

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF DAVID WOODS

DATED THIS

DAY OF

2008

I, DAVID WOODS, 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. At the time of the incident I was seventeen years old and living in Portadown with my parents. I have lived there all of my life. I have one older sister, Carol Ann Woods and she is married to William David Terence Jones. I cannot remember who I socialised with at that time but I did know Andrew Allen, Marc Hobson, Rory Robinson, Allister Hanvey and Dean Forbes from the Ulster bus. I never went out with them as I was only seventeen years old in 1997 but I recognised their faces. I do not know Wayne Lunt, Gregory Blevins, Donald Blevins, Andrew Osbourne or Timothy Jameson
3. On the evening of the 26th April 1997 I left my home about 18:00 or 19:00 and went down to the river where there was a Snooker Club. I was by myself and sitting outside the Club having a drink, probably Cider. I think that I drank a three litre bottle of Cider.
4. A transcript of my Interview with the Police on the 15th May 1997 has been produced and shown to me and at **page 7489** of the Interview. I recalled that “...come 9.00pm I made my way up to the Herron’s Chip Shop to get the bus to the Coach”. The location of Herron’s Chip Shop was on the corner of High Street and Castle Street.

5. I cannot remember who was waiting at the Bus Stop or who got on the Ulster bus but the journey only took about half an hour. I cannot remember who was at the Coach Inn or recall if Andrew Allen, Marc Hobson, Rory Robinson, Allister Hanvey and Dean Forbes were there. Anyway I was there to “*get a girl*” so I was not with any group nor did I socialise with any of the other boys. I just drank and danced. I stayed until the Coach Inn closed at 01.00 in the morning and then caught the Bus at about 01.15 or 01.20. I travelled back on the Ulster bus to Portadown and fell asleep on the Bus as I was very drunk. The Bus got back in to Portadown about 01.45 on the morning of the 27th April 1997 It was full and there were probably 30 people on the Bus and we all got off at Herron’s Chip Shop.

6. I did not stop for any food and started to walk home. There were a few people around but I cannot remember if there was a lot of noise. I just wanted to get home so I walked through the High Street and then up Thomas Street. I did not see any police or a Land Rover as I walked up the main Street but I was very drunk and I could barely see two feet I front of me.

7. I began to walk up Thomas Street and I could hear people shouting “*Orange Bastards*” and “*Up the RA*” and doors being kicked. I could see two women and three boys walking down Thomas Street. The men were bigger than me and one of them was “*a big, fat fellow, five foot eight, big shoulders, a big lump of a fellow*”. He was the one shouting “*Orange bastards, up the RA*”. I can not remember anything else about this man or what he was wearing. The other two men were not as big as the first man but still a bit bigger than me and of average build. I cannot remember anything else about these men and they too were shouting “*Orange bastards*”. I cannot recall what the women looked like but they were drunk too, although not as aggressive as the men. There was no one else around apart from me and those people. I do not know if there were people behind me but I normally take that route home and there is no one else I know who lives up that way.

8. I stopped to see if they were going to walk past me and I saw one of the men kick the door of Jameson's Pub which was halfway down Thomas Street and between the British Legion and the junction with Market Street I was about 15 to 20 feet away from them and I was watching the big fella to see what he was doing and I just kept saying to myself "*Right, put your head down and just go past then there*" I thought that they would not pick on me as I am a "wee fella". As I was watching the big fella another one of them came running down the Street and smacked me in the eye and ran off towards the town centre. I reeled back onto the footpath outside Jameson's Pub and the others continued to walk past me. My attacker had short dark hair and was wearing a black leather jacket but I cannot remember anything else about him.

9. My sister then came out of her flat and asked me if I was alright and I went into her flat. I did not see anything or anyone else at this stage but just went into the flat. When I got inside I lay on the sofa and passed out. A copy of my transcript of interview dated the 15th May 1997 is now produced and shown to me and on **page 7511** of the Interview I was asked by the Interviewing Officer "*Right before you were pulled into the flat, what did you see David?*" I replied "*There was a fight going on in the middle of town*". I cannot remember seeing any fighting in town and I do not know why I said that. I accept that when I gave that answer back in 1997 I was telling the truth, but I cannot remember now, 9 years on seeing any fighting. In my Interview I was then asked "*Was it any of the people that you described for me? Was it any of the people that hit you?*" You replied that "*It was the man who hit me, I think*". I can not remember this now, all I remember was my Sister taking me into the flat and going to sleep.

10. When I woke up in the morning I went home and I think that I had a mark on my face. I think that my mother noticed the mark but I was so hung over I just went to bed. I woke up about 07:00 or 08:00 and my mum knew what had happened as she had already spoken to my sister. I did not see any Police in town that night or any Land Rovers and I cannot remember seeing any people in the Woodhouse Street or Market Street area.

11. The first time that I knew that there had been a serious incident in town was when I was watching the news and I thought to myself "*That boy who smacked me must have got a kicking*". I do not think that I talked about the assault with anyone but maybe I told some workmates and no one said anything to me about that night. An excerpt from the Transcript of Interview of Andrew Allen is now produced and shown to me dated 15th May 1997. He says in his Interview that he got off the Ulster bus with me and Rory Robinson and that we went to a bakery at the corner of Thomas Street. I do not agree with that statement as I was on my own that night when I got back to Portadown. He goes on in his Interview to describe hearing shouting coming down Thomas Street and he saw a crowd of boys coming down the road. He thought that in this group people were from the British Legion and Jamesons Bar. Andrew Allen goes on to recall that "*I thought that they were going to walk on past, I paid no attention. One of the boys hit David Woods on the face and another boy started fighting with Rory Robinson*".
12. I was very drunk that night and I was on my own. I do not recall seeing Andrew Allen but I accept that I may have seen him in the Coach Inn or that it is possible that he was behind me when I was walking up Thomas Street. I just cannot remember and I never spoke to him or Rory Robinson or Dean Forbes or Allister Hanvey or Marc Hobson about the incident or the assault on me. I did not want them to think that I was a "wimp". I heard from the news that they were charged with the murder of Robert Hamill but I did not think anything of it as it was nothing to do with me.

SIGNED:

DAVID WOODS

DATED: