

STRENGTH OF COMRADESHIP

# THE MILLTOWN MURDER

PRIVATE JOSEPH BERGIN

14 DECEMBER 1923

MARK D. McLOUGHLIN





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**An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,  
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## *Foreword*

Mark McLoughlin brings to life remarkable characters from an era that until recently was shrouded in secrecy, 'unfindable' in books.

'Shh we'll leave it. We don't need to be talking of such things.' was said to me by Paddy Sheehan, my cobbler in his Newbridge, Henry Street shop as he started to tell me of a murder most foul. Paddy's brother Mick was interned in Tintown and would have known Private Joseph Bergin, the young man who paid dearly for the 'fine line' he walked.

The (old) IRA had fought to a standstill the British Army that had just won The First World War. The fighting was brought to a close by a truce in 1921, followed by the Treaty ratified in the first Dáil in the Mansion House Dublin but barely ratified by a slim margin.

Young men took to arms to fight ferociously against former colleagues who had taken on the responsibility of Government. Young men from both sides were prepared to kill and murder for what they believed was right. Civil War!

Private Bergin paid with his life for what he believed in. Captain James Murray in an earlier era would have been celebrated as a hero rather than remembered as a murderer by a Newbridge cobbler ninety years after these events. The emerging State was severely embarrassed by the revelations and writings in a free press, yet the nascent Garda Síochána mounted an impressive investigation that still impresses a hundred years on.

Mark D McLoughlin shines a light on this most difficult time in our history. In bringing these characters to life, we are enabled to understand why so many people chose to be so silent on an event that rocked The State as it struggled to be born.

*Councillor Noel Heavey, Mayor,  
Kildare-Newbridge Municipal District*

## *Preface*

On 14 December 1923, the body of a young military policeman, Joseph Bergin, was found dumped in the Grand Canal in the village of Milltown, Co. Kildare. The murder of Joseph Bergin was an appalling and senseless crime. Speculation was rife in the newspapers on the motive initially suspected to be a robbery. There was little progress for over a year until a suspect was finally arrested on Christmas Eve 1924. The murder and the subsequent investigation revealed the internal divisions in the new Irish Free State at the end of the Civil War and the complicated juxtaposition in the administration of law and order as it transferred from the military to the police. The trial had the potential to undermine the authority of the new Irish Free State as revelations emerged that agents of Military Intelligence had a role in the murder.

When I took on the task of researching the murder of Joseph Bergin under the auspices of the Decade of Commemorations in County Kildare, I did not realise the extent of the complicated task that I was undertaking. The availability of an ever-increasing variety of sources from the National Archives and Military Archives, and in particular the military service pension collection allow for a greater analysis of what actually happened which would have not been possible even in the very recent past. And, yet, even in these records, the gaps are huge. I was fortunate that the Garda Síochána investigation file exists but the gaps in the file suggesting that there were other files is obvious. Equally the gaps in military intelligence files, destroyed in the 1930s leave many unanswered questions. The surviving documents shows the brutality that existed at the time, particularly in Dublin, which in this case, spilled over to Kildare, as the new State attempted to curb the influence that Michael Collins' former network of agents and spies was having in the transformation from the War of Independence through the Civil War to a stable democracy. This publication cannot answer some of the questions that are posed about the murder – the evidence from the two sides in the murder trial is utterly disparate as to whether the murder was ordered or not and the question will never be answered but I hope that this publication presents the evidence in a balanced manner.

I have a personal link to the story. My grandfather James McLoughlin was a captain stationed in Portobello Barracks, Dublin in 1923 and 1924 and knew both Colonel Michael Costello and Colonel David Neligan who play a part in the story. He served with Costello in the Military College in the 1930s and as a brigade commander in Cork under the then Major-General Costello during the 1940s. I also came from a military family and was raised on the Curragh and vividly remember, as a child, the surviving remnants and brick chimney stacks of Tintown Internment camp.

In compiling a piece of research such as this, it is unfortunate that the victim of the murder – Joseph Bergin, gets little coverage. There are only a few records related to his life, whereas a large amount of the content of this research focuses on the murderers and on one in particular. Indeed, the newspaper coverage of the time is so focused on the murderer that the victim is often incorrectly named as ‘James Bergin’. Similarly, the date of his death is recorded incorrectly as 15 December 1923 on both his grave and a plaque erected in his memory when he was murdered on the night of 13-14 December 1923.

Joseph Bergin was abducted on Thursday, 13 December 1923 and his body was found the next morning. While the date of his death is often cited



*All that remains of Tintown*

as occurring on the Thursday, for the purpose of this work, I have used the date on his death certificate which matches the timeline of events to suggest that he was murdered in the early hours of Friday morning.

This publication would not have been possible without the assistance of a number of people; Colin McKay for his drawing and map work; James Durney, Kevin Murphy and Karel Kiely in the Kildare Library and Arts Service; Brian Costello for his assistance and advice; Joe Connelly, Cill Dara Historical Society; Matt McNamara, Curragh Local History Group; Paul Ennis, Guidenstown; Mike Rafter; Betty O'Shea, Milltown Heritage Centre; Carmel Curran; Pat Murphy; Aisling Kearns and the Decade of Commemoration Committee of Kildare County Council for supporting the publication. I have been unable to identify the ownership of a number of photographs, many of which are widely available and published elsewhere and for that I wish to apologise. I have also dispensed with reference notes in this volume, the majority of the research coming from newspapers, the Military Archives Bureau of Military History and Military Service Pensions collections together with the An Garda Síochána File on the murder now available in the National Archives.

I hope this work will go some way towards bringing the tragic story of the murder of Joseph Bergin to a wider audience.

*Mark McLoughlin*  
*November 2023*

CHAPTER 1

*Milltown, Co. Kildare*  
*- 14 December 1923*

Telegram to Minister Home Affairs Dublin

*Young man found dead today in Canal at Milltown Newbridge Co. Kildare Three bullet wounds in head believed to be a soldier from Curragh Camp in civilian clothes not yet identified*

*Sgt McNeill Naas*

*2.41 p.m., 14 December 1923*



*Milltown Canal Bridge*

The first indications that a crime had been committed were the blood stains and brain matter on the bridge over the Grand Canal in the small village of Milltown on the morning of Friday, 14 December 1923. At about 9.25 a.m. Anastasia and Elizabeth Curran, two sisters from Punchersgrange with a number of other children had walked nearly 3 miles (4.5 kilometres) to school in Milltown and were crossing the canal bridge close to the school. Anastasia spotted blood on the parapet of the bridge and drew the attention of a young man named Ernest O'Farrell, who was on his way to work. O'Farrell looked over the bridge and saw a body in the water and went into Kelly's Public House where William Martin was working and they called the Civic Guards in Newbridge.<sup>1</sup>

Inspector Joseph Kelly and Sergeant Patrick Hackett arrived on the scene and proceeded to take the body out of the canal. Inspector Kelly searched the clothing and found two military passes, one dated 10 December in the name of Joseph Bergin and one illegible. He had a small check bag around his neck containing scapulars and medals. The belt of a trench coat was tied loosely around his neck as was a pair of braces and a handkerchief. He was dressed in undervest, underpants, black tunic shirt, trousers and a cardigan. He had no shoes or overcoat. The most curious thing, according to Inspector Kelly, was that he had no boots or socks on. The Doctor at the scene examined him on the canal bank and thought that he had four bullet wounds to the head.

It was established at the Coroner's Inquest held at Milltown on Saturday that he was shot six times, three of these of which were probably fired while he was lying on the ground. The details of the injuries sustained by Bergin were reported in the newspapers of the time; two flesh wounds, two on the left brow and one half-way between the left ear and the left eye and three fairly close together on the top of his head. The left eye was shattered and some of the teeth were shattered as was the brain, all caused by the bullets that were fired from such close range. There was a jagged flesh wound on the left ear and two small pieces of lead were found under the skull with another bullet that penetrated the skull was found in his mouth. The skin around the wound between his left eye and left ear was discoloured by gunpowder indicating that the gunman was probably three to five feet away from the victim when that particular shot was fired. The calibre of

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that the names Civic Guard and An Garda Síochána were interchangeable at this time even though the Civic Guard were renamed An Garda Síochána on 8 August 1923.



*Recreation of the six wounds suffered by Joseph Bergin with gunshot residue on the temple wound.  
(Courtesy of Colin McKay)*

the weapon fired was not indicated but it was more than likely a .38 or .45 revolver considering the internal damage caused by the bullets. At the inquest, Dr. Roantree of Kildare declared that the wounds could not have been self-inflicted.

Local tradition suggested that the body was dragged behind the car and that the rope broke at the bridge before the men threw the body into the canal. The level of injuries and the fact that the body was found with his arms extending upright away from the body may have contributed to the speculation that the body was dragged behind a car. However, there were no other wounds than those caused by the bullets, except for the wound to the ear. When the crime scene would eventually be found with bullet holes in the wall, it is possible that the flesh wound to the ear may have been caused by one of the bullets that impacted the wall beside him. The Republican newspaper *Eire* reported on 2 February 1924 that:

‘His corpse was taken for miles from the scene of the murder and driven, propped up as if alive, in the front seat of the car until the canal was reached.’

It was quickly established that the body was that of Joseph Bergin, a military policeman stationed at Tintown No. 3 Interment Camp in the Curragh. No one in the area heard any of the shots leading to speculation that he was murdered at another location. At the Coroner’s Inquest, William Bergin, the victim’s brother, identified the remains and it was established that Bergin was going to Dublin to buy a motorbike and would have had at least £35 on him leading to initial suspicion that the motive was robbery.

The unreliability of the newspapers is illustrated by three contradicting reports. It was reported by the *Evening Telegraph* that William Bergin said that his brother was a shop assistant before joining the army said that he had last saw Joseph about three months previously. The *Leinster Leader* reported this as three weeks previously, while the *Irish Times* reported that he enlisted in the army three months ago.

Inspector Maher of the Civic Guards at Kildare requested the adjournment of the Inquest pending further investigation but this was rejected by the Court whose sole purpose was to determine the cause of death. A verdict of ‘wilful murder against some person or persons unknown’ was returned by the jury on Saturday 15 December 1923.

1923							
Fourteenth December 1923	Joseph Bergin	Mr Bridger	23	Military Policeman	Shed at Milltown and Coroner of the Coroner's Court by Coroner's Court at Milltown on 15 December 1923	Information received from E. Cooper Coroner for South Kildare	

Extract from General Registry Office record for the death of Joseph Bergin

Immediately after the killing, the Civic Guard commenced the investigation of the murder and were certain that he was not murdered at Milltown. No trace of the bicycle he borrowed from a colleague in the Curragh could be found at Kildare or Newbridge railway stations. Mr. Laurence Kelly, the owner of the public house beside the canal bridge at Milltown was up and about around his own yard beside the canal at 12.30 a.m. and did not hear anything. It did not make sense for the victim of a robbery for money to be murdered at one location and dumped at another location. There were reputed to have been two witnesses to the dumping of the body who never came forward. Michael and Kit Murphy were out with



shotguns hunting rabbits during the night. When the motorcar arrived at Milltown, Kit Murphy is alleged to have been under the bridge and Michael hiding in the ditch nearby. Both saw the body being dumped into the canal. Perhaps, as both were former IRA men, they wanted nothing to do with the murder.

Just before the body was discovered at Milltown, Private James Cleary, an army driver responsible for Ford car A.C. 802 stationed at Portobello Barracks, Dublin was ordered to report to Colonel Michael Costello, Director of Military Intelligence and told to collect his car from Crown Alley, just off Dame Street in Dublin City Centre. Private Cleary discovered the car in a filthy state with the back seat covered in blood. It wasn't long before the Civic Guard linked the bloodstained car and the discovery of the body at Milltown together setting off a murder investigation worthy of any spy thriller.

## CHAPTER 2

# *Joseph Bergin*

*'He found himself in the ranks of those who were trying to destroy the Republic; found himself called upon to kill his old comrades; expected to treat his former comrades with brutality in the enemy prisons and camps.'*

*Moss Twomey, May 1938*

Joseph Bergin was born at Glencondra, a townland in the foothills of the Slieve Bloom mountains on the Laois-Offaly border near the picturesque village of Camross, Co. Laois on 15 December 1900 to Stephen Bergin (1857-1929) and Annie Gleeson (1869-1922). Stephen and Annie married in 1896 and had six children; Katie, William, Patrick, Joseph, Mary and Stephen. The family farmed a modest 100-acres on mountainous land, enough to support ten cattle. There was enough of a living to be made for the two



*Joseph Bergin*  
(Courtesy of Kildare Co. Library)

eldest sons, William and Patrick to work on their father's farm but Joseph worked as a shop assistant in Mrs. Dowling's licenced premises on Pound Street, Mountmellick. The two eldest boys were involved with the Republican movement during the War of Independence. Camross had its own Company as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Laois IRA. Activities carried out by this unit included armed raids on houses to seize weapons, cutting and trenching of the Cork to Dublin road, the destruction of bridges, and the burning of the courthouse at Borris-in-Ossory.

William and Patrick Bergin participated directly in a number of actions including the armed hold-up of two British Officers at Camross in November 1920; the removal of

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a person of bad repute from the district; attempted ambushes of a police constable in May and June 1921 and the preparation of a camp for the North Tipperary and Offaly Flying Column in the Slieve Bloom mountains in early 1921.

Although Joseph Bergin is not listed in the surviving records of the Laois (Leix) IRA in any of these action, compiled in the 1930s and held in the Military Archives, he is listed as a second lieutenant with the Camross Company on the date of the Anglo-Irish Truce of 11 July 1921.

Captain – Patrick Neill, Neilstown, Camross, Leix

1st Lieutenant – William Bergin, Camross, Leix

2nd Lieutenant – Joseph Bergin, Glencondra, Camross, Leix

Adjutant – John Gorman, Camross, Leix

Quartermaster – John Cudihiy, Aughduff, Camross, Leix.

The majority of the 27 men listed as part of the Company do not feature in the surviving records, nevertheless, Joseph Bergin had clearly made enough of an impression to be one of the officers of the Company by June 1921.

We will never know the reason why he subsequently joined the National Army at the height of the Civil War, but the prospect of a steady income and



*Tintown Internment Camp, Curragh  
(Courtesy of Matt McNamara)*

some adventure rather than his job as a shop assistant seems the most likely reason. He enlisted on 17 September 1922 at Portlaoise and was assigned to the Military Police at Portlaoise Prison guarding republican internees captured in the ongoing war. It appears that his two brothers who had been so active in the War of Independence stayed out of the Civil War.

With the consolidation of republican prisoners primarily to the Curragh and Newbridge internment camps in the Summer of 1923, Bergin was posted to 'Tintown' No. 3 Internment Camp at the Curragh, Co. Kildare. Although the order to dump arms had ended the Civil War in May 1923, thousands of republican prisoners remained interned in late 1923 and into 1924. At the western end of the Curragh, there were three camps known as Tintown 1, 2 and 3 (sometimes referred to as Tintown 'A' and 'B') in addition to Hare Park Camp at the eastern end of the Curragh. Conditions nationally in the camps were very basic and this together with the indefinite period of detention after the end of hostilities resulted in a mass hunger strike in October 1923 including 3,390 prisoners at Tintown. The newspapers of the time reported the dreadful conditions of the hunger strikers at the Curragh, particularly in November 1923 which included elected members of Dáil Eireann (TDs):

'Mr. Brian O'Higgins, T.D. is reported dying in Tintown No. 3 Camp, also that Prof. Atkins of Galway University and Mr. P. Mullins O/C of the prisoners in the same camp are very weak.'

O'Higgins wife wrote to the *Freeman's Journal* on 14 November 1923 to outline her concerns:

'On receipt of information, the authority of which is beyond doubt, that my husband, Brian O'Higgins T.D. for Co. Clare is dying in Tintown No. 3 Camp, I, this morning applied to Army Headquarters for a permit to visit him, to be issued either to myself or to his medical advisor or to both, but this was peremptorily refused. My husband is now 26 days on hunger-strike, he has never been strong...'

O'Higgins was subsequently released a week after the murder of Bergin.

A recently released prisoner, Bernard Keegan wrote in the *Irish Worker* on 3 November 1923:

'I was arrested by F.S. military in Abbey Street in April and taken to Richmond Barracks where I was detained for three months, then

removed to Tintown No. 3 Internment Camp, Curragh, where I was detained without charge or trial until my release on Friday last, October 26th.

Well over 1,000 men, I do not know the exact number, went on hunger strike until release or death. Every man continued the strike up to the time of my release on Friday, Oct. 26th. Many of the men were then quite weak, some having been in poor health and physically run down before the beginning of the hunger strike, but all were unflinching in their determination to carry on to the end – release or death.’

The Internment camp system was operated by the military with Commandant Daniel McDonnell in the position of army provost marshal at the Curragh. McDonnell reported directly to military intelligence who, in practice, had some level of control over the internment camps.

Although records are scant, Joseph Bergin was operating as an intelligence officer for the IRA at this time and was smuggling dispatches in and out of Tintown. During the hunger strikes of 1923, there was a constant flow of information being smuggled out to the republican movement, particularly in October and November 1923. Bergin was in communication with the IRA Director of Intelligence, Michael Carolan (1875-1930) in Dublin, a Belfast republican who became Director of Intelligence for the anti-treaty IRA in August 1922. Republican newspapers such as *An Phoblacht*, *Eire* and *Wolfe Tone* carried reports from the internment camps with details on hunger strikers and conditions. There is no doubt that the Military would not have been happy with the level of information being smuggled out of the camps at a time when they were trying to break the morale of the hunger strikers.

Some fifteen years after Bergin’s murder, at the unveiling of a memorial, the following was said of him:

‘He found himself in the ranks of those who were trying to destroy the Republic; found himself called upon to kill his old comrades; expected to treat his former comrades with brutality in the enemy prisons and camps. He could not do this work; he revolted against what was expected of him in the new service. He wanted to leave, but it was decided that in the circumstances he could be of service

in remaining – he could help comrades who were imprisoned; he could be near those who were about to be executed.’

The Republican newspaper *Eire* gave a view on the reason for his murder in an article written by Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington on 2 February 1924 in which she claimed that the demobilisation of the National Army saw ex-IRA men losing out with the retention and promotion of anyone with a Black and Tan or British Army record. She suggested that there was some unpleasantness at the Curragh after a number of old IRA men were demobilised without their consent and Bergin had opposed this plot.

‘Joe Bergin, the murdered man, who was an old I.R.A. Volunteer who had served since 1916, openly opposed the plot and organised boldly against it. A few days before his death it is said he was attacked by an ex-British officer and told to beware. He is the latest victim of the murder gang.’

The scenario seems highly unlikely but served a propaganda purpose in the build up to the army mutiny of 1924 where the demobilisation of former IRA men brought matters to a head.

Bergin was known to the prisoners as ‘motorbike’ and was someone who could be trusted. The Bureau of Military History which collected material between 1947 and 1957 from participants in the independence struggle holds a statement from Stephen Keyes who was in the anti-treaty IRA during the Civil War and was transferred from Mountjoy Prison to the Curragh in late 1923. He recorded the following in respect of Joseph Bergin:

There was a P.A.<sup>2</sup> in the Curragh by the name of Bergin. He was shot afterwards. I knew he was one that could be approached on matters of escape. If you could possibly approach him through the big shots. I heard of that. One evening I was told to be up at the cook-house early in the morning and don’t bring any orderlies with you. I was told that by our Camp Adjutant; Malone, I think, was his name. I went up the next morning to the cook house or dining room, early. As I went up, the Camp Adjutant came up and said, ‘Come on quick.’ I went to the side of the cook house. There was

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<sup>2</sup> *Postai Airm* (PA) is the Irish version of Military Policeman (MP) and is used more often than the term ‘MP’

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a horse-drawn vehicle standing there, with rubbish. Commandant Malone, the Camp Adjutant, and our Camp Commandant got into the car and they lay down on the bottom of it. Myself, Bergin, the P.A., and two other people covered up the Camp Commandant and the Adjutant with cabbage leaves and all the refuse from the cook house. When they were covered up, they were driven right out and escaped.'

Pension records held by the Military Archives, Dublin as part of the Military Services Pension Records Collection show that the Camp Adjutant mentioned by Keyes was Thomas Malone (1896-1981) of Nenagh, Co. Tipperary who served during the War of Independence primarily in Westmeath and Offaly, had served since Easter 1916 and was interned by the British at Spike Island. He was Divisional Officer with the IRA 2<sup>nd</sup> Southern Division during the early part of the Civil War and was



*Tintown 'B' Camp Staff  
(Courtesy of Matt McNamara)*

subsequently interned by the Irish Free State at Portlaoise on 7 August 1922 before being transferred to Tintown No. 3 where he was officer in command of the prisoners. According to his file he escaped from Tintown No. 3 in July 1923.

Bergin was involved in at least one other escape:

‘The next escape from the Curragh was made by Joe Wilson, a former Commandant of the Free State Army. I used knock around with him a lot because he was able to get a great lot of cigarettes from the soldiers. He said to me one day, ‘I am going to escape’. We were sitting on the grass. He mapped out the whole Curragh on the grass. I said, “Let me have your cigarettes before you go”. One evening while I was talking to him, he said he was going to escape the next morning. He told me how he was going. There was a very, very big hut which held about five or six hundred men. It was a riding school one time. The morning paper was secured in some way, and the O/C of the hut called all the men that were there down to one end of the hut, telling them he had the paper. Of course, everybody was anxious to hear the news. I was at the top part of the hut. I saw Joe Wilson walking in and he waved his hand to me. He climbed up on top of a platform where the guard was placed to keep an eye on the men. It was raised above the hut. The same man again, Bergin, was there waiting for him and gave him a uniform, into which Wilson changed. He walked on out and got away.’

There is further evidence of Bergin’s involvement with the anti-treaty IRA during this period when Donnach Ua Neill gave a reference to the Military Pensions Board in respect of a local *Cumann na mBan* member Peg Daly of Claregate Street, Kildare.

‘During the Civil War period she maintained dispatch service between Btn and about July 1922 she actively assisted in the establishment of a secret service connection with Free State Forces on the Curragh and which eventually culminated in the shooting of a Sergt Bergin (Free State) near Milltown, Co. Kildare. Ammunition and some revolvers were got by her through this connection.’

Margaret (Peg) Daly (1890-1990) was born in Rathangan and took an active role in the nationalist movements from 1914 onwards being a founding



member of the Kildare Town Branch of the women's republican movement *Cumann na mBan* together with her sister Lucy Daly (1884-1969). She helped with dispatches and assisting prisoners at the Curragh interned by the British and continued with this when the Irish took over. Peg Daly was arrested at Southwells shop on the Market Square, Kildare where she worked as a bookkeeper on 5 March 1923 and was interned in Mountjoy until her release in September 1923 when she resumed her contact with anti-treaty forces and Joseph Bergin. James Mulholland, of the anti-treaty IRA GHQ Intelligence reported that Peg and Lucy Daly were in contact with Joseph Bergin up to the time of his murder.

