain why a PSNI representative was outraged when a former RUC SB officer named John McAnulty, who was killed by the IRA in south Armagh during the conflict, was identified as an agent at the Smithwick Tribunal. Counsel for the PSNI told the tribunal that naming past informers 'beggars belief' and could 'seriously damage the flow of information' from current informers.¹²²

Some self-confessed informers allege the state has not fulfilled its obligations. In 2012, Gilmour told *BBC News*:

he was promised £500,000, a new home, psychiatric support and a pension by MI5, but was provided with modest accommodation and £600 a month for three years and was not given employment. Mr Gilmour said his false identity did not stand up to scrutiny, he suffered alcoholism and post-traumatic stress disorder because of his work and was left destitute.¹²³

A similar case involves Martin McGartland. He infiltrated the Belfast IRA between 1987 and 1991. The IRA interrogated him for setting-up arrests. He escaped and fled abroad. He released an autobiography in 1997 and says his informing was justified because he: 'tried ... to save ... innocent people'.¹²⁴ He alleges UK intelligence 'deprived [him] of promised funds'.¹²⁵ He also claims British intelligence failed to protect him, which led to being shot whilst in exile in 1999.¹²⁶ These accounts cannot be substantiated. In September 2019, the media claimed a police investigation said the assassination attempt on McGartland was not addressed properly.¹²⁷ Some former British security force members agree particular informers should be protected. Barker thanked Gilmour and other agents 'for helping ... to save lives'.¹²⁸ DUP MPs also wrote to the Northern Ireland Secretary of State in 2012 demanding Gilmour and other agents receive support.¹²⁹

Multiple reasons including self-preservation could explain the state's (in)action. Controversial cases could contradict the state's conflict narratives. The continuation of the neither confirm nor deny policy may also simply seek to protect other informer identities and state security today. At the same time, Aldrich and Cormac believe the neither confirm nor deny ambiguity is partly to enable 'powerful' state narratives to be sustained.¹³⁰ Ambiguities in international and national law facilitate state silence over the recruitment, actions and treatment of informers to some extent.¹³¹ State omniscience combined with secrecy about most informers makes it difficult for self-

confessed informers to challenge state narratives. Furthermore, public consensus on the UK mainland about Northern Ireland being a 'place apart' assists state secrecy over its intelligence practises there.¹³²

Nevertheless, some former UK security and intelligence personnel suggest certain informers were criminals and financial nuisances. Ian Phoenix, a senior RUC SB member, for instance, 'found, and other officers confirm this . . . the vast majority of paramilitary informers, like their counterparts in the "ordinary" criminal organisations, do it for the money. They also tend to have criminal traits'.¹³³ The UK state may not engage with certain informer grievances if they know complaints are unfounded. Of course, secrecy is risky here. It enables those the state deems as fabricating grievances to continue voicing their accounts. However, the state can cast doubt on such claims by not responding. And with little English, Scottish and Welsh public opinion pressure to respond favourably to informers linked to Northern Ireland, the state is not disadvantaged by ignoring these requests. There is little political appetite to discuss informer legacy cases collectively, some of which might expose state spyecraft, secrets and past alleged ethically dubious actions.

Having said that, the state has assisted some informer legacy cases. Willie Carlin, a former British Army agent who infiltrated Sinn Féin, was swiftly relocated by British intelligence when his cover was blown in 1985. Carlin was subsequently rehoused, given a new identity and funds.¹³⁴ Kevin Fulton is a self-confessed British Army agent who infiltrated the IRA. He once publicised claims that the state abandoned him. Yet during his appearance at a recent tribunal in Dublin, Fulton: 'felt that he was now being fairly treated by MI5, who have taken control of his case. His expenses and accommodation are paid for by MI5'. It is interesting here how British intelligence did not prevent Fulton speaking to the tribunal either. Two former RUC officers confirmed Fulton prevented various IRA activities.¹³⁵ Another rare exception involves the McConville case. As explained, she was disappeared by the IRA for allegedly informing in 1972. Her family deny the informer accusations. In 2006 the Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman announced there was no evidence showing McConville was an informer.¹³⁶ To say this publicly was very unusual due to the neither confirm nor deny policy.

