

that there was, this is about quarter to three, he said there had been a couple of calls to the police and

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00:07:30,323 --> 00:07:42,803

indicating that there was a bomb around the courthouse and that the police were clearing pedestrians and shoppers away from the area of the courthouse.

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00:07:45,283 --> 00:07:56,003

Now my wife had been in town about half an hour ago and so I knew that

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00:07:57,203 --> 00:08:00,563

that she wasn't going to be caught up in the fuss, whatever it was.

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00:08:01,843 --> 00:08:05,123

And I just checked that the police didn't want anything.

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00:08:05,123 --> 00:08:11,443

We put the helicopter on standby in case they wanted to check how the traffic was getting snarled up or whatever.

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00:08:12,803 --> 00:08:13,643

But nothing further than that.

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00:08:14,923 --> 00:08:24,964

And then at six minutes past three, there was a significant explosion.

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00:08:25,924 --> 00:08:54,564

Now the ops room is a kilometre away from the town centre and the building shook with that and bearing in mind that the device was in a fairly enclosed narrow street the force of the explosion must have been quite significant because as I say our building shook my house we lived in Dromquinna house in the barracks

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00:08:55,004 --> 00:09:02,484

all the doors were open because it was such a lovely summer afternoon and that's 1100 meters away and all the doors were slammed shut by the blast.

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00:09:05,764 --> 00:09:19,364

So as soon as the blast had happened it was a sort of a short, very short sort of compact thud but loud and then the shockwave as I say hit the building where I was.

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00:09:20,404 --> 00:09:21,524

As soon as that happened

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00:09:22,324 --> 00:09:26,884

We started the tape recorder running in the ops room because obviously there was a problem.

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00:09:27,124 --> 00:09:37,684

And we sent, I put the helicopter up just to check the grid reference of where the seat of the explosion was because we've been told that there was, you know, it was around the courthouse.

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00:09:37,924 --> 00:09:39,204

Police were clearing away from the courthouse.

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00:09:39,764 --> 00:09:50,084

The helicopter came back with news of what appeared to be massive damage, but the grid he gave was 400 metres away from the courthouse.

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00:09:52,084 --> 00:10:05,644

Now we had the RUC radio turned on so we could monitor all their transmissions from inside the ops room and understandably it was chaotic.

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00:10:05,644 --> 00:10:15,884

All you could hear were sort of screams and people running around and shouting to each other but there was no use of the radio to

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00:10:17,044 --> 00:10:20,564

They were tasking each other but there was no tasking of the military.

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00:10:21,604 --> 00:10:36,484

So we got the standby company together and sent them down into town in their Land Rovers and they were on the ground by I think within 20 minutes or so.

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00:10:38,164 --> 00:10:46,164

I got a situation report from him and I then got into my combats and went down to join him with reinforcements.

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00:10:47,604 --> 00:10:58,565

By the time we got down there, there were obviously quite a few troops on the ground around the seat of the explosion itself.

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00:11:00,085 --> 00:11:05,605

And the police were in the process, the fire brigade were there as well.

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00:11:06,485 --> 00:11:14,565