



STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF JOHN BRIAN FOSTER ADAMS

DATED THIS 30th DAY OF June 2008

I, JOHN BRIAN FOSTER ADAMS, 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. I have served with the PSNI formerly known as the RUC for 26 years and my present position is that of Call Manager in the Communications Centre in Portadown Police Station.
3. On the night of the 26th April 1997 I was stationed at Portadown police station and on general patrol duties with Reserve Constable Silcock. One of our responsibilities was to attend call outs to assist other mobile patrols in the area. The Land Rover crew were the crew dedicated to the town centre. That junction was known as a flashpoint for sectarian incidents. I have patrolled that area many times myself and have seen a number of incidents there.
4. At approximately 1.47am Reserve Constable Silcock and I heard a transmission requesting assistance in the town centre. I cannot recall what was said but remember that the officer requesting assistance sounded anxious. The two of us headed off into the town centre straight away. We entered via Edward Street. It took us no more than a couple of minutes to get there. When we arrived I could see a crowd of people at the junction of Thomas Street, Market Street, High Street and Woodhouse Street.

5. I also noticed two people lying on the road just at the mouth of Thomas Street. Those two people were being attended to by members of the public. There was no ambulance at the scene when we first arrived. There was another small group of people, maybe four or six people, just at the mouth of Woodhouse Street. I assumed, from my knowledge of the local area, that the people in Woodhouse Street were Catholics and the crowd up Market Street were Protestants.

6. I estimated that there were about twenty to thirty people in the Protestant crowd. That crowd was chanting and cheering and trying to push past the police officers, who were holding them back. There were only three or four officers at that stage and they were Constable Neill, Reserve Constable P40, Reserve Constable Atkinson and Reserve Constable Cornett. One of them may actually have been attending to the men lying on the ground. I also think that one of those officers was with the group at the top of Woodhouse Street. I joined that officer as he was the closest to me when I got out of the vehicle. I cannot recall what each officer was doing at the scene but I think that it was Reserve Constable P40 at the junction of Woodhouse Street and that Reserve Constable Atkinson and Constable Neill were with the crowd on Market Street. I am not sure what the female officer was doing, but she may have been assisting the injured men lying on the ground.

7. I saw the Police Land Rover at the mouth of Woodhouse Street on the side of the carriageway facing down the High Street. I have marked the location of the Land Rover on the map of Portadown town centre. That map contains page number **73906**.

8. I cannot recall what the crowd in Market Street were chanting but they were trying to get past the police officers and I presume to get to the group on Woodhouse Street. I was trying to hold back the group on Woodhouse Street who seemed intent on trying to get to the crowd on Market Street. Both groups were equally aggressive towards each other even though the ones in Woodhouse Street were heavily outnumbered.

9. One of the men in the group I was with stood out. He was a bit older than the others; he was about forty years old and of stout build. There was a woman with him who was short with black hair. The older man was chanting and shouting and he came over after I had arrived, perhaps from down Woodhouse Street. The woman was not part of that group but was standing on the main street and was shouting about someone being injured.

10. I can not recall exactly where each of the injured men were lying but I would say that they were somewhere opposite the junction of Thomas Street and on the carriageway off Market Street. There were two lanes in Market Street and I think that they were lying more in the left lane in the direction of Church Street. I have marked on the map of Portadown town centre the general area in which the men were lying. There was some distance between them, perhaps four or five feet. Because I was trying to hold back the group of people in Woodhouse Street I had my back to the injured people and could really only see them from time to time when I turned around. I never had a straight, eyes-on view of them. I think Reserve Constable Silcock went to check on the injured men at some stage.

11. After some time more back-up officers arrived at the scene. I think they were Constable Orr, Constable Cooke and Reserve Constables Warnock and Murphy. I do not know when they arrived or what they did exactly but I think that they were trying to hold back the Protestant crowd. I would not have said that the officers were being attacked by the crowd; it was more a case that the crowd were trying to push past them.

12. When I first arrived at the scene the officer in charge was Constable Neill as he was the most senior officer of the patrol but I think that a Sergeant and an Inspector later attended the scene. I cannot remember when they arrived but I do know that I left the scene at one stage to take Reserve Constable Warnock back to the station to get a baton gun. I do not know if this was as a result of a direct order from the Inspector or an instruction given over the radio. We were not away from the scene for long. We simply reversed down High Street into Edward Street where we picked up the baton gun and then returned back to the scene within minutes.

13. When I arrived back at the scene the group which I had been watching in Woodhouse Street had dispersed. The Protestant crowd had not dispersed but had been moved up Market Street towards West Street. There was an ambulance at the scene by then. I joined the other officers moving the crowd up West Street.

14. I recognised one of the people in the crowd as Rory Robinson. I have known of him for the past two years or so, from previous dealings I have had with him. I cannot remember what he was wearing but he is about 5ft 8ins tall with a slim build and darkish short hair. He was in his early 20's then. He told me that he wanted to get home and I knew that he lived at the other end of town in the Killicomaine area, so I let him past and escorted him down the High Street past the junction. He was not being aggressive with me and there may have been some chatting between us but he just wanted to get home. I took the view that he was one less person on the street and therefore he was better off being escorted out of the area. He had been in the crowd earlier but I did not see him do anything in particular. He did not say anything of any significance to me as I escorted him. If he had I would have noted it in my notebook.

15. There is produced and shown to me my statement dated 23 January 2001 at Inquiry page **21747** which states that while I was at the scene I did not recall seeing Allister Hanvey, Jason McClure or Christopher Henderson. In fact I did not know Jason McClure or Christopher Henderson. I have been aware of Allister Hanvey for two or three years from previous dealings with him but I did not know him well. In fact, I would probably not recognise him now if he was standing in front of me. I recall vaguely that he was well built, muscular, and in his early 20's. I do not recall seeing him at the scene of the incident that night. I have been asked whether I saw Reserve Constable Atkinson talking to anyone at the incident that night. I did not see him talking to anyone. I did not recognise anyone else at the scene and whilst I know the name of Stacey Bridgett, I do not know what he looks like. I do not know Dean Forbes and I do not think I knew Wayne Lunt at the time of the incident but I knew [REDACTED] Lunt, Wayne's brother.

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16. There has been produced and shown to me a copy of an entry from my notebook dated 27 April 1997 at Inquiry pages **9966 to 9967**. My notebook shows that the crowd eventually dispersed and I left the town with Inspector McCrum at about 2.30am. I do not recall any instructions being given before I left the scene or any directions in respect of scene preservation.
17. Once I had returned to the station, I accompanied Inspector McCrum on his supervisory duties that night and drove him around to the various stations in the subdivision. We probably discussed the incident but I cannot remember what was said and cannot remember being given any instructions in respect of the incident by Inspector McCrum. I have recorded in my notebook that I had a break at 3.30am. The station is an old building which is constructed over four levels, which includes an attic. There is a TV/recreational room with a number of tables and chairs and a snooker table. There is a separate small kitchen and a briefing/work room which was in another part of the building where briefings are held and officers do their paperwork. The station is a very haphazard construction with lots of stairs and small rooms.
18. I think that I filled in my notebook and completed my statement in the CID Office before I went off duty that morning. The CID office is on the floor just above the briefing room and I think that there were other officers present at the time but I cannot recall whom. I think that CID had been called in by then and I was instructed to make a statement before I left for the day. I may have spoken to other officers that morning about the incident but I cannot remember. I did not speak to the Land Rover crew; I think they had already left. I did not get any debriefing that morning. The only direction I got was to complete my statement. I was not asked to make a list of persons I recognised at the scene.
19. I was aware that someone from the station had attended the hospital to check on the condition of the injured persons but I can not really remember the outcome of those inquiries beyond a general feeling that neither of the injured men were in a life threatening condition. I did not have any further dealings with the GBH or murder investigations after that night. I became aware of allegations against Reserve Constable Atkinson some months or perhaps even some years later. I

was aware only in very general terms that the allegations concerned his activity at the scene and contact with alleged perpetrators.

SIGNED:

J. Adams
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JOHN BRIAN FOSTER ADAMS

DATED:

30/6/08
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