

Gilfoyle's avowal of innocence may be his last message to the world

Sue Caddick, sister of Eddie Gilfoyle, has always protested his innocence

Andrew Fox

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December 23 2010 12:01AM

"I've told them year after year I'm not admitting to something I haven't done. I don't give a s*** what you do to me. I would sooner die in jail."

With those words, in a telephone conversation with *The Times* from his prison, Eddie Gilfoyle pledged he would never admit to killing his wife, Paula, and their unborn child, whatever the consequences. That interview may be his final message to the world, as he has now been formally silenced.

At the time he spoke in February last year he was coming up to the end of his 17-year tariff, making him eligible for parole. His intransigence risked preventing his release though. Prisoners are expected to confront their criminality before they are deemed safe enough to be freed.

The Parole Board appears to have devised a novel formula to get round the problem of making him stay in jail because he refuses to admit that he hanged his wife. He can go free as long as he shuts up about being innocent.

Who is Eddie Gilfoyle and how will he cope with freedom? As a young man he played in local bands. A Falklands veteran, he served in the Royal Army Medical Corps. In civilian life he became an auxiliary nurse at a Bupa hospital. He married Paula as his second wife in 1989 but the marriage was unhappy and they spent some time living apart. His dalliance with another woman ended when his wife found she was pregnant.

In his interview he swore like a trooper. Whether his coarse tongue comes from a youth in the Army or from spending most of his adult life in prison is unclear. One thing is certain: it is difficult to believe that someone who expresses himself so crudely could have been the true author of Mrs Gilfoyle's suicide note, which is delicate, thoughtful and moving.

Freedom will be a hard road for Gilfoyle. He is almost 50. He was arrested in his early thirties when John Major was the Prime Minister and *Ebenezer Goode* was about to go to No 1. He was freed with an *X Factor* contestant topping the charts and a *Strictly Come Dancing* participant in the Cabinet.

He told *The Times* in that prison interview: "Even if they quash my conviction tomorrow, the damage is done.

"I'm not going to get the years back, my life back, the mental damage, the emotional damage. I've got to start making a whole new life for myself.

Where do I begin? Can I begin?"