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February 20, 2009

# CPS to reconsider Eddie Gilfoyle murder conviction after police notes uncovered

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Merseyside Police today called in the Crown Prosecution Service after *The Times* published [notes](#) which cast doubt on the conviction of Eddie Gilfoyle, who was jailed for life for murdering his heavily pregnant wife, Paula, in 1993.

The force had [previously denied that notes were taken](#) of interviews with officers who attended the garage where she was found hanged. The notes appear to suggest that Gilfoyle was at work when his 32-year-old wife was found.

"We are reviewing this information with the Crown Prosecution Service. We will then decide whether to refer the case to the Criminal Case Review Commission, any other body or agency and what further action, if any is required to be taken," the force said, in a statement.



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The decision raises the prospect that Gilfoyle's murder conviction may be sent back to the Court of Appeal after [two previous appeals failed](#), and follows evidence disclosed in *The Times* that throws his conviction into doubt.

The long-lost notes, unveiled today, catalogue a series of blunders, including the destruction of evidence before scene-of-crime officers arrived. They also show that those first on the scene were convinced that they were dealing with a tragic suicide.

The notes were not shown to the jury and not mentioned during Gilfoyle's trial in 1993. Merseyside Police repeatedly denied that they existed.

Paula Gilfoyle was eight-and-a-half months pregnant when she was found hanged in the garage next to the couple's home in June 1992. A note was found in her handwriting that said that she had decided to "put an end to everything". Her husband was later charged with her murder. Since his conviction, he has lost two appeals.

*The Times* has obtained notes of interviews with the officers called to the house on the day that she died. They state that the doctor who declared Mrs Gilfoyle dead told police that she had died six hours earlier – when her husband was at his workplace. The 20 pages of notes appear to have been taken during an internal inquiry into police blunders at the scene.

Until their disclosure today, there had been no suggestion that the doctor had addressed the question of time of death at the scene. There is no mention of it in his statements to the murder investigation.

Instead, the doctor told the trial jury that Mrs Gilfoyle had been dead for between three and eight hours before being found. This could have given Gilfoyle time to kill her after work.

During the trial the judge, Mr Justice McCullough, expressed amazement that no time of death had been given to the defence, saying that it was “a rather obvious question”.

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The notes detail a series of mistakes that led to the internal inquiry by Merseyside Police. Mrs Gilfoyle’s body was cut down without any photographs being taken. Evidence was destroyed or tainted. The existence of the inquiry was not disclosed to the defence before trial.

The records also indicate that officers let a mortuary assistant destroy the noose – a vital piece of evidence that could have revealed who tied it.

Last night, Gilfoyle’s solicitor Matt Foot said that the disclosure could have changed the course of the trial. “It’s clear that the judge and the defence were left with the impression that there wasn’t an estimate of time of death given at the scene,” he said. “According to these notes, there was an estimate of the time of death. This was never put before the jury.”

He said that he would use the nondisclosure of the notes in a fresh plea to the Criminal Cases Review Commission, which investigates miscarriages of justice. Experts agree that establishing time of death is an inexact science. Gilfoyle’s hopes of establishing that he was wrongly convicted rest on the Crown’s failure to tell the jury the full story of what happened at the scene.



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Mr Foot said: "It would have been extremely useful for the defence to have been able to explore with prosecution witnesses points raised by the notes."

At the trial, the Crown insisted that Gilfoyle had tricked his wife into writing her suicide letter, then coaxed her into the garage where he hanged her.

The notes show that the officers knew that the marriage was unhappy and that Mrs Gilfoyle may have doubted that the baby was her husband's. DNA tests later showed that Gilfoyle was the father. According to the notes, nothing at the scene suggested foul play. The notes emphasise that there was no evidence of a struggle. Her body had no marks or defensive injuries. The doctor examined her and decided that there was nothing suspicious. He was "99.9 per cent happy with it being a hanging".

However, when family, friends and workmates described how happy and optimistic Mrs Gilfoyle had been, the police began to wonder if she might have been murdered.

The evidence at Gilfoyle's trial was almost all circumstantial. Nearly twenty witnesses said that Mrs Gilfoyle had been making plans for the future. A trial source told *The Times*: "For two days, friends and relatives and workmates gave evidence in which they said that this girl was vivacious, bubbly, so excited about this new birth. The morning she 'committed suicide' she got books about children's names. After two days of people saying she was happy, the idea that a pregnant woman hanged herself? The jury just looked astonished."

Gilfoyle's family contacted the Police Complaints Authority (PCA), which was so alarmed by its inquiry into the handling of the investigation that it alerted the Crown Prosecution Service to doubts about the conviction.

The criminal profiler David Canter, who worked with police to help to convict him, revealed last year that he had had second thoughts. Writing in *The Times*, he said that fresh research into suicide notes had persuaded him that Mrs Gilfoyle took her own life.

Alison Halford, who was a Merseyside assistant chief constable at the time, Desmond Browne, QC, the Chairman of the Bar Council, and Graham Gooch, the retired superintendent who investigated the case for the PCA, have all stated that the conviction was unsafe.