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Tribunal investigating double murder comes North

(by Suzanne Breen, Sunday Tribune)

The Smithwick tribunal, which is investigating the killing of two RUC men in south Armagh, will visit the North on Wednesday to view the murder scene and interview a witness who gave vital new evidence to the *Sunday Tribune*.

The evidence is from an ex-policeman who uses the pseudonym 'Andrew Hanna'. He was a colleague of Chief Supt Harry Breen and Supt Bob Buchanan. The two most senior police officers to be killed in the Troubles were shot dead in 1989 near the village of Jonesborough by a six-strong IRA team.

They were traveling home from a meeting in Dundalk garda station. The Smithwick tribunal was set up by the government to investigate allegations of garda collusion in the double murder.

It had been widely believed the RUC men had contacted gardai to arrange the meeting only hours before their murder. However, Hanna claimed the meeting was arranged three days earlier, allegedly giving the IRA ample time to plan the attack after a tip-off from a garda informer.

Hanna said his two colleagues were drawing up a joint strategy with gardai to end the multi-million cross-Border smuggling empire of senior IRA commander, Thomas 'Slab' Murphy.

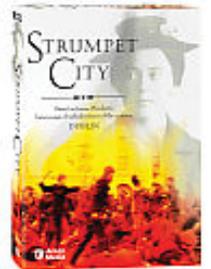
There have been rumours that one of the gunmen later became a Sinn Féin politician. However, reliable republican sources have told the *Sunday Tribune* this was not the case. 'Andrew Hanna' will be one of several ex-policemen interviewed on Wednesday.

Willie Frazer of Families Acting for Innocent Relatives (FAIR) will also meet the Smithwick team during their visit. "This is a very positive development. Plenty of guards were decent men doing their jobs well, but I believe there was collusion in this case and any genuine investigation will show a can of worms," he said.

January 15, 2008

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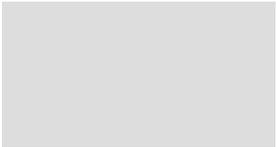




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