A few reasons can account for these exceptions. The UK government and intelligence services potentially see dealing with specific informer allegations as presenting minimal risk to the state's conflict narrative and intelligence practises today. In fact, the cases mentioned could help reinforce the state's portrayal of the IRA as ruthless and the state as peacekeepers. For example, Fulton's complaints were regarding protection and funds. He agreed with the state: the IRA's campaign was unjustified.¹³⁷ Allowing Fulton to speak at the Smithwick tribunal and basically confirming his informing was not particularly risky. The state could always say Fulton chose to reveal his identity. Since the Smithwick Tribunal was investigating IRA collusion with the Garda in the killing of RUC superintendents, Fulton's evidence was always going to be against the IRA, not the state. With Carlin, he praised the state's role in bringing peace. His was another safe case for the state to deal with because he was an alleged political informer, unlikely to be involved in murky criminal activities. Allowing 'celebrity' informers to share their cases at times helps protect the state's conflict narrative and reputation. The state also recognises accusations of neglect by 'celebrity' agents, who actually supported the state's campaign against the IRA, risks deterring future informers.

The exceptional case here is McConville's. It is a rare occasion where the state officially confirms a person was not informing. It is difficult to work out why. As detailed, former Republican prisoners agree McConville's disappearance and orphaned children presented a particularly harrowing case. Perhaps humanitarian reasons motivated the state. However, during the early 2000s the state needed to ensure Sinn Féin and the IRA were under pressure to identify the disappeared and sign up fully to peace agreements (including decommissioning). Arguably, the McConville case diverted attention away from investigations against the state such as Bloody Sunday and various collusion investigations including the Rosemary Nelson case.¹³⁸ It can be seen as being part of preserving the reputation and practises of the state in the past and present. The case certainly – even if

unintentionally – acted as a reminder about state power too. It contrasts with other occasions where the state continues neither confirming nor denying someone was an informer, despite pleas from distressed families or individuals.

In some more controversial cases the state has not prevented investigations commencing, such as Operation Kenova's investigations into Stakeknife. These could demonstrate elements of the state responding to pressure from certain ex-employees to remedy alleged unethical practises. Former intelligence workers such as Martin Ingram who co-wrote a book on Stakeknife want alleged ethically dubious practises admitted to prevent repetition.¹³⁹ Former Special Branch officer Laurence Templeton has publicly said: 'I personally would like to know why certain murders [by informers] were not selected for investigation and who made these decisions'.¹⁴⁰ Some former intelligence officers wanting reviews of particular cases coincides (unintentionally) with Republican pressure for state revelations. Public pressure from Irish Nationalist has certainly grown about the Stakeknife case.¹⁴¹ The state perhaps realised continued silence might enable Republicans to control the narrative surrounding Stakeknife and damage the state's reputation.

In an interview, Boucher emphasised Operation Kenova recognises how: '[m]istrust of the police by some parts of the community will not be addressed unless we can confront actions of the past'.¹⁴² Potentially, the state allowed this investigation to try to build trust and public confidence in the security forces. The Pat Finucane de Silva review in 2012 and the Rosemary Nelson collusion state-sponsored reports in 2011 both accepted state collusion with Loyalist paramilitaries. Both led to state-sanctioned apologies, further demonstrating their trust-building purpose. Nonetheless, it is worth noting the state in these cases can always argue the intelligence agencies involved in the controversial cases have been reformed, including RUC SB and the Force Research Unit (FRU). Today, MI5 regulates informers in Northern Ireland, who have contracts.¹⁴³ Reputational damage may be somewhat restricted by these reforms already taking place. Cases that might raise questions about ongoing intelligence practises may be overlooked.

By announcing plans for an amnesty for state forces and paramilitaries (which presumably would include informers) recently, the UK state is demonstrating it has no intention of altering its neither confirm nor deny policy towards informers. Reasons outlined above including self-preservation, protecting current and previous agents and intelligence activities account for this approach. Whilst denials provide political capital for Sinn Féin, the UK state seems more concerned with protecting its national security, intelligence practises and international reputation today.

Alleged and self-confessed IRA informers

Divisions between suspected or self-confessed informers contribute to Republicans and the state responding inconsistently to legacy cases. O'Callaghan believed 'all but one of the supergrass ... was motivated by selfish interests'.¹⁴⁴ Army agent Carlin sees distinctions too: 'An informer ... turns on their comrades like Denis Donaldson ... I was not betraying my cause'.¹⁴⁵ Various motives and perspectives on informing by those accused and self-confessed creates different views on how to deal with legacy. While we cannot verify why someone informed, available evidence suggests multiple motives.¹⁴⁶ Taylor and Snow investigated factors motivating some Americans to inform for the Soviets. Common motives included money, ideology, coercion, ego, excitement and revenge.¹⁴⁷ Martin Ingram, a former British intelligence member, found IRA informers had 'many motivating factors' including revenge, coercion, 'good, old-fashioned greed', excitement and ideology.¹⁴⁸

'Celebrity' informers say they informed for moral reasons. Fulton claims he wanted 'to save lives'.¹⁴⁹ Carlin says he informed to serve the British Army.¹⁵⁰ O'Callaghan suggests he informed to 'defeat ... extreme nationalism'.¹⁵¹ They publicise their views for various reasons, including to receive greater recognition from the state and to continue opposing Republicanism. Nonetheless, Dudai suggests:

memoir-writing informers are not necessarily representative of ... other informers. Their accounts are often characterized by an over-privileging of their heroic agency and do not ... include references to ... coercive recruitment that has been a feature of most informer careers.¹⁵²

Some alleged informers received IRA amnesties claiming they were coerced into spying. Publicly at least, they agreed with Republicans: informing is dishonourable. They wanted safety and forgiveness, not to challenge Republican ideology. This group of self-confessed informers significantly differs from the 'celebrities'. Other alleged informers and their families wish to clear their names. Alongside previous examples, the family of Eoin Morley, a Republican killed in Newry in 1990, welcomed the IRA's confirmation in 2007 that Eoin was not an informer.¹⁵³ A further group is informers whose identities remain hidden. The hostility they could face if their identities are revealed in Republican communities means they maintain silence. The unknown informer and 'celebrities' have greater power than the alleged or remorseful informer. The first two categories benefit from state secrecy. It enables them to maintain silence, safety or narratives about the morality of their actions. In contrast, remorseful informers or those who deny informing rely on Irish Republicanism almost exclusively to address their grievances. It is tricky for Republicans because only state archives can reveal if someone informed.

Alleged and self-confessed informers have different perspectives on informing allegations and how they want their case remedied. With potentially the exception of the unknown and 'celebrity informers', most lack any power to influence forgiveness or apologies from the IRA or state.¹⁵⁴ Some alleged or self-confessed informers find themselves in a no-man's land, where neither the state, nor the IRA, nor wider society will revisit their case. Yet the actions of specific informers have contributed to this situation. The state, Republicans and society recognise how some informers were perpetrators of violence, whilst others were potentially victims.¹⁵⁵

Conclusion

There are no clear legal mechanisms or pressures in international or UK law encouraging the state and Republicanism to address *all* informer legacy cases in a systematic way.¹⁵⁶ This makes it surprising that either side has engaged at all with any informer legacy cases. Current political calculations, but also the suspected motivations behind some informers' legacy cases and community perspectives, particularly influence both sides to respond to some cases whilst ignoring others. Divisions between alleged and self-confessed informers over the motives and morality of informing further facilitates this mixed approach.

Different factors account for state and Republican behaviour towards informer legacy too. The state's monopoly of knowing who informed and what they did is crucial. Undoubtedly, state silence on particular cases assists Republicans in challenging state narratives about the conflict and justifications for its actions in the past and present. But for contemporary security and reputational reasons, the state often prefers public silence over repercussions emerging from revelations about informers. There is an acceptance of state intelligence's covert role within UK mainland society, and subsequently state power and secrecy.¹⁵⁷

Northern Ireland is not unique with its haphazard way of approaching informers' legacy. The factors outlined above mean a single response from states or armed groups towards alleged informers is unlikely post-conflict in various scenarios, particularly if conflicts end in a political compromise. With no clear winner, no dominant conflict narrative emerges. Current evidence suggests there will not willingly be full disclosure by any side on this issue in Northern Ireland. The more detailed the accounts surrounding alleged or self-confessed informers, the more painful the truth would likely be for all sides. Rob Lewis, a former British agent handler, has written: '[t]he world of the informant is a very lonely ... one'.¹⁵⁸ We suggest this remains the case post-conflict.

Notes

1. For examples, see Edwards, *Agents of Influence*; Leahy, *Intelligence War*; Frampton, "Agents and Ambushes"; Taylor, *Brits*; Dixon, "IRA Defeated?"; Hennessey, "The Dirty War: MI5 and the Troubles", 593–596.
2. Bartlett, "Informers", 406–421.
3. For the IRA, see for detailed studies by Edwards, *Agents of Influence*; Matchett, *Secret Victory*; Leahy, *Intelligence War*; Frampton, "Agents and Ambushes"; Taylor, *Provos*; Harkin and Ingram, *Stakeknife*. For the INLA, see Holland and McDonald, *INLA*. For Loyalists, see Edwards, *UVF*; Mulvenna, *Tartan Gangs*; Crawford, *Inside the UDA*. For examples of inquiries/reports discussing infiltration of paramilitaries, see *Patrick Finucane Review*; and *Rosemary Nelson Inquiry Report*.
4. Craig, 'GOC'; Edwards, *Agents of Influence*; Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 138–142; Urban, *Big Boys' Rules*.
5. Bennett, *British Army's War in Northern Ireland*.
6. For example, see Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 49–62, 108–120, 199–248.
7. English, *Armed Struggle*; Leahy, *Intelligence War*; Taylor, *Provos*.
8. McKittrick et al., *Lost Lives*, 1552; "Troubles Victims' Pensions", *BBC News Online*, 31 January 2020.
9. Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 1–14, 29–48, 81–107, 138–198, 255.
10. Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 10–11; Hewitt, *Snitch!*, 1–38; Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*, 105–06, 176–7; Holland and Phoenix, *Phoenix*, 111–13.
11. Barker, *Shadows*, 138–9.
12. Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 10.
13. Harkin and Ingram, *Stakeknife*, 60–69; Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 2–4, 145–147, 247–248; McKearney, *The Provisional IRA*, 242–243; McIntyre, "How Stakeknife", *The Blanket*, 11 May 2003; Morrison, "Number 10's Murderer", 30 January 2016.
14. "More than 20 People May Be Prosecuted After Stakeknife Inquiry", *Irish Times*, 3 October 2019.
15. Harkin and Ingram, *Stakeknife*, 242–254; Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 2.
16. Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 2–3, 228–240, 243; McKittrick, "The Spy's Tale", *The Independent*, 6 April 2006; Moloney, *Secret History*, 580–582; Keenan, "Real IRA claims responsibility", *Irish Times*, 13 April 2009.
17. Frampton, "Agents and Ambushes", 77–78, 86–95; Bew, Frampton, Gurruchaga, *Talking to Terrorists*, 107–114, 242–251; Moloney, *Secret History*, 336, 574–582.
18. Hennessey, "The Dirty War: MI5 and the Troubles", 593–596; Dingley and Kirk-Smith, "Countering Terrorism in Northern Ireland: The Role of Intelligence"; Moran, "Evaluating Special Branch and the Use of Informant Intelligence in Northern Ireland"; O'Kane, *The Northern Ireland Peace Process*, chapter one.
19. Edwards, *Agents of Influence*, 225–228.
20. Moloney, *Secret History*, 336, 574–582.
21. Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 5–8, 210–248.
22. See examples including English, *Armed Struggle*, 303–315; O'Brien, *Long War*, 13, 159–168, 195–200, 238–322; Taylor, *Provos*, 277–327; Ó Dochartaigh, *Deniable Contact*, 188–276; Dixon, "Was the IRA Defeated?", 303–320.
23. Edwards, *Agents of Influence*, 201–202, 230.
24. Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 242; see also Frampton, "Agents and Ambushes", 84–93; Dingley and Kirk-Smith, "Countering Terrorism in Northern Ireland: The Role of Intelligence"; Moran, "Evaluating Special Branch and the Use of Informant Intelligence in Northern Ireland".
25. Frampton, "Agents and Ambushes"; Matchett, "Secret Victory"; Moran, "Evaluating Special Branch"; Bamford, "The Role and Effectiveness of Intelligence in Northern Ireland"; Dingley and Kirk-Smith, "Countering Terrorism in Northern Ireland".
26. Leahy, *Intelligence War*; Sarma, "Informers"; Williams, "Counter-terrorism and Just Intelligence, an Oxymoron?"; Urban, *Big Boys' Rules*.
27. English, *Armed Struggle*, 303–315.
28. Dudai, "Informers", 35–41.
29. *Ibid.*, 45–49.
30. Dudai, "Underground Penalty", 378–382.
31. *Ibid.*, 384–387.
32. *Ibid.*, 384–385; However, some republicans want an apology for those Stakeknife killed. See Breen in *The Belfast Telegraph*, "IRA must clear names of Stakeknife's "informer" victims with pardon, says ex-Provo", 13 April 2017.
33. Leahy, "The politics", 296–297.
34. Cohen, *Folk Devils*, vii–xlv, 5–17, 217–218, 224; Dudai, "Informers", 32–48.
35. Hopkins, "The "informer"".
36. Darcy, *To Serve the Enemy*, 15, 172–200, 212–214.
37. *Ibid.*, 15.
38. Cooper and Black in *The Belfast Telegraph*, "Government to introduce statute of limitations on Troubles Prosecutions", 13 July 2021.
39. *The Guardian*, "UK's Troubles amnesty plan goes further than Pinochet's, study says", 7 September 2021.

