



## Fifty Dead Men Walking

*Martin McGartland*

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## **Fifty Dead Men Walking** Martin McGartland

For more than four years, Martin McGartland lived the astonishing double life of a secret agent. To the IRA, he was a trusted Intelligence Office and an integral member of an active service unit. To the British Government however, he was known only as Agent Carol. Martin McGartland is credited by British Intelligence with saving the lives of at least 50 people. Every time he tipped off the authorities, he risked detection and yet, heroically and fearlessly, he continued to pass on life-saving information. Finally, his cover was blown. Martin was taken from Sinn Fein headquarters in Belfast to an IRA safehouse for questioning and almost certain execution. Though guarded by armed men, in a desperate bid for freedom, he dived from a third floor window. This breathtaking story is now a major film starring Sir Ben Kingsley and Jim Sturgess.

## **Fifty Dead Men Walking Details**

Date : Published May 1st 2009 by John Blake (first published September 1st 1997)

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Author : Martin McGartland

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# From Reader Review Fifty Dead Men Walking for online ebook

## Aaron says

Decent enough book. Written in a very straightforward, almost childish manner. 'I did this, then I did that'. Could have done with a lot more insight into why he turned against his childhood friends. If my family was subjected to that abuse by the British and RUC as a child it would take a hell of a lot for me to join them as an information. There is a lot here he is not telling us.

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## Elliot Richards says

Not a bad book, though its writing style left something to be desired and felt as though it was written by a teenager with its repetitive text. Without belittling the author's contribution to the security of others, he clearly loves himself, has an ego, and seems rather self-centered; when things don't go his way he likes to moan about it and is a hypocrite. I lost sympathy for him by the end.

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## Anne says

An amazing true life account of a Special Branch member who is an IRA informant. This is fast paced and equally terrifying - how a young boy / man can get so dangerously involved so easily.

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## Damon says

This was the latest book in my quest to understand more of the part of the world where I was conceived and have my roots. Having been born in London of Belfast protestant parents and then adopted (completely coincidentally) in to a family with its roots in Belfast's catholic community, one of whom died in an act of sectarian violence in 1972, the subject grips me and I feel compelled to know more, to understand. So did Martin McGartland assist my understanding, perhaps, but more interesting is the man himself. I say man, boy or lad when sucked in to the game by his handlers might be more apt and whilst the text repeatedly refers to his acts being based on principles I can't help feeling that he was young, jobless and scraping an illegal living through knock-off goods when suddenly the Special Branch offer him esteem, thrills and bundles of cash. As he matured perhaps there was truly a feeling of doing the right thing, no matter what arguments can be offered from either side of the torn community if the man believed he was saving lives, and his actions did, then he has the right to cling to what he did as a matter of principle. Regardless of whether it was truly principle or thrills or the cash, the fact remains that it cost him a life with his lover, his children and the ability to ever be himself and live without sleeping with one eye open.

The book reads as you'd expect and with some thrilling passages made all the more chilling in the knowledge that it all happened comparatively recently and in streets that might not wish to be a part of the UK, but which on the face of it resemble just about any urban settlement in the British Isles.

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## **Susan Morris says**

A fascinating read!

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## **Sam says**

This is an open and honest account of life working as an informer for the Special Branch from it's start as a young Catholic boy taunting the RUC and the British Army to it's finish as a retired informer hiding from IRA execution squads on the Mainland. McGartland is honest about his views throughout and admits that his views have changed during his life following various events in Northern Ireland. He writes as he would speak, that is readable and more accessible than many of the texts on life for the ordinary person in the Province during the Troubles. McGartland doesn't take sides in his telling of the story, he merely states what he believed at the time and how this governed his actions for the benefit of his community and his country and in doing so he takes the reader on a journey of deceit, betrayal, hatred and violence from which no-one comes out on top.

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## **Martin Wilkinson says**

### **Interesting read**

The book is very informative on a subject that people know about but seldom know the ins and outs of it. This book let's you in to the facts and the organisation of what became a very powerful two decades of the troubles in northern Ireland

Found the information very accurate from a very brave man who literally risked everything to do a bit of good in a fight against brutality.