The escape of Malone and Wilson and the belief that at least one individual was assisting republican prisoners in the Curragh led Military Intelligence to eventually focus on Joseph Bergin.



*Peg (left) and Lucy (right) Daly*  
(Courtesy of Cill Dara Historical Society)

## CHAPTER 3

# *The Murder*

13 December 1923

*Ford Car No. 802 was required by me tonight for a special job. As it was essential that certain persons travel in the car, there was no room for the Driver. I am, therefore, returning him herewith with his Duty Order.*

*Michael Costello  
Director of Intelligence*

### 13 December 1923

Witness statements taken by *An Garda Síochána* (also referred to as Civic Guard) and newspaper accounts allow us recreate the last day of Joseph Bergin's life.

Private Joseph Bergin went on duty at the upper gate of Tintown No. 3 Internment Camp at 10 p.m. on Wednesday 12 December and was put on duty by Corporal William Harte. Sergeant John Joe Kelly inspected the post at about 1 a.m. and gave Bergin a loan of a fountain pen. Bergin asked for a pass to leave the camp in the morning but Kelly said he would have to wait until Captain Patrick Horgan came in, in the morning. Volunteer Charles Alley spoke to him about 4 a.m. and Corporal Patrick O'Conner spoke to him at about 5 a.m. when, according to O'Conner he was writing a letter.



*Volunteer Joseph Bergin*

Bergin told his colleagues that he was going to Dublin the next day to buy a motorbike for £35, although no one was clear whether he had already paid for it or had the money with him. Private James Moran gave him a loan of his Raleigh bicycle – green with new mudguards.

He finished his shift on duty after 6 a.m. and spoke to Private Martin Tobin, Private William McNicholas and Private John Killeen who were in the same hut as him at the end of the nightshift. Bergin had left his quarters by 6.45 a.m. to get breakfast in Beresford Barracks and before leaving said to his colleagues 'Good-bye now; I may not see you again.'

Bergin was technically absent without leave as he did not have a pass to leave the Curragh. The pass that was subsequently found on his body was a forgery, and Captain Patrick Murray,<sup>3</sup> Bergin's commanding officer at Tintown testified that the signature purporting to be his on the pass was not signed by him. It would appear therefore that he borrowed the fountain pen to create a fake pass to leave the Curragh.

The newspapers carried much speculation about the missing bicycle which was not located at either Kildare or Newbridge railway stations. There was a simple explanation for this. Bergin left the bicycle at the house of Peg Daly on Claregate Street, Kildare that morning and walked to the railway station. Daly claimed not to have met him that morning as she was at Mass when he left the bike at her house. Daly had reason to be less than truthful with the police as she was a conduit between anti-treaty IRA forces interned at the Curragh, their families and IRA intelligence services with Joseph Bergin being a vital part of the communication network.

It is most likely that Bergin took the 8.30 a.m. train from Kildare to Dublin. It is what he did next that sealed his fate. At some point on Thursday he met with Michael Carolan, the Director of IRA Intelligence in Dublin. It is assumed that Bergin handed documents over to Carolan and obtained further documents to smuggle back into Tintown.

Bergin arrived that evening at Kildare Railway Station at 8.30 p.m. from Dublin and proceeded to walk to Claregate Street, Kildare town to collect the bicycle from Peg Daly's house at about 8.45 p.m. He told her he was due on duty at 10 p.m. at Tintown. He had no light on his bicycle. She said to him 'I will get a lamp for you.' His last words to her were 'Ah, no. They will not mind me.'

At some point between Claregate Street, Kildare and Tintown No. 3 Internment Camp on the Curragh, Joseph Bergin vanished.

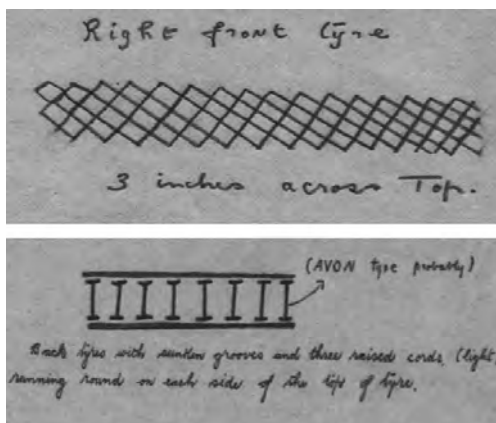
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<sup>3</sup> Captain Patrick Murray was appointed second in command Tintown 'B' Internment Camp, 20 October 1923. Tintown No. 3 appears to have been part of Tintown 'B'.

### Guidenstown, Co. Kildare

The Civic Guard made an early breakthrough in the investigation. It was evident that Bergin had been brought by car to Milltown. The Civic Guard at Kildare located tyre tracks from a motor car north of Kildare town near Thomastown crossroads and proceeded to follow the tyre tracks in an effort to trace the movements of the car.

James Payne of Rathangan Demesne said that a car drove into his driveway at about 11 p.m. and a man called out: 'Hello, Anyone there?' 'Who's there? What do you want?' inquired Payne. The unidentified man requested water for the car. Payne told him that there was a bucket outside the door and that the pump was down the yard. The man took the bucket, filled it from a water trough, brought it to the car and then returned the



*Tyre tracks as recorded by An Garda Síochána  
(National Archives)*

empty bucket to where he had taken it. The man asked for directions to Thomastown Cross and Payne told him which way it was. Payne never opened the door but when the car was about to leave, he looked through the window and saw the car and lights. The car went in the direction of Rathangan before returning past Payne's house a few minutes later.

The Civic Guard tracked the tyre tracks to about half a mile past Payne's house in the direction of Rathangan where it turned at three cottages.

Wexford-born James Lynch, aged about 73 years old, described as an old man, who was a farm servant living on the farm of Helena Connor at Boherkill on the road between Kildare and Rathangan went to bed about 10.30 p.m. and heard a car coming from Kildare, stop outside their house at about 11 p.m. The gate was locked and a person climbed over the gate and knocked on the door asking for directions to Thomastown Cross and Allen.

Lynch said to him: 'You have passed Thomastown Cross half a mile down the road. Who do you want in Thomastown.'

STRENGTH OF COMRADESHIP - THE MILLTOWN MURDER



*All that remains of the vacant house  
were Bergin was shot at Guidenstown*

There was a further query: 'Which is the direct road to Rathangan?'. Lynch replied: 'Go as you are and turn to the left at the forge.' The man climbed back over the gate and the car turned around heading back towards Thomastown Cross. The Civic Guard report on the find gives a tantalising piece of information:

‘There are three cottages where it turned and I am of the opinion that it was at one of those cottages that the men in the motor got the particulars of the route which they then took i.e. back to Thomastown Cross, turn to left, and down the avenue to the house where the crime was committed.’

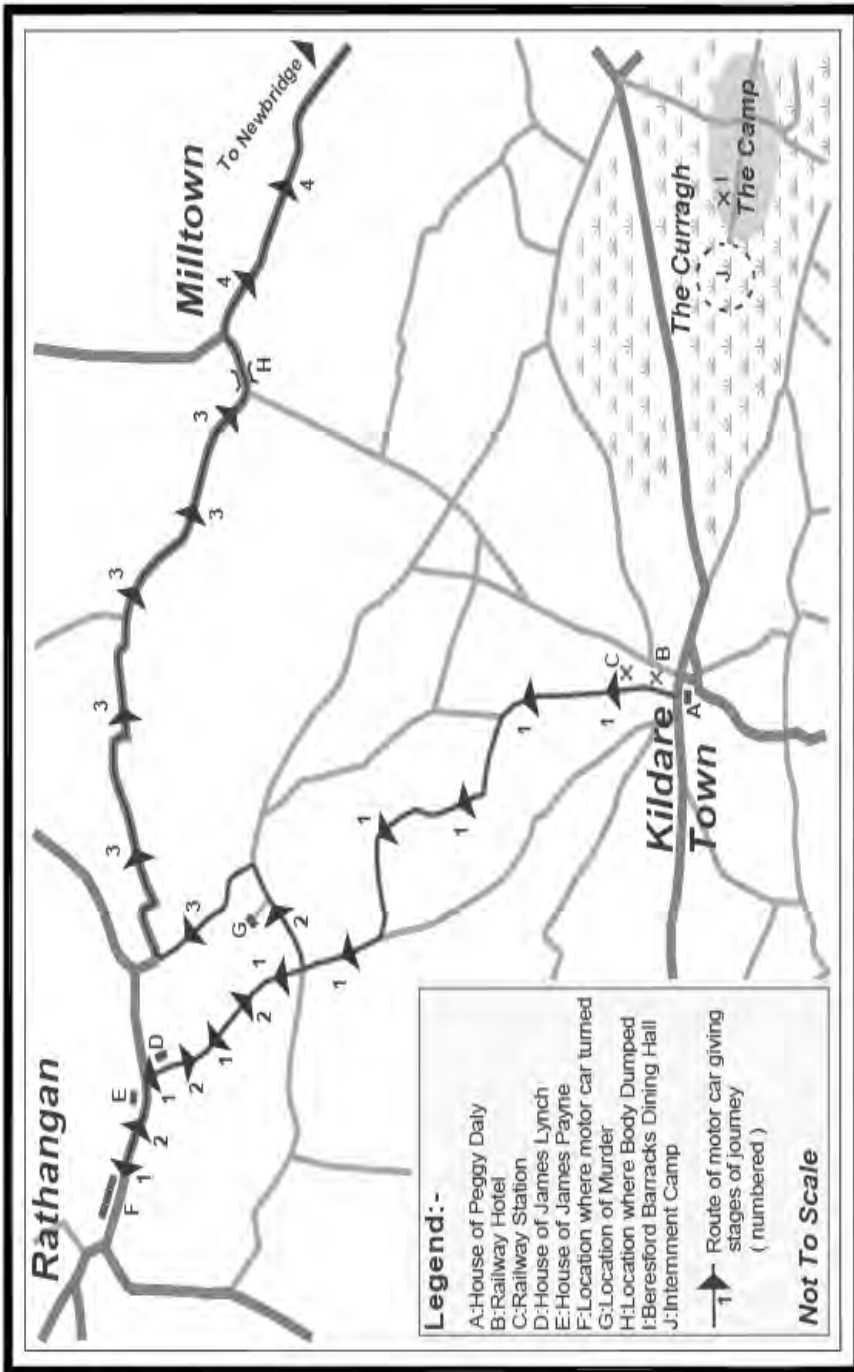
If the Civic Guard were correct, it would suggest that someone living in one of the cottages on the edge of Rathangan assisted them. It would also explain how three men from Dublin were able to find a vacant house on a dark winter’s night. The house at Guidenstown had been used a safe house during the War of Independence so was known to local IRA elements.

The car tracks led to a vacant house in the townland of Guidenstown on the farm of Patrick Ennis.

The Civic Guard went to great lengths to carry out a thorough investigation. Casts were taken of the tyre tracks which ascertained that one of the front tyres was a ‘Continental’ tyre and the other three were ‘Avon’ tyres. It appeared that the car had backed into some tree stumps at the scene of the crime. Superintendent Joseph Maher had the tree stumps retrieved in case there was damage to the car. Maher gave a full account of what they found in the house when he visited the scene on Monday morning:

‘The struggle in the house was carried on in three rooms on ground floor. In one of those rooms it would appear as if the victim was tied to a clothes rack which was nailed to the wall – three hooks were torn from the rack. While tied in this way, he was shot at but not hit. One bullet is imbedded in the jamb of the room door, the other struck the wall in two places and was found on the floor. There are splashes of blood in the second room and in the third – the kitchen – the final struggle took place. Here there are large quantities of blood mixed with soot, which has fallen down the large open fireplace. It looks as if the soot was kicked over the blood and then all swept into the sunken ash pit. We found a knitted necktie saturated with blood and broken in two in the ashpit. It appears to have been pulled from the front and gave way. A table in the kitchen was splattered with blood and I found what appears to be a fingerprint. I cut this portion from the table and retain it. Near the table was found a piece of brown lapping paper on which is well written in pencil:-

STRENGTH OF COMRADESHIP - THE MILLTOWN MURDER



Map of key locations in the text  
(Courtesy of Colin McKay)

PRESIDENT

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164

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1678

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The *Leinster Leader* reported that there were various rumours in connection with the case but did not publish any of them. The reporter noted that:

‘A Dublin morning paper writing on the subject says what is believed to be the scene of the shooting is an unoccupied house at Guidenstown, standing on the farm of Mr. Patk Ennis. It is a substantial two-storey building which has been unoccupied for a considerable time. It is within 260 yards of the road which runs from Thomastown Cross to Milltown where the body was found.

When an *Irish Times* reporter visited the house yesterday he saw that the Civic Guards had been active within it. Portion of a table on which there were blood smears had been sawn off and taken away to the barracks. Blood marks were pointed out in the kitchen and in one of the rooms, and there were other indications that a brutal crime had been committed there.

It is true that what appeared to be blood stains were found in this house, which had been disused for a considerable time. A few years ago a man committed suicide by hanging himself in the house and since then it has been unoccupied being avoided by the people generally. The stains in question were found in the ashes of a fire which were in the outer room, and they are being sent forward for analysis. Until the analyst has examined them, of course, nothing further can be said on this point and it is considered by some at present that it is possible it may be the blood of some animal or fowl which had been killed and cooked in the place by some persons accustomed to frequent the house for shelter.’

An anti-treaty publication, the *Daily Sheet* published by Sinn Fein Headquarters on Tuesday 18 December 1923 was in no doubt as to whom the murderers were:



'It is well known to everyone in and around the Curragh – to the Free State soldiers, to the civilians, to the republican prisoners in the four internment camps there – that Joseph Bergin, Military Policeman attached to Tintown 3 Camp was murdered on last Thursday night by some of the 'Unofficial' murder gang, instigated and aided by certain ex-British soldiers and ex-Black and Tans stationed in the district. Joseph Bergin was one of the Volunteers cajoled into the Free State army by the unscrupulous lies about the Treaty, chief of which was that it was a stepping-stone to the Republic. Two or three weeks prior to his murder, Joe saw that whatever the original intention of the Treatyites was, it was plain that the Anti-Irish Imperial section of the Free State army was now on top and was determined, no matter what the cost, to complete the Anglicising process. He was overheard giving his opinion on this to a comrade by an ex-British Officer, now in the Free State army who called him the orthodox British Army filthy names and told him he had better look out for himself. On Thursday night the 13<sup>th</sup> inst., he was cruelly murdered. His name will not be forgotten by the people of Ireland: "*Go ndeanaidh Dia trocaire ar a anam.*"

### **The Motor Car – Things get complicated**

On Friday morning, Private James Cleary of the Army Transport Corps stationed at Portobello Barracks, Dublin was instructed to pick up his Ford Touring Car No. AC 802 at Crown Alley Telephone Exchange, just off Dame Street in the centre of the City. Cleary found the back seat of the car covered in blood and reported the matter to Sergeant Nugent.

It did not take long for this information to come to the attention of the *An Garda Siochána* and they were quick to link the two events. However, there was an immediate complication. Those who had used the car were members of Military Intelligence. The Head of the Dublin Metropolitan Police was W.R.E. Murphy, a former British Army Officer and a General in the Free State Army who led the attack on Kilmallock and commanded troops in West Cork and Kerry. He left the army in May 1923 to become Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. W.R.E. Murphy requested Chief Superintendent George Willoughby to:

'Trace if possible the movements of a black Ford car army no. AC802 on the night of 13th inst. It probably started from GHQ Parkgate

about 9 p.m. – ascertain where it was seen and particularly if it was seen on any roads leading to Kildare. Also if it was seen in the early hours of 14th returning along these roads.’

Murphy added in the following request:

‘Enquiries must not be made from the military. Instruct one or two very discreet men, like Sgt Killeen or Devaney to report to you and instruct them to make discreet enquiries and refer to no one but you.’

Sergeant Michael Killeen proceeded to check with all the policemen on duty on the various roads around the Phoenix Park, Kilmainham, and Inchicore areas and prepared an account of all the motor cars recorded that night. A number of cars were identified but the car found at Crown Alley was not seen that night or morning.

The police held onto the car and the military would put the driver into protective custody.

### **Civic Guard, Dublin Metropolitan Police and Military Intelligence**

The transfer of power from the British administration to the Irish administration during 1922 went through a number of stages in respect of policing. The Civic Guard were formed in February 1922 and renamed *An Garda Síochána* in August 1923, however Dublin remained under the control of the Dublin Metropolitan Police until 1924. At the time of the murder, the newspapers and most other sources still used the term Civic Guard. A Criminal Investigation Department (CID) made up of members of the National Army and former members of the Republican Police was established at Oriel House in Dublin in 1922 and was organised independently of the Civic Guard and reported to the Minister for Home Affairs.

The CID gained a brutal reputation during the Civil War particularly in Dublin where it was associated with the killing of a number of prominent anti-treaty republicans. It was closely linked to military intelligence and had its history in Michael Collins’ intelligence network during the War of Independence with many of his agents serving in CID during the Civil War. There was a General Election in August 1923, the first since the establishment of the Irish Free State which resulted in a number of

changes in policy. The CID were disbanded in October 1923 with 30 of their members merged into the Dublin Metropolitan Police as detectives and a reformed smaller military intelligence established. As shall be seen, the discovery of the body of Noel Lemass in October 1923, may well have been a contributory factor to this change.

Commissioner W.R.E. Murphy summarised the situation very well in January 1924 in respect of the murder of Bergin.

‘As the murder was in the Civic Guard area, it was understood that the Civic Guard would investigate all the facts, and the DMP would confine themselves to tracing the movements of the car on that night. The insinuation from the documents produced was that the Intelligence Staff had to do with the murder.’

Murphy went on to state his belief that:

‘There is at the present time a secret service being run in Dublin by the Minister of Industry and Commerce [Joseph McGrath]. I do not know if this is supposed to be done without our cognisance. At any rate we are in a position to arrest all the agents of this service at any time, as they are known to us. It would have been as well for the SS Branch to have informed us, as there might have been a collision between our detective branch and this force. Its existence and agents are all known to us.’

Joe McGrath had served as Director of Intelligence from July 1922 and as head of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). This would become part of the unsaid undercurrent in the Bergin murder – a number of ‘toughs’ carrying out crimes on behalf of the State apparently outside of the normal rule of law. Murphy was of the view that the Bergin murder could not be investigated by *An Garda Siochána* alone and that the newly formed Detective Branch was the most effective means of pursuing the murderers. This leads us on to those who were responsible for the murder.

### **Military Intelligence and Joseph Bergin**

There is no surviving record of when Military Intelligence began to take an interest in Joseph Bergin. What is clear is that the level of escapes that occurred from the Curragh Internment Camp and amount of information

coming in and out of the Camps brought them to the conclusion that someone on the inside was assisting the internees.

Originally Lieutenant Keane<sup>4</sup> was tasked with finding information on Bergin. With the change in structure in the Criminal Investigation Department in October 1923, Colonel Michael Costello replaced Colonel David Neligan as head of Military Intelligence and as part of that remit had a clear interest in the activities of republican activists inside and outside of the internment camp system.

In 1932 *Fianna Fáil* came to power in Ireland. *Fianna Fáil* was formed from those who had opposed the Treaty in 1921 and so when they came to power, there was some concern amongst the Intelligence staff about documents which would incriminate those who had been involved in court martials, executions or other activities during the Civil War of 1922-23, less than a decade earlier, coming into the hands of the other side.

Accordingly, the following order was issued on 7 March 1932:

- (a) Intelligence Reports – including Reports and particulars supplied by Agents and other persons.
- (b) Secret Service Vouchers, etc
- (c) Proceedings of Military Courts, including Committee of Officers. Reports on and details of Executions 1922-1923 period.

As the above-mentioned documents contain information which may lead – if disclosed to unauthorised persons – to loss of life, you are hereby ordered to destroy same by fire, extracting therefrom previous to such destruction such particulars as you consider might be required hereafter in the conduct of the business of the Department of Defence.

Minister for Defence

7th March 1932'

These files were destroyed within a few days with the result that any potential records identifying those in military intelligence, their activities or anything that might relate to the murder of Joseph Bergin no longer exist. As a result, the following information is based on testimonies and

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<sup>4</sup> I have been unable to definitively identify which of the numerous Keane in the army at this time was this man.

witness statements from the newspapers of the time and from the surviving and incomplete Garda Síochána (Civic Guard) investigation file.

On 13 November 1923, Captain James (Jimmy) Murray came back from a period of suspension to military intelligence and on 19 November was handed confidential papers on Joseph Bergin by Colonel Costello, the new Director of Intelligence based at General Headquarters, Parkgate Street, Dublin. Lieutenant Keane, an intelligence officer based in the Curragh was believed to have carried out some previous work on the case. During the subsequent murder trial, there was some disagreement on naming Keane in open court and he was referred to both as Mr 'X' and Mr 'Y' which caused some laughter in Court.

Costello and Murray met again on 8 December 1923 at Army General Headquarters on Parkgate Street with Murray's brother Commandant Michael Murray (according to Michael) being present at this meeting. Costello advised James Murray that there was a lot of stuff going in and coming out from the prison camps and that he had information that Bergin, who was known to the prisoners as 'Motor Bike', was the man concerned. Costello said that Bergin had been tracked from dispatches captured from irregulars. According to Michael Murray, Costello asked if 'Halpin'<sup>5</sup> would be up for the job. Costello said that he didn't know where in the Curragh Bergin was stationed or in what branch of the army he belonged and instructed James Murray to go to the Curragh on Monday giving Murray a file on Bergin.

Michael Murphy was stationed in Beggars Bush Barracks and according to him, in a statement given to the police in 1925, he claimed to have attended this meeting between his brother and Costello and that Costello said Bergin would have to be 'plugged'. It seems an unlikely occurrence considering the sensitivity of the conversation that occurred but cannot be dismissed entirely as false either.

