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Brothers admit role in English murder

Friday 19 December 2008 11:08

Brothers admit role in murder

Two loyalist brothers have admitted involvment in the murder of a paramilitary chief eight years ago.

Standing in the dock of Belfast Crown Court dressed in black suits, 34-year-old David Ian Stewart and his older brother Robert Ian Stewart, 38, both pleaded guilty to aiding and abetting the murder of Tommy English on October 31 2000.

The brothers, from Carntall Rise and Ballyearl Court, both Newtownabbey, also pleaded guilty to hijacking a Renault Laguna car and possessing a gun with intent to commit hijacking and to falsely and injuriously imprisoning Witness A.

They also pleaded guilty to a series of further charges, that between October 1995 and August last year, they were members of the Ulster Volunteer Force.

As the pair entered their guilty pleas, Mr English`s brother inhaled sharply as he sat in the public gallery just a few feet away.

It was eight years ago when UDA Chief English was gunned down in front of his wife in their Ballyduff home.

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The murder was one of seven killings during a bloody UVF - UDA feud.

Before his murder, the 40-year-old had been part of a loyalist delegation who were part of talks at Stormont as the Good Friday Agreement was set up and signed.

The prosecution is the first to be brought before the courts by the Historical Enquiry Team, set up after the Police Ombudsman Ballast report in 2007.

Speaking outside the court, Director of the HET David Cox said the team were "*delighted*" at the result but that their thoughts were with the English family.

"We are delighted with the development but it is a continuing, ongoing work," said the director who added that they were "working closely with the Public Prosecution Service and we are cpontinuing with the investigatons."

As part of their remit, Mr Cox said the HET were carrying on investigations into a total of 19 murders, 14 attempted murders and a range of other criminality but would not be drawn whether or not more charges would be forthcoming.

Following the brief court proceedings, Mr Justice Hart remanded the brothers into custody and said he would pass sentence at a later date.

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