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Ireland

Another day in Castlereagh

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On 4 May the Sunday Business Post carried a major article by the British journalist and television producer Lin Solomon. The piece exposes three of the crucial weaknesses in the German warrant which seeks the extradition of Roisin McAliskey in connection with the IRA mortar bombing of a British Army Barracks in Osnabruck on June 28 1996.

Key witness, Manfred Schmidt, owner of the holiday cottage which it is claimed was rented out to the IRA unit, has "unambiguously asserted that he had never identified her (Roisin) as the woman 'Beth'."

The warrant claims that fingerprints, allegedly Roisin's, were found in the holiday cottage. The German authorities now claim however that the fingerprints were actually found 90 km. away at the site of the IRA attack in Osnabruck.

The warrant states that some of the IRA unit returned to Ireland aboard the Roscoff-Cork ferry arriving on July 1 1996. But as Solomon points out, "a check with the ferry company... reveals that there was no ferry which made the Roscoff-Cork crossing on the June 30. There was no ferry which could have arrived at Cork from Roscoff on July 1."

Woman Detective Constable, Douris, is said to have told Roisin that the problem with the cease-fires and the release of prisoners was that "republicans are breeding like rats, breeding like shit". This RUC officer is alleged to have told Roisin which parts of her body were most vulnerable to blows which would induce a miscarriage without any evidence showing afterwards. She is also said to have given a vivid description of the haemorrhage suffered by the another female detainee from Belfast.

Detective McRoberts allegedly told Roisin on the fourth or fifth day that Derek Martindale, the head of RUC Special Branch, had gone "on a wee holiday" and would be bringing back "a package deal". It is thought that Martindale travelled to Germany at this time knowing that the German authorities wanted a woman suspect in the Osnabruck case and hoping to put Roisin 'in the frame'. In other words, the German interest in Roisin was aroused by the RUC Special Branch having failed to pin anything else on the daughter of that "republican bitch".

Roisin's abusive treatment is no accident. Louis Blom Cooper QC, appointed by the British Government to oversee conditions in the interrogation centres, recently found that "complaints continue to be received alleging psychological abuse, personal threats and threats concerning the detainee's relatives. Not infrequently, detainees have complained of the demeaning, degrading and insulting remarks made about them, their spouses, partners or relatives."