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LOCAL NEWS



Omagh, August 1998

Thursday 04 December 2008 18:10

McKevitt defence to begin next week

Convicted terror chief Michael McKevitt`s lawyers will next week begin his defence against claims that he was responsible for the Omagh bomb atrocity.

The 58 year old who is serving a 20-year jail sentence, is one of five men being sued by relatives of some of the 29 people killed in the August 1998 Real IRA attack.

The attention now switches to him at the High Court civil trial in Belfast following submissions by one of his co-defendants, Colm Murphy.

Lawyers for 54 year old Murphy, a building contractor from Co Louth, centred their case on altered interview notes kept by investigating Garda detectives.

In separate criminal proceedings he is challenging a decision to re-try him on conspiracy charges linked to the Omagh bombing.

Murphy`s original conviction was overturned after it was found that the Special Criminal Court in Dublin failed to give proper regard to the note tampering.

A forensic document examiner called to give evidence at the multi-million pound civil action identified "rogue" handwriting within Garda records and transcripts from questioning of the detectives involved was also explored in detail.

Now McKevitt`s legal team are preparing their attempt to rebut the allegations against him.

Much of next week`s hearings are expected to focus on David Rupert, the FBI spy whose evidence was crucial to securing McKevitt`s conviction in 2003 for directing terrorism.

Of the other defendants, Seamus McKenna and Seamus Daly have still to open their defence.

Liam Campbell, who lawyers for the Omagh victims allege was a high ranking Real IRA man, is not represented at the proceedings.

All five men deny liability for the Omagh bombing.

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