40. Ibid., 15,172–200, 212–214.
41. Van Veeren, “Secrecy’s Subjects”.
42. Aldrich and Cormac, “Grey is the new black”, 478, 484, 489–494.
43. Ibid., 489.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., 493–494.
46. O’Callaghan, *The Informer*, 93.
47. For examples, see McKittrick *et al.*, *Lost Lives*, 1268, 3317, 3411.
48. Balousha and Sherwood, “ Hamas Kills 21 Suspected Informers”, *The Guardian*, 22 August 2014; for the Israel-Palestine conflict see also Dudai and Cohen, “Triangle of Betrayal” and Darcy, *To Serve the Enemy*, 26–28.
49. Yousef, *Son of Hamas*, 98.
50. Borer, *A Taxonomy of Victims*, 1096, 1110–1114; Darcy, *To Serve the Enemy*, 16, 23–48.
51. Hewitt, *Snitch*, 148–150.
52. Dudai, “Informers”, 34.
53. Greenwood and Balousha in *The Guardian*, “ Hamas promises amnesty to Palestinian collaborators spying for Israel”, 13 March 2013.
54. For South Africa see Borer, *A Taxonomy of Victims*, 1096, 1110–1114.
55. Dudai and Cohen, “Triangle of Betrayal”, 48; Darcy, *To Serve the Enemy*, 202–203.
56. Dudai and Cohen, “Triangle of Betrayal”, 40.
57. Ibid.
58. Darcy, *To Serve the Enemy*.
59. Grele, “Movement Without Aim”, 40–41; Lummis, “Structure”, 274–275; Portelli, *The Death of Luigi*, 1–19.
60. Portelli, *The Order*, 3–20.
61. Dillon, *Dirty War*, 487.
62. Dudai, “Informers”, 39–41.
63. “Loose Talk Can be Fatal”, *An Phoblacht*, 25 January 1974, p.4.
64. Dudai, “Underground Penalty”, 381–384; Dudai, “Informers”, 378–385.
65. Dudai, “Informers”, 38–39.
66. Ibid., 46–49.
67. Breen, “Raymond Gilmour”, *Belfast Telegraph*, 29 October 2016; Barker, *Shadows*, 137–221; “Gilmour”, *Derry Journal*, 4 November 2016; Gilmour, *Dead Ground*; Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 124, 157–160.
68. Dudai, “Informers”, 38–39.
69. Morrison, “Exiles”, 18 January 2006; Interview with Danny Morrison, 22 May 2012.
70. “DUP concern”, *BBC News Online*, 9 November 2012.
71. “RUC Refines its Informers Strategy”, *An Phoblacht*, 2 July 1992, p.8–9.
72. Dudai, “Underground Penalty”, 379–382.
73. Gilmour, *Dead Ground*; “Gilmour”, *Derry Journal*, 4 November 2016; “Revealed”, *Belfast Daily*, 26 May 2014.
74. Dudai, “Underground Penalty”, 384–387.
75. Ó Dochartaigh, “Rules of Hijacking”, 119.
76. Leahy, “The politics”.
77. Breen, “The Son”, *Belfast Telegraph*, 4 November 2016.
78. Breen, “Raymond Gilmour”, *Belfast Telegraph*, 29 October 2016.
79. Leahy, “The politics”, 296–301, 309–310.
80. Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 191–197; McDonald, “Sean O’Callaghan”, *The Guardian*, 29 August 2017; O’Callaghan, *The Informer*.
81. McDonald, “Sean O’Callaghan”, *The Guardian*, 29 August 2017; O’Callaghan, *The Informer*.
82. O’Callaghan, *The Informer*, 26, 81.
83. Campbell, “O’Callaghan”, *An Phoblacht*, 6 March 1997, p.10–11; MacCormaic, “Touting”, *An Phoblacht*, 11 June 1998; “Hired Hacks”, *An Phoblacht*, 18 September 2008.
84. “Hired Hacks”, *An Phoblacht*, 18 September 2008.
85. Dudai, “Informers”, 47.
86. Interview with Danny Morrison, 18 May 2011.
87. Interview with Laurence McKeown, 16 May 2011.
88. Interview with Danny Morrison, 22 May 2012.
89. Aldrich and Cormac, “Grey is the new black”, 478, 493–494.
90. Dudai, “Underground Penalty”, 384–385.
91. “IRA Investigation Locates Grave Sites”, *An Phoblacht*, 1 April 1999; “Who Were the Disappeared?”, *BBC News Online*, 4 June 2019.
92. “IRA Investigation Locates Grave Sites”, *An Phoblacht*, 1 April 1999; Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 84–85; “Who Were the Disappeared”, *BBC News Online*, 4 June 2019.