James Murray went to the Curragh on Tuesday, 11 December 1923 and stayed overnight returning to Dublin the next day. He was in contact with Commandant Daniel McDonnell, Army Provost Marshall, Lieutenant Keane, Intelligence Officer, and Second Lieutenant O'Hara, assistant to Keane, no doubt having established details on Bergin and possibly even identified him while at Tintown Internment Camp. McDonnell and Murray knew each other very well, both having served as Intelligence

<sup>5</sup> Company Sergeant Robert Halpin (1883-1961), Army Supply Corps

Officers in the IRA together in Dublin prior to joining the National Army. Daniel McDonnell (1898-1972) played a significant role in the entire affair. McDonnell was born in Dublin in 1898 and served in the IRA from 1917 and was a part of the Dublin Brigade Intelligence from August 1920 associated with both David Neligan and Murray. He was involved in a number of assassinations in Dublin during this period. In 1922 he was stationed at Oriel House as part of military intelligence before moving to the Curragh as Army Provost Marshall. He retired from the army in 1929.

### **Thursday – Dublin**

On Thursday, 13 December 1923, about 5 p.m., Colonel Costello ordered his driver Private James Cleary to take three officers from Parkgate Street (two in uniform and one in civilian clothes) to McKee Barracks. He said to Cleary ‘This is Captain Murray. The car is going on a special job tonight. When you leave them report back to me.’

Cleary drove the car about 70-80 yards from Parkgate Street on to the North Circular Road when Murray told him he was no longer required and should report back to Costello. Cleary was not happy about this as he was responsible for the car and was expected to bring it back to the Transport Yard at Portobello Barracks. However, he reported back to Costello who dictated the following letter to his typist:

‘13th December 1923

To:

Officer I/C Transport,

Portobello Barracks

Ford Car No. 802 was required by me tonight for a special job. As it was essential that certain persons travel in the car, there was no room for the Driver. I am, therefore, returning him herewith with his Duty Order.

The car will be brought back to you before morning.

Michael Costello, COLONEL

For THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE’

Clearly then got a lift back to Portobello Barracks with Captain Leonard.

### Thursday - Kildare

After meeting Carolan in Dublin, Bergin arrived at Kildare Railway Station at about 8.30 p.m. and proceeded to walk the short distance to Claregate Street in the centre of the town. At about 8.15 p.m., James Kelly, ticket-collector at the Railway Station spotted James Murray at the Railway Hotel, on the road between the railway station and the town with another man. The train was due in Kildare at 8.25 and Kelly again saw Murray at the station just before the train arrived. Kelly recognised Murray because he had an altercation with him previously and a friend of his was arrested by Murray back in February 1923 after the ticket-office at Kildare Station was burnt. The proprietor of the Hotel, P.J. Connolly, may also have seen these men but he chose to distance himself from the events. It was never good for business to take sides in politics.



*Railway Hotel, Kildare*

Bergin called into Peg Daly's house to collect the bicycle and he spent approximately half an hour talking to her before leaving to cycle to the Curragh.

At this stage Murray had already gone to the Curragh and, according to a witness, Sergeant Nolan, was in the Dining Hall of Beresford Barracks by 9.30 p.m. Bergin was due on duty at Tintown No. 3 Internment Camp at 10 p.m. Tintown was on the western side of the Curragh Camp nearest Kildare so the timing would suggest that Bergin was most likely picked up very close to the internment camps.

There is then an unexplained gap in the timeline. The motorcar driven by Murray was seen at Boherkill and Rathangan Demesne around 11 p.m. that evening. The distance from the Curragh to Rathangan Demesne was about 10 miles (16 kilometres). It seems likely that the car may have been lost and that they drove around for a while looking for the location of the house at Guidenstown where they intended to interrogate Bergin before being forced to ask for directions.

## Friday

The next sighting of the motorcar was between 3.30 a.m. and 3.50 a.m. by a military patrol as it travelled through Newbridge coming from the direction of Newbridge Railway Station and Milltown with a bicycle on the roof of the car, heading towards Naas. This would also tie in with the evidence of Mr. Kelly of the Public House at Milltown who went out to his yard at 12.30 a.m. before going to bed and had heard nothing up to that time.

The next time the car is heard of was at 9 a.m. when Driver James Cleary was ordered to collect the car from Crown Alley, off Dame Street, in the centre of Dublin.

The above sequence of events suggests that Joseph Bergin was brought to the deserted house at Guidenstown where he was murdered and then dumped at Milltown between 11 p.m on Thursday night and 3.30 a.m. on Friday morning. Considering that Bergin was interrogated before he was murdered and that is very unlikely that the murderers spent too much time with him before dumping him in the canal at Milltown, it is almost certain that it was the early hours of Friday morning that he died.



*The Forge between Thomastown Cross and Rathangan*



### **Local Knowledge**

It is apparent that the men who murdered Bergin did not come across the house by chance.

There is no doubt that Bergin was picked up very close to the Curragh yet the men travelled to the far side of Kildare town to interrogate and ultimately murder him. None of these men were local, yet they managed to find a vacant house, down a laneway on a December night. When the men stopped and spoke to James Lynch at 11 p.m. they asked him where the road was to Thomastown Cross and Allen and when Lynch confirmed that they had passed it, they also asked the way to Rathangan. Lynch told them to continue past the Forge which was further down the road. The men also asked similar questions to James Payne after the Forge closer to Rathangan when they stopped to get water for the car. Superintendent Joseph Maher believed that someone in one of the cottages on the road gave them directions back to the vacant house as the tracks of the car were visible at the cottages. This makes sense as there was no other reason for them to continue towards Rathangan when they could have turned at Payne's house. During the War of Independence, the IRA had used the vacant house in Guidenstown as a safe house so there is little doubt that the location was familiar to a number of people. Indeed, two of Michael Collins' men - Ned Broy and Joseph Kenny were both from Rathangan and were both policeman in Dublin at this time.

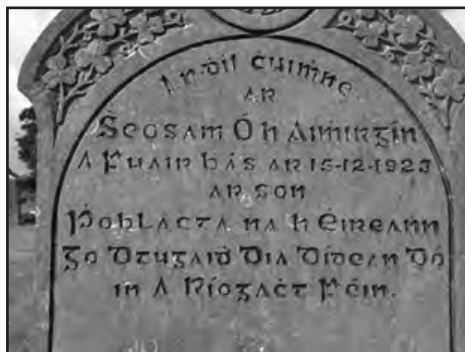
It is worth noting that the road layout in 1923 was slightly different than now. The main road from Rathangan to Milltown in 1923 is not the road that is used today. In order for the murderers to return to Dublin, it made sense to go to Allen crossroads and across Blacktrench to Naas and on to Dublin. However, they went to Milltown and back into Newbridge where they ran the risk of being stopped by the regular military patrols that were in the town. They clearly wanted the body to be found and would have had to go to great lengths to put the body in the car which was then removed at Milltown. There was some effort to clean up the scene of the killing but this seem rushed and it is unlikely that the killers envisaged the scene of the crime ever being located. Once they left the scene, it seems likely that they made a mistake near Milltown and turned the wrong way towards Newbridge in their efforts to get back to Dublin in the dark.

There was also a suggestion that Bergin's cap was thrown into Peg Daly's house after the killing and that Daly was Bergin's fiancée. It would seem

unlikely to have been carried out by the men involved in the killing who did not return to Dublin through Kildare town but more than likely by one of the intelligence officers in the Curragh.

Bergin was interred beside St. Kevin's church in the village of Camross not far from where he was raised. The inscription on his grave was written in Irish:

*I n-dhil chuimhne  
ar  
Seosamh Ó hAimhirgin  
A fhuair bás ar 15-12-1923  
ar son  
Phoblachta na hÉireann  
Go dTugaidh Dia Dihdean do  
In a Rioghacht Féin*



The inscription on the gravestone includes the date '15-12-1923' even though his body was discovered on the morning of Friday, 14 December 1923.



## CHAPTER 4

### *Identifying the Suspects*

*'This is Captain Murray, The car is going on a special job tonight.  
When you leave them, report back to me.'*

*Colonel Costello*



*Army Ford cars in Beggars Bush Barracks, Dublin  
(An tOglach)*

It did not take long for the Dublin Metropolitan Police to identify a suspect in the case through their main witness, Driver James Cleary. Cleary was brought to Arbour Hill prison on Wednesday 19 December and gave a statement to the police. He would remain in custody for the next four months – by the military for his own protection. He was subsequently transferred to Athlone. Cleary proved to be the most important link in the chain and it would be his testimony at two murder trials that was both crucial and contradicted by the other main character in the affair – Colonel Michael Costello, the Director of Military Intelligence.

Cleary had enlisted in the National Army on 25 August 1922 at 18 years of age and was assigned to the transport section at Portobello Barracks. He was from Thomas Street, Dublin and was responsible for Ford Motor Car A.C 802. At the time of the murder he was generally employed as Colonel Costello's driver.

The exchange between Cleary and Costello has already been outlined in Chapter 3. However, the effect of the letter that Costello had dictated and handed to Driver Cleary ensured that Captain James Murray and Colonel Michael Costello were now associated with the murder, once the car was linked to the crime.

### **Return of the Car**

On Friday morning, Colonel Costello sent for Cleary to come from Portobello Barracks around 9 a.m. and he was ordered to collect the car from outside the Crown Alley Telephone Exchange. When Cleary collected the car it was in a bad state with dirt and mud together with blood on the upholstery, mat cushion and door. He drove the car back to Portobello and was of the view it had been driven a considerable distance on soft ground. There were sandwiches, collars and shirts in the car which were his and a bloodstained handkerchief which was not. He showed the condition of the car to Private Doyle, Sergeant Nugent and others who were there and made a report in writing to the Inspector of Transport.

Chief Commissioner W.R.E. Murphy of the Dublin Metropolitan Police had carried out his enquiries in a delicate manner. It was complicated enough that An Garda Síochána would lead the investigation as the murder occurred outside of Dublin. However, the car was found in the area of operations of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. Murphy was instructed not to go through the newly formed Detective Branch under Colonel Neligan due to their close relationship with Military Intelligence. Murphy went as far as to state:

‘The A.G. [Attorney General] called at this office and told me that Capt Jimmy Murray had cleared off. He also believed a phone message had been received from Col. Neligan by that officer telling him to go.’

Murphy doubted the veracity of this claim and was of the view that Neligan would not fail in his duty.

However, there is a letter on the investigation file dated 1 February 1924 written by Neligan:

'I am now informed that Captain J. Murray is located in the vicinity of Foxrock, South Co. Dublin. He is well armed and is accompanied by three other armed men at present unknown.

Recently he has written letters of a more or less threatening nature to members of the Government (It is believed the President received one). He also sent a verbal message to me stating he 'would never be taken alive, etc. etc.'

The section of this Division stationed at Dun Laoghaire have been instructed to make every effort to apprehend him, and the Officers in the city are also on the look-out.'

This correspondence is at odds with all other available information which suggests that Murray had left the country within a few days of the murder. It brings us to the main suspect in the crime – Captain James Murray. As shall be seen, Neligan and Murray were well acquainted and had worked closely together in the previous years.

## CHAPTER 5

### *Captain James Murray*

*'It must be rather an unpleasant reflection for whoever was responsible for setting Murray at liberty, to think that the murder of Bergin might never have taken place had the law been allowed to take its course.'*

*Eoin O'Duffy, Garda Commissioner, January 1924*

James Murray was born on 27 July 1899 in Kingstown (renamed Dun Laoghaire in 1920), Co. Dublin, to John Murray, a sailor, and Esther Kinsella in a family of four boys and three girls. His father died in April 1915 when the family were quite young leaving his mother Esther to raise the family on her own. Murray enlisted in the Royal Naval



*Captain James Murray (back) and his brother Commandant Michael Murphy at Dun Laoghaire Pier*

Reserve on 13 October 1915 at sixteen years of age, although he claimed to be eighteen. He was described as 5 ' 3½", grey eyes and fair complexion. He served with the rank of seaman at Portsmouth naval base and the gunnery school with some service on armed merchant ships in 1915-16. In late 1918 he served on HMS Ford – a minesweeper. His ability was described as satisfactory and conduct excellent.

He was discharged on 9 April 1919 when living at Paradise Row and admitted to St Nicholas Hospital in Newcastle Upon Tyne. where he remained until 7 October 1919 suffering from a lung disease related to his tuberculosis aggravated by his service at sea. He was awarded the Silver War Badge and more importantly a pension from the Royal Navy. He would continue to receive a British army pension until June 1922 when he failed to turn up twice for medical examinations.

He joined the IRA, probably in 1920, and was a member of 'D' Company, 6th Battalion of the Dublin Brigade along with his brother Michael operating in the Dun Laoghaire area. The Dun Laoghaire Company were active in attacking Naval infrastructure and were involved in the execution of a number of spies. Murray is alleged to have executed two men during the War of Independence. When the nominal rolls were being prepared for military pension purposes in 1935, Eugene Davis, the commanding officer described Murray as belonging to the Active Service Unit of 'D' Company supporting the likelihood of his involvement in the murders.

In his Bureau of Military History statement written in 1950, Charlie Dalton, one of the members of Michael Collins' squad, said that Murray was a member of the GHQ Intelligence Squad:

'Jimmy Murray was, I believe, a member of 6th Battalion and acted as Battalion I.O. Murray resided in Kingstown and was at one time employed on the boats. Shortly before the truce, Murray and Dan McDonnell were our contacts with Dave Neligan, who was then residing with another secret service man (Woolley) in Kingstown.'

Murray was involved in an attempt to capture the British hangman, together with Charlie Dalton, on his way from England to Mountjoy Gaol to execute republicans. Murray and Dalton watched passengers alight from mail boats at the pier in Dun Laoghaire but were unsuccessful in their mission.

The first murder that Murray was involved in was that of Peter Graham, aged 23, an attendant at the Kingstown Pavilion who was shot dead by an IRA unit from Dun Laoghaire under the command of William Walsh on 15 May 1921. Gerard Owens appears to have been one of the other members of this IRA unit. Graham was shot five times in the head and his body dumped at Killiney Golf Links with a note pinned to the back of his coat and written in pencil:

'Spies & Traitors Beware. Tried and convicted by I.R.A.'

This occurred two days before Murray married Josephine Gribbens, the daughter of a butcher on Portland Row, on 17 May 1921 and two weeks before their first child Doreen was born on 31 May 1921. According to pension records related to James Murray held by the UK National Archives, Murray received a grant of £50 on 1 April 1921 'towards the purchase of a

boat'. There is no record of whether he ever purchased a boat but it must have been a nice bonus for a man about to get married.

The next murder that Murray was involved in was that of Andrew Knight, a 42 year old married tram inspector on the Dalkey Line. He was identified by Patrick Mannix a constable in the Dublin Metropolitan Police as someone who was giving information to the British and was abducted by the IRA after getting off of a tram, being shot dead at Castle Park Road, Dalkey on 7 July 1921 by the same unit under the command of William Walsh. A witness heard five revolver shots being fired at about 17.20 hours that evening and he was killed by a bullet to the chin.

Murray joined the National Army in 1922. The Military Census of 1922 would suggest that he was initially a Private in 1922 stationed in Wicklow and appears to have had some service in Cork in 1922 before transferring to military intelligence in Dublin in 1922 or 1923.

In November 1923 he was assigned to Colonel Michael Joseph Costello's Intelligence Department although it is quite clear that he was already operating in Military Intelligence throughout 1923 and possibly earlier under Colonel David Neligan, and that this was after a period of suspension. Murray appears to have been working at Oriel House which was the headquarters of Military Intelligence during 1922 and was involved in Dublin's 'Dirty War'. A newspaper article in *Eire* dated 14 April 1923 reported:

'Miss Nellie Wallace was arrested at her home, Eyre Street, Droichead Nua, on Tuesday morning the 6th inst., at 4 o'clock a.m. by military from Dublin, among whom was a Captain Murray and a Captain Wilson. They had no female attendant with them, and Miss Wallace refused to get up or dress herself to go with them at that hour of the morning.'

Nellie Wallace was an active member of *Cumann na mBan* and was interned in Kilmainham and the North Dublin Union from April to October 1923 having previously been interned by the British.

According to a witness statement given by John Russell Cruise to the Military Pension Board, Murray was involved in an attempt to murder him in October 1922 and recounted details of a pursuit by National Army officers:



'Donnelly got away before the home was properly surrounded while I stayed. After Donnelly was an hour gone I attempted to get away and was followed down the road by the N.A. officers who arrested me. I then noticed one officer whom I believed was in the shooting of three of my comrades a fortnight previous at Clondalkin (Hughes, Holohan and Ryan). I was brought up the road to some fields and Comdt Joseph Dolan ordered me to get across a gate and he would give me fifteen yards of a run. I refused and he hit me with his gun and said he would shoot me if I did not. I still refused and he asked me who was the other man with me. I refused to tell him and he said he would give me half a minute to say my prayers. He stuck the gun into my mouth and ordered me over the gate. Capt. Murray then intervened as a couple of civilians passed. Murray, Dolan and Lt. Bolster then had an argument and I was brought to Wellington Barracks where I was beaten unconscious by a number of officers in the night time.'

Murray was involved in at least two murders during this period. The most notorious killing that is attributed to Murray is the murder of Noel Lemass, another former member of the 6th Battalion IRA and brother of the future Taoiseach Sean Lemass. The evidence of his involvement in this is overwhelming. Noel Lemass took the anti-treaty side during the Civil War and was captured only to escape to the Isle of Man. He returned to Dublin once the Civil War had ended but was abducted by two armed men in civilian clothes on Exchequer Street on 3 July 1923. His body was found on 12 October 1923 on Glendoo Mountain near Glenree with three bullet wounds to the head. At the inquest held in Rathmines Town Hall, the jury were given details of a brutal killing. However, two witnesses called to the Inquest, Christopher Tuite and Richard Broderick received a threatening letter dated 14 October 1923 and headed 'Headquarters Defence Unit, Old IRA' stating:

'Owing to your lying statement one of our members has been placed under arrest. This order is served on you in order that you may know the position.

Take notice that:

- (a) You have been sentenced to death for making statements likely to cause disaffection to our forces.

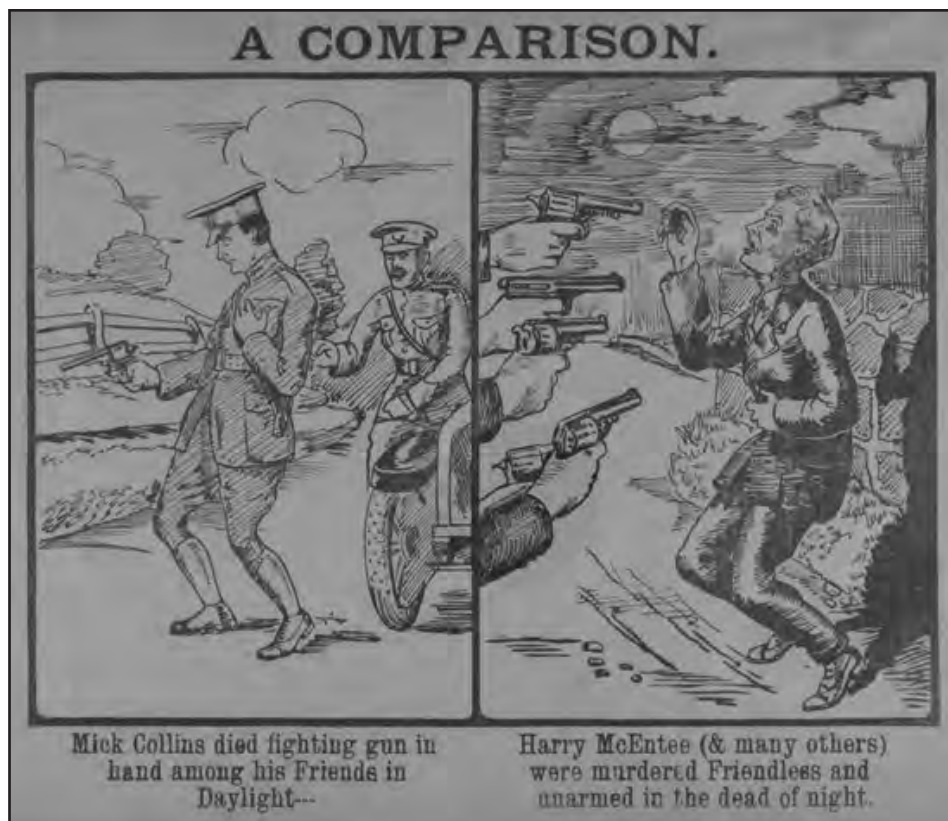
- (b) You will attend forthwith at Military Headquarters, Dublin and deny absolutely that Captain J. Murry [sic] ever stated to you that he shot the late lamented Mr. Lemass.
- (c) If you or any person states that the officer mentioned had anything to do with the execution of Lemass they will be dealt with as at (a).

If you fail to carry out these instructions we will set about inflicting the said sentence on you without fail. Death sentence will be commuted and you are a free man if you carry out the instructions at (b).

Lemass is gone and the earlier he is forgotten the better. Take care do not meet the same fate.

Signed Fifty Members of the Old IRA.'

While the *Irish Independent* of 15 October 1923 did not include the name of Murray, he was subsequently named in the newspaper report of 24 October. Christopher Tuite, a teacher in Blackrock Technical School testified that on the morning of 15 September he was brought to Ballyward Bridge at Blessington by Captain Murray and others. Murray was seeking two boys – Patrick Dixon and ‘Tosser’ Flanagan. Murray and the driver went over to the bridge while Tuite remained with a man named ‘Dan’. Murray and the driver fired a few shots in the area. Tuite was brought into a field and Murray said to him that: ‘There’s where was thrown the body of Noel Lemass when he was done in.’ Tuite was given three minutes to say his prayers when two other men came on the scene. Tuite asked not to be shot and agreed to find two boys that Murray was seeking. Tuite was brought for food in Murphy’s Hotel in Blessington where Murray had some ‘stimulants’ and they returned to Portobello Barracks. Tuite agreed, if he located the boys, that he would send a message to an unnamed individual using the code ‘Confidence, Dublin’ – suggested at the Inquest to be a ‘Cabinet Minister’. Tuite subsequently visited Lemass’s father to tell him what he was told happened to his son. James Murray’s brother Michael Murray was identified by Broderick’s sister as one of the men who delivered the threatening notice to her home. It appears that Murray was suspended from duty and placed under arrest at this time but subsequently released – possibly on the orders of Colonel Neligan.



*Republican pamphlet - 1923*

Mr. Lynn representing the Lemass family at the Inquest stated that it was beyond doubt that Noel Lemass was foully murdered, and there was no doubt that he was murdered by a person employed by the Free State Government. He said that it was the jury's duty to bring a verdict of wilful murder against Captain Murray and if he were innocent he could prove it before a court and jury and clear himself. Following consultation, the jury returned a verdict of 'murder against some person or persons unknown.' The jury went on to say:

'We the members of the jury, are satisfied that the remains are those of Noel Lemass. We also agree with the medical evidence that he was brutally and wilfully murdered. We have not sufficient evidence produced to satisfy us who the actual perpetrator was. Arising out

of the inquiry, we are convinced that armed forces of the State have been implicated in the removal and disappearance of Noel Lemass from the streets of Dublin. We demand of the Government a judicial inquiry on the evidence produced at this inquest. We tender our deepest sympathy to the relatives of the deceased.'

