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# Lawyer defends 'wrongly accused'

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By Brendan Anderson

A CO ARMAGH man charged with murdering two RUC officers has been "wrongly accused", campaigning English lawyer Gareth Peirce claimed yesterday.

Mrs Peirce said it was "crystal clear" that 29-year-old ~~Colin Duffy~~ is innocent of the double killing in Lurgan two months ago.

Mr Duffy, from Drumnacree Gardens, Lurgan, faces charges of murdering Constable Roland Graham and Reserve Constable David Johnson at Church Walk in the town on June 16.

He has already spent three and a half years in prison before being released 10 months ago when the appeal court overturned his life sentence for the murder of John Lyness in June 1993.

According to his legal team's submission during two unsuccessful bail applications, Mr Duffy was arrested on the word of a witness who "was an unreliable woman of limited and low intellectual capacity".

In another development in the controversial case which has been the focus of attention for human rights groups, Mr Duffy's solicitor has claimed that investigating RUC officers mentioned his name to a potential witness before his arrest.

Mrs Peirce, speaking at the Maze prison yesterday where she was visiting a client, said: "It is crystal clear that Mr Duffy is wrongly accused and it is equally crystal clear why. Every ingredient that has led to wrongful convictions in the past seems to be present in his case.

"But what is not clear is how long it will take before anyone of conscience steps in and puts a stop to it. I hope that will be immediate. There is a momentum to charging and prosecuting, and there needs to be an equal momentum in putting a wrongful prosecution into reverse."

Solicitor Rosemary Nelson, who is acting for Colin Duffy, said she was "very concerned" about a Lurgan woman being asked about her client's alleged involvement in the killings "even before he was arrested or charged".

The woman, who asked not to be named and who lives near the murder scene, said she had telephoned for an ambulance immediately after the shootings.

## Man charged with RUC murders is 'innocent'

A week later, after being approached by police officers investigating the killings, she voluntarily went to Lurgan RUC station to make a statement. After two hours, the woman's husband went looking for her and found his wife coming out of the police station, crying and in a distressed state.

"They asked me if I was sure I did not know who had carried out the shooting. An English policeman left the interview room and the Irish policeman said, 'do you know Colin Duffy?'"

The woman said she had been on tranquilisers and sleeping tablets since making the statement in the police station.

Rosemary Nelson said she had protested to senior police officers about the incident.

"I am very concerned and I have raised the matter with the Director of Public Prosecutions. I feel it is highly irregular for a name to be mentioned prior to charging someone particularly in an identification case," she said.