93. "Bodies Found", *The Disappeared of Northern Ireland*; "Body is that of Disappeared Victim", *BBC News Online*, 20 October 2003; "IRA investigation locates grave sites", *An Phoblacht*, 1 April 1999; Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 12–13, 83–84.
94. "Still Missing", *The Disappeared of Northern Ireland*.
95. McMullan, "Truth and Conflict", *An Phoblacht*, 12 October 2006.
96. "IRA investigation locates grave sites", *An Phoblacht*, 1 April 1999.
97. Dudai, "Underground Penalty"; "IRA investigation locates grave sites", *An Phoblacht*, 1 April 1999.
98. For McConville see Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 12–13, 83–84; for McVeigh see "Still Missing: Columba McVeigh" *The Disappeared of Northern Ireland*; see also "Engagement with WAVE Trauma Centre", Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, 9 December 2021.
99. For examples, see "IRA offer amnesty", *An Phoblacht*, 28 January 1982, p.1, 6–7; "RUC refines its informer strategy", *An Phoblacht*, 2 July 1992, pp.8–9.
100. "Informer Comes Forward", *An Phoblacht*, 19 August 1999.
101. Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 124.
102. *Ardoyne: The Untold Truth*, 299–300.
103. Interview with Laurence McKeown, 16 May 2011.
104. Dudai, "Underground penalty", 384–385.
105. See above 52.
106. Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 84.
107. McKay, *Bare In Mind*, 51–56.
108. "Bernard Teggert", *An Phoblacht*, 6 August 2009; Moriarty, "Apology from IRA", *Irish Times*, 15 October 2004.
109. See above 95. 2006.
110. Ardoyne Commemoration Project, *Ardoyne*, 364–367.
111. "Anthony Braniff", *An Phoblacht*, 25 September 2003.
112. Dudai, "Underground Penalty", 377–381.
113. Harkin and Ingram, *Stakeknife*, 60–69; Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 2–4, 145–147, 247–248; McKearney, *The Provisional IRA*, 242–243; McIntyre, "How Stakeknife", *The Blanket*, 11 May 2003; Morrison, "Number 10's Murderer", 30 January 2016; O'Neill, "Files", *BBC Online*, 2 October 2019; *Operation Kenova*, "An Investigation"; McDonald and Cobain, "IRA informer 'Stakeknife'", *The Guardian*, 30 January 2018.
114. Dudai, "Informers", 40–46; Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 3, 198; O'Toole, "'Stakeknife'", *An Phoblacht*, 22 May 2003; Lane, "'Stakeknife story'", *An Phoblacht*, 22 May 2003.
115. Morrison, "No 10's murderer", 30 January 2016.
116. For loyalist-UK state collusion cases see De Silva, *Patrick Finucane Review*; and *The Rosemary Nelson Inquiry*.
117. See above 51.
118. Darcy, *To Serve the Enemy*, 197–198.
119. Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, 650–651.
120. Hewitt, *Snitch*, 25.
121. "Informants", *BBC News Online*, 11 September 2007.
122. Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 165; O'Brien, "Mole Named", *Irish Times*, 11 May 2012.
123. "DUP Concern", *BBC News Online*, 9 November 2012.
124. Bowcott, "IRA Mole Martin McGartland", *The Guardian*, 8 July 2014; Holland and Phoenix, *Phoenix*, 262–270; Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 148–151, 155; McDonald, "Former British Spy", *The Guardian*, 2 September 2019; McGartland, *Fifty Dead Men*.
125. Bowcott, "IRA Mole", *The Guardian*, 8 July 2014.
126. *Ibid.* 2014.
127. McDonald, "Former British Spy", *The Guardian*, 2 September 2019.
128. Barker, *Shadows*, 10.
129. "DUP concern", *BBC News Online*, 9 November 2012.
130. See above 42.
131. Darcy, *To Serve the Enemy*, 15, 172–200, 212–214.
132. Foley, *Countering Terrorism*, 59–60.
133. Holland and Phoenix, *Phoenix*, 113.
134. Carlin, *Thatcher's Spy*, 226–228.
135. *Smithwick Tribunal*, 247–268, 2013.
136. "O'Loan find no evidence McConville was a spy", *Irish Times*, 7 July 2006; reference 699 in McKittrick et al., *Lost Lives*.
137. Fulton, *Unsung Hero*.
138. Rosemary Nelson was a solicitor who was killed when a loyalist paramilitary group planted a bomb in her car at her home in Lurgan, in 1999. Allegations surrounding UK security services' role in the killing led to an inquiry.
139. Harkin and Ingram, *Stakeknife*.
140. Breen, "Agents", *Sunday Life*, 12 July 2008.

141. Whelan, "North's Police Ombudsman", *An Phoblacht*, 3 November 2011.
142. Munro, "Operation Kenova", *Policing Insight*, 30 September 2019.
143. *Pat Finucane*, 2012, 1–24; *Rosemary Nelson*, 2011, 463–470.
144. O'Callaghan, *The Informer*, 128.
145. "Willie Carlin", *BBC HardTalk*, 28 October 2019.
146. Hewitt, *Snitch!*, 5–66; Leahy, *Intelligence War*, 11.
147. Taylor and Snow, "Cold War Spies", 101–10, 116–25.
148. Harkin and Ingram, *Stakeknife*, 36–39.
149. See above 137.
150. See above 145.
151. O'Callaghan, *Informer*, 316.
152. Dudai, *Informers*, 47–48.
153. "IRA apology", *An Phoblacht*, 12 April 2007.
154. See above 131.
155. *Ibid.*, 15.
156. *Ibid.*, 15, 172–200, 212–214.
157. Aldrich and Cormac, "Grey is the new black", 479, 484–487.
158. Lewis, *Fishers of Men*, 236.

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