The Lemass case also put the spotlight on Murray for another killing. The other witness Richard Broderick was arrested by five men at the Sinn Fein Club on Lower Dorset Street, including Murray. Broderick was driven out to Stillorgan, beaten with revolvers and asked where Christopher Tuite lived. Murray told Broderick that he had not put up with half as much from Harry McEntee. McEntee was riddled with bullets near Ballymun on 31 July 1923. Broderick was then beaten by David Neligan. Neligan said to Broderick that Murray was not talking 'swank' when he said he shot Lemass and McEntee and Broderick was lucky to be alive. The McEntee Inquest revealed that approximately 12 shots were fired. The level of killings taking place in Dublin at that stage was alluded to at the Inquest when one of the Criminal Investigation Officers, Captain Moynihan was asked for statistics on how many men were found riddled with bullets in Dublin, a not uncommon occurrence.

Neligan was the same man whom W.R.E. Murphy, Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police believed would not fail in his duty in tracking down the killers of Joseph Bergin, which, of course included James Murray.

The *Belfast Newsletter* of 23 October 1923, gave more specific detail than any of the other newspapers at the time:

'Richard Broderick alleged that a man named James Murray, a captain in the Criminal Investigation Department, stated to him (Broderick) on the 15th September – "I shot Noel Lemass and threw his body into the Liffey at Poulaphouca".

Broderick's account was that he (Broderick) was amongst a number of men arrested in a raid by C.I.D. officers. He was driven about the country in a car for some time, and when he did not answer questions about men "on the run" he was beaten. Murray, he said, declared he had shot Lemass and also Henry McEntee as well as two other men during the "Black and Tan" times. Later he (Broderick) was taken to Portobello Barracks, where an intelligence officer

told him that what Murray had said was not “swank”. He believed Murray’s statements to be true.’

There are enough witness statements and newspaper reports to indicate that James Murray was involved in the killing of five men between 1921 and 1923 as follows:

Peter Graham	Killiney, Dublin	17 May 1921	5 bullet wounds to head
Andrew Knight	Dalkey, Dublin	7 July 1921	5 bullet wounds
Noel Lemass	Poulaphouca, Wicklow	3 July 1923	3 bullet wounds to head
Harry McEntee	Poppintree, Finglas	31 July 1923	Several bullet wounds to head and body
Joseph Bergin	Guidenstown, Kildare	14 Dec 1923	6 bullet wounds to head

In the case of Joseph Bergin, Eoin O’Duffy, the Garda Commissioner wrote in January 1924 while Murray was still at liberty that:

‘The absconding Officer was previously in custody for threats to shoot parties from the Blackrock area, at or about the time of the finding of the remains of Noel Lemass, whose death Murray stated was also caused by him. Acting on my instructions at that time the Sergeant of the Garda at Blessington took statements from the parties concerned, which statements were corroborated by independent witnesses. These statements were very convincing (copies are with the Ministry), but for some reason Murray was set at liberty – he never passed into civil custody.

It must be rather an unpleasant reflection for whoever was responsible for setting Murray at liberty, to think that the murder of Bergin might never have taken place had the law been allowed to take its course.’

There can be little doubt that Colonel David Neligan, Director of Military Intelligence until the end of October 1923 had enough power to determine what happened to Murray. Murray was suspended from military intelligence until November 1923 – for murder. It raises the question as to why Murray would think that there would be any difference in December 1923?

## CHAPTER 6

### *Murder Trial – June 1925*

*'Since Sunday last over 500 prisoners have gone off hunger strike. This number includes 376 more prisoners in Tintown 'A' Camp, 8 in Mountjoy, 42 in Tintown 'B' Camp, 13 in Hare Park, 33 in Gormanstown, 16 in Castlebar and 33 in Newbridge – in all approximately, 200 prisoners have gone off hunger strike in the last five days.'*

*Cork Examiner, 31 October 1923*

At this stage in the story, it is important to examine the four-day murder trial of James Murray held from 9 to 12 June 1925 at Green Street, Dublin before Justice Henry Hanna. Included in the exhibits presented as evidence in the court was the Ford Touring Car, a portion of a blood-stained table and a scissors. Twenty-seven witnesses for the prosecution were called. Mr. Carrigan, Mr. Dudley White and Mr. Costello appeared for the State and Mr. W. T. Gleeson represented James Murray.



*The Accused – a sketch*

The essential elements of the trial involved a number of key testimonies – that of Captain James Murray, on trial for his life; Colonel Michael Joseph Costello, Director of Intelligence; Driver James Cleary and Commandant Michael Murray, brother of the accused.

The testimonies by James Murray and Michael Costello seem implausible in that one or both of them were lying.

Murray's defence was that Costello asked him to drive a car for two men whom he did not know, on a special mission. Once he left General Headquarters with two unidentified men, and relieved the driver James Cleary of his duties, he discovered where they were going and decided to take no part in the operation returning to his home in Dun Laoghaire. He

met a man named Patrick Kinsella and his brother that evening in Dublin. He claimed that he gave the men his private address and they returned to his house the next morning, came in for tea and then he drove them to Crown Alley where he left the car.

This testimony was contradicted by a number of witnesses in Court identifying him as being in the Curragh and Kildare on the evening of 13 December 1923 – the ticket-collector, James Kelly, saw him in the Railway Hotel, Kildare and Sergeant Nolan saw him in Beresford Barracks, Curragh on the evening of the murder. Murray had three witnesses placing him in Dublin on that evening – Patrick Kinsella gave evidence of having a drink with him that evening, John Coyle gave evidence that he saw Murray in the Theatre Royal in Dublin that day. His sister Frances gave evidence that Michael and Jimmy were both in their residence on Convent Road, Dun Laoghaire that evening.

Murray's story did not stack up. He claimed the two men arrived at his house the next morning to collect him and came into his house for tea. He claimed that they gave him documents for Costello. Murray drove the car to Crown Alley and then walked to Portobello Barracks where he reported to Costello. Costello asked him how he got on and he said he got on 'All right'. He claimed to have called into Costello again between 3.30 p.m. and 4 p.m. that afternoon where Costello showed him a telegram with the report of Bergin's death. According to Bergin, Costello told him to 'keep his mouth shut.' The State produced a witness – Commandant O'Donoghue, who shared quarters with Costello and heard the conversation and contradicted Murray's recollection of events. Costello would deny that he met Murray in the afternoon.

### **Colonel Michael Joseph Costello (1904-1986)**

On the second day of Murray's trial on 10 June 1925, Colonel Michael Costello entered the witness box and gave evidence.

Costello was something of a military prodigy. He was born in Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary on 2 July 1904, both his parents being schoolteachers. He joined the IRA in 1920 and became an intelligence officer for the North Tipperary Battalion. He enlisted the National Army on 23 March 1922 at Birr, Co. Offaly with the rank of lieutenant. On 28 July 1922, he was involved in an action between a National Army convoy

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that was ambushed between Abbeyleix and Portlaoise and an anti-treaty force in which Commandant General Austin McCurtin, Commandant Sean Collison and Private Thomas Grace were killed. They were in a party of troops in a Lancia armoured car and two lorries that were attacked with the armoured car hitting a landmine at Tonduff. There was a considerable firefight with a further two officer and three men being injured in the engagement. Lieutenant Costello, together with a corporal, succeeded in getting 21 men to surrender. The men were brought to Portlaoise prison and General Michael Collins who was travelling south at the time, was one of those who questioned the men. Collins was clearly impressed by Costello as he promoted him to Colonel Commandant on 1 August 1922 at just eighteen years old. He was appointed Intelligence Officer of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Southern Command at Roscrea in November 1922, was appointed a Commandant in January 1923 and a Colonel in May 1923. He became the army's Director of Intelligence in October 1923 during a reorganisation of military intelligence. Costello would become a key figure in the military



*Colonel Michael Joseph Costello  
(courtesy of Brian Costello)*



during this period and the ensuing 'Army Mutiny' of 1924. He participated in the Military Mission to America in 1926 leading to the establishment of the Irish Military College at the Curragh in 1931 which he commanded. During the Second World War, known as 'The Emergency' in Ireland, he commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> (Spearhead) Division in Cork before retiring in October 1945 to become General Manager of Irish Sugar.

At the time of murder, when Colonel Costello was Director of Intelligence he was nineteen years old while Murray was twenty-four years old.

### **Costello's Evidence**

During the murder trial, Colonel Costello built up a narrative of giving Murray instructions to confront Bergin with the information that military intelligence had and to get him to cooperate with them. Costello maintained that he did not know the men who accompanied Murray. He explained to the trial that intelligence officers had their own people – civilians or 'outside men', to accompany them on missions. Costello claimed to have met Murray alone in his office although their might have been other men in the yard when they came out. Driver Cleary testified that when Costello came over to him with the instruction to drive the three men out of the Barracks he was speaking generally to all three of them. Cleary's statement to the police contained more detail than was reported in the trial. Cleary stated there were three officers present, one in civilian clothes. Cleary was in the army well over a year at that stage and had seen all three of them at various times in the yard so you would expect him to recognise army officers. Cleary had no reason to lie.

So, what were the implications of Costello knowing the names of the three men? During the police investigation, in addition to tracking down the whereabouts of Murray, whose name was associated with the crime very quickly, Costello was the obvious next person to question. An entire month after the murder, Costello had not been questioned:

'I have read the statements given by various soldiers at the Curragh forwarded here by the Deputy Commissioner on the 16<sup>th</sup> instant which do not throw very much light on the matter; but the statement of Private James Cleary No. 34425 taken at Arbour Hill on the 19<sup>th</sup> ultimo, which is now in possession of the Chief Commissioner, Dublin Metropolitan Police, and of which you probably have a copy

seems to me abundantly to justify the arrest of Captain Murray and the interrogation of Colonel Costello as to who the two other officers are who are mentioned as having been in Car A.C. 802 with Captain Murray on the evening of 13<sup>th</sup> ultimo. I cannot understand why neither police force seems to be in possession of any statement from Colonel Costello in this whole matter or why a more active pursuit of Murray is not on foot.'

The Civic Guard Commissioner Eoin O'Duffy agreed:

'There seems, as the Minister justly points out no good reason why Colonel Costello should not be seen and interrogated, and I am of opinion that this would, in the circumstances, be more properly the work of an officer of the 'G' Division of the D.M.P.'

On 24 January 1924, O'Duffy instructed the Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police to interrogate Costello to identify the officers stated to have been in the car with Murray. He noted that it was unnamed officers at General Headquarters who had given the police their first leads in the case which was their duty. The details of Costello's questioning by the Dublin Metropolitan Police were submitted to the Minister for Home Affairs. His answers were described as 'generally of an evasive character.'

The questions and answers received were transcribed as follows. Note the interview was held one day before the interview was formally requested:

*Questionnaire – Col Costello 23/1/24*

1. How many Ford cars attached to Intelligence Dept presently?

*Costello: One*

2. How many were attached on 10th Dec?

*Costello: I do not know.*

- 3, What was the number of this car?

*Costello: 420*

4. Is Army Car 802 attached to intelligence?

*Costello: No*

5. Was this car usually used by members of your Dept?

*Costello: It was at one time and I do not know the exact date it ceased to be used but it is about three weeks ago.*

6. Did you order this car to the Curragh on any date?  
*Costello: It was at the Curragh several times.*
7. Did you order any car on 13th Dec?  
*Costello: I cannot fix that date.*
8. When were you in the Curragh last?  
*Costello: About the end of November on official duties.*
9. When last did you see Capt. Jas. Murray?  
*Costello: About a month ago.*
10. Where?  
*Costello: In my offices at G.H.Q.*
11. When was Capt. Murray, to your knowledge last in the Curragh?  
*Costello: Some time over a month ago.*
12. Did he ever go to the Curragh in Car 802.  
*Costello: He did.*
13. When last?  
*Costello: On one occasion about a month ago.*
14. On what purpose?  
*Costello: On official duty.*
15. What was accomplished.  
*Costello: I do not know.*
16. Nature of duty?  
*Costello: I cannot discuss without permission of Chief of Staff.*
17. Did you ever hear of Private Jos Bergin?  
*Costello: I did.*
18. What did you hear?  
*Costello: I heard that he was shot.*
19. Did you ever hear of him previously?  
*Costello: I knew him two years ago when the National Army was being formed.*
20. Do you know where this man was stationed recently?  
*Costello: I do.*

21. When did you first hear where he was stationed?

*Costello: I gave him his first uniform in Mountrath Barracks in 1922.*

22. Did you know he was stationed in the Curragh prior to seeing the report of the shooting in the press?

*Costello: I did.*

23. Have you any reason to put forward why he should be shot?

*Costello: No.*

24. In your capacity as D.I. do you know of any reason why anybody should have this man shot?

*Costello: I cannot speak to you in my capacity as D.I.*

Costello admitted in the interview that he knew Bergin. He also admitted this at the subsequent trial where he stated that he saw him when he was at the Maryborough Garrison and at Mountrath. Does it give Costello a motive for having Bergin killed? It is not beyond the realms of possibility that Costello, an intelligence officer, would be aggrieved to discover that Bergin was working for IRA intelligence and that he was the very man who 'gave him his first uniform'. However, it seems unlikely.

The above questions and answers are handwritten in the surviving police file and appear to have been an in-person interview but there was also a number of other questions and answers that were typed as follows and appeared to have been submitted to Costello and replied to in writing in which Costello was less evasive and more cooperative.

1. Question: Does he remember on 13th December giving driver of A.C. 802 a typed and signed letter saying he required the car for a job?

*Answer: I do.*

2. Question: Does not this letter recall details of that night to him?

*Answer: This fixes a certain night but I did not remember the date until I looked up copy of letter in question.*

3. Question: Why did he dismiss driver from car?

*Answer: Because the men going with Capt. Murray were 'outside' agents of his and could not become known to the driver.*

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4. Question: What was the job?  
Answer: *Investigation of alleged Irregular activities, lines of communication, etc.*
5. Question: Who used the car on that occasion?  
Answer: *Capt. Murray and others unknown to me.*
6. Question: Did Murray use the car on that occasion?  
Answer: *See 5.*
7. Question: Was Murray detailed for any duty that night?  
Answer: *See 4*
8. Question: When did Col. C see Murray after 13th?  
Answer: *The following morning.*
9. Question: Does he know anything of the movement of car on night in question?  
Answer: *No.*
10. Question: It is stated Murray was at the Curragh on the night of 13th Dec. Was he there to Col. Costello's knowledge?  
Answer: *Yes.*
11. Question: If so, was he on duty?  
Answer: *Yes.*
12. Question: Did Col. Costello hear of car being found at Crown Alley?  
Answer: *Yes. I was told by Capt. Murray that the car was at Crown Alley; that the man who was driving was an 'outside' man and could not come into Barracks. I sent the driver (Cleary) to crown Alley for the car.*

Note: An 'outside' man is a civilian, generally an Irregular, who is a secret agent of ours.

In the meantime, Costello had been getting on with his intelligence work. In a report to the Chief of Staff on 4 January 1924, he wrote:

'It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that recent crimes have been attributed to the Army. During the month of December, members of the Army have been mixed up in at least 4 fatal shootings, while

several unsolved mysteries of the past few months have been attributed to the Army by the public. In the same way, soldiers and ex-soldiers have figured in numerous cases of robbery. Even strong supporters of ours are very sarcastic in their comments on army discipline. It is only too apparent that a considerable amount of this criticism is merited.

Particular attention is drawn to the fatal shootings at the Curragh, Monaghan and Ballymahon during the Xmas season.<sup>6</sup>

It would seem, from available evidence, that too much drink was chiefly responsible. Be that as it may, it is a great pity that the Army should lose its good reputation on account of a small percentage of unscrupulous 'toughs'. Immediate and drastic action is necessary to restore the good name of the Army.'

Costello appears to be referring to the Bergin murder as one of the four fatal shootings carried out in December 1923 which involved military personnel. There may have been drink involved in Bergin's murder too as a broken whiskey bottle was found by Sergeant Blake at the scene. Patrick Ennis would tell the Dublin Police Court in January 1925 that the house had the fresh smell of whiskey. Costello would turn out to be the right man in many respects to deal with the 'toughs'. He would play a crucial role in restructuring the army with the clear-out of these 'toughs' in 1924 and in the transformation of the army throughout the 1920s and 1930s into a professional force.

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6 Lieutenant Michael J. Keane shot dead in Ballymahon on 28/12/23 by a military patrol; Private Fitzgerald in Monaghan Barracks by a colleague with a revolver on 27/12/23; and Corporal William Johnston in his bed in the Curragh by a colleague with a rifle on 20/12/23.

## CHAPTER 7

### *Glasgow and Buenos Aires*

*'Just a few lines to let you know that because of certain circumstances, over which I have no control, I have been obliged to cut short my tour of the southern hemisphere, and as the period of one year for which you requested me to remain absent has almost expired, I would like an interview with you regarding my future action.'*

*James Murray, 3 November 1924*

A number of sources allow us to build up a picture of what happened to James Murray after the murder. There is general agreement on most points but a fundamental disagreement in the murder trial on the most critical aspect. Did Murray flee or was he assisted by Colonel Costello in his absence abroad? In respect of Colonel Michael Costello, he claimed to have had no contact with Murray after they met on the morning of Friday 14 December 1923, and to have had no knowledge of where he went after that date. The conversation that is alleged to have passed between them that morning seems totally unbelievable. Murray arrived at Costello's quarters in Portobello Barracks and asked him how he got on. According to Costello, Murray said he got on 'all right' and handed over the documents obtained from Bergin, apparently failing to mention the fact that Bergin was dead. He told Costello that the car was in Crown Alley and that he couldn't bring it into the barracks because he didn't have a duty order for it.

Murray claimed to have met Costello again that afternoon when Costello showed him the telegram advising that a body had been found at Milltown. Costello denied that this meeting ever happened while Murray claimed that Costello told him to keep his mouth shut and agreed to go away on seven days' leave until things quieted down on condition that Costello took care of his wife and family.

#### **The Administration**

At this point it is important to note the composition of the central figures in Government and policing at the time:

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President:	William T Cosgrave T.D.
Minister for Defence:	Richard Mulcahy T.D.
Minister for Home Affairs:	Kevin O'Higgins T.D.
Minister for Industry and Commerce:	Joseph McGrath T.D.
Attorney General:	Hugh Kennedy T.D. (since January 1922)
Chief Commissioner Civic Guards:	Eoin O'Duffy (since August 1923)
Chief Commissioner – Dublin Metropolitan Police:	W.R.E. Murphy (since May 1923)
Director of Military Intelligence:	Colonel Michael Costello (since October 1923)

The Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, W.R.E. Murphy, was called to a meeting with some of these individuals on or about 17 December 1923 at Portobello Barracks, Dublin. In attendance were Eoin O'Duffy, Chief Commissioner of the Civic Guard; Hugh Kennedy, Attorney General; Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Defence; and Lieutenant-General Sean O'Muirthuile, Quartermaster General. At this meeting, it was determined that the Intelligence Department were involved in the murder of Bergin and W.R.E. Murphy was requested to carry out checks on the movement of Ford car A.C. 802 with the help of reliable men without letting military intelligence know what they were doing. Murphy writes to Kevin O'Higgins on 14 January 1924 to tell him:

'Subsequently the A.G. [Hugh Kennedy] called at this office and told me that Capt. Jimmy Murray had cleared off. He also stated that he believed a phone message had been received from Col. Neligan by that officer telling him to go. I do not know what proof he has for that statement. It was my intention when the Civic Guards had been allowed sufficient time for their enquiry to raise the whole matter with you. In the first place it was accordingly awkward for me to be asked to conduct enquiries outside my detective branch and without informing Col. Neligan. In the second place the reflection of want of trust made on the occasion of the conference in Portobello on that officer and the A.G.'s statement re phone message made to me are things which require cleaning up. Unless these suspicions and



allegations are founded on fact it is most unfair to Col. Neligan. He, I am personally sure, will not fail in his duty on any occasion.'

The DMP Chief Commissioner was not convinced that Neligan had tipped Murray off, but he did point the figure in another direction:

'There is at the present time a secret service being run in Dublin by the Minister of Industry and Commerce [Joseph McGrath]. I do not know if this is supposed to be done without our cognisance. At any rate we are in a position to arrest all the agents of this service at any time, as they are known to us. It would have been well for this S.S. Branch to have informed us, as this might have been a collusion between our detective branch and this force.'

### **David Neligan (1899-1983)**

David Neligan, famously referred to as 'the Spy in the Castle' from his 1960s memoir, gained a brutal reputation during the Civil War in the National Army in Kerry. He was born in Co. Limerick, both of his parents being school teachers. He joined the Dublin Metropolitan Police in 1917 working in counterintelligence while acting as an agent for Michael Collins. He enlisted in the National Army on 1 July 1922 at Griffith Barracks, Dublin and joined the Dublin



*David Neligan*

Guards while he was living in Dun Laoghaire. The Dublin Brigade of the IRA formed the nucleus of the Free State forces in Kerry and were involved in a significant number of atrocities. In September 1922, Neligan savagely beat a young IRA man, Bertie Murphy, on the steps of Army Headquarters at the Great Southern Hotel in Killarney before the man was shot dead. Neligan was transferred back to Dublin in May 1923 and became Director of Intelligence in August 1923 succeeding James Hogan who returned to his previous job as Professor of History in University College Dublin. Neligan's commander in Kerry in 1922 was the future DMP Chief Commissioner W.R.E. Murphy, until replaced by Brigadier-General Paddy O'Daly. It is surprising that W.R.E. Murphy had such faith in Neligan considering he was aware of what had happened in Kerry. O'Daly was a member of Collins'

Squad and once O'Daly took command, the brutality in Kerry increased, in particular with the infamous murders at Ballyseedy.

Neligan resigned from the army on 31 October 1923 when he became Chief Superintendent with 'G' Division of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. In his application for a military pension in February 1925, Neligan gave one of his references as Daniel McDonnell, the army provost marshal in the Curragh and one of the key persons involved in the Bergin murder. McDonnell confirmed to the pensions board Neligan's key service in intelligence work while McDonnell was an intelligence officer at IRA General Headquarters.

Joseph McGrath, Minister for Industry and Commerce and referred to in a poor light by the DMP Commissioner W.R.E. Murphy, had played a significant role in leading military intelligence officers in 1922 and 1923 at a time when there were a number of murders at Wellington Barracks (later renamed Griffith Barracks) and Oriel House, the home of the criminal investigation division.

