

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF RORY ROBINSON

DATED THIS

DAY OF

2008

I, RORY ROBINSON, 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. This is the first witness statement I have made in connection with the death of Robert Hamill. I completed a questionnaire to the police dated 29 April 1997, a copy of which is at pages **8125** to **8126**. I was then arrested by the police on 10 May 1997 and interviewed under caution on that day and also on 11 May 1997. A copy of the transcript of those interviews is at pages **7559** to **7764**.
3. In April 1997 I was about 25 years of age. At the time I was living in Ulsterville in Portadown, having lived in Portadown all of my life. I went to school at Portadown Technical College. I am not really sure who my best friends were in those days: I kept myself to myself. Claire Glover was my girlfriend at the time, and we used to socialise together; just the two of us.
4. I knew Tracey Clarke at the time through attending discos at the Coach Inn in Banbridge. We used to talk to each other sometimes. Many people of a range of ages used to go to the Coach Inn at that time; it was the most popular place to socialise. I also knew Stacey Bridgett, Dean Forbes, Allister Hanvey and Davy Woods at the time. Stacey was a bit younger than I was, but I knew him from seeing him around Portadown. I also knew Dean Forbes from about the town. I think that he was 4 or 5 year younger than I was. I knew Allister through seeing

Kenneth, his father, around Portadown, but I did not really socialise much with Allister. Davy Woods was quite small and known as “wee” Davy Woods; he was another person I knew from socialising in Portadown. I am no longer in touch with any of these people and I do not know whether they still live in Portadown.

5. I can confirm that I did not know Timothy Jameson at the time, and I did not hang around with him, nor did we have any contact. I would not recognise him if I were to see him. I can also confirm that I did not know anyone called Neil Ritchie, Marc Hobson, Pauline Newell, Jonathan Wright nor Andrew “Fonzie” Allen, although it is possible that I might have known Andrew to speak to him in the town.
6. On 26 April 1997 I went to the Coach Inn to meet Claire Glover. Banbridge is about 12 miles from Portadown, so I went to the Coach Inn by myself on the bus; this was the cheapest means of getting there. There was sometimes a usual crowd that went the Coach Inn, but I do not remember the identity of anyone else on the bus. I have been told that a witness named Neil Ritchie says that he saw me on the bus with Stacey Bridgett, but I do not know or cannot remember now if that were the case.
7. I am not sure at what time exactly I arrived at the Coach Inn, but the disco usually started at around 9.00pm so I probably got there at about 9.00pm to 9.30pm. I am reminded that, in my police interview on 10 May 1997 at pages **07579** to **07581**, I described myself as wearing an orange checked shirt, a blue bomber jacket and cream pinstripe trousers. However, I cannot now remember what I was wearing. I am not really sure whether or not the pinstripe was thin and whether or not the overall impression of the trousers was white.
8. Claire and I spent the evening together, and I cannot recall whether I spoke to anyone else at the Coach Inn. I was drinking beer that evening, but it is hard to say how much I used to drink at that time; it would depend upon the atmosphere. Since I was with Claire, I do not really think that I would have drunk a lot.

9. I cannot recall at what time we left the Coach Inn, but it is more than likely that we left at closing time. At the end of the evening I caught the bus back to Portadown alone and Claire went to her home in a different area. I think that I had a seat at the front of the bus. Some people probably would have been drinking on the way back, but I cannot remember if I drank alcohol on the bus. I am not sure whether we took the first or second bus back to Portadown, but we would usually arrive back at about 1.30am or 2.00am. I am reminded that at page **07562** of my police interview on 10 May 1997 I said that I was walking up the town after 1.30am, and this time sounds about right.

10. In my interview with the police on 10 May 1997 at page **07567** I said that the bus dropped us off "*at the top of the town outside Z-Cabs*". Z-Cabs was located on the High Street near to the cinema and probably inside the barriers, but I cannot remember whether it was on the left or the right side of the road if you are walking towards Market Street. This was the usual drop-off point for the bus, and it was the final stop. In fact, I think that there was just the one stop, but I am not sure.

