

Gilfoyle finally gets to condemn ‘cover-up’ that cost him 18 years

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Eddie Gilfoyle today: “I am going to be kicking at your doors to get my life back”Chris Harris for The Times

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Eddie Gilfoyle today: “I am going to be kicking at your doors to get my life back”Chris Harris for The Times



• **Paula Gilfoyle, who was found hanged in 1992**

Dominic Kennedy

Last updated March 22 2011 1:58PM

Eddie Gilfoyle broke his silence yesterday after being released from 18 years' imprisonment, angrily declaring: "I didn't kill my wife and I didn't kill my baby."

Speaking at the House of Lords, at the invitation of Lord Hunt of Wirral, his former MP, Gilfoyle turned to reporters at a press conference and demanded: "What are you looking at? I'll tell you what you are looking at. An innocent man who just spent 18 years in prison for something I didn't do."

Gilfoyle has been free since December, when he was released on licence from his life sentence for the murder of his heavily pregnant wife, Paula.

The Parole Board imposed a gagging order to stop him, his lawyers or Lord Hunt from speaking publicly about the case. The condition was removed when the Conservative peer complained.

Mrs Gilfoyle was found hanged in the garage of their home at Upton, Merseyside, in 1992. A suicide note was found in her handwriting but, at the trial, the prosecution claimed that her husband had tricked her into writing it.

The jury was never told about an internal investigation by police into a series of mistakes made by officers at the scene. When The Times asked Merseyside Police for notes of interviews with officers who were at the garage, the force denied that the paperwork existed. When the newspaper subsequently printed details from the notes, they revealed a potential alibi for Gilfoyle, showing that his wife was estimated by a doctor to have died at a time when he had been at work.

Dominic Grieve, QC, the Attorney-General, apologised to Parliament last year after MPs were given incorrect information about the handling of the prosecution in this case.

Gilfoyle accused Merseyside Police of destroying evidence. “They knew there would be consequences and ramifications. In order to get round that, I was easier to blame. I was the fall guy. I might be out of prison, but I’m always going to be in prison while this is over my head. I haven’t done this. They know it.” He criticised the Parole Board for the gagging order, and blamed Kenneth Clarke, the Justice Secretary, for the board’s decisions. The Ministry of Justice defended Mr Clarke, saying: “The Secretary of State cannot authorise licence conditions in respect of life sentence prisoners. It is for the independent Parole Board to agree any licence conditions.”

Gilfoyle also criticised the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) for failing to allocate a case worker after his request for an appeal against conviction, which was submitted by his solicitors last summer.

“I am going to be in your faces,” he told the authorities. “I am going to be kicking at your doors to get my life back. You were quick enough taking it 18 years ago. The dishonesty doesn’t get better, it gets worse. At every stage they are trying to cover up.”

Lord Hunt said: “I was delighted to welcome Eddie Gilfoyle to the Palace of Westminster because the last time I saw Eddie was in Wakefield jail, where I went as his MP in 1996, and we had a discussion about things. This is only the tip of the iceberg. We have been searching for evidence for many years. The biggest problem in this case has been the initial investigation by Merseyside Police.”

Matt Foot, Gilfoyle’s solicitor, read a message of support from Alison Halford, the former Assistant Chief Constable of Merseyside Police, who visited Gilfoyle in jail and has taken a close interest in the details of the case. “How sad it is that so many lives have been ruined by what was clearly a badly bodged inquiry,” she said.

“My faith is unswerving in Eddie’s innocence. Sadly, the perpetrators of this sorry mess are just too arrogant or disingenuous to make an apology to the family. I really am delighted that Eddie is free at last and I shall be with him all the way until he clears his name.”

In another message, Paddy Hill, one of the Birmingham Six, who spent almost 17 years in jail after being wrongly convicted of an IRA bombing in 1974, said: “It is a disgrace how long it has taken the CCRC to deal with his case.”

Merseyside Police said that it would be inappropriate to comment while the case was under review by the CCRC.

Profile of Eddie Gilfoyle: a man with enough anger to fill a room

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Dominic Kennedy

March 23 2011 12:01AM

When Paula Gilfoyle, 32, was found hanged in her garage, officers from Merseyside Police called to the scene made so many blunders that an internal inquiry was held to prevent such a mess ever happening again.

However, the existence of that inquiry was never disclosed to her husband's murder trial a year later. The Police Complaints Authority also raised concerns about the safety of the conviction. Despite this, two appeals against conviction failed. But interest in the case was revived when David Canter, the criminal profiler who helped the police in their original investigation, [wrote in *The Times*](#) that new research into suicide notes indicated that Mrs Gilfoyle's was genuine. It then emerged that Vera Baird, as Solicitor-General, relying on guidance from the Merseyside Crown Prosecution Service, gave the wrong information to Parliament about when police provided prosecutors with the internal report.

A timetable placed in the Commons library now shows that prosecutors learnt about the inquiry long after the murder trial. How appropriate, then, that Gilfoyle's first words uttered in public should be at the Palace of Westminster, which had been misinformed about his case.

A man with enough anger to fill a room

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Analysis Dominic Kennedy

March 23 2011 12:01AM

Eddie Gilfoyle's anger was more than enough to fill the gilded room where he sat beneath a portrait of Queen Victoria's christening to declare his innocence to the world.

He spoke without notes but with a crib sheet of four points that would carry him through a press conference in front of television and flashing press cameras. "Dishonesty. Consequences. Ramifications. Easier to blame me," he had written on a scrap of paper.

Gilfoyle, 49, was recognisable as the dapper young man seen in photographs taken before his conviction but he now has a grey prison complexion, sallow features and shakes involuntarily. He has clinical depression. He asked interviewers yesterday to avoid questions about his wife and child since their loss was still "too raw".

Society has changed a great deal since he was imprisoned in 1992. "Everything you take for granted is strange to me," he said. When his brother-in-law's sat-nav indicated that a speed camera was near by, Gilfoyle was perplexed about how it knew. When he sent an e-mail, he expected it to reach the recipient a day later.

New technologies such as supermarket scanning machines make him so befuddled that he is reluctant to leave the house alone. "I'll go to the local shop for my ciggies but that's it," he told *The Times* yesterday. He lit up as soon as he left the House of Lords. The smoking ban has been another source of bemusement although, as he said with black humour: "What are they going to do? Send me to prison?"