

# **Colin Wallace and the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry**

## **The Kincora cover-up continues**

**Robin Ramsay**

### **Back story**

**T**his journal has been reporting on the Colin Wallace story since 1986.<sup>1</sup> Among the many striking things Wallace has spoken and written about over the years was the situation in the Kincora boys' home in Belfast in the early 1970s, where some of the inmates were being sexually abused by the male staff. One of them, the late William McGrath, was a senior figure in the Loyalist movement and ran a strange organisation called Tara.<sup>2</sup> The Kincora abuse has been an acutely embarrassing issue for the British state because elements of its secret arms in Northern Ireland, MI5 and the RUC Special Branch, were aware of the abuse of the inmates but chose to ignore it because of MI5's interest in McGrath. Among the documents Wallace had kept from his days working for the secret state's psy-ops Information Policy unit in Northern Ireland was a memorandum he had written in 1974 which showed institutional awareness of the abuse at Kincora.<sup>3</sup>

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1 If you are unfamiliar with Wallace, there is a reasonably accurate Wiki summary at <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colin\\_Wallace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colin_Wallace)>.

2 There is an introduction to Tara at <<http://powerbase.info/index.php/TARA>>. For more detail see the written report to HIA by former Tara member Roy Garland at <[https://www.hiainquiry.org/sites/hiainquiry/files/media-files/Roy%20Garland%20-%20KIN-130010%20to%20130074\\_Redacted%20%282%29.pdf](https://www.hiainquiry.org/sites/hiainquiry/files/media-files/Roy%20Garland%20-%20KIN-130010%20to%20130074_Redacted%20%282%29.pdf)>.

3 A photocopy of that document is on page 82 of the collection of documents supplied by Wallace to be found on the HIA website at <[https://www.hiainquiry.org/sites/hiainquiry/files/media-files/Colin%20Wallace%20%20Material\\_0.pdf](https://www.hiainquiry.org/sites/hiainquiry/files/media-files/Colin%20Wallace%20%20Material_0.pdf)>.

When the current heightened awareness of institutional sexual abuse led to the creation of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in 2014, rather than include Northern Ireland in IICSA, the British state set up a separate inquiry there, the inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1995 (HIA).

But while the mainland UK inquiry has the power to compel testimony under oath, the Northern Ireland version did not. When this was announced we knew that another Kincora cover-up was going to be perpetrated and British secret state awareness of the Kincora abuse was going to be denied yet again. Because of this Colin Wallace declined to be interviewed by HIA.<sup>4</sup> However he did supply the inquiry with hundreds of pages of documents and some of his claims are discussed – and dismissed – in the HIA report.<sup>5</sup>

HIA held 223 days of public hearings between 13 January 2014 and 8 July 2016 and published its report on the day after the American presidential inauguration. This resulted in short pieces in the *Guardian* on page 14 and in the *Independent* on p. 22. Job done: report out and no-one paid any attention.

The following paragraphs are from chapter 3 of that report.<sup>6</sup>

para 391 *We are satisfied that it was not until 1980 that the RUC Special Branch, MI5, the SIS and Army Intelligence became aware that [William] McGrath had been sexually abusing residents at Kincora, and they learnt of that when it became the*

4 <<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/kincora-abuse-probe-disarray-as-second-witness-colin-wallace-rules-out-testifying-34622485.html>>. One-time Tara member Roy Garland also declined to be interviewed by HIA for the same reason. His written statement to HIA rebuts much of what the inquiry said about him – notably the claim that he was one of McGrath's sex partners – and, like Wallace, he says that the British secret state knew about McGrath's activities in the 1970s. See <[https://www.hiainquiry.org/sites/hiainquiry/files/media-files/Roy%20Garland%20-%20KIN-130010%20to%20130074\\_Redacted%20%282%29.pdf](https://www.hiainquiry.org/sites/hiainquiry/files/media-files/Roy%20Garland%20-%20KIN-130010%20to%20130074_Redacted%20%282%29.pdf)>.

5 <<https://www.hiainquiry.org/>>

6 <<https://www.hiainquiry.org/sites/hiainquiry/files/media-files/Chapter%203%20-%20Findings.pdf>>

*subject of public allegations and a police investigation was launched.*

para 405 *We do not regard Mr Wallace as truthful in his accounts of what he knew about sexual abuse in Kincora, or of what he did with that knowledge, between 1972 and 1974. In particular, for the reasons we have given, we do not accept that the critical document of 8 November 1974 was created at that date.*

So there it is: the kernel of what the HIA had to discredit. In Volume 9, Kincora Boys' Home (Part 2), from para 482 onwards, the report works hard at rubbishing Wallace's 1974 memorandum which revealed institutional knowledge within the British secret state of McGrath's activities at Kincora and finally concludes – its only option – that *Wallace fabricated it.*

Colin Wallace issued the following statement to the media after the report's publication.

