

DRAFT

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF MARK BLACK

DATED THIS

DAY OF

2008

I, MARK BLACK, 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. This is the first witness statement that I have made in connection with the Robert Hamill incident. No documents have been produced and shown to me in connection with this statement.
2. On the night of 26 April 1997, I went by bus to the Coach Inn in Banbridge with my brother Joe Black, and Shelley Liggett. I did not notice any trouble at the Coach Inn that night. After leaving the Coach Inn, Joe, Shelley and I got off the bus near the top of Thomas Street. From there we proceeded to walk up West Street to St Mark's Church where we sat on seats nearby.
3. From that location, I noticed a bit of a ruckus or fight. I was not sure if it was Catholics or Protestants, or people who were on the bus together who had had a falling out, as this was not uncommon when people had been drinking. I could not tell if the fighting was sectarian, but I think there were over 20 people involved.
4. It looked like a free-for-all with people also gathering around to watch the fight. My main concern was that my brother, Joe, was not involved and, apart from that, I was not all that interested. We headed home not long after it started. I did not notice any police presence in town that night or see the Police break up the fight.

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5. I have been asked about a number of individuals and whether or not I knew them in 1997. I knew Allister Hanvey but I did not know him very well. I probably knew Andrew Allen by sight who I have also been told was known as Fonzy. I also think I knew Chris Henderson and Ian Carville but not that well. I knew Mark Hobson but I would not describe him as a friend of mine. I knew Dean Forbes and I would speak to him occasionally. I am not sure if I knew P46
[REDACTED] I did not know Donald Blevins.
6. I knew the area where the incident took place to be a trouble spot for Catholic and Protestants every now and again. It normally started with either Protestants from up the top of Thomas Street waiting for Catholic people, or Catholic people coming up or down waiting on Protestants, and involved mostly young people.
7. I recall I was approached by the Police and spoke with them about the events of 26/27 April 1997. Shelley Liggett had been contacted by the Police earlier and told them she was with me that night, and that is why they came to me. I did not have concerns about talking to the Police about the event.
8. After the news of Robert Hamill's death I did not hear any conversation about who was involved, as people kept quiet about it and would not have wanted their names mentioned.

SIGNED:

MARK BLACK

DATED: