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## **Justice for 'Innocent Eddie Gilfoyle' (1)**

### **The law's delay**

The Times, Friday 29th February 2008  
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/letters/article3464329.ece>

Professor Canter has done the cause of justice a great service

Sir, Professor Canter's belated but welcome decision to admit that the suicide note was in all probability a document written by Eddie Gilfoyle's wife was courageous but the only proper thing to do ("Hope for prisoner as expert recants on wife's suicide letter", Feb 25).

His sister, Sue, and her husband Paul Caddick had contacted me some years ago and sought my help to prove his innocence. From their determination to clear Gilfoyle's name, I recognised a genuine belief that Gilfoyle was the victim of a huge miscarriage of justice. Being cautious, I visited him in prison and after seeing him also felt there had been a huge miscarriage of justice.

While I was heading the Complaints and Discipline Department in Merseyside in the 1990s, another pleasant but somewhat inexperienced "fast-track special course man" with limited CID expertise was promoted to lead the Paula Gilfoyle murder inquiry. Suicide was suspected at first and so no medical check established the actual time of death. The noose that had strangled Paula vanished, thus wiping out vital evidence as to how and by whom the knot had been tied.

Even more worryingly was my exchange of e-mails with the superintendent from a neighbouring force, appointed to investigate the Caddicks' complaints. Amazingly, he reported to the then Police Complaints Authority that the evidence against Gilfoyle and thus the conviction was unsafe. This stunning disclosure seemed to fizzle out and nothing seems to have been done. Paul Caddick retired from the force in disgust.

Despite prison overcrowding, Gilfoyle is serving his 15th year in jail, and has not been paroled yet. His refusal to admit guilt is doubtless the stumbling block to winning his freedom.

Finally, in June 1992, the chief constable, Jim Sharples, might have had things on his mind other than ensuring a murder enquiry was being fully monitored. He was days away from having to give evidence on oath against me as I had taken the force to an industrial tribunal for sex discrimination. He was saved the witness box ordeal when the Home Office obligingly demanded a settlement and I could do nothing but accept my counsel's advice.

Professor Canter has done the cause of justice a great service. I acknowledge his brave stance and hope that the way is now open to end Eddie Gilfoyle's long and wrong incarceration.

Alison Halford

Assistant Chief Constable of Merseyside 1983-92

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