

The “Bomb-In-Transit” Disinformation from RUC

RUC Duty Officers’ Report: 8 a.m. 5th December 1971

“ At 8.45 p.m. on Saturday, 4th December, 1971, an explosion occurred at McGurk’s Licensed Premises, 83 Great George’s Street (sic – the address was 81-83 North Queen Street). The charge was estimated at 50 lbs completely demolished the two storey building. Just before the explosion a man entered the licensed premises and left down a suitcase, presumably to be picked up by a known member of the Provisional I.R.A. The bomb was intended for use on other premises. Before the ‘pick-up’ was made the bomb exploded.

British Army - Director of Operations Brief: 5th December 1971

“ A bomb believed to have been planted outside the bar was estimated by the A.T.O. to be 30/50lb of HE

Media: The Times’ John Chartres, 5th December 1971

“ Police and Army Intelligence Officers believe that... an explosion in a Belfast bar last night was caused by an IRA plan that went wrong...
[The] Army believe bomb was in transit...

Media: Newsletter 6th December 1971

“ The RUC is of the opinion that the bomb was brought into the bar earlier in the night and that a Provisional IRA man was to have set it off somewhere in the city later...
The RUC last night rejected reports put about by Republican sources that the bomb was left outside the bar by the “UVF”

NI Prime Minister, Brian Faulkner, meets the British Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling: 6th
December 1971

“ *Mr Faulkner said that Mr. McGurk, the proprietor of the pub which was blown up at the weekend, had been interviewed by police in hospital and had said that there were no strangers in the bar on the night of the explosion. The army also discovered that the bomb went off on the ground floor. Both point strongly to the likelihood that the bomb was carried by the IRA rather than Protestant extremists. Mr. Faulkner had asked the RUC to find out whether anything was known about the associations of the people who were killed or injured.*

Speech by John Taylor, Minister of State for Home Affairs, at Stormont: 7th December 1971

“ *The premises are at 83 Great George’s Street (sic – as in RUC Duty Officers’ Report above)... The plain fact is that the evidence of the forensic experts supports the theory that the explosion took place within the confines of the walls of the building*

British Army/MI5 - Head Quarters Northern Ireland Intelligence Summary (HQNI INTSUM): 9th
December 1971

“ *Forensic and EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) reports tend to indicate that the explosion was caused accidentally inside the public house by premature detonation amongst a group which contained an identified IRA victim*

British MoD: Current Situation Report, 14th December 1971

“ *The forensic evidence now available shows quite clearly that five of the victims were killed by blast – indicating that the explosion must have been inside the bar and raising the very strong presumption that it was caused by the accidental detonation of a bomb being carried by one of the customers – as has seemed likely all along. The Minister of State for Defence is being invited to consider whether to make this point public in a written answer... In the view of Headquarters Northern Ireland it is important to put this point on record, in order to discourage continuing speculation about who was responsible for the explosion.*

British Army (with RUC supplementary Intelligence redacted) Brigade Intelligence Summaries: 8th – 15th December 1971

“ Following the McGurk's Bar incident, it has been confirmed that it was a bomb that was destined for another target, but exploded prematurely

RUC Special Branch Report to Cabinet and British Army: Joint Security Committee Minutes, 16th December 1971: to be confirmed by PONI

British Army Propaganda Leaflet Drop from the Commanding Officer of 2 Royal Regiment Fusiliers, Lt. Col. Jeremy Reilly, 23rd December 1971

“ We can look forward... To a period in which you will not lose your friends in a repetition of the 'Provos' accident in the McGurk's Bar

Media: The Guardian, 24th December 1971

“ The security men are now convinced that the bar was a transfer point in the IRA chain between the makers and the planters of the bomb

British Army: MO4 Monthly Report for December 1971, dated 10th January 1972

“ On 4 December McGurk's Bar in the Glenravel area was destroyed by an explosion in which 15 people died and 13 were injured... IRA propaganda tried to blame the SAS and Empire Loyalists. It is fairly certain that the bomb was being handed over by the "makers" to the "planters".

The secret archives above were unearthed by the families themselves, the Pat Finucane Centre and the British Irish Rights Watch. For further information and to download these archives, please visit [The McGurk's Bar Massacre](http://www.themcgurksbarmassacre.com) campaign website or the link below.