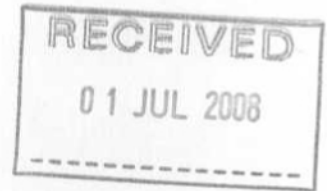


STATEMENT OF WITNESS



STATEMENT OF ALAN GEORGE McCRUM

DATED THIS 20 DAY OF JUNE 2008

I, ALAN GEORGE McCRUM, 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 am a Superintendent in the PSNI. I have served in the police force for over 23 years. In April 1997, I was an RUC uniformed Inspector in 'J' division stationed at Portadown and had been stationed there since September 1996. On 26 April 1997, I was the night duty Inspector for 'J' Division, with responsibility for the three sub divisions of Portadown, Lurgan and Banbridge. Each sub division would have had a sergeant to assist me.
3. The Woodhouse/Market Street junction in the centre of Portadown was a known flashpoint interface for sectarian violence because of the route from Woodhouse Street in towards the area known as 'The Tunnel' and Obins Street which was a predominantly Nationalist area within a predominately Unionist town.
4. Referring to my notebook entry [Page 9960] on 27 April 1997, I see that at approximately 01.51am, I was informed by Constable Godly (Communications Operator) that there was a disorder taking place in the Market Street area of Portadown. He told me that there were opposing factions fighting in Market Street and that the officers at the scene were in need of immediate assistance. There was no mention of casualties at that stage. I always treated such incidents as a critical priority so I directed immediately that all available back-up be sent

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to the area. There were, however, only about six officers available in Portadown that night. Sergeant McClean was in the station that night so I found him and the two of us left immediately.

5. Sergeant P89 and I walked quickly from the station on Edward Street down to the scene, which was about 300 metres away in Market Street. I was aware that we had limited resources and that there was an issue of officer safety, so it was important that I saw for myself the situation to lead the response. As we were leaving the station Reserve Constable Silcock and Reserve Constable Warnock told Sergeant P89 that there was serious disorder in the town centre. I did not know exactly what we were facing but experience told us to issue a Federal Riot Gun as a precautionary measure. Sergeant P89 was the one who actually dealt with that. I think Reserve Constable Warnock signed out the gun and then followed us to return to the scene.
6. As we continued towards the scene, an ambulance drove past us. I have marked a map of Portadown town centre with an 'A' to mark the position of the police station and a 'B' to mark the point at which the ambulance drove past us on the way to the scene. A copy of that map is attached containing page number 73902.
7. On arrival at the scene I saw a man who was not known to me being put into the ambulance. That man was on a stretcher. I was briefed by Constable Cooke who said there had been disorder between two rival factions and given Portadown's history, it was very clear to me that the factions were Protestant and Catholic. I think I was told that two people were injured and had been taken to hospital. There was a scene of some disorder in the town centre at that stage. There was a group of about 30 to 40 youths around the junction and they appeared to have taken a considerable amount of alcohol. I perceived this crowd to be made up of Loyalists and some were acting quite raucously jumping about and shouting.
8. I saw a number of police officers at the scene including the members of the Land Rover crew, whom I knew as Reserve Constables P40 Cornett and Atkinson and Constable Neill. The other officers from my section whom I noted were Constables Cooke, Orr and Constable 'A'. I saw one Land Rover at the

scene, which from memory was at the junction of Woodhouse Street and Market Street although I cannot now be sure exactly where it was. I have marked 'LR' on the map [page 73902] where I believe the Land Rover was parked. I am certain it was on the Woodhouse Street side of Market Street. There was only one Land Rover but there was a second police car in which the back-up crew had arrived.

9. The officers were engaged in trying to quell a difficult situation. I also noticed a small group of three or four people who appeared to be hanging around further into the mouth of Woodhouse Street. I can recall one man in particular who was bare-chested and seemed to be very drunk. I remember thinking to myself that must have been the other faction that had been mentioned in the first report of the incident.
10. My concern at that stage was to restore order. My initial and overriding concern was that there would be another outbreak of disorder between the two factions. The larger, Loyalist group comprised 30 to 40 youths but were spread out. Some were sitting on the footpath, close to the area where the ambulance had been while others were singing and dancing in the middle of the street. I did not see any other group of people coming either from Bridge Street or Thomas Street.
11. The mood of the crowd was fairly aggressive and I would say they were egging for a fight. I was very concerned that my officers would be attacked. We were outnumbered significantly. There were about nine or ten officers facing 30 to 40 Loyalist youths, predominantly men. Because it was a Saturday night I was worried there would be other people coming into the town centre. My first and primary order was to get the crowd away from the town centre. We had to cajole and use all of our professional policing and social skills to encourage them to move away from the junction.
12. I got the officers in a line to force the crowd up towards West Street and the predominantly Unionist residential areas. However, I was aware in doing so that there was no guarantee of success. It was my attempt to minimise further disorder and attacks on police officers. I did not see any member of the crowd

throw anything at the officers but a number of them did behave aggressively towards them and tried to goad the officers in to conflict. It was certainly a worrying few minutes because it could have gone any number of ways. People were drunk, aggressive and very much 'in your face'. This was particularly concerning because there was a history in Northern Ireland of police officers being attacked. My recollection of all the youths at that time is a very blurred recollection. None of them stand out as such and I did not know or recognise anyone by name. Allister Hanvey, Marc Hobson, Wayne Lunt, Dean Forbes, Andrew Allen, Rory Robinson and Christopher Henderson were not known to me at that time.