11. I think that I was one of the first to get off the bus. I would often take a taxi home because my house in Ulsterville was about 1 – 1½ miles from the town centre, but sometimes I walked. My usual route home was via Bridge Street, Carrickblacker Road and up Gilford Road. That night I walked alone up the town on the left side of the street towards the Church at the junction of Market Street and West Street. I am not sure if there was anybody else walking just behind me. I was intending to get a Chinese takeaway from the Chinese restaurant on West Street. As it happened I did not get my Chinese meal, but cannot remember why.

12. As I was walking through the town centre, I saw a police Land Rover parked in the main street. I think that there was just one Land Rover, but I really cannot say exactly where it was parked, nor can I recall whether there were any police officers outside of the vehicle. It was usual for a Land Rover to be stationed there in the town centre, but I do not really know why.

13. I have been told that some witnesses have said that I walked up the town with Andrew Allen and Davy Woods. I have also been shown a transcript of the police interview of Andrew Allen on 15 May 1997, containing pages **07390** to **07437**, where it is recorded that Allen said that he walked up the town with Davy Woods and me. However, as I have said, I do not know Andrew Allen and I did not walk from the bus stop with those two men. I do not know whether Andrew Allen or Davy Woods were behind me as I walked up the street, and to my knowledge I was not aware of them. I can confirm that I did not see Stacey Bridgett and Dean Forbes as I walked.
14. I continued as far as the church without stopping. However, I have been told that in his police interview at page **07397** Andrew Allen said that he, Davy Woods and I “*were walking up the street and we stopped at the bakery at the corner of the main street*”. Allen then says at page **07405** that Woods and I said we were, “*just waiting on the crowd*”. I was walking alone and I am not sure where this bakery was in those days, but in any event I cannot recall stopping at all by any bakery. I can confirm that as I walked through High Street and Market Street I did not see any other people that I recognised.
15. I have been informed that Andrew Allen, from page **07396** of his interview transcript, described to the police that I was walking on the left-hand side of the road until I stopped by Thomas Street, and then that I crossed the road by Eastwood’s clothing store, continuing to look up Thomas Street. This is not true. I am informed that Allen then went onto say, from page **07413** to **07415** of the transcript, that he heard shouting from the direction of Thomas Street and a group of boys and girls walking down. However, I did not see any people walking down Thomas Street from the direction of St. Patrick’s Hall that night, and I had never seen such people coming into town from that venue before. I did not know that St. Patrick’s Hall was in Thomas Street, nor did I know that Catholics would be leaving the Hall.
16. At pages **07434** to **07448** of his transcript, I am told that Allen then describes a twenty-something male approaching him as if to hit him, upon which Allen says that he ran up Thomas Street. At this point I am informed that Allen says he ran

into another male who started throwing punches at him and then another three or four males arrived to start punching Allen's attacker. I did not see Allen being attacked, nor did I see anyone punching his alleged attacker.

17. I have been informed that two other witnesses state that a man who had walked from Thomas Street assaulted Davy Woods. I did not see Woods being assaulted because I was not there. I do not know what happened.
18. I have further been told that Andrew Allen informed the police at page 07454 to 07455 of the interview transcripts that he saw another boy starting to fight with me at the corner of Market Street and Thomas Street by Eastwood's Clothing. I have also been told that Allen describes the crowd from the Coach Inn bus arriving and a "free-for-all" fight breaking out outside Eastwood's. Allen also alleges that I was involved with Marc Hobson in this fight.
19. This is not true. I was standing at the church throughout. In my police interview at page 07570 I said that when I got the church, "*I heard all the shouting and I stopped... I heard orange bastards and things like that there*". I am not sure from where this shouting was coming, and I do not know whether it was aimed at me. I then saw some "skirmishes", or minor fights, going on in the middle of town. I was standing at the church being nosey and wondering what was going on, but from 200 yards away I could not recognise anyone involved in the fighting. I do not know whether Andrew Allen or Marc Hobson got into any fights either.
20. Some information the police obtained from a woman named Pauline Newell, containing page 50182, has been read out to me as follows: "*Hamill & 1 x male & 2 x female friends were walking from Thomas St to Woodhouse St. As they crossed Main Street Hamill went over to a Protestant crowd of approx 30 and called one a 'black bastard'. Then he hit this person * who retaliated. The others joined in and Hamill & his male friend were both beaten. * Named as Rory Robinson, 23 – 24 yrs, dark brown hair in curtain style, source thinks he is UVF. Many of the protestant crowd were in Boss Hoggs prior to the incident*". I have also been told that Pauline Newell says that she saw me walking towards

Thomas Street with Davy Woods and Andrew Allen and she heard a rumour that the fight was started by the people coming down Thomas Street.

