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Local & National

Murdered Paul 'was lured to death farm by offer of work'

Monday, November 19, 2007

By Clare Weir

A friend of Paul Quinn, the Armagh man murdered in a suspected republican beating last month, has spoken of how they were lured to the shed where the killing took place.

The dead man's girlfriend has also spoken for the first time of witnessing Mr Quinn's final moments as she accompanied him to hospital in an ambulance.

Brendan Nugent (21) told the Sunday Times that he and Paul, also 21, had been "spinning" around their home town of Cullyhanna in a car on the afternoon of Saturday, October 25, when he received a phone call offering them work on a farmyard in Co Monaghan.

"It was, 'Come and clean up the yard, there's cattle coming tomorrow'," he said.

After arriving at the farm in Oram, he said: "We walked in, round the back and we were standing talking for a good five minutes.

"We were thinking the yard didn't look that bad. I walked over beside a lorry. That's when I seen the first fella."

Mr Nugent described how they were then surrounded by masked men.

"I knew they were looking for Paul," he said.

"I thought they'd give him a bit of a beating - a broken arm or something."

Mr Nugent then described the attack on Quinn.

"They were beating him, you could hear the bars bouncing off him, maybe four or five bars, he was screaming," he said.

The paper reports that after the victim fell silent, the attack continued for some five minutes. When the beating ceased, Mr Nugent said his friend was "the picture of death". He wrapped a coat over him before ringing Paul's girlfriend Emma Murphy.

The 18-year-old told the Irish Mail on Sunday that seeing her boyfriend moments from death was "the hardest thing I've ever witnessed in my life".

"He was more or less screaming with the pain, he was in a bad way," she said.

"I thought first that he had got bullet shots in his legs but it was actually the bone sticking out of his knee.

"I thought he was just going to have broken arms, broken legs. He was just battered. He had bruises all over his face and head and there was blood coming out of his arms and legs."

She said that he tried to speak in the ambulance but was "only able to repeat his own name".

Miss Murphy has said she blamed Provisional IRA for her boyfriend's murder. Mr Quinn's family spoke out immediately after the killing to say they believed the IRA was involved.

The young man's sister Cathy told the Sunday Times that in September Paul had an altercation with a man.

Mr Nugent told the same paper that after the incident he got a message to "stay away" from Quinn, who also allegedly told Miss Murphy that "the Provos would be after him" because of the row.

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