

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF P34

DATED THIS DAY 30 OF JANUARY 2009

I, P34 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 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 am a serving officer in the Police Service for Northern Ireland. I joined the Royal Ulster Constabulary in 1985 and I am presently a community sergeant. Although I have never been stationed at Portadown Police Station I have policing experience of the area having been stationed at Mahon Road in the traffic department between 1991 and 1993. I then joined the Mobile Support Unit (MSU) for J Division also based at Mahon Road between 1993 and 2001 when I left on promotion to the rank of sergeant.
3. On joining the MSU I undertook a five week training course which included a five day search course. This included the full range of searches expected of the unit and the various roles undertaken as a MSU officer. Searches of property were an integral part of MSU function to support local divisional officers.
4. On 6 May 1997 I paraded for duty at 0630hrs and I have recorded in my notebook [page 50117] that I was detailed the call sign blue 3. It would have been normal to have paraded for duty at 0800hrs it would appear therefore that we were called into duty early. This was not an unusual occurrence when conducting house searches.

5. I rely on my police notebook to assist my memory as I now have no recall of this particular duty. I recorded in my notebook that I attended Portadown Police station and was briefed at 0705hrs by CID at Portadown regarding a search at the home of a Stacey Bridgett who was to be arrested in connection with an offence of grievous bodily harm which had taken place at Portadown on 27 April 1997.
6. I have no memory of the briefing or who conducted it. Normally such briefings are undertaken by the Detective Sergeant or Detective Inspector. I have been shown a copy of the Form 29 search record [Page 73969] for the home of Stacey Bridgett and I note that the warrant was authorised by DC Keys and that he was also present during the execution of the warrant. The Form 29 records that Sergeant Bingham was the search team leader; Constable [REDACTED] was the log keeper; and Constable Andrews and myself conducted the search.
7. The log records that we entered the home of Stacey Bridgett at 0720hrs where Constable Andrews and I conducted a search of a bedroom in the house from where I seized the following items of clothing and the location of the items:
 - a. 'Watson' checked shirt [wardrobe] P34/1
 - b. 'Calvin Klein' black shirt [wardrobe] P34/2
 - c. 'Ralph Lauren' blue check shirt [wardrobe] P34/3
 - d. 'Ralph Lauren' purple/yellow shirt [wardrobe] P34/4
 - e. 'Sonnetti' grey cord trousers [wardrobe] P34/5
 - f. 'Replay' cream jeans [Sports bag on floor] P34/6
 - g. Pair of black shoes [floor] P34/7 & 8
8. The search was completed at 0745hrs and Stacey Bridgett was arrested by DC Keys. At Lurgan Police Station at 0830hrs I passed to DC Keys the items of clothing and footwear I had seized as part of the search of Stacey Bridgett's bedroom. I later that day completed a witness statement [page 9728 – 9729] regarding the search.
9. When conducting a search it would be normal as part of the briefing to be given details of clothing to be looked for and to be as specific as possible on what clothing would be seized. I cannot now say what items of clothing we were briefed to look for but I have

been shown a statement of DC Keys [page 9708] in which he refers to briefing Sergeant Bingham on the description of clothing to be seized.

10. On 10 May 1997 I paraded for duty at 0600hrs and attended a briefing at 0700hrs at Portadown Police Station by Detective Inspector Irwin regarding the search of the home of an Allister Hanvey in connection with the murder of Robert Hamill. In my notebook [page 51349] I recorded that the premises were to be searched for clothing and trainers and I was detailed as the log keeper during the search. As the log keeper I would have been responsible for the completion of the Form 29 search record form.
11. I now do not have a memory of the briefing by Detective Inspector Irwin my only recollection of my involvement with the Robert Hamill investigation is a search of a house where the property was long and narrow and where you went from one room into another. This is the only thing that sticks in my memory and I rely on my notebook and log record to assist with other details.
12. I have been shown the form 29 search record for the premises of Allister Hanvey for 10 May 1997 [page 73989] and I confirm that form is completed in my handwriting. I have recorded the reason for search as '*search for clothing and trainers*' and that the search was authorised by DI Irwin. I have listed the officers present as Sergeant Bingham (team leader); myself (log keeper); Constables Andrews and Porter (search team) and the CID as DC McAteer.
13. The house was entered at 0721hrs and I listed the persons present in the house as Kenneth; Elizabeth [REDACTED] Allister; [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Hanvey and [REDACTED]. It is normal practice for the team leader to explain the warrant and purpose of the search to the occupant of the house; record details of any firearms legally held; and any existing damage to the property prior to conducting the search.
14. I recorded that the search team commenced a search of bedroom one at 0727hrs and at 0730 hrs Constable Porter seized a pair of dark blue jeans MJP/1; a pair of white and black Asics trainers MJP/2; and a black padded bomber jacket MJP/3. At 0740hrs the search team left the bedroom one. At 0745hrs DC McAteer arrested Allister Hanvey and we left the premises.

15. As part of my log keeper role I prepared two sketch plans [Pages 73999 - 74000] on the form 29 one being a plan of the bedroom and the other a floor plan of the house. The sketch of bedroom one shows a room with two beds, two wardrobes, a cabinet and a stool. The floor plan sketch of the house shows that bedroom one is accessed through bedroom two down a long hallway. This is my recollection of the property subject of the search.
16. I did not include details on the sketch plan to show which members of the family occupied which bedroom. Neither did I record from where the clothing was seized in bedroom one. I cannot now recall where I was during the search of bedroom one. I may have roamed the house with the team leader preparing my sketch plans as I did so. None of the other rooms were subject of a search if they had I would have recorded the details on the log. Similarly no searches were conducted outside of the house because if they had again I would have recorded the details on the log.
17. I have been asked if I can recall being briefed to look for evidence of clothing being burnt. I do not recall this and if searches had been conducted I would have logged this on the search record. I have also been asked if I can remember being briefed to search for a silver/grey jacket with orange on the sleeves. I do not recall what we were briefed to search for. As a search team we relied on what we were briefed to search for and would not have seized items which did not match the descriptions given to us.
18. Later on 10 May 1997 I completed a witness statement [page 9730] regarding the search of the premises of Allister Hanvey. I had no further involvement in the Hamill murder investigation.
19. I have been asked if I knew Reserve Constable Robert Atkinson. I did not know him personally and would be unable to recognise him. I can recall hearing his name in connection with a later investigation and hearing a rumour that people involved in the Robert Hamill case burned clothing but I cannot recall where I heard this or in what context.

SIGNED:



P34

DATED:

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