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INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN GALVIN (NORAIID) RTE RADIO I
PAT KENNY SHOW, 21 AUGUST, 1984

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"Martin Galvin, looking back on your trip to Ireland and the repercussions of it, what is your reaction?"

"Well, of course the death of Sean Downes was tragic, no-one could have foreseen that the British Government would decide to engage in a terrorist attack on literally thousands of Irish men, women and children who the media of the world saw that those men, women and children were in the act of sitting down with their backs to the British Army and RUC simply to listen to a speech in which I espoused views that I have espoused again and again, demanding the right of all the Irish people to be free. But by showing themselves as they did, I think anybody who saw that, who got a small glimpse of what it's like to be Irish, to be living under British rule in the North of Ireland. Certainly in America the reaction has been that the British are the terrorists, that they are the men of violence, that their rule, their sectarianism must be ended in the interest of peace. I believe that the people in the British mainland are coming to the same conclusion but I would hope that the people within the 26 counties, again that is part of Ireland, that is fellow countrymen and countrywomen that the British are doing that to in the North of Ireland. Anybody who saw that should take a decision that that has to be ended, that we must do something to push the British out of Ireland."

"But at the same time, Martin, if you had not been there, Sean Downes would be alive today. Do you have no tinge of regret at all?"

"No reasonable person could have foreseen that the British would act in that way. They could very easily have arrested me after the demonstration. All I was, was there without a reason, which is a very minor matter, I don't even believe it's a criminal offense. It's certainly nothing that would

justify, if anything could justify, a terrorist attack upon thousands of people and that the decision authorised at the highest levels within the British Government to have a special squad there, the RUC, to unleash, to use murder and terrorism against so many people. It was just as I said, I was shocked by it. I had seen British rule in action before, when I was in the North a year ago with an American delegation, two young men, Martin Malone aged 17, and Thomas Friar aged 21, were murdered by British occupation forces. But I never expected, I don't think any rational person could have expected the British to engage in that type of terrorism before the eyes of the World. And as I said anybody who understands that must recognise that there will never be peace so long as those British terrorists walk the streets of Ireland."

"You know, Martin Galvin, that here in the Republic and indeed in many parts of the United States, people believe that your organisation is funding the violent activities and not the peaceful activities, supporting the wives of people in jail, but in fact the violent activities of the Provisional IRA"?

"Well I think anyone who saw the activities of 9 days ago must say that if there is money being contributed by, from abroad which go to support men of violence, which go to support terrorists, I would have to say that these are the monies contributed by the British taxpayer to put those terrorists, 30,000 uniformed terrorists for the British Army, Royal Ulster Constabulary and Ulster Defence Regiment on Irish streets."

So you would not be ashamed to say to people who would contribute to you in the United States, that you would be fighting literally fighting that kind of thing in Northern Ireland"?

"We are certainly opposed to that, we are opposed to British terrorism in Ireland. Our monies go to the families of Irish political prisoners, but morally we support, we believe that any civilised person who saw that terrorism must say that

the Irish people have the right to resist this terrorism, that they have a right to fight against it, that they have a right to have peace and freedom in their own country and I think that the Irish Republican Army, those who fight against the 30,000 Occupation Forces the British have there, enforcing sectarianism, enforcing sham legal procedures, that the Irish Republican Army, the Irish people, have the right to national freedom and I think that only when the British get out of Ireland will there be peace for all the people of Ireland".

"So you would believe in the ballot paper in one hand and the armelite in the other, to quote Danny Morrison."

"I think that anything that shortens the time of British rule, hastens the day that peace and freedom will come to Ireland, I believe that the Irish people have long since exhausted all peaceful means of getting the British out of Ireland. There was a national referendum in 1918 and almost 80% of the people voted for free and independent 32 county Ireland and Britain partitioned the country. They've rejected the ballot box over and over again. When Bobby Sands was elected they passed laws saying he couldn't run, that the people in Long Kesh couldn't run. The British rule by force, they will not allow an all-Ireland referendum, and I think anybody who saw the events of nine days ago must say that the British are using force and terrorism to stay in Ireland and that Irish people have exhausted every possible means of achieving freedom, of achieving religious equality and the only means, the means forced upon them by the British, is to resist the terrorists."

"So do you believe that the Republican gun can win a 32-county Republic?"

"I believe that the Republican movement is the only one bringing any effective pressure to bear on the British to get out of Ireland, that they are the ones that will win freedom for Ireland, that that's the method by which 26 of Ireland's 32 counties had British rule ended within it, and that is the method that the remaining six will be ended. The British have shown over and over again that that is the only means by which they will withdraw from their colonies."

Lastly, Martin Galvin, how did you escape?

Ah, I got to run for this plane. I walked, well I jumped over onto the street, I was pushed by a number of people, there were a number of people from Sinn Fein with me, we ran around the side route. We were confronted by three RUC who pointed guns, yelled "halt", they were so anxious to get into the crowd they ran right by me, charged into the crowd fired plastic bullets and that enabled me to walk through. I was able to go to a location where I watched the news and learned of the tragic death of Sean Downes. That's my plane, the last call.

Martin Galvin, publicity director of Noraid thank you for joining us this morning.