Although I initially offered to give evidence to the Inquiry, I later decided not to mainly on the grounds that the Government repeatedly refused to give it the same legal powers as the corresponding Inquiry in London. I believe that both the perception and the reality of the Government's decision is one of unfairness to the victims.

Despite my decision, I did, however, provide the Inquiry with 265 pages of comment and supporting documents, drawing attention to false or misleading information contained in the transcripts of the public hearings. My reason for doing so was to enable the Inquiry to investigate and corroborate the accuracy of my past comments about Kincora and related matters, and to provide the Inquiry with the opportunity to correct the relevant errors in the its published transcripts.

None of the information I provided to the Inquiry is new. Although some of it has not previously been in the

public domain, it has been in the possession of the Ministry of Defence and other Government agencies for many years and should have been made available by those authorities to the Inquiry. It should also have been made available by the authorities to previous Inquiries and the Government needs to explain why that did not happen.

Even more worrying, is the acknowledged fact that key Army Intelligence files relating to Tara and William McGrath appear to have gone missing after they were handed over by the Army to MI5 in 1989, prior to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's admission to Parliament (30 January 1990) that Ministers had 'inadvertently misled' Parliament about my case. There also appears to be no record whatsoever of what became of all the 'Clockwork Orange' project files which I handed over to my superiors when I left Army Headquarters in Lisburn in February 1975. Some of those files related to William McGrath. To make matters worse, it is now clear from the Inquiry's transcripts that a senior MI5 officer, Ian Cameron, falsely accused me of 'leaking' information to the press about William McGrath. His claim was that I did so without authority.

The MI5 claim is bizarre because, as my Army superior at the time has confirmed in the press, I was officially instructed by my superiors in Psy Ops, at the behest of Major General Peter Leng, to brief the press about McGrath as early as 1973, in a bid to draw media attention to his activities. I have no doubts whatsoever that because General Leng wanted the press to investigate McGrath, he had very good reasons for doing so and deserves credit for what he did.

It is also significant that the MI5 officer who accused me of 'leaking' information about McGrath to

the press later refused to be interviewed by the Terry Inquiry investigators about why he ordered Army Intelligence officer, Captain Brian Gemmell, to stop investigating William McGrath. Clearly, the Army and MI5 had very different agendas regarding McGrath and his activities.

The astonishing claim by the authorities, including the Intelligence Services, that they knew nothing about the allegations surrounding McGrath's sexual activities until 1980 is a total travesty. As my documents clearly show, it is simply not credible that I knew more about McGrath and his activities than the combined Intelligence community did in 1973/74. One must conclude, therefore, that the Intelligence Services did not tell the Inquiry all they knew about McGrath during the 1970s. Indeed, most of the information I possessed about McGrath in 1973/74 came from within the Intelligence community and was quite substantial. Moreover, my 1973 press briefing document clearly contains more information about McGrath than the Intelligence Services have claimed to the Inquiry that they possessed at that time!

Finally, to suggest that because I gave the press the exact postal address (including the street number of the property) and telephone number of the Kincora home, but did not actually include the name, 'Kincora', somehow invalidates my evidence, is an unacceptable attempt to avoid facing up to what I have been saying over the years. That information also shows that the claim made by the Intelligence Services to the Inquiry that they were not aware until 1980 of where McGrath worked is demonstrably false.

Overall, I believe the Inquiry has been a wasted opportunity to establish the full facts relating to this

matter and I feel the victims have been let down yet again, as they were by previous Inquiries.

In addition this press statement, Wallace has written a 45 page analysis and refutation of the sections of the HIA report about him. This is on the HIA site,<sup>7</sup> which is in the ridiculous position of offering both its own report and analyses by Wallace and Roy Garland which refute large chunks of it.

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<sup>7</sup> At <[https://www.hiainquiry.org/sites/hiainquiry/files/media-files/Colin%20Wallace%20%20Material\\_0.pdf](https://www.hiainquiry.org/sites/hiainquiry/files/media-files/Colin%20Wallace%20%20Material_0.pdf)>.