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## **Sam says**

Znepokojiv? d?šivé vypráv?ní o ob?anských nepokojích v Irsku z první ruky. Autor nám p?ibližuje pohled na práci v utajení, kterou on sám musel provád?t a díky níž se nakonec stal doživotním uprchlíkem.

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## **SWZIE says**

Martin McGartland's autobiography opens with memories of when he was four years old. After being enticed by the sound of music, the young boy eluded the protective eye of his mother to investigate the source of the loud rhythm. Distraught, she eventually found her Catholic son marching in front of the band during an orange parade. As he grew up, similar escapades were to follow, for Marty, as he was called, was a little rapsallion. He was afraid of nothing, except his formidable mother. So, the book begins by depicting, what it was like for a Catholic boy growing up in Northern Ireland. From the perspective of a young boy, he described the turbulence as 'exciting'.

As he grew up, he developed more understanding. The soldiers who burst into their homes looking for hidden weapons and destroying their homes in the process, would anger him. Young Catholics supported the IRA, but, Marty's support was short lived. The IRA considered themselves to be law-enforcers and meted out harsh punishments, such as kneecapping, even for trivial misdemeanours – and some victims were totally innocent. This sickened Marty.

Then one day he was approached by Special Branch. They wanted him to work for them. Subsequently, Martin McGartland became a secret agent and infiltrated the IRA. He risked torture and certain death. Marty managed to abort and thwart many killings of soldiers, policemen and innocent civilians. Spurred by the knowledge that he was saving lives, he continued his perilous missions, even though by this time he had a wife and children. The suspense was almost unbearable.

I could feel Marty's fear and anxiety as the noose closed in on him: He was well-aware that the numerous times he was involved in averting the IRA's plan to murder, would sooner or later culminate in their realization that their scuppered plans was not purely bad luck or coincidental.

I cannot believe the courage of people who did this type of work. It's ironic that there are many people in Northern Ireland who don't even realise that they owe their life to Martin McGartland (and others like him) – because, without his (their) intervention, they would have been shot or blown-up.

I recommend this true story. The style of writing is very easy to read. I only had a baseline understanding of the conflict in Ireland, and the book explains a lot.

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### **Jamie Rose says**

Please note. I wrote this for the goodreads site, unfortunately Amazon hijack kindle reviews to this site and it's not a setting I can change. The quotes to back up points mentioned are on my profile there but don't show up on Amazon reviews. The relevant points can also be confirmed from various reliable online sources if you can't find me on good reads. Please read them before making any kind of ignorant troll attack on my opinion of this book. Thanks :)

'There's nobody more callous and ruthless than MI5 once an agent has pasted his/her sell-by-date. Hope you enjoyed reading my story', Marty McGartland, January 2013'

Growing up in England, I was always aware of the war in Ireland, as an adult I understand it's as horrific as anything ISIS have done in recent years. The actions of ISIS have caused understandable universal outrage. The actions of Irish Terrorism inexplicably, not so much. Reading this, once again, I cannot understand why that's the case.

There might be spoilers, if so I'm sorry but most of the information in this book has been widely reported, made into movies etc. Also, this got a bit longer than my normal reviews so I apologize for that.

This is not really an enjoyable book. There are parts that made me very angry. It's not the book, it's the subject. The book is well written, well edited, engaging and interesting which are normally things that I love in a book, especially a non fiction book (because non fiction does tend to be awkward and dull at times even if the overall topic is fascinating) but for me, in this area, the subject is just hard to read. I'm glad that this

guy was one of the brave that were willing to risk so much trying to save and protect hundreds of others. He should be getting a peace prize nomination instead of the hideous snake maguiness

I hope lots of people in America have or will read this. I grew up in England. I've always vaguely known how horrific events related to Northern Ireland were. I've always been vaguely aware my American friends and family seemed to think the situation in Ireland " Wasn't that bad, was it? And you know Bloody Sunday was bad wasn't it?"