Indeed, the President of the Executive Council, W.T. Cosgrove was present when a member of his bodyguard captured an anti-treaty IRA man, Bobby Bonfield, on St. Stephen's Green, Dublin and was subsequently found murdered on 29 March 1923 in Clondalkin.

## **Liverpool**

James Murray appears to have met his brother Michael on Monday 17 December 1923 in Dublin. He had a letter of introduction to a Mrs Nesbitt, Harriby St., Liverpool, given (according to him) by Dan O'Brien in Military Intelligence and left for Liverpool that evening on the night boat. The next day he met with another agent in Liverpool – Henry (Harry) Shorte. Henry Shorte (1890- 1966) was a valuable agent that had worked for Michael Collins in England from 1917 onwards as an intelligence officer procuring arms and acting as a courier in Liverpool. He got a job on a boat smuggling arms into Ireland. He would retire to Kildangan, Co Kildare.

On Christmas Eve 1923, Thomas Deegan, an intelligence agent, known as Agent 101 (and 101A) travelled to Liverpool and gave Murray £50. He instructed Murray to proceed to Glasgow and meet up with Michael O'Callaghan. Deegan travelled to Liverpool again a few days later bringing another man with him - John Dooley.

Thomas Deegan lived at Lower Great George's St., Dun Laoghaire. The Collins Papers, held in the Military Archives, Dublin relating to Michael Collins' intelligence network includes intelligence reports from 1920 to 1922 from 'Agent 101' detailing enemy agents living in the Dun Laoghaire area. There is little doubt that Agent 101 and Agent 101A are the same man.

On the following Saturday, Thomas Deegan called to the Murrays house at 44 Convent Road, Dun Laoghaire and gave Michael Murray money for James Murray's wife Josephine. Michael Murray would play a significant role in the events of the next year liaising between his brother and Costello.

By this time, James Murray was already in Glasgow with another agent – Michael O'Callaghan (1898-1947) where he would remain until April 1924. Murray hoped to be put onto O'Callaghan's staff for £5 a week and could then bring his wife over from Ireland. Costello would not agree to this and wanted Murray to go to America. Murray believed he would not pass the medical as in the 1920s, the United States Public Health Service screened immigrants for infectious diseases such as tuberculosis (TB). Murray had tuberculosis as a child and spent time in a sanatorium and would not pass the medical to enter America.

O'Callaghan's sister-in-law Cecelia Brennan worked on his staff in Glasgow and she would testify at Murray's murder trial that she typed reports and dispatches for O'Callaghan and recalled Murray being present in Glasgow at this time.

#### **Four Letters**

During the murder trial, the prosecution produced four letters written by James Murray (see appendices for the text of the letters):

Letter 'D' – 17 December 1923 [date not clear – could be 27  
December]

Letter 'C' – 24 January 1924

Letter 'B' – 22 February 1924

Letter 'A' – 3 November 1924

In letter 'D', Murray wrote to Costello seeking advice on whether he should deal directly with President WT Cosgrove and the Minister for Defence Richard Mulcahy on a proposal that Bergin was tried by a drumhead military courtmartial and sentenced to death.

Murray wanted to know if 'Davie' (Colonel David Neligan) was asked to arrest him and if they had a photograph of him. According to the Garda Siochána file they had sought a photograph of him in his house and office but were unsuccessful in obtaining one.

It would appear that this letter was more than likely delivered by his brother Michael, in person, to Costello.

In letter 'C' to Costello, there is the inference that Costello had some communication with Murray. Murray says, 'Regarding your proposal that I cross the Atlantic, I treat this with the contempt it deserves, as I look at it as a very poor attempt to get me quietly out of the way.' Despite the Prosecution introducing this letter as evidence, Costello would testify for the prosecution that he had no communication with Murray after 14 December 1923. The contradictions in the murder trial evidence are startling. There is no evidence of Costello communicating directly with James Murray. Murray and his brother Michael Murray would claim that Michael visited



James Murray's Visa in the name of James Donerty

James a number of times and also visited Costello although it is not clear if this actually happened. The two agents, O'Callaghan and Deegan, never testified nor produced any documents in court to outline what they did or didn't do. On the one hand it could be argued that O'Callaghan and Deegan had a certain free reign and could have assisted Murray without sanction from Costello. Deegan in particular, operating in Dun Laoghaire, would have known Murray for a number of years. Similarly, it is possible that David Neligan's influence was still there and that both O'Callaghan and Deegan were working on his instruction.

### **Argentinian Visa**

For an unknown reason, James and his brother Michael decided to travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina. In a statement given in November 1925, Michael said that it was his idea and James agreed to go following pressure from Costello for him to go to America. However, a visa was required for this journey so the agent Michael O'Callaghan was called upon to assist with obtaining one.

When Michael O'Callaghan applied for a military pension in the 1925, he outlined the role he had in 'the Murray case.' O'Callaghan wrote to the pensions board stating that he was refused admission to *An Garda Siochána* because of his connection with Murray. Although he reported to Costello, Costello had signed his application form in March 1925 but then refused to give a reference for O'Callaghan in October 1925. Was this because of the recent Murray murder trial and the potential for other trials? O'Callaghan was in desperate circumstances at that time with his wife in hospital and was clearly of the view that the Murray case was part of the issue. He advised the pension board that his role in the Murray case was from an official standing. When Murray applied for a visa to travel to Argentina, the Argentinian Consul in Glasgow would not help. O'Callaghan claimed that Murray, who applied for a visa under the name 'James Doherty' had a letter from a police officer in Ireland confirming that he was not under police supervision for a period of five years and that there were no outstanding warrants against him. O'Callaghan wrote:

'If there was a warrant issued for Murray it was never sent to Glasgow as it always done in his case or others wanted on warrant for murder or robbery.'

The Consul was not happy to issue a visa for someone with a Dublin address and a letter from Ireland but O'Callaghan succeeded in getting Murray's papers legalised by the Argentine Consul General in Dublin and the visa was issued in Glasgow on 1 April 1924.

The cynicism of how the military operated is demonstrated by O'Callaghan's completion of service on 1 August 1925, just after the appeal in the Murray case was completed. O'Callaghan was back and forth to Ireland on a number of occasions in 1924 and 1925 and was called as a witness for the defence in the murder trial of James Murray but could not be found to give evidence. Correspondence on his pension file shows that he was in Dublin at the time of the trial. Mr. Gleeson defending Murray, said of O'Callaghan: 'He is a servant of the State.' Carrigan prosecuting for the State declared: 'He is not.' The pension record application in the possession of the State at that time shows that O'Callaghan was indeed a servant of the State at that time and that the State was in a position to produce this key witness. It was also confirmed at the trial that O'Callaghan had been questioned but that no evidence was taken in writing. It is therefore the case that the State lied at Murray's trial.

The republican newspaper *An Phoblacht* reported in its issue of 11 September 1925:

Amongst those present at Madame MacBride's meeting for the Release of Prisoners on Sunday 23rd August, was Captain Michael O'Callaghan, Free State Army. This is the witness who was missing at the late Captain Murray's trial and with whom Murray was said to have lived in Glasgow. How is it that the C.I.D. could not find him?

O'Callaghan wrote to the pensions board in December 1925 complaining about how he was cut off without a demobilisation grant even though his staff were paid grants:

'I was cast into the street without a penny. I consider that a grave injustice has been done to me in this matter. It is six months since I was cut off. Agents in England are still working and Col. Costello D.I. was in communication with former members of my staff with a view to find out details regarding the irregulars movement in Scotland. This gives me to understand that I was got rid of for some other reason.'

The sequence of events and pension details suggest that O'Callaghan was punished for helping Murray. It suggests that this was either because he had assisted Murray without authorisation, or he did it with authorisation and had to be disowned to protect the State.

In a Bureau of Military History statement left by a Kerry Brigade IRA member, Tadhg Kennedy, who had dealt with the IRA intelligence service in Glasgow when attempting to smuggle weapons, he commented on an unnamed agent in Glasgow:

'I heard he was shabbily treated by our Governments and had to go to England to earn his living at insurance. Dave Neligan knows why and so do I but I only have it secondhand so will leave it to Dave Neligan to tell should he choose.'

There is no doubt that Kennedy was referring to Michael O'Callaghan. Neligan and O'Callaghan were clearly in contact with each other at this time. In a court case in Glasgow, reported in the *Dundee Courier* of 29 March 1929, Colonel David Neligan sued O'Callaghan for £25:

'The defence put forward that the £25 was paid not, as alleged by pursuer, for the purpose of purchasing furniture, but for services rendered by O'Callaghan as a secret service agent in Glasgow. It was stated by Col Neligan that O'Callaghan who was an Irish Free State agent, visited him frequently at Dublin Castle and that he gave O'Callaghan a commission to buy furniture for him in Scotland, later sending him a £25 money order. He never got any furniture.

O'Callaghan admitted that he had received three years' penal servitude in Scotland for endeavouring to purchase ammunition for Ireland. His mode was to get men to break into miners' magazines and take gelignite and detonators.

He denied having undertaken to purchase furniture for Col. Neligan, and said that when writing to Col. Neligan and others he used a code 'Furniture' mentioned in one of his letters, might mean anything – rifles or prisoners.

Giving judgement for Col. Neligan, the Sheriff found that the money was sent to O'Callaghan to purchase furniture, and that O'Callaghan acknowledged receipt of the money in a letter to pursuer dated 18th

January 1924, in which he said – ‘You can rest assured I will do the best I can for you in the furniture line.’

Whether Neligan had indeed paid O’Callaghan to buy him furniture or not was true, it shows that Neligan and O’Callaghan were in contact in January 1924 when Murray was in Glasgow and Neligan was no longer Director of Intelligence. If O’Callaghan was telling the truth, it could suggest that the ‘Furniture’ in Glasgow was James Murray. Once again in the murky world of intelligence it is impossible to separate the truths, half-truths and lies.

### **Buenos Aires**

Shipping records show that James Murray under the name ‘James Doherty’ with his brother Michael Murray sailed from London to Buenos Aires on board the ‘*Highland Pride*’ on 10 April 1924. Michael was demobilised from the army in March 1924 so had time on his hands. James gave his occupation as a farmer with an address at 41 Crail Street, Glasgow. Michael gave his occupation as a student and gave his home address as 44 Convent Street, Dublin. Michael stayed for a short period arriving in Southampton on board the ‘Andes’ on 17 June 1924.

It is not known what James Murray did in Buenos Aires or how he survived for over seven months but Michael Murray in a statement given after his brother’s trial, in November 1925 said that Costello had stopped giving his wife an allowance forcing James to return home.

Passenger shipping records show that ‘James Doherty’ c/o O’Callaghan & Co., 20 Bath Street, Glasgow, a 25-year-old farmer, travelled from Buenos Aires and arrived in Liverpool on 3 November 1924. He appears to have arrived in Dublin on 18 December 1923 and did not hide the fact that he was home. In letter ‘A’ produced as evidence at the trial, Murray wrote to Costello to advise that he had cut his tour of South America short.

‘Just a few lines to let you know that because of certain circumstances, over which I have no control, I have been obliged to cut short my tour of the southern hemisphere, and as the period of one year for which you requested me to remain absent has almost expired, I would like an interview with you regarding my future action. For this purpose, I intend to visit Dublin as soon as I have made the necessary arrangements regarding ‘digs’ etc and I can assure you



that it would be in our mutual advantage to arrange an interview with me.’

This letter was sent from Liverpool on 3 November 1924 and adds a certain credibility to suggestions that Murray was told to go away for a year. After a few days in Dublin, he was arrested on Christmas Eve 1924 at his home in Dun Laoghaire by Colonel David Neligan and brought to Mountjoy Gaol.

### **On Inspection Duty?**

A key aspect of the murder trial was whether Murray was, as he described it, on inspection duty. Murray claimed that the intelligence agent, Thomas Deegan, gave him £50 in Liverpool with an instruction to travel to Glasgow. Murray was clearly concerned that his wife Josephine and children would have enough money to survive and suggests that his wife received a weekly payment for part of the time he was away. While in Glasgow, he wanted to be placed on Michael O’Callaghan’s staff at £5 per week. There was considerable argument at his murder trial on these points. The State denied that he was being paid in any form while Murray insisted that he was still on the State’s payroll. A witness testified that payments ceased for him in December 1923 and denied that his wife was being paid under the name ‘McMahon or as ‘Agent 116’. However, the payroll sheets, in the interest of State security, were not made available at the trial.

Michael Murray in a statement given to the police on 6 November 1925, after the trial of his brother stated that Deegan gave him some money for James Murray’s wife about a week after the murder. Michael claimed to have met Costello in January 1924 and travelled to Glasgow after getting Michael O’Callaghan’s address from Costello. He was given an extra month’s leave by military authorities. He claimed Costello encouraged him to get his brother to go to America or else his pay would be stopped. His brother agreed to go to America if he could get six month’s pay and an allowance for his wife and children in Ireland. Michael claimed that Costello gave him £50 for his brother and requested that O’Callaghan give him a further £50. Following his arrest in December 1924, Murray’s wife wrote to the *Irish Independent* on 2 January 1925:

‘Sir, In Tuesday’s issue you published under above heading that James Murray, an ex-officer of the National Army, was arrested at his home on Christmas Eve, which is incorrect and misleading.

My husband, Captain James Murray, has never been demobilised from the army, and I believe has been on some secret mission for G.H.Q. Intelligence Branch, Parkgate St., as I have been receiving my allowance regularly from same up to some time ago; also, he was not home for some time previously.

(Mrs.) J. Murray, 11 Crofton Avenue, Dun Laoghaire.'

She was incorrect on the demobilisation point. In 'Staff Duties – appointments and discharges memo No. 13' published by General Headquarters on 6 March 1924, Murray features:

Dismissals

Captain James Murray, Department of General Staff, for continued absence without leave.

The Military did not leave the correspondence unchallenged. A follow-up letter appeared in the *Irish Independent* the next day - 3 January 1925:

Sir - With reference to Mrs. Murray's letter regarding the arrest of her husband, Capt. James Murray, in connection with the murder of Joseph Bergin, I am directed by the Minister for Defence to state that Capt. Murray has been absent from the Forces without leave since Dec. 14, 1923, and that pay and allowances have not been issued in his case in respect of any period after Nov. 30, 1923.

It was notified to the Forces in Staff Duties – Appointments and Discharges Memo No. 13, dated March 6, 1924, that Capt. Murray had been dismissed for continued absence without leave.

C.B. O'Connor, Runaidhe (Dept. of Defence)

Murray admitted during the appeal of his death sentence that he was not paid since April 1924, however, even if he was off of the payroll as an army officer by 6 March 1924, it is still not clear as to whether Murray and his wife continued to receive some financial support through military intelligence. At his trial, a number of military witnesses testified that no payments were made but it is possible that some payments were made through money available to military agents. On the balance of probability, it would seem that Murray was not paid after his demobilisation even if he was possibly given funds to pay for his fare to travel to Argentina. He would

have been entitled to a demobilisation grant but none of this was made clear in the murder trial. Nevertheless, the fact that the State withheld the military intelligence payroll sheets suggests that there is strong chance that 'McMahon' or 'Agent 116' feature.

### **Document 'E'**

The most significant aspect to the trial was the introduction of Document 'E' [see full document in the appendices]. In a most unusual event in a court of law, while James Murray was being cross-examined by the Prosecution, they produced Document 'E' – a statement made by Murray admitting to arresting Bergin, bringing him to Guidenstown, where he was shot. Murray denied that he had written the document but a military handwriting expert confirmed that it was in the same handwriting as the four letters that Murray had admitted he had written. It transpired that the document was obtained from Thomas Deegan – the other agent who was not called to testify at the trial but was present in the courtroom. The Dublin newspaper *Honesty* noted that the expert called to verify the handwriting was a member of Colonel Costello's Intelligence staff.

Justice Hanna made the unusual step of allowing this evidence even though it was the first time it was produced in the court and telling the jury that in effect, if they believed that Murray wrote it, then they should believe that he was guilty. There was no mention of another statement in Document 'E' where Murray wrote:

'On Monday 10th December, I again saw Costello at his office. He, on this occasion, told me that Bergin would have to be shot, as he was a dangerous man.'

It is certainly strange occurrence that Murray was potentially convicted on a statement he made when part of the statement implicating Colonel Costello was ignored.

## CHAPTER 8

### *The Verdict*

*'I only wish to declare my innocence and to state that I have been made the scapegoat in this crime, of which I am innocent. I only hope the officers who swore my life away will be prepared to meet their God when the time comes, as I am.'*

*Captain James Murray*

On the last and fourth day of the trial of James Murray, his brother Michael was called to give evidence. Michael gave evidence to the effect that his brother never left Dublin on the night of the murder. He claimed that Costello continued to pay Murray while he was away on special duties and visited him in Glasgow on a number of occasions. The prosecution objected to Michael outlining details of any conversations he had with O'Callaghan while O'Callaghan was never found to give evidence for the defence even though he was in Dublin at that moment.

The prosecution did a good job in discrediting Michael Murray. A Court of Inquiry in respect of a shooting the witness was involved in at the Theatre Royal when a man was shot dead was raised.<sup>7</sup>

Murray then proceeded to drop a bombshell in the Court in respect of his brother's work with military intelligence and how his brother was in trouble over the Lemass case. The exchange was reported in the *Irish Independent*:

‘Murray:                   The reason I did that was because something like this had happened before when a man was shot, and Jimmy knew too much – the late Noel Lemass – and it was suggested to him that he should stand trial for this man. Jimmy refused to stand trial.

At this point, Justice Henry Hanna intervened although there was no objection raised by the defence to the line of questioning.

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<sup>7</sup> Appears to be the death of William Johnson at the Theatre Royal, Dublin on 27 March 1923.

Justice Hanna: When you are asked a question in cross-examination contain yourself to it, if you are a wise man. You may have been in the C.I.D. and a Commandant in the Irish army, but you are not in a position to judge what is in favour of your brother and what is not.

Mr. Carrigan: I am not going into details but I learn this much – that Jimmy was in trouble over the Lemass case?

Michael Murray: Jimmy was not in trouble over the Lemass case but he was mentioned in connection with it.

Carrigan: Were you in trouble over the Lemass case?

Michael Murray: I was not.

Justice Hanna: These men seem to think they are better able to defend themselves than the professional men engaged.'

Carrigan, of course, knew that Michael Murray had threatened one of the witnesses at the Lemass inquest in October 1923. After the summing up of evidence by the Defence and the Prosecution, the jury retired at 7.05 p.m. and returned at 8.25 p.m. Murray was brought up from below 'showing the strain of the long wait, slightly straightened and drew himself erect.'

The guilty verdict was then announced to the surprise of most present who thought that the jury's absence for over one hour and twenty minutes which was seen as a long time and suggested a disagreement. The silence was broken by the weeping of Murray's sister Frances. James Murray said:

'I only wish to declare my innocence and to state that I have been made the scapegoat in this crime, of which I am innocent. I only hope the officers who swore my life away will be prepared to meet their God when the time comes, as I am.'

Justice Henry Hanna donned the black cap and pronounced the death sentence to be carried out by hanging on 2 July 1925.

Gleeson was furious at the introduction of Document 'E' in the cross examination of James Murray and stated that he would appeal the sentence but Justice Hanna refused the request for a certificate of appeal.

## The Appeal

Murray submitted an application for leave to appeal the sentence at the Court of Criminal appeal on 6 July on the basis that the trial judge had misdirected the jury on a point of law by suggesting to them that the whole case could be appealed which, he argued should never have been mentioned. Gleeson also argued that the judge had in effect instructed the jury to decide that if they believed Document 'E' was written by Murray then they had to find him guilty of the murder.

The Attorney General replied on behalf of the State and argued that once Murray entered the witness box, the State was entitled to cross-examine him, even with new evidence. The Court of Criminal Appeal refused Murray's application for leave to appeal.

On 15 July, Murray's case came before the Supreme Court but was rejected there also.

On Sunday 19 July, Murray's death sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life on the recommendation of the Executive Council under William T. Cosgrave to the Governor General. A petition had circulated in Dublin, primarily in the Dun Laoghaire area seeking his reprieve. Cosgrave, who, as we saw earlier, saw one of his own bodyguards lead a man away to be murdered could hardly see Murray hanged for the same offence.

Murray was sent to Portlaoise prison to undergo his prison sentence.

## Honesty Magazine

A Dublin newspaper, *Honesty*, which started publication in February 1925, and claimed to be neutral on political issues published two articles on the Murray Trial. *Honesty* was edited by a well-known socialist and Gaelic Games journalist James W. Upton a veteran of the 1916 Rising.

On 27 June 1925, the paper commented:



*Masthead from Honesty*

'... thousands of men and women all over the country are not convinced that the prisoner is to be hanged because he was found guilty of murder.

Fact No. 1: The unfortunate military policeman – Bergin – is suspected, and more than suspected of being in communication with the intelligence officer of the Irregular Forces. The suspicion becomes a certainty. Now the ordinary man will want to know why Bergin was not arrested and tried by Court martial. Upon conviction he could be suitably punished – if necessary, by a death warrant. There is no arrest, no trial. Instead of this very natural procedure, against which no criticism could be levelled, Colonel Costello sends an officer to interview Bergin.’

In respect of Fact 1, it is reasonable to argue that Murray’s role was to convert Bergin into an agent for military intelligence.

‘Fact No. 2: The officer selected by Colonel Costello is Captain James Murray who sets out in a car to obey the commands of his superior officer. It does not appear from any statement made by Colonel Costello that any arrangements were entered into by means of which the interview should take place in a building within the Curragh Barracks, or at the Railway Station, or at a Barrack in Dublin. It would seem that Bergin is to be intercepted at some unknown spot.’

In respect of Fact 2, it is reasonable to argue that if the intention was to turn Bergin, it could not be carried out in the Curragh, but equally the choice of a secluded location could suggest that the intention was at the very least to torture him. No one knows whether Costello knew that Murray’s modus operandi was to put six bullets into the head of those he questioned but equally, Murray had a familiarity with the Kildare area having been on previous operations there in 1923. Costello now had a much smaller staff than was there before he took over.

‘Fact No. 3: Murray returns the next morning to Colonel Costello and reports that he had seen Bergin and that ‘it is all right’. On the same day, the evening papers publish an account of the finding of Bergin’s dead body. At this point it is important to study the attitude of Colonel Costello. He would either support Capt. Murray of the murder or he would act. If he had not suspected him, the relations between the two men would have remained unchanged. But it is quite clear that there was more than a dark suspicion in the mind of Colonel Costello, for, according to his sworn testimony, he refused

to have any further intercourse with Capt. Murray. Quite apart from the Colonel's duty as an officer of high rank to see that a soldier of his army could not be murdered with impunity he had the ordinary duties of citizenship. Why then did he not give information to the police and have Capt. Murray arrested? For it should not be forgotten that all the evidence adduced against the prisoner would have been available at the time of the tragedy.'

This certainly seems to be a failing by Costello. However, it could also be argued that by giving information to the Police, the information would be received by Colonel Neligan who was in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department and this would tip-off Murray and help him escape which is, in effect, what occurred. The investigation file shows that ultimately information on Murray was obtained from others in General Headquarters.

'Fact No. 4: No action is taken against Murray. He is known to have gone to Glasgow. He is several times at the offices of the Secret Service Agent in that city, and no steps are taken to arrest him for the murder. He next proceeds to the Argentine Republic – from which Jabez Balfour has been extradited.<sup>8</sup> Question No. 1 Where did Murray get the money for his passage? No. 2 Who procured his passport?'

This again is one of the fundamental issues in the case. Did Costello allow his agents to assist Murray or were they working on their own initiative or with the connivance of Colonel Neligan. O'Callaghan himself said that no warrant was issued in Glasgow for Murray. The investigation file in the search for Murray in early 1924 did suggest issuing a 'hue and cry' for him but for some reason this was never acted upon.

'Lastly, what the man-in-the-street is saying amounts to this: So long as Murray was in Scotland or in the Argentine he was perfectly safe, the fate of Bergin seems to have been forgotten.'

On 4 July 1923 *Honesty* asked another series of questions. Rather than simply reporting the trial as the daily newspapers did, *Honesty* took a more critical view of the trial:

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<sup>8</sup> Balfour, a British politician and businessman, was not actually extradited. He was seized by British police in Argentina and brought home during legal wrangling over extradition in 1895.



- ‘(1) On Murray’s arrival in Ireland, why was he allowed to remain at large from 18th to the 23rd December 1924.
- (2) Why was there no direct evidence of Murray’s arrest.
- (3) Did it look like the action of a guilty man to return from his place of immunity and announce that he was going to G.H.Q. at Parkgate Street, Dublin to resume duty?
- (4) Why was it that his arrest was only made public then? At the preliminary Police Court proceedings, where Murray was arraigned, a private soldier of the National Army attached to the Crown Alley Telephone Exchange guard, swore that the motor car was brought into the place by an officer in uniform. A railway porter, attached to Kildare Railway Station, swore that Captain Murray was not in uniform. On the same day, Colonel Costello swore that Murray was in civilian dress.’

This witness was Private Philip Creighton who had testified that the car was handed over to him by an army captain. It would seem reasonable, however, that Murray had changed clothes at home before dropping the car off at Crown Alley.

- ‘(5) Why was not the private soldier who took the car from Murray at the Telephone Exchange, and who was deemed an important witness at the previous Police Court proceedings, produced at the trial in Green Street.
- (6) Michael Murray, while under cross-examination – in defence of his brother - in Green Street Courthouse, publicly identified Deegan among the audience attending the trial. Why was Deegan in court?
- (7) Considering the many important references to Deegan during the trial, why was he not produced for examination by the prosecution?
- (8) Why was not O’Callaghan who knew so much about ex-Captain Murray’s movements, produced for examination by the prosecution?’

The newspaper claimed that the questions were nothing more than the

## STRENGTH OF COMRADESHIP - THE MILLTOWN MURDER

average man in the street would ask. The newspaper was certainly asking many relevant questions which suggested that Murray was not given a fair trial. Michael O'Callaghan was in Dublin at the time of the trial and Thomas Deegan was in the court yet both were not produced during the trial despite being key persons.

## CHAPTER 9

### *Lieutenant Joseph Mack*

*'Well I think the whole affair is a joke.'*

*Lieutenant Joseph Mack, 23 October 1925*

Joseph Mack was born on 5 July 1900 at 2 Longford Lane, Dublin City as Joseph Marcantonio to Francis Marcantonio and Suzanne Shields. By 1911 he was living at Chancery Lane with his parents and siblings Rosie, Francis and James. There is a record of him being arrested in January 1914 as a newspaper boy for housebreaking and larceny under the name Marcantonio. He had some service in the IRA with the 2nd Battalion, Dublin Brigade although records are scant.

He enlisted in the Free State Army on 2 February 1922 at Beggars Bush Barracks, Dublin with a home address listed as 9 Charlotte St., Dublin and



*Joseph Mack in civilian clothes  
(no. 13) outside the  
Great Southern Hotel, Killarney,  
April 1923 from An t-Oglach and  
above in uniform  
(Author's collection)*



served with the 6th Battalion, Dublin Guards. Joseph Mack served for a considerable period of the Civil War in Co. Kerry more than likely from September 1922 when the Kerry Command was formed. He was there during the controversial killings that occurred in March 1923 when both National Army troops and Republican were murdered. He was the military representative at an inquest in Killarney in May 1923 when one of his men, Volunteer Thomas Fitzgerald was killed when two trains collided near Kenmare.

6th Battalion.						
<i>Officer Commanding</i>	...	Conroy, Isaiah	...	<i>Comdt.</i>	17	29/1/'23
<i>Second in Command</i>	...	McClellan, Wm.	...	<i>Captain</i>	18	30/1/'23
<i>Adjutant</i>	...	Murphy, Henry	...	<i>Captain</i>	18	30/1/'23
<i>Quartermaster</i>	...	McKenna, Thomas	...	<i>Captain</i>	18	30/1/'23
<i>Assistant Adjutant</i>	...	Mack, Joseph	...	<i>2nd Lieut.</i>	18	30/1/'23
<i>Assistant Q.M.</i>	...	Creen, John	...	<i>2nd Lieut.</i>	18	30/1/'23

According to the writer Uinseann MacEoin, Mack participated in a number of murders near Killarney on the same day at the well-known Ballyseedy mine explosion of March 1923:

'On the same morning that this occurred four other hostages were taken out by Officers Wilson, Mack and others, and shot fifteen miles away at Killarney. The Great Southern Hotel there was used as a troop barracks; prisoners being beaten in its basement.'

This incident occurred when the National Army brought five prisoners from Killarney to Countess Bridge and threw hand grenades and fired on them with a machine gun. Four men were killed (Jeremiah O'Donoghue, Daniel O'Donoghue, Stephen Buckley and Tim Murphy) and one, Tadgh Coffey, managed to escape. A photograph published in the army journal *An tOglach* on 30 June 1923 shows Mack on top of an armoured Rolls Royce car - 'Tom Keogh' in Killarney dressed in civilian clothing indicating the likelihood that he acted an intelligence officer. Mack was therefore well-known to David Neligan and Paddy O'Daly in Kerry at the time.

It is not known when Mack returned to Dublin but he was assigned as an intelligence officer from December 1923 to March 1924 when he was demobilised from the army. He became President of the Association of Ex-Officers and Men of the National Army, a position he held for the next year. He addressed a group of ex-soldiers and ex-officers of the army at a march from North Great George's Street to Kildare Street on 20 May 1924. A large banner at the front of the parade declared 'Wounded men want pensions from the government not charity from St. Vincent de Paul'.

On 23 October 1925, Sergeant Marcus O'Brien arrested Joseph Mack on Dame St., Dublin for the murder of Joseph Bergin. He said to the arresting officer: 'Well, I think the whole affair is a huge joke. I will reserve my defence anyways.' The next day Mack was put in an identity parade of twelve men and was identified by James Cleary as one of the men with Murray on 13 December 1923. On 3 November, the police visited James Murray in Portlaoise prison to see if he would co-operate but the visit achieved nothing. Murray was on hunger strike over being disciplined for a breach of prison discipline.

A former Sergeant Major in the National Army, Thomas Moran, gave a statement on 5 January 1926 to say that he had driven Ford Car A.C.802 the day prior to the murder and had an accident on the Quays in Dublin. When he heard that the car had been requisitioned, he went to examine it to ensure that it was in working order. He saw two men standing at the door whom he had never seen before. On 17 November 1925 while on exercise in the compound of Mountjoy Gaol, he saw one of the men again, whom he discovered was Joseph Mack. He gave a statement to that effect on 5 January 1926 in advance of the Mack trial.

An interesting point in Moran's statement was the statement that the two men were waiting outside while Murray was with Costello. This tends to put a bit more credence into Costello's contention that he only met Murray on 13 December 1923 and did not meet the two men who were with him. Mack does not appear to have left Ireland, or if he did, it was only for a short period of time, and had a certain amount of political influence. After his arrest, Deputy Johnson raised his case in Dáil Eireann as the trial was due to take place on 19 March 1926 but was postponed. It was a reflection of the lawlessness that had occurred in the country with a backlog of 110 cases awaiting trial in the criminal court, a significant number of these being for murder.

### **Trial of Joseph Mack**

At the murder trial of Joseph Mack which opened at Green Street on 20 April 1926, Driver Cleary was the main witness called for the prosecution. He had identified Mack in a lineup of twenty men at Mountjoy. He gave similar evidence to that given at Murray's trial which was again contradicted by Costello. Thomas Moran, the ex-sergeant-major also identified Mack. John Lenihan, Secretary of the Association of Ex-Army Officers and Men said that Mack had resigned at a meeting in December 1924 declaring that he was about to leave the country and the rope was already around his neck. This was recorded on loose sheets of paper and afterwards transferred to the typewritten minutes of the meeting. Justice Hanna remarked at the trial: 'There must be a great deal of loyalty amongst you when you write down a thing like that about a comrade.'

However Justice Hanna was not happy with the case. The only evidence produced were the minutes of the meeting and contradictory evidence between Costello and Cleary on the clothes worn by the defendant. At the trial Moran said he saw Mack in Portobello Barracks but did not see him get into the car while Costello stated he did not see Mack on 13 December 1923. Justice Hanna instructed the jury to issue a verdict of not guilty which they duly did this and Mack was free to go.

Joseph Mack got employment as an overseer at York Street with Dublin Corporation and married Christina Murphy in 1927. Despite the murder trial, Mack did not keep a low profile. He was heavily involved in the Blueshirts, the League of Youth and Fine Gael from the early 1930s onwards.

He was a Fine Gael candidate in the 1960s and worked as a Relieving Officer and was a Board Member of the Meath Hospital. A Fine Gael Branch in Crumlin, Co. Dublin was named after him. He was referred to as Captain Mack although when he left the army he held the rank of lieutenant.

The General Registry Office records the death of Joseph J Marcantonio on 17 May 1968, former Relieving Officer of 38 Grange Park, Rathfarnham. Newspapers of the time record an expression of sympathy from the 2nd Battalion, Old IRA.

## CHAPTER 10

### *The Third Man*

*'The man with the black leather coat and Officer's cap is about 28 years, 5' 10" or 5' 11" high, dark complexion, clean shaven, long features, sharp nose, dark eyes, well set up and of smart appearance. He also wore brown leggings and brown boots similar to those worn by Military officers. I believe this man to be Capt. McAuliffe'*

*Driver James Cleary 14 October 1925*

The first mention of the third man involved in the murder was reported in the *Irish Independent* of 29 October 1925:

'Another arrest has been made in connection with the murder of Pte Joseph Bergin, a military policeman, whose dead body was found in the canal at Droichead Nua in December 1923. The accused, John Healy, Clarence St., Dun Laoghaire, ex-Sergeant of the National Army was remanded in custody till today, charged with conspiring with Ex-Capt. Murray and others to murder Bergin. Det. Sgt. M. Byrne gave evidence of having arrested the accused in College St.'

This name was an error and all other newspapers report his name as John Dooley. John William Dooley (1904-79) was from Crofton Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, the son of John Dooley, an ex-Royal Dublin Fusilier and Annie Gannon. He attested into the National Army on 2 February 1922 at Beggars Bush Barracks, Dublin and served with the Dublin Guards. At the time of the National Army Census compiled in November 1922 he was stationed at Gormanstown, Co. Meath.

Dooley is first mentioned as a suspect in the Bergin case in correspondence written by Eoin O'Duffy on 21 July 1925 that:

'Chief Supt. Neligan informed me a few days ago that he was sure ex-Lieut. Mack and one Dooley were with Murray on the occasion of the murder, and that they are presently in London, probably on Col. Costello's Staff there.'

Neligan's statement implicates Costello in suggesting that Dooley and Mack are on his staff there which contradicts what Costello stated in court. Dooley is also mentioned by Michael Murphy in his statement to *An Garda Síochána* in November 1925 when he stated that Dooley had also travelled to Liverpool accompanied by Thomas Deegan and had travelled on to Glasgow with James Murray to report to O'Callaghan. Dooley was a civilian by the time of the trial but it is not clear whether he was a civilian at the time of the murder. There is no pension record for him in Military Archives and no record of an involvement with the IRA during the War of Independence, perhaps because of his age, although he is from Dun Laoghaire and living on the same street as Murray – Crofton Avenue.

The charges against Dooley did not last long. At the Dublin District Court on 5 November 1925, the State advised that it was no longer proceeding with the charges against Dooley. Dooley subsequently worked in insurance and would marry Breda Casey, daughter of a former RIC policeman in 1931 and spend the rest of his life in south County Dublin.

### **Was John Dooley the Third Man?**

There is a potential problem with John Dooley being the third man in the murder of Joseph Bergin. The Garda file contains no information on Dooley and no witnesses.

The only witness, James Cleary, testified that Costello instructed him to take three officers to McKee Barracks. John Dooley was an NCO and not an officer. Even if Dooley was dressed as a civilian it seems a clear statement and suggests that Dooley was not the right man. This leads us to a previously unidentified suspect. In a statement given by Driver Cleary to police in October 1925, he named Captain William McAuliffe as one of the suspects. There is no other mention of McAuliffe on the file and no follow-up on this statement.

William McAuliffe (1898-1986) was born 25 April 1898 to Con McAuliffe and Mary Behan in Ennis, Co. Clare. His father was stationmaster at Kilmorna with the Great Southern and Western Railway and originally from Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick. The family moved to Emly, Co. Tipperary



*William McAuliffe circa 1940*



in October 1915 where his father was appointed stationmaster. William got a job as a porter at Emly station.

He was arrested on 16 July 1920 for having one revolver and three rounds of ammunition. Also arrested with John Crawford of Ballylanders, sentenced to two years and sent to Wormwood Scrubs on 13 August 1920.

He enlisted in the National Army on 2 July 1922 at Wellington Barracks and according to the National Army Census of November 1922 was stationed at Killarney, Co. Kerry – as an Intelligence officer with the rank of Captain under Colonel Neligan.

He was discharged from the army on 5 September 1924 and married Margaret Parsley in Kensington, London on 24 June 1925. He emigrated to Australia in about 1930, remarried twice and died in 1986.

## Descriptions

A comparison of available descriptions of the four potential suspects together with known details about them reveals the following:

In Cleary's first statement on 19 December 1923 he described **Suspect 1** - Captain Murray as of a dark complexion, 5' 6" wearing uniform. Murray is described in 1924 in Mountjoy Gaol as Description 5' 7½" Dark Brown hair, Hazel Eyes, Fresh complexion, age 26. His Royal Navy service record described him at sixteen years of age as 5' 3½", with grey eyes.

He describes **Suspect 2** as wearing a green leather coat and officer's cap. In October 1925, he describes suspect 2 as wearing a black leather coat, officer's cap, brown leggings, with brown military boots worn by officers, about 28 years old. 5' 10" – 5' 11" dark complexion, clean shaven, long features, sharp nose, dark eyes, well set up and smart appearance. In October 1925 he believed this man to be Captain McAuliffe while in a previous statements he stated that this was Lieutenant Joseph Mack.

Joseph Kelly, ticket collector testified at Murray's trial that the second man he saw with Murray in the Railway Hotel was about 6' 2".

**Suspect 3** was described as wearing a grey tweed overcoat and civilian cap. A second description described him as wearing a heavy greyish overcoat, About 19/20 years old 5' 5" – 5' 6", dark hair and complexion., clean shaven round features, small nose, brownish eyes, fairly stout build, grey tweed cap, soft collar, dark trousers. A previous statement described him as 25/26 years old.

Unfortunately there is no description of John Dooley who was 19 at the time of the murder but there is a description of McAuliffe from his arrest in 1920 by the British. He was described as 5' 7", black hair and green eyes. It is possible that McAuliffe and Mack could be confused with each other raising the possibility that it should have been McAuliffe and not Mack who was put on trial, however there is a significant height difference between the two men which reduces the likelihood of confusing them. Cleary seems to have gotten somewhat confused between the descriptions of Suspect 2 and Suspect 3 and this significantly contributed to the collapse of the Joseph Mack trial. At the trial, the defence asked Cleary to explain how in his deposition, Mack was described as wearing a green coat but in the information which formed the basis of the arrest of Mack, it relied on Cleary's statement that Mack wore a different colour coat.

It does therefore suggest that both Mack and McAuliffe could have been suspects. Dooley, however also fits the profile as a likely suspect with service in the Dublin Guards and residing in the Dun Laoghaire area close to Murray.

There is, of course, the possibility that a fourth man was involved in returning the car to Crown Alley on the morning after the murder.

## CHAPTER 11

# *Conclusion*

*'Driver Cleary is just about the only person here telling the truth.'*

*Captain James Murray, 11 June 1925*

After an analysis of the evidence, there are a number of findings that can be made in respect of the murder of Joseph Bergin.

### **The Suspects**

Four people were named at different points as suspects on the Garda Síochána investigation file, while only three of these could have taken part in the murder. The four suspects were Captain James Murray, Lieutenant Joseph Mack, Captain William McAuliffe, all serving army officers; and ex-Sergeant John Dooley.

The Gardai also identified the following potential accessories to the crime: Colonel Michael Costello, Commandant Daniel McDonnell, Lieutenant Keane and Second Lieutenant O'Hara.

The military intelligence investigation into Private Joseph Bergin is most likely to have commenced while Colonel David Neligan was Director of Intelligence. Colonel David Neligan, Captain James Murray and Commandant Daniel McDonnell were all former intelligence officers who had served together during the War of independence in the Dublin Brigade of the IRA and all had personal experience in the execution of adversaries.

Colonel David Neligan, Captain William McAuliffe and Lieutenant Joseph Mack all served together in Kerry with Neligan and Mack involved in a number of atrocities there during the Civil War. John Dooley was also a Dublin Guard so it is possible that he served in Kerry.

In the Garda investigation file, Neligan identified Murray, Mack and Dooley as the suspects and these were the three men who ultimately were charged with only one being convicted. However, it cannot be ruled out that William McAuliffe may have been the third man matching Cleary's

contention that all three were army officers or that the three suspects were Murray, McAuliffe and Dooley.

### **The role of Colonel Michael Costello and Colonel David Neligan**

Military intelligence was restructured in October 1923 with Colonel Michael Costello taking command and many of its previous functions transferring over to the Criminal Investigation Department of An Garda Síochána and the Dublin Metropolitan Police. The majority of men that had served under Neligan were now gone. Murray who was most likely on suspension when the restructuring occurred came back in November 1923 and was the most experienced intelligence agent with experience of carrying out intelligence in Kildare.

It is highly unlikely that any specific order was given to kill Bergin although two documents written by Commandant Michael Murray and Captain James Murray state that Costello gave such an order. At his trial, Murray said that he was not accusing Costello of giving such an order. There is little doubt that Commandant Daniel McDonnell, Army Provost Marshall, Curragh facilitated Murray at the Curragh in identifying Bergin and that some intelligence contact in the Kildare area identified the house for use at Guidenstown.

Colonel Costello identified Murray to Driver James Cleary and left a paper trail in respect of the car which tied Murray and Costello to the car which was not the action of someone who was planning a murder. Murray on his behalf had already gotten away with murder only a few months previously and was released without charge while Colonel Neligan was in command. Murray was also tipped off after the murder to leave the country by Neligan at the same time as Neligan was seeking to arrest him.

Costello, at the very least, let Murray escape and knew that Murray was in Liverpool and Glasgow and did not prevent his agents from assisting Murray. O'Callaghan was of the view that he was punished for helping Murray but never stated at who's behest he was operating. One of Costello's agents – Thomas Deegan - was also a Dun Laoghaire man like Murray who had worked for Michael Collins. He stopped his army pay in either December 1923 or March 1924 and deemed him absent without leave but may have continued to pay his wife through army funds, or at the very least chose to ignore that she was being paid. Neligan claimed in July 1925 that

Mack and Dooley were in London on Costello's staff there – suggesting that Costello had, at the very least supported them, yet at the same time showing that Neligan continued to have some knowledge of the case through his contacts. There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that Neligan was still influencing military intelligence, including his continued contact with O'Callaghan and had more of an interest in the removal of republican activists than Costello who was more focused on the reorganisation and professionalisation of the army at this time. It must be noted that Costello was an outsider and just nineteen years old at this time. Neligan, Murray and Deegan were close associates with a shared history during the 'Dirty War'. It is likely that Costello had never met Deegan, Short or O'Callaghan prior to the murder and had no role in allowing Murray back into Military Intelligence in November 1923. The loyalty of the outside agents to Neligan rather than Costello cannot be discounted.

On the day that the body of Bergin was discovered, Costello was aware that Murray had met Bergin and knew that the car had blood in it. Costello did not make any effort to report Murray or assist in the arrest of Murray. Yet, there is a contradiction here. Costello most likely knew of the link between Murray and Neligan so that reporting Murray to be arrested could assist in his escape. Yet Costello also knew Bergin – he gave him his first uniform in Mountrath - which leaves that small doubt as to whether his preference was to have him turned into one of his agents rather than have him executed. Costello, the former intelligence agent in Portlaoise, it could be argued, might have taken Bergin's defection personally.

Despite Neligan's role in the affair, he named Murray, Mack and Dooley and personally arrested Murray in December 1924 in his capacity as head of the Detective Branch. Neligan certainly had a greater role in the affair than Costello in that he created the 'toughs' or as they were called in Kerry 'the Visiting Committee' and orchestrated a military intelligence and officer culture which took an brutal and murderous approach to dealing with the anti-treaty IRA . Costello on the other hand as Director of Intelligence concentrated on improving discipline and morale in the Army at a time prior to the army mutiny of 1924. Neligan, escaped any criticism in the public eye while Costello has always been associated with the crime.

Driver James Cleary named Murray, Mack and McAuliffe at different times and, despite some inconsistencies in his evidence, always said that they were three army officers which would tend toward his belief that these

were the three men involved. Nevertheless, there is that possibility, at some point that Cleary mixed up Mack and McAuliffe who were a similar height, making Dooley the man in civilian clothes who lived out the rest of his days in Dun Laoghaire.

Murray's defence seemed implausible – that he was never there – despite of overwhelming evidence presented to show that he was in Kildare. The idea that Murray did not know who the other two men were and brought them back to his house in Dun Laoghaire for tea the next morning is beyond farcical. However, to admit he was in Kildare would have required a defence that he was under orders to carry out the mission, if not the murder. The strength of comradeship among military intelligence seems to have included a code of silence in this regard.

There is little doubt that Murray was guilty of the murder but the trial was heavily weighted against him – absence of key witnesses including the agents Thomas Deegan and Michael O'Callaghan; the introduction of Document 'E' in the cross-examination on the last day of the trial; the lack of production of payroll and payment sheets by the military. The 'circling of wagons' by the State and military contributed to Murray's conviction and an arguably unfair trial. He was poorly defended with his brother Michael associating him with the murder of Noel Lemass in the minds of the jury who took only one hour and twenty minutes to convict. It seems very doubtful whether a similar trial held today would result in a guilty verdict.

### **The 'Toughs'**

The culture of the National Army at the time played a significant part in the events after the murder. A significant number of officers signed the petition for Murray's reprieve from the death penalty – the 'strength of comradeship' after a bitter Civil War. There is no doubt that there was significant support for Murray and there were many people willing to help him, together with a certain level of sympathy for the lack of support by the regime for him. Once Murray was convicted there was little appetite to pursue Joseph Mack who was doing so much for ex-army officers during the 1924-25 period or the third man arrested - Dooley - being charged with no evidence presented.

The involvement of senior politicians of the State in the case made the case remarkable as mentioned by Justice Hanna on the last day of Murray's trial.

Two in particular stand out; President W.T. Cosgrave whose bodyguards seized Robert Bonfield in his presence and subsequently murdered him; and Joe McGrath, the former head of the Criminal Investigation Department and Minister for Industry and Commerce who, it was claimed, was involved with Murray in the murder of Noel Lemass and was mentioned by W.R.E. Murphy as operating his own secret service in 1923. The Murray case was an embarrassment to all of them and the danger that Murray might not keep quite about what actions he carried out on behalf of the State seemed



*Joe McGrath T.D.*

to be an underlying concern during 1924 and 1925. There is little to doubt that if Murray had stayed away, no one would have pursued him but he was a threat to the State as long as he continued to threaten to implicate figures in authority in the 'Dirty War'.

The State did succeed in upholding the rule of law which had changed to a peacetime regime with the election of the Fourth Dáil Eireann in September 1923. The murder of Joseph Bergin would have been tolerated a few months earlier but was no longer acceptable. James Murray had to pay the price for his crime, even if the trial was weighted heavily against him. From that point of view, it could be argued that justice was done for Bergin by Murray's conviction but it is clear that there is some merit in the comments written in *Honesty* on 27 June 1925:

'After careful examination of the facts it does not seem clear that Murray is to be executed because of the murder of Bergin, and the man in the street seems inclined to the belief that Bergin's death is the excuse but not the reason for Murray's execution.'

## *Postscript*

*In memory of  
Volunteer Joseph Bergin Intelligence Staff I.R.A.  
who gave his life in the defence of the Irish Republic.'*

*Memorial Plaque at Milltown, Co. Kildare.*

### **Death of James Murray**

James Murray was transferred from Mountjoy Gaol to Portlaoise prison on 25 July 1925, however, his time in Portlaoise prison was not long. Pulmonary Tuberculosis (TD) which he had suffered as a child and was the most likely reason why he went to Argentina instead of America returned in the damp environment of the prison.

Meanwhile, Michael Carolan, the IRA Director of Intelligence was arrested by Colonel Neligan on 31 July. He would not remain long in custody as he escaped from Mountjoy in November.

There were some efforts made to have Murray released from prison. According to the Republican newspaper *The Wolfe Tone Weekly*, they published a letter on 21 May 1938 purported to be written on behalf of Fionan Lynch, a former Government Minister to Murray's mother on 7 July 1926:

'With reference to your son, Mr. James Murray. Mr. Lynch desires me to inform you that he has put up a strong case as he could to the Minister for Justice and expects a decision in the matter in a week or two.

Mr. Lynch fears that one of the things that might prejudice your son in the eyes of the Minister for Justice is the possibility that, if released, he might not leave the country after all, as once a man is released he has a perfect right to remain in the Country. A condition he must leave the country cannot be imposed on his release. On the other hand, he might leave the country, and be away for a few months and then return. That will be a difficulty in this case, and as far as Mr. Lynch knows no guarantee would get over that particular aspect of the affair.'



He was on hunger strike twice early in his sentence and his tuberculosis seems to have returned around Christmas 1927. His weight dropped from 10 stone 3 pounds to 8 stone 8 pounds over a period of 10 months. On 1 November 1928, he was transferred to the Prison Isolation Hospital where he remained until he died on 13 July 1929. The Inquest into his death held on 15 July was attended by members of his family and the jury returned a verdict of death caused by pulmonary tuberculosis. The Government agreed to his body being handed over to the family and he was buried in Deansgrange Cemetery after a funeral in St. Michael's Church, Dun Laoghaire.

James Murray's wife Josephine and two daughters had been left destitute after his death and had emigrated to Finsbury Park, London. She applied for and received a small pension from the Royal Navy after his death which was paid until 1932. Josephine and her daughter Doreen were recorded in Islington London in 1939.

Michael Murray died on 17 December 1966 and was interred together with his brother and their parents.

### **Memorial to Joseph Bergin**

On Sunday 22 May 1928, a plaque was unveiled on the canal bridge at Milltown in memory of Joseph Bergin by the National Graves Association. A procession formed in Newbridge and marched out to Milltown made consisting of representatives of various republican organisations. The speech was given by Moss Twomey, the leader of the IRA at the time.

'There were impressive scenes at Milltown, Droichead Nua, on Sunday, when a plaque to the memory of the late Volunteer Joseph Bergin was unveiled before a gathering of two thousand people. Joseph Bergin, a native of Glencondra, Camross, Mountrath, Laoighis, was an active member of the Intelligence Staff of the I.R.A. and his body was found at Milltown bridge on 15th December 1923,<sup>9</sup> on the spot now marked by the plaque. The latter records in Irish and English that it is in memory of Volunteer Joseph Bergin 'who gave his life for the Republic.'

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<sup>9</sup> Both the memorial plaque and grave of Joseph Bergin refer to his death as occurring on 15 December 1923.

STRENGTH OF COMRADESHIP - THE MILLTOWN MURDER

I gcuimhne ar / In memory of  
Volunteer Joseph Bergin Intelligence Staff I.R.A.  
A thug a anam or son Phoblachta na h-Eireann / who gave his life in the  
defence of the Irish Republic.  
15 - XII - 1923  
Go dheanaid dia trocaire air



*National Graves Association 1938*

The following quote from a story recorded by the Irish Folklore Commission by a family member and namesake of Joseph Bergin more than twenty years after the murder has resonance to the terrible events of December 1923.

‘Jack Hooley was once going into the town. On his way he met a postman. He asked the man for his clothes till he would go into the town for a new suit. He put the poor man into a barrel. When Jack went into the town he told the Guards that there was a poor man on the road with no clothes. The Guards took the poor man into the barracks. The man never saw Jack or his clothes anymore.’

*Joseph Bergin, National School, Camross, Co. Laois, 16 March 1936*  
*Collected by the Irish Folklore Commission*

## *Appendices*

Appendix 1: Inquest Report – Dublin Evening Telegraph - 15 December 1923

Appendix 2: Four Letters and Document ‘E’ sent by James Murray

Appendix 3: Court appearances associated with murder of Joseph Bergin

Appendix 4: List of witnesses from Trial of James Murray

Appendix 5: Statement of Michael Murray – 6 November 1925

Appendix 6: The Ballad of Joe Bergin



## *Appendix 1*

### *Inquest reported in Dublin Evening Telegraph, 15 December 1923*

An inquest was held to-day concerning the death of Joseph Bergin, Military Policeman, whose bullet-riddled body was found in the Canal near Milltown, Co. Kildare yesterday morning.

The medical evidence was to the effect that the deceased was first shot and then his body was thrown into the canal.

A comrade of the deceased said the latter told him on Thursday morning he was going to Dublin to buy a motor-cycle for which he was paying £35.

The Civic Guard Sergeant said there was no money in deceased's pockets. A verdict in accordance with the medical evidence was returned by the jury.

This morning Dr. Edward Cosgrave, Coroner for North Kildare held an inquest at Milltown on the body of Joseph Bergin, a military policeman whose body was found yesterday morning in the Grand Canal near the village.

William Bergin, Congra, Mountrath, identified the body as that of his brother, who was 23 years of age, and single. Prior to joining the army he had been a shop assistant. He last saw deceased alive about three months ago.

Captain P. Horgan, National Army, Curragh said the deceased served under him. He was a private in the Corps of Military Police and was a capable soldier, sober and steady.

Coroner – Did he perform any duties that would have created enmity against him by anybody? No.

You do not know any reason why he should have been injured by anybody? No.

That is all you know about the case? That is all.

Ernest O'Farrell, a young man, deposed that the previous morning he was going to work, about 9.25 a.m., when his attention was attracted by some school children, who told him there were pools of blood on the

bridge nearby. He went there and saw blood marks, and on looking over the bridge he saw the body of a man in the canal. He immediately went to Kelly's public house, nearby, and told the assistant, William Martin about what he had seen. They both went out and saw the body. Witness then sent word to the Civic Guard, who later arrived.

At this stage Inspector Kelly, Civic Guard, Kildare, intimated that he had been instructed by the authorities to ask for an adjournment of the inquest for a week to enable him to complete inquiries.

The Coroner said he had a strong objection to an adjournment. Their duty there that day was to ascertain the cause of death, and by proceeding with the inquiry they would not in any way interfere with or prejudice any inquiries the authorities wanted to make. The inquest was proceeded with.

Sergeant Patrick Hackett, Civic Guard, stated that from information received he proceeded to the Canal, where he saw the dead body. He helped to have it recovered. He searched the clothing, but there was nothing in the pockets except two slips of paper – military passes; one dated December 10th, but he could not make out correctly the date of the other. There was no money in the pockets. Deceased was wearing a little check bag round his neck containing scapulars and medals. Deceased had no boots or socks or collar or tie. The belt of a trench coat was tied loosely round the neck, and round it also were a pair of braces and a handkerchief. The body was dressed in an undervest, underpants, black tunic shirt, trousers, and a cardigan jacket.

It appeared that he had been taken out of a house in such a hurry that he had not got time to put on his boots, collar or tie.

Private Killeen, Military Police, Curragh said that he knew the deceased whom he had last seen alive about 6.45 a.m. on Thursday morning. Bergin spoke to him about going out on his bike that morning. He told him he was going up to Dublin to buy a motor bicycle, for which he was paying £35.

Witness in reply to jurors, said deceased was saving, and must have had a considerable amount of cash on him, including £10 which he did not want to change. He left camp on a green bicycle, and was wearing a black plain coat without any belt. He would have to go to Newbridge or Kildare to take a train to Dublin. Bergin, he added, had been on duty from 5 o'clock on Wednesday night up till 6 on Thursday morning, and he would be free all day. He left without any pass.

A military officer said that technically deceased was absent without leave, but in view of his good record and character his absence would not have been regarded as a very serious breach of discipline. Possibly his not asking for permission was caused by his (officer's) absence.

Dr. J. Roantree deposed that he made a post-mortem examination of the body in conjunction with Doctors Cosgrave and Blake. Deceased had been a healthy young fellow. External marks of violence found on his body were two slight flesh wounds, one on the left brow and one on the right scalp. There were six gunshot wounds, two on the left brow, one half-way between the left ear and left eye and three fairly close together on top of the head to the left. The left eye was shattered. The six gunshot wounds were entrance wounds. The direction which one took was across the skull, fracturing the other side of temple bone. Another apparently smashed the left orbit and had an exit through the eye. The other wounds took a downward direction into the mouth and body. The bullet that fractured the right temple bone was found in the brain together with a rubber washer belonging to the cartridge. Another bullet had penetrated the base of the skull was found in the mouth. Some of the teeth were shattered as was also the brain. There was a singed flesh wound on the left ear. Two small pieces of lead were found in the skull near two wounds on the top. The second wound between the left eye and ear was discoloured with gun powder.

In his opinion death was due to shock and haemorrhage following laceration of the brain, due to the gunshot wounds.

To the Coroner – he was dead before his body was thrown into the water, and in my opinion the wounds could not have been self-inflicted.

To a Juror – The three bullets on the top of the head were probably fired while he was lying down.

Dr. Blake and Dr. Cosgrave corroborated.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence and added a rider expressing sympathy with the relatives and comrades of the deceased.

Our special representative in Newbridge telegraphing from Newbridge says the most exhaustive inquiries have failed to trace the movements of Bergin after he left camp on Thursday morning. He apparently met nobody, and, as it has been ascertained, did not appear to have travelled by train either at Newbridge or Kildare stations.

The fact that he was known to have in his possession a considerable sum of money supplies a possible motive to the crime.

No money was found on the body, which shows that a robbery has been committed.

He was well known in Newbridge and Kildare and was a member of the Curragh Command Gaelic Football team.

One theory is that he was lured to some place on Thursday morning, held prisoner during the day, and whatever money he had in his possession taken, and that sometime during the night he was taken to the vicinity of the canal, shot, and the body carried along the roadway and thrown into the water.

Residents in the vicinity heard no sounds of shots and expressed the opinion that if shots were fired during the night they would have heard them.

## *Appendix 2*

### *Four Letters 'A'-'D' and Document 'E'*

The following letters were produced by the prosecution at the trial of James Murray in June 1925. They are reprinted here in chronological order but were presented as evidence in the order 'A to 'D'. Document 'E' – Murray's confession - was produced by the prosecution during his cross examination in a highly unorthodox move during the murder trial.

#### **Letter D – 17 or 27 December 1923**

##### **James Murray to Colonel Costello hand delivered by Michael Murray**

To M.,<sup>10</sup> I have been thinking over the advisability of attempting to deal direct with the P.<sup>11</sup> and M.D.<sup>12</sup> regarding my case. Of course this would have to be very carefully thought over before any move is made, and would only *be* necessary in the event of there being no prospect of my returning to military duty, say, during the next year. My plan is roughly: - to get a reliable clergyman to see P., and find out his views on the case, also to do likewise with the M.D. Then, as the thing would develop, I could place copies of all the captured stuff before them, with a statement to the effect that B.<sup>13</sup> was tried by Drumhead Courtmartial, and found guilty on his own statement. All this would necessarily be done under a promise of secrecy; and, in the event of their not being willing to reinstate me, I am sure they would make an offer of a settlement of some description. In any event, if the thing broke down completely no harm would have been done. In fact, it might do a lot of good, inasmuch as it would show them that I am not willing to let the matter rest, as has been done up to the present. My position at the moment is, that were it not for the fact that you would get yourself mixed up in the thing, I would *be* perfectly willing to place the full facts of the case before the public, and accept their judgment, no matter what sacrifice it might entail.

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10 M. is General Michael Costello

11 P. is President W. T. Cosgrave

12 M.D. is Minister of Defence, Richard Mulcahy

13 B. is Joseph Bergin



Having expressed these views, I think it would be a very good thing if you met me on this side any time at your own convenience and discussed the matter fully, exploring every possible channel which might be useful towards fixing the thing up, as I am sure a settlement would strengthen your position as much as mine, and, if they made an offer, no matter how little, it would give us a lever, as they would then have hopelessly compromised their position, and would have to give way to my demands for a settlement. You will understand that I do not wish to embarrass you in any way, and I am willing to take your instructions regarding this matter, as I have done in every case up to the present, and I am only putting this plan to you in the nature of a suggestion, by which we can both find a way out of a very difficult position.

Before seeing you I would like to be in possession of the following information:- What is the M.D.'s attitude, and reason for it? What is 'R.'s' attitude? How much do they know? Has Davie<sup>14</sup> received orders for my apprehension? Have they circulated a photo or good description? Have they been sent on to the Yard? Have G.O.C.'s Commands received instructions for my arrest? Have Staff Duties been notified that I am missing? Have I appeared in orders as missing? What are the chances of getting copies of the fingerprints, with a view of comparing them with mine? What are the chances of destroying C.G. records?

I will close for the present, hoping that above scheme will meet with your approval, and that I shall be seeing you in the near future. Yours sincerely,  
P.S. - You can discuss the matter fully with bearer, as I have told him everything except that any person had knowledge of the thing before it was carried out. J.

### **Letter C – 24 January 1924**

#### **James Murray (in Glasgow) to Colonel Costello**

To M., I have been speaking to our friend, and am greatly surprised at your attitude regarding the proposal which I outlined in my last communication. However, I have decided to put the thing through on my own, and will start working on it immediately. I do not see how I can possibly do any harm in going ahead with it, and if I do not make some attempt to rectify matters I will be a hunted man for the rest of my life. You on your part, as

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<sup>14</sup> Davie is Colonel David Neligan

far as I know, have done nothing to settle things. You did not even think it worthwhile to accede to my request for an interview, consequently I am obliged to withdraw the pledge of obedience to your orders which I have given. This does not mean that I am going to let you down, but it certainly does mean that I am going to use every means in my power to effect an understanding with the Government. Regarding your proposal to cross the Atlantic, I treat this with the contempt it deserves, as I look on it as a very poor attempt to get me quietly out of the way.

I hope, M., that you will consider this action in the light in which it is taken, as you know I am the only one that is paying the penalty, and as such I certainly am entitled to take such action as I think necessary for my own welfare, as long as I do not let anyone down in doing so. To tell you candidly, my opinion of the whole matter is, that you are letting the thing play on your nerves, and consequently are not asserting yourself as you should do. I am very sorry to see that you are letting it wear you down as it has done, as I had, and still have, every confidence in your ability to strike out a plan of action, if you will only pull yourself together, and not let the situation overawe you. I am, Yours sincerely, 'Jimmy.'

### **Letter B – 22 February 1924**

#### **James Murray (in Glasgow) to Colonel Costello**

Dear M., with reference to my letter of to-day's date - you will no doubt have been surprised at the sudden change in front on my part. Well, the reason for that change is that certain things were pointed out to me, in a letter which I received to-day from Michael. These I will not discuss, as he will probably have seen you before you receive this and will have told you a lot. Whilst accepting full responsibility for my purposed action, which may have seemed to you to be rather hasty, I, although realising that certain forces have been at work to cause me to take that action, believe that the situation could have been avoided if you had written to me or sent over someone capable of expressing your views.

In the first place I told M. O'C.<sup>15</sup> to inform you, when we went across the first time, that if you could put me on his staff at £5 per week, I would undertake to bring my wife to Glasgow temporarily, and thereby make things easier for you, as you would not have to provide any other funds.

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<sup>15</sup> Michael O'Callaghan, Free State agent in Glasgow

I went into this matter fully with him, and he agreed that if you gave permission, he could do away with one or two men here, so that there need be no increase in his weekly cheque. This plan seemed to *be* a perfectly feasible one, and I thought you would be willing to endorse it. When he returned he told me that you had absolutely turned it down without giving any reason for doing so.

I further told him that, when submitting to you my proposal regarding writing to P., he, in the event of your turning it down, should obtain your views on the whole matter. His answer to me was that you had nothing to say on the matter beyond the fact that you could not agree to my proposal.

Then again I had to consider 1, your repeated proposals that I should go to the States; 2, my wife writing to me for money; 3, you either consciously or unconsciously withheld four of the most important of the B. papers from me. These things, together with the reports that I was getting, to the effect that you were getting afraid of the situation, forced me to decide on a definite and independent course of action, in the event of your not coming up to scratch.

I am not making an apology for my attitude, but am merely stating the main points which led up to my adopting it. I hope that when you receive this, you will write me, and let me know exactly what your attitude is. You know I am absolutely in the dark regarding your views, and I would be very thankful to have them. It would also be advisable, in the event of your writing, to address your letter to 41. Michael will give you full address. I would also welcome the chance of meeting you, and talking things over, as I am sure that a ten minutes' conversation would show us both exactly how we stand.

It is a rotten thing that I should be jockeyed into the position of treating you unfairly, and I believe that if, in future, you communicate with me directly, these misunderstandings will vanish, and that no fresh ones will be created.

I am keeping an open mind on the matter, and will not, in any way, alter the attitude I am now adopting until I hear from you. But I may tell you candidly that if you do not reply to this letter, I will surrender for trial. My reason for doing so is that if you let me down, I could never again trust anyone. This would only mean that it would be far better to go through with it, win or lose, than be constantly waiting for the next to let me down. I remain, Yours sincerely, Jimmy.

P.S. - There are a lot of details which I would like to mention, but will do so at a more appropriate time.

**Letter A – 3 November 1924**

**Murray (in Liverpool on the day of his return from Buenos Aires)  
to Colonel Costello**

Dear C.,<sup>16</sup> just a few lines to let you know that because of certain circumstances over which I have no control, I have been obliged to cut short my tour of the southern hemisphere, and as the period of one year for which you requested me to remain absent has almost expired, I would like to have an interview with you regarding my future action. For this purpose I intend to visit Dublin as soon as I have made the necessary arrangements regarding 'digs', etc., and I can assure you that it would be to our mutual advantage to arrange an interview with me. I will not say anything further at present, as if you meet my wishes in the matter we will be able to go into everything, and thereby clear up the whole situation. Yours sincerely,  
Jimmy.

**Document 'E' - Statement of Captain James L. Murray  
regarding the shooting of Private Joseph Bergin.**

On or about the 6th of December, 1923, I was informed by Colonel Costello, Acting Director of Intelligence, that Private Bergin, stationed at Tintown Camp, was in the pay of the Irregulars D.T. He instructed me to proceed to the Curragh and make inquiries, with a view to finding out the line of communication between Bergin and Irregular G.H.Q.

On Monday, 10th December, I again saw Colonel Costello at his office. He, on this occasion, told me that Bergin would have to be shot, as he was a very dangerous man. I replied to the effect that I was willing to carry out any orders he thought necessary. It was then arranged that I should go to the Curragh next day and report to him on the possibility of doing the job in such a way that the military would not be suspected. My brother, Commandant Michael Murray, was present at this interview.

I proceeded to the Curragh on the 11th, as instructed, and returned on the following day. I reported to Colonel Costello that it would be impossible

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<sup>16</sup> C. appears to be Costello

to carry out his orders unless provided with a motor-car. He then said he would supply the car at 4 p.m. on the following day. Next day, 13th, I reported to Colonel Costello, accompanied by two men. He brought us to a Ford car which was waiting outside the barracks and handed the car over to me. I then drove to Kildare and picked up Bergin, whom I placed under arrest. I drove him to an empty house at Thomastown cross-roads, where I interrogated him, as instructed, during which he made a statement admitting his connection with the Irregulars. At this stage he was searched, and a large number of dispatches addressed to the prisoners' O.C.'s at the Internment Camps were found in his pockets. Also a personal note from Irregular Director of Intelligence. Bergin was then shot and his body taken to Milltown Bridge and thrown into the canal.

The car was then driven back to Dublin, where it was left outside the guardroom at Crown Alley. I then reported to Colonel Costello at Portobello Barracks, at the same time handing over to him, unopened, all of the captured papers.

Later in the day I sent him a typewritten report confirming my verbal report made that morning.

I again saw Colonel Costello on the same afternoon, and he informed me that the body had been found and identified. I did not take very much notice of this, as I thought that the job was one of the usual unofficial executions. Nothing of importance transpired between this and Sunday afternoon, when I saw him at G.H.Q. He then informed me that the Civic Guard were well on the track, and stated that the position was getting very serious.

Under these circumstances I suggested that I should go away on seven days' leave, and, if necessary, stop away in order that he should not be embarrassed by my being arrested. This step was agreed to on condition that he should look after my wife and family during my absence. My part of this agreement has been loyally adhered to; but, as he has refused to fulfil his, I do not see why I should any longer shoulder the responsibility alone.

Signed            J. MURRAY, CAPT.

Witness:        M. MURRAY, ex-Comdt.

### APPENDIX 3

#### Court Appearances Associated with Murder of Joseph Bergin

Wednesday, 24 December 1924

**James Murray**, ex-army officer, 11 Convent Road, Dun Laoghaire arrested for murder of Private Joseph Bergin near Milltown, Co. Kildare.

Wednesday, 31 December 1924

James Murray appeared before Dublin District Court. Witnesses called were Laurence Kelly, Publican who saw body in canal; William Bergin, Glencondra who identified his brother; Dr Joseph Roantree, Newbridge who gave evidence of injuries; Peggy Daly, Kildare who saw Bergin at her house; Sergt Patrick Hackett, Civic Guard, Newbridge who found tyre tracks and house; Sergt John Blake, Civic Guard, Newbridge; Guard Tallon, Civic Guard, Newbridge who found sandwiches outside the house. Murray remanded for 8 days.

Wednesday, 7 January 1925

James Murray appeared before Dublin District Court. Witnesses were Sergeant Patrick Hackett, Civic Guard on finding passes on body; Captain Patrick Murray on not signing either pass; Private McNicholls on Bergin leaving his billet; Private James Cleary on handing the car over to Murray and receiving the car back covered in blood; Chief Supt Maher on taking casts of the tyre tracks; Guard McCarthy, Rathangan on finding bullet in house; Guard Tallon on tyre tracks. Murray remanded for a week.

Wednesday, 14 January 1925

James Murray appeared before Dublin District Court. Witnesses called were Chief Superintendent Brennan who took possession of the motorcar; Colonel Michael Costello, Director of Intelligence who reported on nature of Murray's investigation of Bergin; Guard Colley with a sketch of the tyre tracks; James Kelly, Ticket Collector who saw Murray at Railway Hotel accompanied by a tall man; Sergt Nolan, National Army who saw Murray in Beresford Barracks; James Lynch, Boherkill and James Payne, Rathangan who heard motor car. State wanted to get witness from outside the jurisdiction. Murray remanded for a further week.

Wednesday, 21 January 1925

James Murray appeared before Dublin District Court. Witnesses called were Dr. William O'Kelly, Assistant Pathologist, University College Dublin on mammalian blood found in car; Commandant Joseph O'Donoghue, on conversation between Murray and Costello in Portobello Barracks; Private Philip Creighton on being handed the car by an army captain.

Wednesday, 28 January 1925

James Murray appeared before Dublin District Court. No further evidence. Sent for trial to the next court of the High Court Circuit for County Kildare.

Wednesday, 4 February 1925

James Murray appeared before Dublin District Court. No further evidence. Sent for trial to the next court of the High Court for County Kildare.

Tuesday, 28 April 1925

Application granted at Central Criminal Court to postpone trial of James Murray until next session.

Tuesday, 9 June – Friday, 12 June 1925

4 day murder trial of James Murray. Murray sentenced to death scheduled for 2 July 1925.

Monday, 22 June 1925

Death Sentence for James Murray respited until Friday, 24 July 1925 to allow for application for leave to appeal sentence on eighteen grounds.

Monday, 13 July 1925

Court of Criminal Appeal refuses Murray's for leave to appeal sentence or licence to appeal to Supreme Court.

Wednesday, 15 July 1925

Supreme Court refuses application for leave to appeal sentence.

Sunday, 19 July 1925

James Murray's death sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life.

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Friday, 23 October 1925

**Joseph Mack**, ex-lieutenant, 9 Charlotte St., Dun Laoghaire, arrested for murder of Joseph Bergin.

Tuesday, 27 October 1925

Joseph Mack remanded further in custody. No evidence offered.

Wednesday, 28 October 1925

**John Dooley**, ex-sergeant, 8 Clarence St., Dun Laoghaire, arrested for murder of Joseph Bergin.

Thursday, 29 October 1925

John Dooley and Joseph Mack appeared before Dublin District Court. Witnesses were Private James Cleary on handing over motorcar; Laurence Kelly on finding the body. Both remanded for 7 days.

Thursday, 5 November 1925

Charges against John Dooley were dropped at Dublin District Court and he was released. Joseph Mack further remanded. Witness called were Sergt John Blake, Civic Guard on condition of house; Dr. Joseph Roche, Naas on condition of body; Detective Cully, Naas on sketches of the tyre tracks.

Friday, 20 November 1925

Joseph Mack appear before Dublin District Court and sent for Trial to Central Criminal Court. Witnesses called were Colonel Costello on accompanying Murray; Driver James Cleary on the colour of coat worn by Mack; Sergt Patrick Hackett, Civic Guard on finding the body.

Tuesday, 20 April 1926

Day 1 of Joseph Mack murder trial. Witnesses called were Richard Gore, Board of Works with evidence on the maps produced; Laurence Kelly, Publican on finding the body; Sergt Patrick Hackett, Civic Guard on recovering the body; Dr. Joseph Roantree, Newbridge on the inquest; Sergt J. Burke, Civic Guard, Newbridge on the condition of the house; Driver James Cleary, National Army on handing the car over; James Lynch, Boherkill on his conversation with the men in the car.

Wednesday, 21 April 1926

Day 2 of Joseph Mack murder trial. Witnesses called were Colonel Michael Costello who said he did not see Mack; John Lenihan, Secretary Association of Ex-Army officers and men on Mack stating 'the rope was



already around his neck'; Thomas Moran, ex-Sergt National Army on recognising Mack in Portobello; Detective Sergt M. Byrne on arresting Mack.

Trial stopped by Justice Hanna who instructed jury to return a verdict of not guilty.

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## *Appendix 4*

### **List of Witnesses at Murder Trial of James Murray**

Green Street Courthouse before Justice Henry Hanna, 9-12 June 1925

The State: Mr. Carrigan, K.C.; Mr. Dudley-White K.C.; Mr. Costello B.L.  
(Instructed by the Chief State Solicitor)

Defence: Mr. W. T. Gleeson B.L. (Instructed by Messrs Noyk and O'Reilly)

#### *Day 1 - Tuesday, 9 June 1925*

##### *Witnesses for The State:*

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Chief Superintendent Jeremiah Maher, Kildare, Civic Guard	---
Superintendent John Kelly, Kildare, Civic Guard	---
Laurence Kelly, Publican, Milltown:	Saw blood on bridge and body in water
Dr. Joseph Roantree, Newbridge:	Details of post-mortem
Sergeant Patrick Hackett, Civic Guards:	First Guard on the scene of the murder
James Bergin, brother of Joseph Bergin	Identified body of Joseph Bergin
Captain Patrick Murray, former OC of Tintown B Camp	Confirmed pass on body not signed by him
Private William Higgins, Military Police, Curragh	Confirmed clothes work by deceased
Peg Daly, Claregate Street, Kildare	Last saw witness at 8.30 p.m. 13 December
Sergeant John Blake, Civic Guard	Evidence of motor tracks and house of Ennis
Guard X. Tallon, Civic Guard	Evidence of motor tracks and house of Ennis
Guard M. McCarthy, Civic Guard	Evidence of bullet from door of house
Private James Cleary, Military Driver	Details of handing car over to James Murray
Sergeant O'Leary, Civic Guard	Car unaltered since examined by him

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STRENGTH OF COMRADESHIP - THE MILLTOWN MURDER

***Day 2 - Wednesday, 10 June 1925***

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Colonel Michael Costello, Director of Intelligence	Evidence in respect of Murray and Bergin including Letters A-D
Commandant Joseph O'Donoghue, Portobello Barracks	Corroborated Costello's statement on conversation with Murray on 14 December
Dr. William O'Kelly Prof. of Pathology, Nat. University	Blood evidence in respect of Ford car
Guard Colley, Kildare	Evidence of motor tracks at Ennis house.
Patrick Ennis, Guidenstown, Kildare	Condition of house after murder
James Kelly, Ticket Checker, Kildare Station	Saw Murray at Railway Hotel, Kildare
Sergeant Patrick Nolan, Mess Orderly, Curragh	Saw Murray in Beresford Barracks, Curragh
James Lynch, Boherkill, Rathangan	Evidence of car outside his house
James Payne, Rathangan Demesne	Evidence of car outside his house
Captain H. Dallaghan, Army Pay Department	Evidence of no payments to Murray
Maurice Mortell, Pay Branch, Intelligence Department	Evidence of no payments to Murray
Mr. C.B. O'Connor, Parliamentary Sec, Min. of Defence	Not in interest of State to disclose Intelligence Dept pay accounts

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***Day 3 - Thursday 11 June, 1925***

***Witnesses for Defence:***

Captain James Murray – the Defendant

***Day 4 – Friday 12 June 1925***

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Commandant Michael Murray – Murray's brother	Evidence of role between Costello and James Murray
Patrick Kinsella, 121 Stella Gardens, Ringsend	Evidence that he met Murray on Dawson St

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STRENGTH OF COMRADESHIP - THE MILLTOWN MURDER

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Frances Murray, sister of James Murray	Evidence that Murray remained in Dublin
John Coyle, Fire Station, Dun Laoghaire	Evidence that Murray was in Theatre Royal
Cecelia Brennan, 228 West Muir Street, Glasgow	Confirmed Murray was in Glasgow
Michael O'Callaghan, 101 Dame Street, Glasgow	Called but did not attend

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*Further Witnesses for the State:*

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Lieutenant Arthur James Quirke, Codes and Cyphers Dept	Confirmed letters A-D and Document 'E' written by same hand
Captain John Francis Feeney, Records Staff, Intelligence Dept	Confirmed letters held by his Dept
Captain Dan O'Brien, <sup>17</sup> Military Intelligence	Evidence of not giving any letters of introduction to Murray

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<sup>17</sup> Possibly Captain Dan Bryan

## *Appendix 5*

### **Statement of Michael Murray – 6 November 1925**

#### *Statement of Michael Murray, Ex-Commandant, National Army*

In December, 1923, I was a Commandant in the National Army and stationed at Beggars Bush Barracks. During the period I was stationed there I was in the habit of calling to see my brother, James, who was a then a Captain in the National Army and stationed at Portobello Barracks. I called on him almost invariably on Saturdays, when he and I usually went home to Dun Laoghaire together. I live at 44 Convent Road, Dun Laoghaire, and my brother, who is married, lived at 11 Crofton Avenue, Dun Laoghaire.

I remember one Saturday early in December, 1923, I think it was the 8th December, 1923. I called on my brother at Portobello Barracks and accompanied him to G.H.Q. Parkgate Street, where we saw Col. Costello, who was my brother's Commanding Officer at the time. I was present with my brother and Col. Costello in the latter's office on that occasion, and I heard all that passed between them.

Col. Costello had a file somewhere about his desk. He took it up and looked at it, and addressing my brother said 'there is a job at the Curragh and it must be brought to a head.' There is a lot of 'stuff' going in and coming out from the Prison Camps, and that he had information that Bergin, who was known to the prisoners as 'Motor Bike' was the man concerned in taking the information in and out of the prison camps, and that he would have to be 'plugged.' Colonel Costello then asked my brother if he thought 'Halpin' would be efficient for the 'job', my brother replied that he didn't know. It was none of his business.

The three of us then returned to the Officers' Mess where we had tea. During the time we were having tea, Col. Costello kept on talking of Bergin, and how he, himself, got on to him through despatches [sic] that had been captured from the irregulars; that he did not know in what part of the Curragh Camp Bergin was stationed, or to what branch of the Army he belonged. After tea we again went back to Col. Costello's office. On the

way back Col. Costello said to my brother that he had better go down to the Curragh on the Monday following and see if he could locate Bergin. My brother replied 'alright'. When we got into the office Col. Costello handed my brother the file he had referred to before going to tea. My brother looked through the file, and was in the act of handing it back to Col. Costello when the latter said 'You had better keep that. It might be useful to you when you get to the Curragh.' It was then finally decided that my brother would go to the Curragh on the following Monday, my brother and I then left and went home to Dun Laoghaire.

I saw my brother again the next day, Sunday, and was some time in his company. He slept in his own home that night, and I did not see him again for some days.

The first I knew of Private Bergin's murder was when I read it in the Newspapers.

Neither on the Sunday or the Monday following the announcement of the Murder in the Press, I think it was on the Monday. I was in Dublin and met my brother. He told me he was going to Liverpool and he showed me a letter of introduction to a Mrs. Nesbitt of Harriby St., Liverpool. He said the letter was from Col. Costello. As far as I know my brother went to Liverpool that night. I know no more until the afternoon of the following Saturday, when a man named Thomas Deegan, whom I knew to be one of Col. Costello's agents, called at my mother's house, 44 Convent Road, Dun Laoghaire. I was there and spoke to him, and in the presence of my Mother and sister, Frances, Deegan handed me some money and asked that I would give it to my brother's wife. Deegan told me that he had just returned from Liverpool where he had left 'Dooley'. He also said that he had met my brother Jim in Liverpool and had transmitted to him instructions that my brother and Dooley were to proceed to Glasgow, and report there to a man named Mr. O'Callaghan, and that Jim would not be back for a week or two.

He further stated that during my brother's absence from home, that he would leave at my home the money for my brother's wife. That was about Christmas 1923. From that time forward I knew nothing of my brother until I went to see Col. Costello sometime in January 1924. The reason I went to see Col. Costello was because of rumours I heard about my brother. I asked the Col. If there was any truth in these rumours and he replied 'not at all.' The Col. Was friendly with me and asked me to call to see him occasionally.

I was not, however, satisfied with the result of my interview with Col. Costello, and about that time I was given leave of absence. Having got the leave I called on Col. Costello, and told him that I intended going to Glasgow to see my brother. The Colonel gave me the impression that he did not approve of my doing so. I told him I had leave and that it would be a holiday for me. He then asked me when I intended going and I said that night. He asked me to put it off till the next day, and he would give me some despatches [sic] to take with me.

I agreed to that and he asked me to call at his office about 3 o'clock the next day. I did so, and the Colonel told me he had already sent the despatches [sic]. He then asked me to travel via Belfast as he did not wish me to go direct from Dublin. He gave me Mr. O'Callaghan's address, 101 Bain Street, and told me to call there and by that means I would get into touch with my brother and Dooley.

I remained in Glasgow for a few days, after which I returned to Dublin. There were still some days of my leave unexpired. I was then notified by the Army Authorities that I had been granted another months' leave. That would bring my holidays up to the 1st March. During these latter holidays I frequently called on Col. Costello, and discussed my brother's position with him.

The Col. was insisting that my brother should go away to the U.S.A. but my brother has turned down the proposition. He asked me to try and get my brother to go. In fact he insisted that I should get him away, as the whole thing looked black against him. I did not like the idea of my brother going away and told the Col. so the Col. then said that if my brother turned the proposition down that he, the Colonel, would turn my brother down and that he would have his name struck off the pay list, and that if my brother returned to Dublin he would be arrested. I told the Colonel that he, himself would be arrested, and he said 'no', that he would deny everything and that there was nothing to save my brother.

I then said that I would think over his suggestion of my brother going away. I then left the Colonel's office. I thought the matter over with the result that I again called on the Col. two days later and told him that I would do my best to get my brother away.

I then went to Glasgow again and saw my brother, whom I told that I was going to the Argentine, and asked him if he would go with me. After some persuasion he consented on the condition that Col. Costello would

advance him six months pay, and at the same time continue to give his wife her usual allowance. I returned to Dublin and acquainted Col. Costello of my brother's conditions, and the Colonel accepted the conditions.

He further stated that he would have £100 for me in the course of a few days. When I called on him for the money he said that O'Callaghan had the £100 belonging to his Department; that he had written for it, but it had not yet reached him.

By this time I was demobilised from the Army, and as I wished to see my brother, in order to make definite arrangements for our going away, I told the Colonel that I intended going to Glasgow. He then asked me to call on him the next day, and that he would give me a note to O'Callaghan authorizing him to give £50 to my brother, and that he would give me the balance £50 to take to my brother.

I called as arranged, but the Colonel told me that he already sent the note by a courier. I got the £50 from the Colonel and I took that sum and gave it to my brother.

When I got to Glasgow, I called on O'Callaghan, accompanied by my brother. Mr. O'Callaghan informed us that he had not received the note referred to by the Colonel, my brother then suggested that O'Callaghan should telephone to Col. Costello in reference to the matter. O'Callaghan did so, and with the result that O'Callaghan handed my brother £50, for which my brother gave a receipt signed by he and I.

I then came back to Dublin, and on 7th April, 1924, I met my brother at Crewe, and we travelled together to London enroute to the Argentine. We sailed from London on the 10th April 1924.

I remained only about 10 days in the Argentine when I returned to Ireland. On my arrival home in June, 1924.<sup>18</sup> I learned that Col. Costello had stopped the payment of the allowance which he had promised to give my brother's wife during my brother's absence.

I then wrote to my brother acquainting him of that fact and asked him to come home at once. On receipt of that letter my brother returned to Glasgow, and on or about the 19th December 1924, he came home to Dun Laoghaire.

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<sup>18</sup> Michael Murray, student, aged 22 44 Convent Road departed London for Buenos Aires on 10 April 1924 on board SS Highland Pride together with James 'Doherty', 41 Crail St., Glasgow. Michael Murray, 44 Convent Rd, Dunleary, Co. Dublin, Ex-Army officer, aged 22 arrived from Buenos Aires on board the Andes at Southampton on 17 June 1924.



STRENGTH OF COMRADESHIP - THE MILLTOWN MURDER

Some few days later I phoned Col. Costello that my brother was home and that he intended surrendering to the Police. Having done that, I did not wait for a reply from the Colonel.

M. Murray 6th November 1925.

Witness: Mark J. Byrne, Sergt. D.B. 6/11/25.

## *Appendix 6*

### **A BALLAD OF JOE BERGIN**

The following ballad was published on a one page pamphlet issued by the National Graves Association for the unveiling of a memorial plaque at Milltown Bridge, Co. Kildare on 22 May 1938.

(Air: The Sweet County Antrim)

#### I

I sing of a soldier, both trusted and brave,  
Whose youth and great daring, to his country he gave,  
On a dark night in December, in nineteen-twenty-three,  
He was taken, and made prisoner, by a cruel enemy.

#### II

His work for his comrades was secret and true,  
In the red gap of danger, it placed him, he knew,  
He was tortured by traitors in a hut in a field,  
But no whisper of information did this quiet hero yield.

#### III

No word will I tell of his lone agony,  
His body was broken, but unconquered was he,  
As steel was his silence, Bergin would not betray,  
Unto death was he ever faithful to the true I.R.A.

#### IV

No remorse, not a prayer, as they dragged his poor clay,  
By the Curragh to Milltown, ere the dawning of day,  
Under cover of darkness and its secret gloom,  
Oh! Cold were the dark waters, they chose for his tomb.

V

Oh, peace to your ashes, your name it will be,  
With the legion of martyrs in our history,  
Who by scaffold or wayside, or grim firing squad,  
With honour still unsullied, were sent before God.

VI

In His keeping we leave you, with Erin's brave dead,  
The wreath of a hero around your dear head,  
And we end with a prayer for your slayers – On them,  
May the gentle Son of Mary have mercy. Amen.

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## *About the Author*

Mark McLoughlin is a native of the Curragh, Co. Kildare. He is a History graduate of Trinity College Dublin (1994) and of the Higher Diploma in Arts Administration (1995) from University College Dublin. He has been involved in a number of publications over the years including the editing of 'The Curragh: A Lifetime of Memories' (1997) and 'The Curragh Revisited' (2002) with the Curragh Local History Group; 'Kildare Barracks: From the Royal Field Artillery to the Irish Artillery Corps' (2015) and 'The Murder of Lt. John Hubert Wogan-Browne at Kildare – 10 February 1922' (2022) as part of the Kildare Decade of Commemorations Programme. He was awarded the Lord Walter Fitzgerald prize for historical research in 2013 in respect of his work on the Wogan-Browne murder. He has articles published in numerous publications including *The Irish Sword*, *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Journal*, *History Ireland* magazine and *An Cosantóir*. He works in Kildare County Council and lives in Kildare town with his wife Natasha and children Orlaith and Diarmaid.



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**CONFIRMATION**  
**telegrafa an puist.**

ni mór an tairm seo ar le h-ion tairm  
a déanfar mar seal ar an telegram so.  
(This form must accompany any enquiry respecting this telegram.)

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DUBLIN 14 DECEMBER 1923

(b) Ceip do tairm aigro i mbainc an puist  
 (c) Sealán Telegraf

(d) Ceip do tairm aigro agus Support línu  
 aigro ar an tairm Oifis Bank

Minister Home Affairs Dublin  
 Young man found dead today in canal  
 at Milltown Newbridge Co. Wick  
 bullet wound

COPY.

X

**PERSONAL & SECRET.**

**OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE.**  
**GENERAL HEADQUARTERS.**  
**PARKGATE.**  
**13th. December, 1923.**

TO:  
Officer I/c. Transport,  
PORTOBELLO BARRACKS.

Ford Car no. 802 was required by me to-night for a special job.  
 As it was essential that certain persons travel in the car, there  
 was no room for the Driver. I am, therefore, returning him herewith with  
 his Duty Order.  
 The car will be brought back to you before morning.

Micheal Costello COLONEL.  
 for: THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE.

MD/JP.



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,  
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán  
Department of Tourism, Culture,  
Arts, Gaelacht, Sport and Media



**Comhairle Contae Chill Dara**  
**Kildare County Council**

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