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Officer who shot IRA man dead cannot be found

(Barry McCaffrey, [Irish News](#))

The family of an IRA man shot dead in disputed circumstances last night (Wednesday) hit out after it emerged that the police officer who fired the fatal shots cannot be found.

Pearse Jordan (23) was shot dead by an undercover RUC unit as he drove a stolen car along the Falls Road in west Belfast in November 1992.

Eyewitnesses claimed that he was shot three times in the back as he attempted to run away from the vehicle.

The original inquest into the killing was halted on a number of occasions after the Jordan family refused to accept the coroner's ruling that police officers did not have to give evidence in person.

Those laws were changed in 2001 after the European Court of Human Rights found that the British government had failed to properly investigate 12 controversial killings.

Earlier this year the House of Lords ruled that the RUC and British army were legally obliged to allow a coroner to view all intelligence documents relating to inquests.

However, at the reopening of the Jordan inquest yesterday, senior coroner John Leckey was told that the officer who fired the fatal shots, identified only as sergeant 'A', could not be compelled to give evidence at the inquest because he had disappeared.

The court was told that the police have been unable to find sergeant 'A' as he is believed to be living in a foreign country outside the jurisdiction and working in a third foreign country.

The court was told police had attempted to contact sergeant 'A' through a third party but had no response.

Senior coroner John Leckey said that he had considered applying for a High Court subpoena to force sergeant 'A' to give evidence at the inquest but had been advised by his legal team that such a move would attract "considerable difficulties" and was "unlikely to be successful".

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The court was told that the PSNI had been informed by a number of other serving and retired police officers and civilians that they were willing to attend the court.

However, it had been unable to make contact with former Special Branch chief Bill Lowry to ascertain if he would give evidence.

Outside the court Mr Jordan's father Hugh questioned the PSNI's inability to find the police officer who had killed his son.

"I find it very hard to believe that the PSNI do not know where this man is," he said.

"Is the PSNI saying that this man is not receiving a police pension?"

"We have been fighting for justice for Pearse for 15 years and we'll go on for another 15 years if that is what it takes."

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