The Bloody Sunday references always get me. Yes, Bloody Sunday was a tragedy but the focus on that seems to infer other atrocities like the Kingsmill massacre, the Omagh and Birmingham bombings weren't \*that\* bad...and anyway you work it, the fact remains that the 'peace prize nominee' was in fact, known to be carrying a machine gun at the event. Even as a child, thanks to family holidays, I was definitely aware and made sick by the knowledge that Americans had charity collections for the IRA, the way we had them for British Legion or Guide Dogs for the Blind.

I never thought I'd see the day when the most vile example of a terrorist commander is inexplicably nominated for a peace prize! The same period of time a royal marine admits to stealing weapons for that 'cause' and 60+ year old paratroopers are being arrested for doing their job, I'm not disputing the correctness of the orders they were given but their job is to follow orders, however insane they might seem to be.

I wondered if I was mis remembering events at the time or if the way adults in my life had explained things to me because of their jobs. I'm half intelligent, I know it's not impossible my own culture, environment and upbringing was making me biased. So, as usual I started reading about it.

This is not the only book on the subject that I've read over the years or plan to read in the future, but honestly, so far this is one of the only one that actually seems to acknowledge both sides. I find the books written by terrorist types on both sides are mostly pathetic attempts to justify their appalling actions.

Turns out, my child memory was right but the adults had been playing it down. They really were worse than that bad.

Mr McGartland didn't particularly want to betray people he'd known his whole life, nor did he want innocent families suffering punishment beatings because a terrorist decided it was necessary or men being blown apart in their homes and cars, just because they happened to be in the Army. The normal drama of teenagers falling in love (like they do!) In Ireland that was enough for a pregnant girl and her boyfriend to be executed in cold blood just because of a postcode or she was Protestant and he was Catholic. Bobby Sands and his poster boys for terrorism were not "martyrs" they were suicidal attention whores. The reason they were not entitled to POW status and privileges was because they weren't prisoners of war, they were terrorists.

Murder, attacks on innocent families theft, hijacking, punishment squads, affairs, kneecapping, friends of the PLO, fraud, violent incest, (Jerry Adam's brother raped his daughter, Adams didn't act on that, years later he tried to bully his niece into keeping it quiet because he feared his reputation was likely to suffer.) The claim that they did not attack civilian targets is a lie, for example, not one of the pubs bombed in Birmingham was a military or government establishment or known to be patronized by military or government staff. Plenty is said about the inappropriate use of plastic bullets by the Army, little is said about Belfast confetti, a by product of using traditional bullets, the spent casings were collected and thrown at security forces by children. This practice also caused accidental blinding in some cases. How many media or propaganda

stories about that are there compared to the accidental blindness as result of misfiring plastic bullets?

The IRA are not the bunch of poor, misunderstood choirboys under the brutal boot of the British Army as they seem to be considered in America. The loyalists were no better. They're all terrorists who even today show no remorse for the sickening acts they performed. Sinn Fein are not even "duly elected" as they committed voter fraud to get their seats.

In comparison, the British Army were responsible for only about 10% of the total deaths in the war in Northern Ireland. (I refuse to contribute to the downplaying of the atrocities of that war by referencing it by that inaccurate, cutsey label "The Troubles"). Yet, the British Army and government have apologized frequently for the occasional unacceptable actions of their men, unlike the various shameless terrorist murderers responsible for the other 90% of deaths.

Those killed by the British Army, their loved ones have been able to ask for answers, millions have been spent on official inquiries that have not given answers, soldiers have been unjustly called to account for their actions under order, the bodies were available to the family for a funeral. On the other hand, the terrorists, even to this day, refuse to apologize, give answers for their voluntary actions or share information on people responsible for various murders or in some cases divulge the locations of remains of people they murdered.

All over the world, it's rightly considered criminal, immoral and ignorant to deny the holocaust or support terrorist groups such as ISIS. Hopefully books like this will influence people to understand that the Irish war and the terrorist commanders responsible shouldn't be denied or absolved the way they are currently.

