

## **Written Evidence submitted by Mr Colin Parry for the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee's inquiry into HM Government support for UK Victims of IRA attacks that used Gaddafi-supplied Semtex and weapons (LSX0035)**

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The IRA bomb which killed my 12 year old son Tim in March 1993, was made of the semtex supplied to the IRA by Colonel Ghaddafi's Libya.

Tim sustained such serious head, face and brain injuries on the day of the bombing, March 20 that, although he was not killed immediately by the bomb, his fight for life ended 5 days later. Doctors in the Neurosurgical Unit at Walton Hospital in Liverpool, to where he had been transferred from Warrington General Hospital, declared there was no hope of survival for Tim when, on Day 4, the tests they conducted to establish Tim's brain activity, revealed there was none.

On Day 5 (March 25), my wife Wendy, our two other children, Dominic and Abigail, my father, Wendy's parents, her sister, brother in law, her brother and sister in law, all came to the hospital to spend personal time with Tim before his life support machine was switched off.

Despite being advised by the Doctor in charge of Tim's treatment, that at the moment his life support machine was switched off, Tim's body might literally lift off the bed, I chose to stay with my son as he died (as a matter of record, the Doctor's advice so terrified my wife that she could not stay with Tim in these final moments...something which she has deeply regretted ever since).

I held Tim in my arms and said my final goodbyes to him, before signalling to the Nurse / Attendant to switch off the machine. Describing the final moments of your child's life is beyond words... because, as a parent, there is no greater pain or loss than the death of your child. However, as well as the pain that such a sudden and unthinkable killing brought, there was the immediate challenge that I and my family faced in becoming a family of four and not five.

Life could never have prepared us for what followed Tim's death, and yet this was our new reality and the new life we had to deal with, if we were to maintain the fabric of our family life.

The ongoing consequences of losing Tim are not quantifiable in material terms, but they were evident in other ways.

As mentioned earlier, we have two other children, who were aged 11 and 14 years respectively at the time Tim was killed. Abbi [Abigail's shortened name] and Dom [Dominic's shortened name] were thrust into the limelight and glare of the media locally, regionally and nationally, as were Wendy and I. But as adults, Wendy and I were better equipped [though certainly not well equipped], to deal with all the media attention than were our children.

We tried to keep their lives as normal as possible in impossibly difficult circumstances, following family routines as best we could. But the impact of losing Tim coincided with a time in their young lives when they would have been undergoing significant physical and social change in any event. In Abbi's case, she became very quiet and withdrawn, spending as much time with her closest circle of young friends as she could, whereas in Dom's case, he became the centre of everyone's attention at school. Distracted as he was over a long period of time, his behaviour changed noticeably, with increasingly poor reports from school and ultimately his failure to achieve any notable GCSE passes at 16 [not a single exam received a C grade]. Seeking out the company of children older than himself, also led to Dom being introduced to illegal drugs, and on 2 occasions, he was arrested and cautioned by the Police over the possession of cannabis.

Dom left school at 16 and for many years, found it difficult to hold on to, or commit to jobs. Neither he, nor Abbi achieved the educational results we had hoped and expected they would achieve.

For my part, I found it increasingly difficult to execute my responsibilities in my job as a Human Resources Manager for the company I had been employed by, and happy with, since 1986, and negotiated my departure in early 1998. I chose to become self employed, to allow me the time and space to build and consolidate the charitable Foundation that Wendy and I decided was the most worthy and sustainable way of keeping Tim's name and memory alive. The Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace was born in 1995, albeit with a different name when it was registered with the Charity Commission.

My final observation is simply this: as there is no realistic, early prospect of a new, stable and democratic government being formed in Libya, the UK government should delay no longer in enacting legislation, which follows the precedent of the United States government and which I believe would have cross party support in Parliament, to enable the British victims of IRA attacks which used Libyan supplied semtex, to receive financial compensation on terms fully comparable to the settlements received by American victims of the same IRA acts of terror.

In my opinion, this is the only way in which we will ever receive compensation, and when you consider that so many victims of other criminal acts have long since received compensation, then it does seem that we are the forgotten ones...the ones who for reasons utterly beyond my comprehension, successive UK governments have chosen to overlook. Furthermore, I would say that it is unforgivable on their part that they have ignored our case and indeed, matters are made worse when you consider that there are significant grounds for believing that previous UK governments have actually conspired to exclude British victims of IRA attacks from a fair and just settlement.

*29 October 2015*