could then be subsequently challenged at a later stage if the circumstances of such dictated that type of action. In addition I was mindful that in speaking to these witnesses we could potentially be speaking to one of the assailants. An example of such was the interview of Allister Hanvey by Detective Sergeant Bradley and myself on 7th May 1997 in which a witness statement was recorded. My notebook entry states 'Spoke with an Allister Hanvey, [redacted] Portadown ref movements in Portadown town centre. D/Sgt Bradley recorded witness statement after initial conversation'. If during that interview process I had established reasonable grounds to conduct an arrest for the assaults, then this course of action would have been pursued. In conducting this interview I was able to assess and make a reasoned judgement on the benefits of possible arrest and interview process at that stage or to continue with enquiries, in order to gather further evidence.

Unfortunately, and not untypical in Northern Ireland investigations, several of the most vital witnesses, who I will identify as witnesses in support of Robert Hamill, refused to fully co-operate with the police investigation. This had a serious detrimental effect on the investigation, eg blood identification remains outstanding on the clothing of Robert Hamill. I believe this could be resolved if one of these witnesses provided a comparison sample. I personally attempted through the family of Robert Hamill and through [redacted] Solicitor, to encourage these individuals to come forward, but without success. I am aware that Detective Chief Inspector P39 also made attempts within the community, through local clergy but again without success.

It also transpired during the investigation that there were counter allegations of assault and that the facts as outlined by a number of the witnesses on how the incident occurred were being challenged. If such were factually correct I am in no doubt that this, in conjunction with the consumption of alcohol, would have had an impact on the sequence of events as described in their witness statements and also on descriptions/identification of those involved. Additionally this was a very traumatic incident for those witnesses who were subjected to such violence and fear, this too may have had a major impact on the contents of the witnesses' statements. In 1997 RUC Officers were not regularly updated or trained in the recording of witness statements or in any PEACE (Planning and Preparation, Engage and Explain, Account, Closure, Evaluate) models used to assist and improve police techniques in