13. I recall seeing Reserve Constable Atkinson at the scene and I approached him at one point. I recall this because I remember he produced his baton to me and indicated he had used it to assuage some of the disorder and I recall the baton's strap was broken. I assumed it had been broken during the course of the disorder. **[Statement Page 11301]**
  
14. I requested assistance from the Mobile Support Unit but I cannot remember exactly when they arrived at the scene but it was fairly early after my initial assessment of the situation. However, by the time they arrived the situation had calmed down significantly. I was still concerned that there was still potential for further disorder from people coming back in to town and briefed Sergeants Shaw and Lutton of 'J2' Mobile Support Unit directed them to position the members of the unit through the town covering in particular West Street, Market Street and Woodhouse Street.
  
15. When I finished briefing the Mobile Support Unit I directed Sergeant **P89** to go to the Craigavon Area Hospital to make enquiries about the injured people. In 1997, that type of sectarian disorder was a regular feature of Friday and Saturday nights in Portadown, especially in the lead up to the Marching season. Policing in Portadown was extraordinarily difficult at the time. I needed to know if the incident fitted into that category or was more serious and this would allow me to determine what follow-up action was needed.

16. I cannot be sure how long it took to get the crowd under control and up to West Street but I think it was about 15 minutes. It was probably a few hundred metres from the junction to West Street. I think the police officers did a first class job managing a volatile situation in very difficult circumstances. I cannot recall what precisely each member of the Land Rover crew was doing at the scene but I am quite satisfied that they did what was asked of them. I can recall Constable A in very close proximity to the crowd. She was engaged in what appeared to be a serious dialogue between her and a young man. I cannot recall what he looked like but I think that I talked to Constable A at the scene and was told that the young man had been arrested by the officer but as it was not practical to detain him there and then he had been released.
17. Having satisfied myself that the Mobile Support Unit was managing the town centre and that Sergeant **P89** was making enquiries at the hospital I went back to my divisional night duty responsibilities going first to Banbridge then to Lurgan with Constable Adams. At that stage I did not manage the scene forensically because I did not know the extent of what had taken place at all, but police officers were stationed at the scene to prevent any vehicular movement through the scene and I think the barriers were closed. I did not know of the severity of the injury to Robert Hamill at that stage and did not see any requirement to manage the scene. These were common incidences and if one were to secure every scene of every public disorder in 'J' division, one would simply not have the resources to enable this to be done. I am aware of the Police General Order 1994 regarding scene preservation but that does not require preservation of every scene of crime. I did what I believed to be necessary at the time based upon the knowledge I had of the incident. With the information I had at the time, it would have been impossible for me to have concluded that there was a need to secure the scene.
18. In any event, it was unclear to me where the scene actually was. There were so many people milling around at the junction. I did not know anything about the injuries at that time or who had been assaulted. There was nothing to suggest to me that this was a serious assault. No officers said it was a life-threatening assault. I had an opportunity to speak to all of the officers or virtually all of

them, during the course of moving the loyalist group away from the town centre to away from the interface area. So, those opportunities for dialogue did take place but I have to say the officers themselves were trying to piece together exactly what had taken place. I remember speaking to Alan Neill around what had taken place. I can't remember exactly at what point that was and he said to me, again from memory, that they had done their best to try and pull some of those people back from attacking some of the other people that were obviously being assaulted. But it was general information. If specific information had been relayed to me then I would've been thinking about scene preservation at an earlier stage. My focus had been on the preservation of life and prevention of a recurrence of disorder.

19. I did not give any specific instructions to the Land Rover crew before I left the scene. They were due to conclude their period of duty so it was for Sergeant **P89**, their frontline supervisor, to debrief them at the termination of their duties. I am sure, however, that before I left the scene I told every officer to make a contemporaneous note of what had happened. I would have done that as a matter of routine.
  
20. When I returned to Portadown police station at about 04.00 after carrying out my other supervisory duties in the other two sub-divisions, I was advised by Sergeant **P89** who updated me on his visit to the hospital. He told me that he had attended hospital and met members of the Hamill family and other people who had been much less than courteous to him. He said he had been unable to find out about the injured men's medical condition. Looking at my notebook [**Page 9960**], I see that I then rang the Craigavon Area Hospital myself and spoke to the senior House Officer or Consultant "*on return to Portadown made enquiries with CAH reference the extent of injuries to the two males who had previously been assaulted. Informed by doctor in the ICU that one of the two Hamill had sustained serious head injury which may be life threatening and he was to be transferred to the neurological department at RVH*". I think I had put the question "Were the injuries in any way life threatening?" The Doctor prevaricated a little bit then said that one of the two injured men would probably be transferred to the Royal Victoria hospital. When

he said that I realised we might be dealing with a serious assault rather than a normal Saturday night brawl.