21. None of this is true. My hair was dark brown with curtains a long time ago, but I was not the person Pauline Newell describes; I did not get involved in any fighting that night. As I have said, I did not know Pauline Newell and I am not sure how she knew my name. Boss Hoggs was a chip shop, but I have nothing to say about whether any “protestant crowd” was there that night. I do not know who started the fight.
22. I have been told that someone called Jonathan Wright made a witness statement, containing pages **9141** to **9142**, in which he described seeing 20 to 30 people fighting between Thomas Street and Woodhouse Street. Wright also described seeing me “*in the middle of the crowd, running around like a headless chicken*”. I was not behaving in this manner. I do not know Jonathan Wright and I have no idea why he would say that I was doing this. I am also told that Wright describes seeing Stacey Bridgett trading punches with another person and heard some bottles being smashed. All I can say is that this is not true.
23. I am told that Timothy Jameson or Witness B says in his statement dated 9 May 1997, containing pages **15883** to **15886**, that he saw me wearing cream coloured jeans and hitting someone with my fists. I repeat: I was not involved in the fighting and, specifically, I did not hit anyone with my fists.
24. I have been shown the witness statement of Tracey Clarke dated 9 May 1997, containing pages **17327** to **17330**. In that statement, Clarke describes seeing a person lying motionless in the centre of the road being kicked and jumped on by a group of persons. She names Dean Forbes, Allister Hanvey, Stacey Bridgett and me as belonging to this group of persons. My response is this: I did not kick or jump on Robert Hamill.
25. I have been told that Constables Neill, Cooke and Adams and Reserve Constables Silcock and Atkinson identified me as being present at the scene and taking part in the disturbance. I cannot recall if I knew any of these officers at

the time. These police officers have made various allegations against me, which have been summarised for the purposes of making this statement broadly as follows:

26. Reserve Constable Atkinson says that he struck me in the stomach with a police baton to prevent me breaking through police lines;
 - a. Reserve Constable Cooke placed me at the front of the crowd with Stacey Bridgett, Dean Forbes and Marc Hobson, and stated that I refused to move up to Bridge Street when asked. He also stated that another man and I tried to push past Reserve Constable Cooke and other officers on several occasions;
 - b. I am told that Constable Neill, in his statement starting at page 9667 describes me as talking to the injured people on the ground and to those looking after them, and also moving backwards and forwards. He also alleges that I squared up to him in a threatening manner;
 - c. Reserve Constable Silcock alleges that I was in a crowd with Stacey Bridgett shouting "*I hope you die*" as the two injured men were placed in an ambulance.
27. None of the allegations made by these police officers is true. I was not trying to break through police lines and I was not struck with a baton. I did not see any men on the ground, nor did I see those men being put into an ambulance. I was not there.
28. I have no idea why any of these witnesses would say that I was there and involved in the fighting when I was not. During my interviews with the police, as here, I admitted to being present at the scene, but I was alone at the church throughout the time when the fighting was taking place.

29. I am told that Constable Adams said that he escorted me away from the scene. I cannot remember this happening. Moreover, I cannot remember at what time I left the scene, or how I got home.

30. I accept that after being arrested I declined to take part in a police ID parade. I do not know why.

31. I have been asked about the subsequent investigation by the Independent Commission for Police Complaints (ICPC) into the alleged inaction by the police on 27 April 1997. I am told that my solicitor received a letter from the ICPC on 10 June 1997 seeking my assistance with its investigations, but I did not agree to help. I cannot remember why this was so. The police were not trying to stop the fighting when the two men were lying on the ground, but they could not have done any more to have prevented the fighting.

32. I do not wish to give a full account to the Inquiry of my movements on the night of 26 – 27 April 1997 and I have nothing else to clarify or to add to this statement.

SIGNED:

RORY ROBINSON

DATED:

