

final words were, 'Teresa, it's the "Orangies"! When she rushed out onto the landing, she saw her husband lying dead. 'He was completely covered in blood. I actually saw a pin-hole in the side of his head and blood coming out through his nose and mouth. Blood was all over the wall.'

Nelson had provided the killers with the vital intelligence that had enabled the 'hit' to go ahead. He had found Slane's address, checked it in the electoral register, got hold of a photograph and made out a 'P' card on him. 'Brian Nelson may not have pulled the trigger,' Teresa told me, 'but to me he was as guilty of my husband's murder as the actual murderers themselves.' But in the case of Gerard Slane, Nelson had done his job. He had warned one of 'Geoff's' successors on two occasions that Slane was being targeted, initially ten days before the attack took place and then the day before the attack itself.

For whatever reason, the intelligence from Nelson was not acted upon. Teresa had no warning visit from the RUC and no attempt was made to thwart the attack. 'My husband might have been here today were it not for the RUC,' she says bitterly. But there's no evidence that the RUC ever knew about it. So what happened to the information? Did it get beyond the FRU? Was it sanitized somewhere up the chain? Did it ever get to the TCG? Was a decision taken to let the killers go ahead? Or was the information simply not precise enough?

Those who came to know Nelson said he had a passionate hatred for the IRA and a 'psychopathic tendency'. This may have inclined him to act on his own as well as with the encouragement of the FRU. 'Geoff' claims Nelson did much of the intelligence work himself and had to do so to maintain his own credibility with the UFF. 'He constantly asked me for information, to check out a car number plate or an address. As a rule I used to say to him, "It's better that you collect this information yourself because you have to be seen to be doing this job. You can't just disappear and come back with it in a day or two."' 'Geoff' was aware that people would get suspicious and his agent's life was on the line every day. But did 'Geoff' personally ever supply him with information? 'No, not directly. But if he said, "Is that so-and-so's registration?" I would say to him, "You don't have that wrong."' If that was the case, I asked, and the car owner was killed, weren't he and the FRU complicit in murder? 'Geoff' was matter-of-fact. 'Well, it's a fine line you walk,' he said. I pointed out that in the end Nelson went to gaol for conspiracies to murder. 'Yes,' he replied, 'at our request.' Encouraged by him and his colleagues? 'Yes.' And by the FRU? 'Yes.' And by British intelligence? 'Yes.' 'Geoff' was astonishingly candid: