

TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

UNITED STATES CONGRESS

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STATEMENT OF KATHERINE FINUCANE

“Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission, my fellow speakers, ladies and gentlemen:
My name is Katherine Finucane. I am the daughter of Patrick Finucane, who was murdered by Loyalist paramilitaries in our home in Belfast in 1989. My family and I have campaigned since my father’s murder for an independent public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the killing.

Elizabeth Kubler Ross said, **“The reality is, you will grieve forever. You will not get over the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again, but you will never be the same again. Nor should you be the same, nor should you want to.”**

The brutal way in which I lost my Father added another dimension to our grief. My Father was very well known for the work that he did as a lawyer and many people relied on him in the fight for equality and human rights. The public nature of his murder meant that we grieved along with our society. It has not been resolved and the consequences are many.

My Dad, in his work as a solicitor was an advocate for the community. My brothers continue that work and my role in mental health is a branch of that work. We are of him and he has inspired us to be who we are. We did not have him for long in our lives, and although we have our memories, we were robbed of so many more.

When my young daughter asks me, “How did Granda Pat die?”, I am reminded that the past is now moving in to yet another generation. Now 14-years old, she asks me, “Mummy, what would Granda Pat have thought of me? Tell me what he was like.”

It wasn't only my brothers and me who had their father stolen from them, but our children too. So, I tell my daughter what her Granda was like..... He liked to play football and didn't like to lose, he liked a joke and a laugh and often played practical jokes on his siblings, he inspired me to learn the French language as I listened to him asking for directions on our family holidays in France and, I tell her..... he would have loved her very much and they would have had the best of fun together.

Having been told for so long to move on and draw a line under the past, the recent announcement of an inquiry has provided us with much hope that we will finally get the full picture of what happened and get the answers as to why my Father was murdered. We can only move into the future when we have a clear sense of the past.

Our fight for justice has not only been for my Dad, but for a future fit for our children and one that he would be proud of. We have high expectations that the upcoming Inquiry will provide that.

I would like to thank this Commission for its time and the support shown to my family over so many years.

Thank you very much."