21. I phoned Detective Constable Keys immediately. He was the CID call-out officer. I asked him to go to Portadown police station as there had been an assault which might be life threatening. I then suggested that he go to the scene to co-ordinate the early stages of the investigation in consultation with me and to establish where the scene was.
22. I can see from my notebook entry [**Page 9960**] that I gave a number of instructions that morning in respect of the incident. I spoke to Constable Cooke, who had the best local knowledge, and asked him to consult with the other section officers who had been at the scene. In particular, I wanted them to draw up a list of persons identified at the scene to assist in the investigation. It was very obviously implicit that it needed to be done quickly and I have a recollection that Constable Cooke then started to do that in the communications room. However, I had every confidence that Constable Cooke would supply that list to Detective Constable Keys to support the investigation.
23. I then directed Constable Cooke and Constable Orr to go to Craigavon hospital to get the clothing of the injured men for forensic examination.
24. I directed all officers on duty that night who had attended the scene to make formal statements. I cannot remember if that direction was given before or after Detective Constable Keys' arrival but I emphasised to them that I wanted statements to be completed before any officer terminated duty. The Land Rover crew had already terminated duty so I ordered them to report back to the station to make their statements as I wanted to ensure nothing would be lost in terms of the individual officers' evidence, and around the initial actions at the scene. I also briefed Chief Superintendent McCreesh, Chief Inspector McMullan and Superintendent [REDACTED] about the incident.
25. The police press office issued a press release [**Page 15066 -15067**] in the early hours, which was based on information we had at that time and authorised by

me. I am sure that I talked to a number of officers but there was nothing to contradict the impression I had that there were two rival factions that had clashed in the town centre.

26. Once Detective Constable Keys arrived I regarded it as a CID-led investigation, with DC Keys as the lead investigator until a more senior detective arrived. My role from that point onwards was to support Detective Constable Keys and provide any uniformed resources he required. Having explained that, I want to make clear that I did not abdicate my responsibility in any way. When DC Keys arrived at the station I gave him as comprehensive briefing as I could given what I knew at the time. I was working hard to ensure that there was a proper media update and that the Land Rover crew came back in to provide statements.
27. As the morning progressed I became aware through speaking to other officers that a number of individuals had been identified from their presence at the scene. I did not know at that stage whether they were witnesses or suspects. It was a matter for CID to decide whether there was sufficient ground to arrest any individual. I was not in a position to consider that because that was a matter for the Detective who was now leading the investigation.
28. My responsibility was to ensure that all the officers had made contemporaneous notes and provided that evidence as quickly as possible to the investigating team. I appreciated how important that was, which was why I got a number of people out of bed at 06.00. It was then for the detectives to interpret that information. I terminated duty at 08.15 but had briefed Detective Chief Inspector P39 before I left. She had come into the station some time before 08.00. I briefed her on the incident and what steps had been taken thus far. She had become the senior officer in charge of the investigation at that stage. I recall there was an issue to do with Constable Neill not wanting to come back in, and I recall discussing with DCI P39 the importance that he come to the station and make a statement.

29. At this point I believe I had taken all reasonable steps to ensure that CID had everything they needed. It was for them to follow-up the various lines of inquiry that I had opened up as I about to go off duty having worked all night.
30. I have been asked why my statement dated 7 May 1997 [Page 9217] was completed over a week after the incident took place. The reason for that was quite simple. At the time of the incident I had been on night duty but then had the weekend off and did not return to work until the following week. Furthermore, I had not recognised any individuals at the scene and did not have any other observations or information to assist. As I had already briefed the investigation team thoroughly as to what I had done I did not believe there was any pressing urgency for my statement.
31. I have read Superintendent Kennedy's Report which contains page numbers **10120 to 10174**. In that report she concluded that I should be admonished for lack of supervision, poor scene management and failure to debrief in connection with the incident. [Page 10163] *"In hindsight it is easy to identify faults and level criticism. However Inspector McCrum as the senior officer on duty, appears to have taken an insufficient hands on approach to the incident."* [Page 10162] *"I feel that Inspector McCrum is open to criticism for not taking a more active leadership role by supervising and assisting those uniform officers under his command."* I do not accept the reasons given above. I wish to state that I take offence at that criticism as I believe I led my officers in a very difficult and volatile public order situation in such a way that prevented injury to any officer or any further injury to members of the public. I reject completely Superintendent Kennedy's recommendations, namely *"to receive admonishment with record regarding his lack of supervision, poor scene management and failure to brief/debrief in connection with the fatal assault on Mr. Hamill and the assault on Mr. [D] on 27 April 1997 at Portadown."* [Page 10168]. I accepted her admonishment under duress, following legal advice and without prejudice.

SIGNED: .....  
ALAN GEORGE McCRUM

DATED: .....  
20/6/09