

FROM 20. Feb. 1997 16:44

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TRANSCRIPT - GOOD MORNING ULSTER, 13 FEBRUARY 1997  
INTERVIEW WITH LORRAINE MCILROY

Interviewer

There was widespread condemnation of the killing of the 23-year-old Lance Bombardier Stephen Restorick at a checkpoint in South Armagh yesterday evening. He served in the third regiment Royal Horse Artillery, his commanding officers paid tribute to his soldier saying his love of life ensured he always made the best of what he was doing. When he was shot Lance Bombardier Restorick was talking to a woman motorist. Lorraine McIlroy was cut by flying glass. She spoke to me by phone from her home in Bessbrook.

Lorraine McIlroy

Basically I know I just heard them saying there about flying glass. We are not actually sure. One of the soldiers that was injured, now he actually thinks that it was the same bullet that killed the soldier that grazed my eye after it came through him. It ricocheted from his gun and in passing grazed my head.

It must have been an enormous shock for you?

Lorraine McIlroy

Yes it was. It was dreadful especially because with us going through the checkpoints so often, the soldiers recognise you and they will smile at you and you know have a word for you and that is exactly what happened. The soldier you know he took the licence of me and checked it and was smiling and handing it back to me when it happened. I don't even think I had the licence out of his hand.

Can you tell us what did happen?

Lorraine McIlroy

All I remember about it was that as I said the soldier checked the licence and handed it back to me and smiled and thanked me and just straight away as I would describe as a crack and a flash and all I knew there was blood pouring from my head. I actually thought that I had been shot and my husband who was with me thought the same and I then heard the soldier groaning, he was on the ground beside my



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car and obviously the first thought that came into my head I wanted to help him you know and there was nothing I could do and I think it was actually some minutes later before the other soldiers who I think at that stage were thinking about further attacks, they came from their bases to see what had happened and to help him but unfortunately it wasn't to be.

Was there a degree of panic at that?

Lorraine McIlroy

Yes.

I suppose as you say a shot literally in the dark it is hard to tell from where it came, how many people were involved and so on. There was no sign anywhere around you of where the shot came from?

Lorraine McIlroy

No not at all. We were down buying ice-cream for our children that was it you know and just coming along just a normal procedure handing in the licence, getting it checked, that was it and it is just as I said it's my thoughts are with the soldier's family for it was just so awful. I was with him in the ambulance going to the hospital. You know to think that a young man stood doing his work in a very pleasant manner as I said he was there smiling and to think a while later he was dead and I think the horrific part of it is that as I said they think at the moment that it was the same bullet that actually hit my head as well and it is quite likely if that is the case that had I been turned slightly facing the soldier I too would be dead. As I have said what are those people going to say to my children and my husband. It is just so mindless and so very very sad.

And in a strange way all the more so for the normality which sparked it, as you say you were just going to get ice-cream for the children. One minute everything was normal and the next minute that had all stopped.



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Lorraine McIlroy

That is just it. As I said whoever fired that shot could see me sitting in that car speaking to the soldier. I had a baby seat in the back. They couldn't see that my baby wasn't in the seat. He normally would be and there was just no regard for what lives were going to be taken as long as they killed the poor soldier it didn't matter who went with him. I just feel so angry about it, so very very angry and it is awful now to think that is this the start of it all again that our children have to grow up with and we have to put up with.

If those people were listening to you this morning Mrs McIlroy what would you want to say to them?

Lorraine McIlroy

I would just say you know what is really the point of saying anything to them because that sort of people what I had to say, what that soldier's girlfriend, his parents have to say wouldn't matter to them because as far as I think people who would do that don't have the mind to listen to other people, that is really it. As I said they didn't care who they killed as long as someone was killed it didn't matter who else was hurt in the process and just to watch that young man dying last night I think he was only 23 or 24 it was the saddest thing I ever seen and I just felt so helpless you know I sat in the car, we saw it my husband and I and the other soldier thought I also had been shot but now they think it was a ricochet as such but the blood was pouring from me, the soldier was lying on the ground and I just felt I had to do something for him but there was nothing I could do, nothing at all and I just feel so very very sorry for his family and I also feel so ashamed that people will start tarring us all with the one brush but fortunately most of us are not like that.

END.