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e If the bodies really were on the ground when the crew exited, why did Cornett not call for an ambulance straightaway, instead of waiting for another few minutes after her first call for help?

f Neill lamely postulated at the Hobson trial that there must have been some other violent incident that had precipitated Prunty/Hull to rush up with his accusation 'you sat there and did nothing', and he suffered for this at the hands of defence counsel and, as we have seen, those of the judge. In fact, however, there was independent evidence that there had been a prior confrontation at the Thomas Street junction (see paragraph 19) but this was not called at the trial and Neill may not even have been aware of it.

31 There is room for debate about exactly how long and violent the disturbance was, though it is relevant that the Diplock court had no problem in convicting Hobson of affray. Neill and Atkinson paint a fairly lurid picture, with Catholics needing to be pulled out and protected from Protestants, and this idea of 'two factions' is one of the things to which the CAJ object. On the other hand, some accounts such as that of A (see below) imply that the situation was simply one of the police containing a threatening crowd of Protestants. Given the evidence of Prunty, for example, there can be no real doubt that some Catholics must have got involved with the Protestant crowd; the weight of evidence is that there was indeed a widespread violent fracas for some minutes after Cornett's first call at 1.45:37; but that by 1.55 or so the police seem to be succeeding in keeping the Protestants back.

32 It will help the reader to focus if at this point I summarise in my own words the RUC story of the incident, as explained to me by DCS McBurney, and set it against the campaigners' version.

a The RUC believe that there was undoubtedly a preliminary fight at the Thomas Street junction, and that Hamill was almost certainly involved. They point out that Prunty and his girlfriend were able to cross Market Street with no trouble shortly ahead of Hamill. Whatever happened it was enough for Prunty/Hull to come rushing back saying that the police should have stopped it. Thereafter, things happened in the general way that Neill described, and the fatal attack on Hamill happened very swiftly while Neill and Atkinson were robustly trying to control the crowd (and whatever Atkinson may or may not have done the next day, he did his duty bravely on the street).

b The campaigners say that Hamill and D were set upon without the slightest provocation and that if the patrol did not actually witness the attack without intervening as Diane Hamill originally alleged, then at the very least their negligence was appalling. Having ignored the fatal attack while chatting with Bridgett and Forbes, Neill makes up a nonsensical story of seeing no bodies when he exited the landrover, and invents a sectarian conflict when there was none. Thereafter for several days the RUC persist in that story through press releases.

33 The issues of whether there was a preliminary skirmish and whether the main attack took place after the crew dismounted are inter-related.

- In my opinion the evidence in statements made to the police of a preliminary confrontation is quite strong. If only because of various witnesses' timings, I think that Hamill must have been in the area of such a preliminary confrontation at the relevant time. (Furthermore, and this is simply my speculation, I think that it is inherently likelier that something happened to attract the attention of the 'dribs and drabs' of Protestants drifting down the street, rather than that a crowd of 30 suddenly appeared without warning. It just

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