Ps. I wrote this for the goodreads site. The quotes to back up points mentioned don't show up on Amazon reviews. They can also be confirmed from various reliable online sources if you can't find me on good reads. Please read them before making any kind of ignorant troll attack which you maybe feel you can justify simply because your distant family once lived in a village in Ireland, because if they did, that doesn't make you Irish but if you're human, whatever your roots are, you should find the actions of terrorism abhorrent, irrespective of the colour of whatever terrorist flag they made the free choice to live under. Thanks :)

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### **Katie Byrne says**

#### **Brave or Stupid ???**

Compelling read keeping you engrossed in his world of killing and informing.  
It was hard to put the book down and I read it from cover to cover in a day.

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### **Lee Sherred says**

I read this book years ago but was reminded of it recently. A very informative book detailing the pressures faced by the author, from both sides, after finding themselves in the most dangerous position possible at the time. If anyone is interested in the realities of what was happening in Northern Ireland in the latter part of the twentieth century than this is well worth a read.

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## **David McRobert says**

### **Interesting tale**

An interesting story, about a fella who took some hella risks to thwart the IRA. It highlights that the IRA were ruthless, but also that many get wound up in the whole affair for the wrong reasons.

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## **Mark Jennings says**

This is a fantastic book, I really enjoyed reading this true life story, and wow what a thing Marty did with his life, to sacrifice everything he did to protect the lives of innocent people. This guy's deserves not only protection from the state, he also deserves recognition for his service.

I can't wait to read dead man running

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## **Conor Galloway says**

interesting read, very hard to put down and a brilliant insight to the troubles in belfast.

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## **Helen says**

read the book and avoid the movie

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## **Jack says**

Interesting account of an IRA/RUC double agent. Good insider insight of "the Troubles" in Northern Ireland. This guy is a hero to his people.

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## **Rhonda Heyns says**

This book was written by the man who lived the life of a Special Branch agent infiltrating the IRA. it is written just as he speaks, and as a result is an easy read, easy to understand to the average person. What Martin went through to help his country and save lives is nothing short of phenomenal.

While the story is true, the movie inspired by the book has been doctored for Hollywood and view-ability. Read the book first, take the movie with a grain of salt.

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## **Huzzah says**

### **Frightening and enlightening**

I knew The Troubles in Northern Ireland were violent, but I didn't realize the extent of it. Mr. McGartland does an excellent job clarifying just how complicated and downright terrifying the NI situation was and likely continues to be. I rarely read a book straight through without pause; this one I did. Well written, I'm now off to read his follow-up book.

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## **Jenny Karraker says**

Having gone to college in the 70's when there was much in the news about the Troubles in Ireland, later living in a northeastern city with a large Irish population, and then visiting Northern Ireland 20 years later, I found this book fascinating. Though Irish and resenting the British occupation/presence and their rough handling of the Catholic people, the author was even more resentful of the harsh treatment by the IRA of their own people. On my trip to Portrush one summer, I observed the parade of the Orangemen (Protestant Irish) through the Catholic section of town, drums drumming and instruments playing. Rather than a celebration of their heritage, it seemed more of a rubbing it in your face of the Protestants' supposed superiority over the Catholics. This man took tremendous risks to protect the lives of British people who lived in Northern Ireland, and with each episode I was wondering when he would finally get caught. At times he seemed immoral in his behavior, yet at others he seemed to stand for justice and fair treatment by all for all. When finally found out and having to leave the country and eventually his family, your heart broke. With the violence and terrorism in the Middle East currently eclipsing that of Ireland and the consequent more negative view of the IRA's activities, associating them more with terrorism than the nobler cause of rejoining a divided land, you would have thought that this fellow would have been safe. But it seems these hatreds never go away and attempts on his life are a constant threat. I admire his courage and determination to persevere and not back down. It's not many who are willing to pay such a high price for what they believe in.

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