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11 DEC 2008

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF AARON REANEY

DATED THIS

DAY OF

2008

I, AARON REANEY, declare that this statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that if it is tendered in evidence at the Inquiry I will be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

1. The Inquiry has disclosed a number of documents to me. Where I make specific reference to a document in my statement I have given the number of the relevant page.
2. In April 1997 I lived in Portadown with my parents and my sister. At that time I went to the Coach Inn almost every Saturday evening. Sometimes I would get there by taxi and sometimes I would take the free bus service. My father required me to be home by 02:00 or thereabouts.
3. If I took the bus back from the Coach then it would drop me off near Boss Hoggs takeaway. Z Cabs taxi rank was just down from Boss Hoggs on the same side of the road. From there I would walk straight up through town and go home and on some occasions I would stop at Boss Hoggs for something to eat first.
4. I did worry about walking through the town centre on Saturday nights because there might be trouble with people coming out of pubs. I tried to keep myself to myself and I would not get involved in anything at all.
5. On 13 May 1997 I gave a statement [page 9576] to the police investigating the murder of Robert Hamill. I remember catching the bus to the Coach with Richard

Cassells and Christopher Smith on the night of 26th April 1997. Richard lived in [REDACTED], south of Brownstown. Christopher may also have lived there at that time but I did not know him very well so I cannot be sure.

6. I cannot remember the exact time we got the bus that evening but I would usually get it between 21:00 and 22:00. I think that Richard, Christopher and I had a few beers beforehand. There was a good atmosphere on the bus but I do not remember who else was on it. It is a long time ago and there were different faces on the bus every week. Going by the usual times, we would have arrived at the Coach at around 22:00. I do not remember who I met or socialised with in the Coach that night.
7. The Coach closed at 1 am. I said in my witness statement that I left the Coach at about 01:00 or 01:15 to get the bus. I cannot remember whether Richard and Christopher were on the bus with me on the way back to town. I said in my witness statement [page 9576] that "*The bus dropped us off at the bottom of town*" but this may be referring to lots of people on the bus being dropped off rather than referring to Richard, Christopher and I specifically. If Richard and Christopher had been on the bus then they probably would have got off at the same stop as me. However, I know that I walked home on my own that night and not with Richard and Christopher.
8. I cannot remember whether the bus was full that night but, as far as I remember, I sat near the front. The atmosphere on the bus seemed all right and no different to any other time I had been on the bus. I had not seen any fights or arguments in the Coach that night and I did not see any on the bus either. When I got off the bus that night I had no reason to believe that there would be any trouble in town that night.
9. I was one of the first off the bus and I headed straight home once I got off. I wanted to get home before 02:00, or thereabouts. I did not feel hungry and so I did not stop at Boss Hoggs. My witness statement says that about 20 to 30 people got off the

bus but I did not pay attention to who they were. I just started walking home on my own. I also said in my statement that there were a lot of people hanging around Boss Hoggs. This was normal for a Saturday night. Again, I did not bother paying attention to who was at Boss Hoggs and I cannot say how many people were there.

10. I said in my statement [page 9576] that "*I saw a police Land Rover beside the bank or the Alliance & Leicester*". I take this to mean that the Land Rover was by the Alliance & Leicester. I would have walked down High Street and Market Street on the Thomas Street side of the road and so the Land Rover would have been on the opposite side of the road to me. I would then have crossed over West Street to walk on the right hand side of St Mark's Church.
11. I do not know which way the Land Rover was facing but I do not think it was moving. I did not see inside the Land Rover and I did not see anyone around it. I was not surprised to see a police Land Rover because they would often be in town at night.
12. I said in my statement [page 9576] to the police that "*I heard noises coming from behind me but I thought it was a boy only carrying on that was it I just walked on home*" when I walked up through town. The noise I heard was shouting and this was normal for a Saturday night in town. It was just people carrying on and I did not think there was any problem. I heard the shouting when I was walking past St Mark's church. I did not look to see what was going on because it was none of my business. I cannot say whether there was anyone coming up Thomas Street at that time.
13. I first heard about what had happened to Robert Hamill on the news. When I went to the Coach after the incident I did not hear anyone discussing the incident and I did not hear any names being mentioned.

14. I have been asked why I refused to attend an interview at the police station on 30 June 1997. I did not want to get involved in something I did not have anything to do with. I just did not want to have anything more to do with it after providing my police statement. I did not feel threatened.
15. I have been asked whether or not I know various individuals. I do not know Dean Forbes, Stacey Bridgett, Allister Hanvey, Marc Hobson, Wayne Lunt, Rory Robinson, David Woods, Andrew Allen, and Timothy Jameson. Heidi Reaney is my cousin but I did not know her very well and I have rarely seen her since I was young. I have never spoken to her about what happened to Robert Hamill.

SIGNED: A. Reaney.....
AARON REANEY

DATED: 4.12.08.....