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GILMARTIN'S NEW CLAIM, P8 & 9



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'I WAS TERRIFIED' BACK PAGE

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WWW.INDEPENDENT.IE FRIDAY 12 MARCH 2004 €1.50 (75p IN N. IRELAND)

Massacre in Madrid




Blood on the tracks: Victims sit on the rail lines just outside Madrid's Atocha station as they are tended by rescue workers following a series of deadly explosions in the Spanish capital yesterday.

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LIFE'S TOO SHORT NOT TO

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David Sharrock and Daniel McGroarty in Madrid

LUISA Alvarez and her son found seats on the upper deck of the 7.20am train to central Madrid as they always do.

She opened the paper. Her son read a book. Commuters chatted. University students shared a joke.

"Everything was so normal," said Senora Alvarez, a 45-year-old civil servant.

Then the bomb went off. "There was a flash at the end of the carriage in front of me. A terrific blast hit us. We were thrown to the floor and then there was another loud bang. I don't know what happened next because I must have passed out."

When she came to she saw a man whose entire face had been burnt away. "Everywhere I turned there was blood," she said. "The windows were smashed and there was moaning and cry-

Suspicion swings from Basques to al-Qa'ida terrorists

Slaughter in Spain: Reports, comment and pictures on the rush-hour atrocity Pages 12-17

ing but I couldn't see where it was coming from."

She and her son survived. More than 190 other commuters did not. In the space of 30 minutes ten bombs exploded on four rush-hour trains heading into Madrid: 1,247 people were injured. It was the deadliest terrorist attack in mainland Europe.

No warning was given. Nobody claimed responsibility. The Spanish government immediately accused the Basque terrorist group Eta of what Jose Maria Aznar, the Prime Minister, called "mass murder." The explosives matched those used in previous Eta bombs.

However, an al-Qa'ida connection was not ruled out. And last night suspicion was growing that the Islamic terrorist group

might indeed be behind the massacre.

Angel Acebes, the Spanish Interior Minister, said a van found at Alcalá de Henares, a town through which all four trains passed, contained seven detonators and tapes of Koranic verses.

Juergen Storbeck, director of Europol, said the co-ordinated attacks did not bear Eta's hallmarks.

Batasuna, Eta's political wing, pointed to Spain's involvement in the Iraq war and blamed "Arab resistance."

Suspicions were further heightened when the Arabic newspaper Al-Quds al-Arabi said it had received a claim of responsibility for the bombings issued by the "Brigade of Abu Hafsa al-Masri" in the name of al-Qa'ida.

The claim received by email at the paper's London offices said the brigade's "death squad" had pene-

Continued on Page 17

<p>NEWS</p> <p>Crackdown soon on ads for children Advertisers will be forced to cut back on using celebrities to promote products to children under a new crackdown. Page 3.</p> <p>'Charity case' Steve Collins in court Former World Champion Boxer Steve Collins is living off the charity of friends and has just a few thousand pounds in savings, a court has been told. Page 3.</p>	<p>Arctic blast blows away spring feeling An arctic chill yesterday swept away the spring feeling as bitter gale force winds blew across the country. Page 7.</p> <p>Leaders pledge to fast-track peace The Irish and British governments have pledged to step up the pace of the review of the Good Friday Agreement in the coming weeks. Page 10.</p>	<p>BUSINESS</p> <p>Greenspan plea for calm on US job losses Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan yesterday urged Americans not to turn high anxiety about US job losses into support for protectionist trade measures. Page 20.</p> <p>Stock markets slump in wake of blasts European stock markets, including Dublin, reacted negatively yesterday to the Madrid bombing. Page 21.</p>	<p>SPORT</p> <p>Celtic make winning start over Barcelona Three players were sent off as ten-man Celtic punished Barcelona in a night of high drama at Parkhead last night. Page 22.</p> <p>Croke Park saga takes new twist The controversy over the spiking of Rule 42 motions took a twist yesterday when it was claimed the motions committee may have broken another rule. Page 23.</p>
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WEATHER

Rain dying out, staying cloudy, winds easing.

Max: 9c Min: -1c

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